

placed in a post of honour on the platform, and so became also noticeable. Hon. J. Ferrier occasionally interjected practical business hints; but beyond these there is little to notice in the lay delegation: many of its members are evidently from the country: and however accustomed to "speak in meetin'" at home, would scarcely venture it in General Conference.

The matters in debate before the Conference are sufficiently significant of the march of events and opinions; and of the powerlessness of even a rigid Methodism to stand against it. It is true that there are some in the Conference who apparently think that Finality was reached at last when the union was formed: and who seem inclined to set up barriers against the rising tide; but the majority are awake to the necessity of bringing their church into accord with the movements of the age. The necessity for action was well expressed by the Chairman in his opening address. Said Dr. Douglas: "During the present Conference permanence and solidity must be given to the system." This can only mean that at present there is neither. Allusion was made more than once to portentous movements within Methodism in both England and the United States which seemed to be ominous of coming dangers in Canada. According to the American journals there is danger there of disintegration and decay: the causes assigned being the lack of a bond of union between the churches, the cumbrous machinery of the church government, and the frequent changes of pastors. To these may be added, in England, the persistent advance of the laity upon the power of government, and the deep under-current of liberal theological thought. It is well for Methodism in Canada that these points are not ignored: but that some of them at least are to receive consideration and discussion. Thus we find among the questions in debate, one regarding the admission of laymen to the Standing Committees: that the people may have a voice in the appointment of ministers to the different fields. It is well known that many men are smarting under what they consider injustice and fraternal tyranny in the matter of their location; and that they loudly hint at professional jealousy: the mere presence of a number of laymen on the Committees would restrain these jealousies somewhat, and would remove the sense of them from the ministers dealt with. Another motion comes from the influential Tabernacle congregation in Toronto, for the extension of the term of ministerial appointment to five years. This motion is echoed from other quarters, and will doubtless become the law of the church: but it marks a great change in Methodism. The same metropolitan congregation petitions for liturgical changes; which, slight in themselves, will make Methodism less distinctive. Thus, for instance, we are to lose probably the "good old" custom of "lining out" the hymns in Divine service; and the preacher is to be privileged to offer prayer immediately on finishing his discourse!

Besides these small subjects of legislation, more important ones are on the carpet. Rev. Mr. Bland, of Montreal, has two motions on the paper which are worthy of notice. One is "to review the whole question" of class-meetings: and the reasons assigned are that "much irregularity exists"; that many ministers are "much perplexed"; and that there is a wide-spread conviction that the Church polity "admits of modification." Of course Mr. Bland means "improvement": and many persons will share his opinion. Here, also, it is possible that Methodism may awake from the improving process as changed as the "little old woman" by the pedlar's shears, in the old nursery rhyme: with not even a "little dog" to recognize it! Mr. Bland's other motion respects the relation of children to the church. It is a deliberate proposal to alter the historic character of Methodist membership. We are to lose the "good old-fashioned" Methodist conversion, and to have instead a membership thus introduced—"When years of sufficient intelligence have been reached, say *ten to twelve*, let the young people, suitably cultured and spiritually desirous, be formally and publicly recognized by the Church as members." Such is Mr. Bland's motion; and it will at once be seen that it brings Methodism into direct line with the Method of the Anglican Church as regards its membership. The Scriptural right of this method is of course an open question. Now when Methodism gives up "conversion" for "culture" and "desire"—when it reviews the whole question of class-meetings—when it grants a five-year pastorate in place of a biennial itinerancy—when it not only has laymen in its legislature, but places them on its important executive committees, what, in the name of all that is excellent, has become of Methodism itself? It only remains to place the coming "System of Theology" in the stead of Wesley's Sermons as the standard of doctrine, and to relax a little the rigidity of ministerial subscription, and lo!—whatever Christianity may have gained—Methodism itself, historic Methodism, will be a thing of the past.

HUGH DONOGHUE.

A SCHOOL OF BEAUTY.

It is proposed, the papers tell us, to form a School of Beauty, in which the members, male and female, pledge themselves to do all they can to make themselves comely by natural means. This is one of the most startling items of intelligence which I have met with for a long time. It is simply a proposal to revolutionize the costume of both sexes, to substitute a standard of taste for a standard of fashion, and to supplant the hideous by the artistic. What an undertaking! And what an amount of moral courage it will need to give effect to it.

There must, of course, be pioneers in fashion. Somebody must have worn the first stove-pipe, though it is difficult to credit that any human being should voluntarily have endured the amount of contumely such an act must have involved. The name of the man who carried the first umbrella has come down to us, and we know that Jonas Hanway was hooted in the streets because he used that implement to protect himself from the rain. He was a martyr to whose pluck society will be indebted for all time. In like manner innovations in female attire had to be adopted by individuals for the first time. Some woman set the mode of shaving the head and wearing horse hair, clogged with powder and pomatum in place of her own hair. Some other intelligent pioneer first wore hoops, no doubt to the amazement of mankind. So in our own day there must have been a daring adventuress who conceived the idea that society would be charmed with a robe constructed on the model of a single trouser-leg, the fair wearer of which should be compelled to adopt a hop; as a means of

progression, as a sparrow hops down a garden path. These and a thousand other innovations needed courage and self-sacrifice, but all these heroes and heroines must, however, pale their ineffectual light before the devoted band of members of the School of Beauty in the enterprise to which they are devoted.

We are not vouchsafed many particulars as to how the school will set about the work of "making themselves comely by natural means," so as to induce others to follow their enticing example. No limit is given as to the standard of comeliness they will set up. There is, as we have seen in newspaper advertisements, a "standard of natural sherry," and there may be a standard of natural comeliness, but no two persons have ever agreed on what it is. Nature offers a wide diversity even in the matter of natural beauty, and Art, seizing upon this, gives us the most widely-contrasting results. Those who admire the beauties Rubens painted can hardly go into raptures over the ideals set up by some of our modern artists. When it comes to clothing these diversified types of humanity so that they may appear "comely" by natural means and appliances, the task becomes gigantic. People are not agreed even as to how they should be fed, much less as to how they should be clothed. A philosopher has lately written a satire against the atrocious habit of eating animal food! He contemplates with horror the idea of a woman putting beefsteak into her mouth, or even "toying with veal-and-ham or pigeon pie." Of some ideal beauty, he tells us, "she takes but coffee and ambrosial cates." Her sources of nourishment are, to say the least of it, limited; but the coffee and the "ambrosial cates," whatever they may be, and wherever obtainable, (possibly at some local Alexander's) are sufficient, it seems, with the addition of exercise, to secure her an "alabaster skin," "cheeks of peach," and the "dancing sparkle of her eyes divine." Perhaps she is an exceptional personage, else it might be worth while for the new School of Beauty to turn its attention primarily to induce ladies to give up meat and adopt a diet of the ambrosial cate and coffee order. This would induce comeliness of form, and then it would only have to be supplemented by comeliness in attire.

Then, what form of attire? What to pick and choose out of the armoury of beauty for permanent use is the great question. The School of Beauty seems thus far only to have one canon. It won't tolerate corsets as conducive to loveliness. "Prizes will be given to those ladies who can move with ease and grace, and so afford evidence of the free use of their limbs, whilst it will be a leading rule of the school that, though stays may be used as a means of support, they shall not be deemed essential as an accessory to beauty. In other words, a natural waist and a well curved back, with a perfectly posed head will be at a premium, and a woman will not be expected to conceal, by unnatural compression, the possession of organs which are a part of herself, and cannot be dispensed with without loss of life." This is sensible, and may lead to a very important reform—may lead, in fact, to the recovery of beauty of form, in place of the deformity which has so long passed for beauty. Another point to which the school may well direct their attention, is the covering of the feet. Nature in her unsophisticated way has decreed that people should walk on the soles of their feet, flat or arched, as the case may be. Fashion on the contrary ordains that they should walk on their toes, the heels being poised in the air. By the latest French decree, the heel of a boot is placed in the middle of the foot, and this distortion is regarded as a triumph of art. If prizes are to be given, it would certainly seem that one is due to the intrepid maiden who will appear in a boot or shoe in which the foot has free and ample play, even to the extent of the toes getting the freedom necessary for them to act as they were intended to act in walking. But perhaps this is too much to expect, unless Fashion were to ordain a return to the broad shoe of Henry VIII.'s day, with the slashed toes,—a shoe adapted to men with feet far better than the pointed boot which seems to have been designed for animals with hoofs.

People who are to be rendered "comely by natural means" ought to begin by a wide deviation from the style of costume suggested by the fashion plates for both men and women. The dress of men is anything but "comely," except as regarded by the prejudices of fashion. The figure is lost in it, and the cut and fashion of the different garments is formal and inartistic to the last degree. But what change are we to adopt? It would not do to go back to the toga for men of mature age, leaving the tunic for the comely wear of youth. Both look capital in pictures; but "there arn't weather in pictures," as Will Fern says, and it would be difficult to imagine anything more outrageous than a youth shivering in the Place d'Armes with bare arms and legs on one of our winter days. Of course use is everything, and the ancient Briton who dyed himself with woad, and then left the greater part of his body bare, did not feel the cold. A Roman dandy, it is said, asked one of the Britons how it was that he could with his scanty clothing endure the rigour of the climate. "Why," replied the Briton, "you come here, and yet leave your face uncovered, don't you?" "True," said the other. "Very well, then, I am all face," was the triumphant rejoinder. Short of woad and toga, it is hard to say what costume would restore us to comeliness.

With regard to the ladies, the question is a wider one, and it is not for those of the other sex to presume to hint a fault or indicate an avenue to improvement. This, however, one may venture to say. It is one of the most lamentable things in life that our whole female population should be absorbed as it is in the one question of dress. The changes in the fashions are so rapid and so minute that it takes all a woman's time and thought to observe and to follow them. The vagaries as to dress extend to the veriest trifles, but these trifles become of magnitude in keenly critical eyes. It may be said that a woman is to blame if she bestows so much consideration on dress that she becomes intellectually dwarfed in consequence. Well, there is a great deal to be said on the other side. A woman's fortune in life depends so much on her appearance that one may parody the famous lines and say—

Man's dress is of man's life a thing apart;
'Tis woman's sole existence.

Every girl feels that by neglecting the adornment of her person, and failing to show off her charms to the best advantage, she "loses a chance" in the great lottery of her life,—marriage. Hence the force she attaches to the axiom—"Better out of the world than out of the fashion." This is to be regretted; it is, in fact, a misfortune; but it is difficult to say how it may be remedied. The