

The Blond Eskimo

Dr. Stefansson, the famous Arctic explorer and ethnologist, delivered a most interesting lecture before the University of Toronto recently on the discovery of a new race of men, the Blond Eskimos in Victoria Land. He found thirteen tribes of these, only three of which had been visited by white men before. He also addressed the Empire Club, and emphasized the necessity of Government intervention to preserve them. In particular, he urged the need of Governmental quarantine against contagious diseases, particularly the measles, which proves fatal in nearly every instance, as evidenced by the ravages made among the Eskimos of the Mackenzie River district, where, out of a population of two thousand sixty years ago, there are left only about forty to-day. According to Bishop Stringer, it is incorrect to say that Dr. Stefansson is opposed to the introduction of missionary work among these people, and we rejoice that the Bishop is endeavouring to get men to undertake evangelizing work in this new field.

A Pertinent Question

In connection with the recent Church census taken in Liverpool a writer in an English paper calls attention to a reason for the diminution in attendance, and therein what seems to be growing irreligion, which may possibly go to the real root of the matter, both in England and elsewhere. He refers to the fact that the failure of the Churches does not lie in undermanned parishes and the paucity of buildings, but in unwillingness to work on God's plan. By this is to be understood the necessity of placing God's work of worldwide evangelization in the first place. The Church is using remarkable effort to Christianize England, and yet withal there seems to be not a little failure with decreasing communicants and attendance, and so the writer asks whether, if we were to cease to spend great sums of money on Church extension, and largely to reduce workers, and send both money and workers into other lands, "it might not be that we should find God's blessing resting on our work in a far greater measure than we see it now"? Attention is also called to the fact that in the Birmingham diocese it is proposed to raise in five years \$500,000, to be chiefly spent on buildings, while the total contribution of the diocese to the missionary work of all the societies is only some \$37,500. The writer has undoubtedly put his finger upon a weak spot, and, even if his contention is not wholly true, the discrepancy between home and foreign work is absolutely wrong. He quotes the speech of a well-known missionary, whose words go straight to the point:—

"We want to have a thoroughly Christianized England first, and then to proceed with the Christianization of other continents. Then we are striving after the impossible. For it is not God's programme. Every argument from Scripture or from history proves conclusively that our first duty, before we proceed to the thorough Christianization of any one country, is to see that the Church is effectively planted everywhere . . . and then to get ahead with our special work at home."

A Courageous Act

President-Elect Wilson has given a striking instance of his courage in regard to what is known as the Inaugural Ball at Washington, which has heretofore been an evening adjunct to the dignified ceremony of initiating the President into office. Every four years the citizens of Washington have enjoyed the privilege of paying from \$5 to \$10 for admission to a building where they could see the new

President and his wife as they appeared for a minute on the balcony for a look at the dancers. Every four years merchants have spent thousands of dollars in preparing for the Inauguration, relying, so it is said, on the proceeds of the Inaugural Ball for reimbursement. All this is not regarded by Mr. Wilson as suited to the dignity of an Inauguration, and very many in the United States are in hearty agreement with him. Indeed, some who ought to know are inclined to think that behind the action of the President-elect there lies a genuine sensitiveness to propriety, since there is reason to believe that Mr. Wilson was mainly influenced by the hint which had got abroad that this year's Ball would be a revelry of recent disgraceful inventions in dancing. In any case, those who are concerned for the best interests of national life will be profoundly thankful for this courageous effort to correct and purify social life.

SOME LENTEN COUNSELS

During the last week or two some important pronouncements have been made, bearing on the observance of Lent, and they are so timely that we feel it will be a service to pass them on to our readers. The "Churchman," of New York, rightly says that the problem of Lent "is to translate an ancient tradition into a form which shall be vital for the help of the Christian life to-day. Slavery to a form now, as in our Saviour's time, defeats the spiritual end for which the form was originally given." It proceeds to refer to some considerations which will help to the solution of the problem. First of all, Lent should be used by the clergy as "a systematic opportunity to develop neglected virtues in the ministry." One of these is the necessity of careful reading and study, and a clergyman is urged to devote each week to one book of real intellectual force and value, as well as some easier reading of biography and poetry. This would develop character and knowledge for future service. It is unutterably sad when it is said of clergy, as is not seldom the case, that "they do not read." Then comes the question of what is popularly known as self-denial, though it really means the denial to self of certain things. As the "Churchman" remarks: "It is of the genius of the Anglican Communion that it prescribes no definite form of fasting, but puts upon the individual the responsibility of discovering the discipline which he needs." This will mean that a man must neither indulge himself by any "formal rule of fasting," nor "weaken his body by a lack of nourishment when the demands of his work require him to keep his body strong." Our contemporary calls attention to a remarkable quotation from the recent autobiography of Father Tyrrell, in which he comments upon the intemperance with which the Jesuit prescribed fasting, and associated high living with seasons of spiritual rejoicing: "The spirit of the Gospel in this matter," he said, "is a golden mean between the rigour of Manichæism and the profusion of gluttony, and makes for the Greek moderation and good taste for which, as a matter of history, the Church has done little or nothing."

Perhaps, in some future age, the Church may conclude that an equably distributed temperance in eating and drinking is a greater end than occasional periods of deficiency, over-balanced by longer intervals of excess." Readers of Count von Hoensbroech's remarkable book, "Fourteen Years a Jesuit," will recall a similar striking testimony. The great New Testament principle is, "Glorify God in your body," and whether this means fasting or careful consideration by regular exercise and moderate food, the result

ought to be to make our bodies more thoroughly fitted for the service of God. In this connection the Bishop of Southwark has been writing with great wisdom in his *Diocesan Magazine*, and we cannot do better than reproduce his words:—

"I personally know no one who observes the fast during Lent by way of entire abstinence from food until evening every day; there are not many working under the strain of life in our diocese who could prudently abstain from meat, if they are accustomed to eat meat, more than twice a week; some, perhaps, cannot abstain more than once a week—on Fridays; many may not be able to do even this. Clearly, it is a case in which our Church has in general left the mode of observing the fast—and particularly in the matter of self-denial in food—free to the individual conscience. Only let the exercise of self-denial be real; let it not be isolated, but accompanied by times for quiet study and meditation, for further prayer, and by more thoughtful almsgiving—times of quiet, for we are over-busy and over-talk ourselves; the test of almsgiving, be it remembered, is not what we give, but what we retain, and why we retain it. Lastly, and above all, let it be real in the sense that we can all feel the impulse and support of an effort made not by individuals, but by the Church as a corporate body; 'the good of it' is not so much the good I am to get by it, but the good of a clear, united, unmistakable testimony to our belief in the things of the Spirit and our determination to use all means to discern them."

Turning once again to the New York "Churchman," we pass on the earnest plea for "moderation, even in Lenten preaching." The many services of the season are perfectly astonishing, and "if many services mean national salvation, we would seem to have reached the Millennium." But Lenten preaching is being sadly overdone, and far too many special sermons or addresses are being given, involving "a form of dissipation." No wonder that clergy break down, physically and intellectually, because they are overwhelmed with work during a special season like Lent. The question is, indeed, a serious one from almost every point of view, and we entirely endorse the opinion that "it is time to call a halt," for unless there is thorough efficiency by the body, mind, and soul being kept perfectly healthy and vigorous the quality of work is certain to suffer. A writer in England some time ago had an article with the curious title, "Satan Disguised as a Railway Train," by which was meant the temptations offered to clergy to travel for the purpose of fulfilling preaching and speaking engagements instead of remaining at home in their studies, pondering Divine truth and feeding their own minds and hearts with a view to better work later on. There is a real danger in the activities of modern Church life, and many a clergyman is in peril of the old charge, "They made me keeper of the vineyard, but mine own have I not kept." It is so much easier to organize some parochial effort, or to address some public meeting, or to take a series of Lenten services than it is to concentrate attention on Divine truth by strenuous thought and earnest meditation, and yet, inasmuch as the quality of our work will never be higher than the reality of our spiritual life, it behoves all who have to serve God in the Church's vineyard to be particularly careful about their inner devotional life. "Solitude is the mother country of the strong," as Tennyson says, and, unless we "dwell with the King for His work," the work and ourselves will assuredly suffer.