

## The Canadian Independent.

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TORONTO, APRIL 1, 1881.

### NOTICE!

Mr. Wm. Revell has kindly undertaken the business management of the INDEPENDENT. In the future, therefore, all remittances and letters about the subscription, or complaints, should be addressed to him, Box 2618, P. O., Toronto, and all articles for insertion, news of churches, &c., to Managing Editor, same address.

Mr. A. Christie, 9 Wilton Avenue, will continue to attend to the business of the Congregational Publishing Company, including arrears for the INDEPENDENT and the Year Book.

We would call the attention of our readers to their labels. All whose subscriptions expired Jan., '81, or earlier, are now due another year. Will they please remit.

We want as many items of news of the churches as possible, but will our correspondents be BRIEF; our space is limited, and we dislike to cut down.

### REV. A. HANNAY ON CONGREGATIONALISM IN CANADA.

We give this week the concluding portion of the article on "Congregationalism in Canada," by the Rev. A. Hannay, of which we gave the first instalment last week. Perhaps, with the memory of his speech at the Memorial Hall in mind, in which the same points were somewhat discussed, our readers may think that there is nothing specially new. To ourselves, however, there is a fullness and compactness about the article which was wanting,—as, indeed, it was impossible to be otherwise—in the speech, and we trust that it will receive the careful perusal which it merits. The state of the churches, the causes that have interfered with their growth, and suggestions for more increased efficiency are the points specially touched upon by Mr. Hannay.

It will be suggested, perhaps, that one spending so short a time in Canada, and receiving information second-hand, and generally from interested parties, cannot pronounce very decidedly on the state of the churches, and that his opinions would necessarily be moulded by the circle in which he was thrown. To some extent this is true, and a man of less experience and ripened judgment than Mr. Hannay might be betrayed into error. It must not be forgotten, however, that although his visit was short, his official connection with Canada has been long, and he was far from being ignorant of the churches, their work and difficulties, and some of their ministers; probably no one could have been found more suitable to take home a report than he.

Mr. Hannay finds that Congregationalism does not bulk largely among the Christian denominations in Canada, and that the progress for the last twenty-five years has "been on the most modest scale." None of our readers will, we think, be disposed to dissent from this, it has been the burden of several letters which have appeared from time to time in these columns, and we ourselves have more than once alluded to the same fact. There is, however, consolation in the truth stated by Mr. Hannay, that the ser-

vice a denomination renders cannot always be measured by its relative numbers, and we are not likely to dissent from his conclusion that it is "not only desirable, but of great moment, that Congregationalism should be maintained in Canada, and be, if possible, strengthened and extended."

Mr. H. discusses the causes which may have contributed to our weakness. Is it an inefficient ministry? No, that cannot account for it, although as he says, "the colony is more exposed than the mother country to the intrusion of clerical adventurers." Was it because we have declined to receive state aid which some other churches without violating their principles could take? To some extent, perhaps, yes, seeing that in new settlements, with money scarce, it would help to give early position and permanence to those churches thus assisted. Immigration, too, has had something to do with it. It is a fact that the percentage of Congregational emigration from England to this side has been smaller than that of perhaps any other body. The Congregationalists of England are largely of a class that does not emigrate, the contented, fairly well-to-do, middle class. This, while good for the churches in England, is not helpful to the churches here. Purity of Communion has, doubtless, had something to do with keeping down our numbers, partly as a principle, and partly, perhaps, as Mr. Hannay suggests, in the way it has been administered, not always with wisdom and delicacy. Yet further, the difficulty—which our leading Churches have at one time or another experienced—of finding the right men for their pulpits. English ministers of proved competence have rarely been available. The Colonial field has not proved attractive; it has not the comforts, the advantages and certainties of home, nor yet the spell of missions to the heathen.

Such, summarily stated, are the reasons Mr. Hannay suggests, as the leading causes of the slow progress of Congregationalism in Canada. As our readers know, we have expressed from time to time opinions that there is yet another cause, perhaps as potent as any of these. Mr. H. does not mention it, not because he does not know of its existence, as some other utterances show, but from the kindly character of the man, who will not take the role of a faultfinder. That cause is the repellent character of some of the workings of our system, not necessarily, but through the unwisdom of not a few who call themselves by our name. They have done their best to make congregationalism appear like a porcupine with the motto, *Nemo me impune lacessit*. They have brooked no restraint, no advice, no caution, and if actions can speak, they have said that they cared for no results so long as they could have their own way. Such procedure has, without doubt, cast a reproach upon the system, and those who have thought that this conduct was the natural outgrowth of Congregationalism, have naturally been averse to identify themselves with it. We know that there are foolish, unreasonable men in all churches; witness the late escapade in Cook's Presbyterian Church,

Toronto; but in these cases the outbreak and evil are a rebellion against authority; in our churches foolish actions are too often done in the name of authority.

Mr. Hannay asks, what can be done to help us in Canada? And he replies, as was indeed suggested at the Conference in Toronto, that more frequent visits from the representatives of the home churches, lay and ministerial, is one method. Then, that the Colonial Missionary Society should be placed in a position more liberally to help the Canadian churches; especially in their working of new and promising fields, such as Manitoba now exhibits; expressing at the same time in the kindest terms, that there has been in the past an undue expenditure upon fields "out of regard for usage and persons," where there was no hope in the nature of things of establishing self-supporting churches. Such is the transatlantic view of help for us, but we must show that we are worthy of that consideration and aid. Are our churches doing all they can for our Home Mission Work? Have we put our own shoulders to the wheel before calling upon another power for help? Are we prepared—ministers and people—in a spirit of self-abnegation and sacrifice to sink our individual likes and wishes and preferences in the common good? to look at our work as a whole, and not only ask what is best for it in that aspect, but when the question is answered to acquiesce in it? It may involve some breaking up of old associations, some drawing in here, and abandonment there, but we shall be the stronger for it, and more successful in the future, by God's blessing, than we have been in the past.

There must be, need we say, a closer drawing together of the churches, a more real unity than we have yet had, a readiness in churches, and among churches to study each other, to seek and take advice, and to act for the mutual welfare and good name of all. If we can rise into this, our churches, twenty-five years hence, will show a much greater increase of power and influence than they have done for the last twenty-five, and future visitors will be able to carry home a more pleasant story than Mr. Hannay has been permitted to do.

### MINISTER'S WIVES.\*

Fanny Fern somewhere expressed her indignation at the yearly toast she heard in New England homes, "The Pilgrim fathers." Had no one a word to say for the Pilgrim mothers? for surely there were mothers in those early homes. The Pilgrim fathers, forsooth, as though New England had no debt of gratitude to pay in loving remembrance of those heroic better-halves whose homely graces made the wilderness life not only endurable, but bright with the peace and comfort of home. Fanny Fern would be satisfied, however, with the interest displayed upon her sex by those who in Church circles are discussing the requirements of a minister. Did you ever know a sewing circle, for example, which ever ignored that most important element in a minister's life, the wife?

\* The Diary of a Minister's Wife. I. K. Funk & Co.

The other day we read in an exchange some statements regarding the dismissal of ministers, in which a certain percentage was due to faulty wives. Do our aspiring young ladies recognize the fact that should their smiles captivate the young student or preacher who is so lovely in his intonation and elegant in his utterances, they are to be wedded not only to the man of their choice, but also to all who may choose him to be their pastor, from Squire Bumptious down through Master Spy and Miss Prim to Master Giggle and Susan Snapdragon. "Give me neither poverty nor riches," said a pastor, in humble submission. "The Lord keep you from poverty, we will keep you from riches," said Deacon Grip-purse, whilst brother Sanctimonious responded, "Amen." And we intend, Miss Simplicity, when you shall become our minister's wife, from putting on airs or imagining you are any more an angel than the rest of us, because some one whose schooling has been neglected should write Rev. Mrs. before your name. And this is the way we intend to do it. Church members, read, mark, learn, you won't need to digest, but simply practice. Rev. Mr. Hope and his wife, after some time of discouragement, had departed for some more congenial field. As their backs were turned the people had discovered wings, but alas, too late, they went. Mr. B. and his pretty, loving, active young wife, had found a home in the parsonage, which after some months of neglect began to gain again its trim appearance. The parishioners began to call. "I hope, Mrs. B. you will visit a great deal, Mrs. Hope always did. I think it so nice to see our minister's wife take an interest in the people." "Oh, Mrs. B., we have put you down as president of our sewing circle. We shall expect you to help us in many ways. Mrs. Hope was very ingenious, and did all the cutting and fixing;" and Miss Patience comes in; after chatting a half hour, she informs Mrs. B. that she has been elected superintendent of some other department, which post Mrs. Hope held for over two years. Father Stevens and his wife next appear, an ominous frown lingers on her brow, and Mother Stevens' thin lips, tightly compressed, forbid thoughts of a smile except by contrast. A sigh and half-uttered groan being over as preliminaries, Mr. Stevens begins, he in this case being the spokes-man of the house. "Well, Sister B., I hope you are prepared to enter upon your duties in a Christian way. Ministers' wives should be bright and shining lights. If ministers' wives would set better examples, much of the folly and wickedness of the people would be done away with." (Mrs. Stevens is visibly moved.) "Mrs. Hope was a bright and shining light, going in and out among the people." Yet so little did these faithful admonitions have their desired effect, that in opening—as Mrs. Hope always did—the first ladies' prayer-meeting, the new minister's wife actually broke down. "A poor stick!" exclaims Miss Trotter, and Mrs. Green declares that she "never saw such a chicken-hearted thing in her life." Unfortunately, there were a few kind souls who sympathetically sighed, "Poor thing, I must say a kind word to her. So timid and sensitive."