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The Canada Presbyterian

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 1893

The politicians on both sides have been wrestling vigorously with the question: are the people of Canada prosperous? The correct reply is, some are and some are not.

Canadian politicians who think it good form to speak disparagingly of our neighbours across the line might do well to remember that many years ago Lord Macaulay described the Americans as "a great people, whose veins are filled with our blood, whose minds are nourished with our literature, and on whom is entailed the rich inheritance of our civilization, our freedom and our glory." Thomas Babington Macaulay did know something about nations.

Frenchmen and Irishmen have always taken the palm for fine oratory in the politics of this country; but in the matter of holding office they are a long way behind the Scotch. McGee was a charming orator. Edward Blake is easily holding his own among the first men of the Empire. Laurier is perhaps the most magnetic speaker that ever stood on Canadian soil. Sir John the first, or Sir Oliver could give any of them points in the practical work of government. It is a good thing that our public men have a diversity of gifts.

The Christian Guardian is of the opinion that "the Presbyterian ministers who preached from their pulpits against Gladstone, and the Irish Methodist ministers who left their work and stumped English counties in behalf of the late government, are hardly in a position to be severe on the priests" whose conduct voided an election in the south of Ireland the other day. That may be quite true; but we think our contemporary will find that no class of people will denounce the priests as roundly as the political parsons who left their spiritual duties and went on the stump, or turned their pulpits into a stump the Sabbath before polling day. That kind of a gospel minister is always severe on the priests, if they are on the other side.

Some intelligent critics who have been studying the Hon. Wilfred Laurier's style for the purpose of finding out the secret of his magnetic power have come to the conclusion that a Frenchman, who masters the English language, has a positive advantage over Englishmen who know only their mother tongue. Undoubtedly, English with a foreign flavour is more interesting than the ordinary every day article. English, learned from the English classics, the school in which Laurier learned his, is certain to be much more elegant than English learned everywhere, the street among other places. Laurier would of course be elegant and eloquent in any language, but his peculiar accent and constructions make him charming to an English audience. Father Chiniquy belonged to the same school. His French way of speaking English always made him intensely interesting.

Trying to account for Sir Oliver Mowat's unique success as a public man people sometimes say that he is not a speaker of the first rank. If saying the right thing at the right time and in the right way constitutes good speaking Sir Oliver will compare favourably with any public man we have. Even in the matter of pol-

ishing up a peroration no visitor of last week, not even Laurier himself, did anything better than this paragraph, which closed the veteran Premier's speech: "I call upon you to remain Canadians forever, resolved that Canada shall ever remain Canada, if you can make it so. I hope our watchword will ever be 'No surrender.' I hope that our aim and determination shall be 'Canada for the Canadians'—for Canadians by birth, whatever their race; for Canadians by adoption, from wherever they come; and for all persons, whatever their objects, who settle among us and become citizens, accepting our laws and proving faithful to our autonomy." (Loud and continued cheering.) So say we all. This is our country. It is as noble a heritage as God ever gave to any people; and it is for Canadians to make the most and best of it that they possibly can.

The Christian at Work has this to say of the heir apparent to the British throne: "In a list of English notabilities who won heavily 'on the turf' last year we notice the name of the Prince of Wales. It was this same Prince who failed to attend the obsequies of Lord Tennyson, preferring a horse-race instead. The Christian people of England must be overjoyed at the prospect of having this rouse and gambler for their future king. A fine example he sets to the young men of England." The Christian people of England are not overjoyed at the prospect of changing their sovereign. No event could give them deeper, more wide-spread grief. But if the Prince does come to the throne he may change his conduct; and even if he should not he is an apostle compared with the rings that rule the Christian people of New York. The future sovereign of England is not what he ought to be, but he compares rather favourably with the sovereign people of the United States who sell their votes for sums ranging from one to five dollars. The Christian people of the United States are engaged in a fierce struggle just now with an organized band of Sabbath breakers who wish to open the Columbian Exposition on the Lord's Day and keep open bars on Sabbath for revenue purposes. It will be time enough for our neighbours to sympathize with the Christian people of England when they have done something effectual in putting and keeping down the public rascalities of their own country. Albert, Prince of Wales, is not the kind of man the son of a mother like his ought to be, but he is at most a mere figure-head, while some worse men across the lines have tremendous power.

In an address delivered last week, in the Presbytery of Montreal, Prof. Scrimger contended that there should be reading rooms, a gymnasium, a swimming bath in connection with each church—city church we presume the professor means—and provision made for such other innocent recreations as may be useful for meeting the wants of our young men, and awakening their interest and keeping them close to the church. The church building he thought should be open seven days in the week instead of one. The object aimed at by the learned professor is to stop the leakage between the Sabbath school and the church. That the leakage exists every one knows who has given the matter the slightest attention. While Professor Scrimger's plan is being discussed we beg leave to suggest another way by which the leakage may be lessened. Ours is an old fashioned way but it has the merit of being the way provided by the constitution of the Presbyterian church. It is simply this: Let the elders do their duty. The leakage arises in no small part from the practical heresy that members in full communion and they alone are under the care of the session. The theory of the church is that every baptized person in the congregation is under the care and jurisdiction of the session; the practice is to look after the members in full communion and in too many cases not much after them. A boy leaving the Sabbath school is just as much

an object of sessional care as a man who has been a member in full communion for half a century. If there is any difference it ought to be in favour of the boy; for a member of fifty years standing should be able to help himself.

Unusual interest was awakened in political circles by the visit to Toronto last week of the Opposition leader and thirteen members of the Ottawa government. Never perhaps in the history of the country have thirteen Cabinet ministers attended a public meeting together; and their presence in such numbers at such a distance from the Capital may, we think, be fairly conclusive evidence that they believe considerable unrest exists in the country, and a little in the ranks of their own party. The principal feature of the meeting was of course the speech of the new Premier. With the party issues discussed in that speech this journal has nothing to do. We may, however, be permitted to say that Sir John Thompson's utterances seem to us to have a harsh, menacing tone, which contrasts painfully with the tone of the speeches of any living British statesman, with the tone of Sir Oliver Mowat's speeches, or that of Laurier's and in a still more marked degree with the tone of most of the speeches delivered by Sir John Macdonald. Sir John could be severe enough when he liked but as a rule he was on good terms with the other side. Alluding to his opponents he would, unless in very bad humour, likely call them his "Grit friends." Sir John Thompson would be almost certain to describe them as "the enemy," a very unhappy term, which has become somewhat common since Sir John Macdonald passed away. Sir John Thompson may not intend to be offensive to any class of citizens and certainly there is no reason why he should assume a menacing manner. Never in the history of this country, nor perhaps of any other British colony, did any subject of Her Majesty get promoted so rapidly and on such slender evidence of superiority ability. There is nothing to show that he is a superior man to either Mr. Meredith or Mr. McCarthy, if indeed he is the equal of the latter; and yet, by a peculiar combination of circumstances, he finds himself Premier of Canada. He should study British models and try to adopt the tone of a British statesman. The menacing tone is not British—it comes from another part of Europe.

REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE HOME.

Sometime before or at the dawn of history a dramatic poem of singular power and beauty was written and has been preserved to the present. The theme of the poem is the afflictions of the upright: their source and purpose. In the preface is a description of the house of a man of piety and wealth. The solicitous care of the father for the spiritual welfare of his household will be apparent from the following quotation: "And it was so when 'the days of their feasting was gone about 'that Job sent and sanctified them and 'rose up early in the morning and offered 'burnt offerings according to the number 'of them all; for Job said, It may be 'that my sons have sinned, and cursed 'God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."

A poet of these latter days, who has glorified the common things of life by his great, if errant genius, has also left on record a felicitous description of a similar scene in "The Cottar's Saturday Night": The cheerful supper done, w' serious face, They, round the ingle, form a circle wide; The sire turns o'er w' patriarchal grace The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride.

* * * * *
The priest-like father reads the sacred page,

* * * * *
Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King

The saint, the father, and the husband prays.

Separated so widely by time, in both these pictures, typical of their respective countries, the father is represented as the high priest of the family, presiding over and conducting the devotions of the home. It is in a general resumption of this holy office ordained by God for the good of the home, and in a wise administration of its sacred functions, that we must look for a revival of religion therein. No amount of church services will atone for neglect here; nor can the Sabbath School, or any other organization having the good of the young in view, supply the want experienced when the head of the family fails to consecrate a portion of his time to the sacred and necessary duties of home religion.

One of these duties and the most important is the conducting of family worship, and this, if intelligently done and conscientiously prepared for, is anything but dull to the children, although it may be formal. There is no book that opens up to the young mind so many avenues of thought as the Bible, and no book so varied in its many-sided presentations of life, hence the multitude of questions which the child pours out to the mother about it. Family worship, as it is conducted in many families, enables each child to obtain a fair knowledge of the Bible before they leave the home. It sweetens the atmosphere and sanctifies the memories which gather around the home-fireside; and in many a home in this new world the treasure most prized is the old Bible used in worship by grandsires now in the Kingdom above.

Should not these duties also include a supervision of the Sabbath School lesson? It would help the earnest teacher and remedy some of the mistakes which are made by immature ones.

It means further that one of these duties is a strict supervision of the literature and conversation of the household. If our children have constantly paraded before them the achievements of godless men who have secured position or wealth at the sacrifice of every principle which Christians hold dear, we cannot be surprised if they strive to imitate them. There is such a wealth of noble, self-denying characters in the annals of living Christianity, that we are inexcusable if we do not place them before our children to stimulate them to higher and nobler ideals of life than mere financial success.

One thing still, it seems to us, is required of the earnest Christian father before the sum of his higher duties to his family is exhausted, and that is direct personal dealing with the child for Christ. He knows the child as no other one can know it, and after an honest endeavor to discharge the other duties pertaining to him as the head of his family he crowns it by so dealing with the child that it yields itself submissively to the service of Christ and joins him in it as a co-worker; there is no joy of earth that can compare with that which wells up in that parent's heart when he so finds that his labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Thus family religion would be revived, and the life so renewed in the home would which tends to elevate the homes of the people should have the hearty countenance of the church; for it can only flourish and tell on the church and the community, as no other revival could do. Hence it appears to us that every modern movement prosper as the home life becomes more pure and spiritual.

MISSION CONFERENCE.

A Missionary Conference was held in the rooms of the Presbyterian Board, 53 Fifth Avenue, New York, on the 11th and 12th inst. The meeting was called upon the recommendation of the Pan-Presbyterian Council, held in Toronto last Septem-