

The Press and General Review

THE PAST FIFTY YEARS. From the Parades Reader.

As despotic governments are one important hindrance, it is pertinent to enquire how they have been affected by the progress of this time. At the opening of this century, the nations whose institutions have a preponderance of freedom were relatively small. This nation, then an infant, was little regarded by the world. Great Britain had not then attained to half its present power. Since that time, by extension of her colonies, conquests and commerce, she has more than doubled herself; and by throwing her presence and influence into every corner of the world, she has come to act with intense and comprehensive power in liberalizing the nations. She has even cut into the heart of Asia, and sent abroad an influence there which has made all Asiatic despotism, from the grand Turk in the West to the Celestial of the East, but the ghosts of their former selves. And as to the despots of Europe, they had stood in their full strength till about the opening of this century. The French revolution, the first spasmodic their commencing decline, passed away with little impairing of their strength. It ended in a "Holy Alliance," which seemed to have consolidated the whole on a *mutuo* basis. But the light had begun to penetrate, the example and success of our country had begun to tell on the common mind of the world. And now, within the last two years, the death-struggles of despotism seem to have commenced. And whatever it has gained by the counter-waves of the last few months, leaves it still standing on the rim of a heaving volcano.

Papery, once the soul and strength of all despotisms, has been driven out from his seat—no as at the commencement of this century by Bonaparte, a rival despot, but by the rising flow of Liberalism among its own people. No nation has undergone a greater and more hopeful change than that on which the Pope has sat as an incubus. Thus we see, that light has been flashing into even the darkest nations, and revolutions and counter revolutions have been sundering the fetters of the people, and opening the crevices for the light of salvation to come in.

The next point of comparison touches the state of human knowledge then and now. Learning has indeed increased more in breadth than in depth. If science has not been opening deeper mines, she has been pouring her treasures upon the many. For instance, the colleges in this country and the subordinate institutions have in the brief term of fifty years, increased more than tenfold. And our numerous theological seminaries have all come into being in this time.

As to the sciences cultivated, or more especially, those natural sciences which give us the revelations of God in nature, there has been an advance approaching to a new creation. Geology was scarcely known before. Botany has made most of its progress since. And similar remarks might apply to zoology, astronomy, chemistry, electricity, magnetism and mechanics. In the aggregate of these, more has been done in the term of which we speak, than in all time before. And science has thus been rapidly accumulating the treasures which God will know how to apply in due time to the furtherance of his work.

Then, as to the application of science to the arts, such a day of useful inventions never before dawned. The steam-engine, applied to countless uses—the electric telegraph, weaving its web around the world, and bringing all men into speaking distance of each other—invention after invention, to speed the printing press and cheapen its products, are specimens of what has been done in this time. The patent offices of this and other countries, if we read their records for fifty years, will give us some idea of the fertility of human invention for that time, and probably show a greater aggregate of useful inventions, in that time, than in all preceding centuries. It is so, this branch of civilization has then made more progress in these fifty years, than in fifty centuries before—that is an hundred fold of the former. And then this advance has been mainly in the useful and not in the æsthetic departments. The fine arts, as sculpture and painting, had their proudest days in darker times. But now human talent, taking its impulse from above, goes to multiply the means of human existence and happiness, and of spreading the light of salvation.

In openings made to send the Gospel to the unevangelized, the progress has been wonderful. The first missionaries sent out by us, much less than fifty years ago, scarce found a place for the soles of their feet. And now, in all the breadth of the world, there are few tribes among whom the gospel could not be introduced without danger. And all this levelling the mountains and filling the valleys to prepare the way of the Lord, has taken place in so brief a time. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

Then as to the work of missions. When this century opened, the English, Baptist, and Congregationalist missions had just commenced. And the Moravians had a few small missions here and there, of longer continuance. But all together were but a taper-light set in the midst of the hemisphere of darkness. But now the men and means employed in foreign missions, are probably a hundred fold of what they were.

And the light diffused, and heathen converted, in the proportion. A like rate of increase for another such term, will bring the gospel to every human ear.

Next, see what advance has been made in the power of the two nations which God has put foremost in evangelizing. Most other nations have been comparatively stationary or retrograding, while these have doubled or quadrupled their people and power. Great Britain has gone into the four quarters of the globe, and caused the heathen nations to feel her power. And this country has gone westward, planting State after State, till now on the Pacific shore she is preparing for the world a new commercial centre, whence will radiate a light, to meet similar radiations from the young United States now coming up in Australia. So that between them both, the dense darkness of Eastern Asia will give way. These two nations have, in so brief a time, effected an investment of surrounding of the heathen world.

Next, how great has been the multiplication of facilities for a rapid spread of the Gospel—the lines of commerce and of that intercourse of nations which scatter the seed of life, have gone out into all the world. The means of rapid transmission have so advanced as to have outstripped, as it were, into a new world. One of the miracles of the last century, rehearsed in the wandering ears of school boys, was that Captain Cooke sailed round the world. But now we have almost a continuous fleet extending round the world. Nay, we have well nigh sailed the globe with lines of steam, on which the voyage of the world may be made in a couple of moons. And soon, with the telegraph, we shall have almost instantaneous communication with the antipodes. Over these lines of thought, the knowledge and life of the church will flow, till the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea.

And not only the roads, but the vehicles of thought have had a wonderful multiplication. The issues of the religious press have, in this brief time, advanced from next to nothing, to world wide dimensions. Religious newspapers unheard of fifty years ago, now go forth, probably, at the rate of a million copies per month to our country alone. Religious tracts, then rarely printed for benevolent distribution, now come forth by millions. Bibles have been printed in the last half century to such an extent, that the aggregate of all that were ever printed before was but a *meagre* fraction in the comparison.

But what is of more importance, the increase of the effusions of the Holy Spirit has kept pace with that of outward means. A time of unavowed darkness preceded the opening of this century. But the century opened with an extensive revival in this country. And revival has since followed revival, till vast as has been the increase of our people, the increase of the church has outrun it; and statistics show, that if the rate of increase of the church advances as it has done, this century will not end before the whole population of the country, great as it will be then, will be in the church.

Again the development of the power of association in the spread of the gospel, has been the work of the time now under review. Next to nothing of it was known before. And now we have the aggregate power of the Christian world, bound together for action in its great work. Before, the individual Christian here had no way to reach the destitute heathen. But this power of association has extended the arm of each around the globe. Individuals mingling in associate action, like the countless rills uniting in the majestic river, are swelling the streams that flow to renew the face of the world.

These events are converging to a glorious issue, God's hosts are going forth to his battle. Our own eyes behold the long lines drawn out and the imposing battalions moving. Our eyes are seeing what Prophets and Kings in vain desired to see.

If Providence has cast our lot in such times, our standard of Christian life should be up to the times. Our face should reflect the brightness of the tokens which appear in our horizon. We should take in the inspirations of the scene around us. The coming millennium should have a breathing through us. Blessed is he who, having prayers to offer, substance to contribute, talents to exert, or life to devote to the spread of the Gospel, discerns the signs of the times, and does with his might what his hands find to do.

From the N. Y. Weekly Herald.

THE STEAM BOILER FATALITY—IMPORTANT VERDICT OF THE CORONER'S JURY.

We have published all the details of this melancholy catastrophe, and we now present our readers with the result of the investigation before the Coroner. The verdict is highly important; and the resolutions of the jury appended, are not less so. The Coroner has discharged his duty fearlessly, and the jury have discharged theirs. A most important principle has been established—the responsibility of the owners of manufactories in which steam power is used and abused; and the liability of the makers and sellers of boilers, which are found to be incapable of sustaining the degree of pressure for which they are designed and purchased. It seemed necessary to make a signal example, before the reckless and imprudent were brought to their senses. The opportunity has been fur-

lished of doing so, and a wise and intelligent jury have not let it pass unimproved. It was high time to put a stop to the sporting with human life, which had been so long practised with impunity in this and other cities of the United States. Enough of victims have been offered to conscience, to uselessness and cupidity. A few more must be turned. A jury, taken, we may say at random from the people, have pronounced unanimously upon the criminality of the course that has been pursued in reference to the boiler whose explosion has caused so much lamentation, mourning, and woe in our city, and has left many a joyful hearth shrouded in the darkness of despair. It is to be feared that this is not an isolated instance, even at the present moment in New York; and that all the guilt exists, without the consequences in human blood which have not yet seen the light. Boilers have not exploded which have been within a hair's breadth of it; just as in the case of Taylor's boiler, which had been subjected to a higher degree of pressure than that under which it was used, and thus killed him and his partners and engineer into a fatal security. The straining of the metal by this excessive pressure resulted at last in desolation and death, and a terrible rebuke has been given to those who would dare to trifle with the laws of nature. Alas! the innocent have suffered for the temerity of the guilty; but God and the people will set it all right.

An act has been brought before the Legislature in consequence of this calamity. May we hope that its provisions will fully meet the case in all its length and breadth. The information developed in the investigation is of great value. Some wild ideas and mad theories have been advanced; but the chaff may be easily separated from the wheat, and it is hoped that this matter will not be allowed to rest till the public have some security against the recurrence of similar disasters.

It matters little to those whose lives are jeopardized or lost, what are the theories of learned gentlemen about steam, "stame," or gas. It is of small consequence what the nature of the agent is, if death and destruction ensue. Whatever may be the difference in theories, the following principles are agreed upon, viz.—that badly constructed or weak boilers ought not to be used—that extreme pressure ought not to be resorted to in the case of good boilers—that the want of sufficient water in boilers and excessive heat are fatal; and that in all cases a safety valve ought to be used which would infallibly meet the danger. A fusible valve, which one of the witnesses stated is used in France, or such as Mr. Crommelin suggests in his very useful paper, ought to be attached to every boiler; and the authorities of the State or of the United States ought to be empowered to enforce it in every instance, under a heavy penalty.—The public look with anxiety to the action of the Legislature.

IMPORTANT MOVEMENT IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH.

(From the Montreal Gazette.)

From the Hon. P. Boyle de Blaquiere has addressed a letter to the Kingston Chronicle and News, containing matter which he says he is most anxious to have circulated through the Upper Province, and which is not without interest in the Lower.

Mr. de Blaquiere addresses a letter to His Lordship the Bishop of Toronto, and to the Clergy and Laity of the United Church of England and Ireland, in which he advises most material changes in its constitution in the Province. He observes that the number of members is little short of 200,000, and that they have strong and urgent claims to be admitted to the privileges of self government in their religious capacity. This is a right which he observes, all other denominations of Protestant Christians possess. He is of opinion that there is a want of Episcopal supervision, and that there ought to be three Bishops in Upper Canada; and he publishes a bill which he proposes to introduce into the Legislative Council to effect that and other objects.

He proposes that the Anglican Church shall consist of three distinct and coordinate estates—the Bishops, the Clergy, and the Laity, male members of the church who have attained the age of 21 years; that the three Bishops shall be those of Toronto, Kingston, and London, with power to admit coadjutor and Missionary Bishops; that the Bishops of Kingston and London shall in the first instance, be elected by a convocation of the Clergy and that subsequent elections be made by a convocation of the Clergy and Laity.

Mr. de Blaquiere carries out the self governing principle, and would approximate the constitution of the Church of England very nearly to that of Scotland. He would hold yearly convocations of Bishops, Clergy, and Laity, the latter to be chosen by the Vestries of each parish; the majority of voices to decide. He departs from the voluntary system in this, that he wishes the nomination of the Clergy to be with the Bishop, but he gives the Laity a very effective control over their salary and emoluments. He also proposes to have a committee of delegates in equal proportions, Clerical and Lay, to whom each Clergyman shall be accountable for infraction of vows, or immoral or scandalous conduct, and who will try upon oath, in con-

formity with the Ecclesiastical Law of England.

The proposal of this gentleman, in fact, amounts to this, to place the Anglican Church in Upper Canada, in pretty nearly the same condition as the Episcopal Church in the State of New York, and how far this is consistent with its discipline and maintenance, is for the great body of its members to judge. We have placed before our readers the leading particulars of a proposal which is entitled to attention, counting as it does, from a very zealous member of the Church, and we have endeavored not to prejudice our readers either for or against it.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AND INTemperance.

From the Canada Temperance Advocate.

The inhabitants of Scotland have long looked upon themselves as the best educated, and most moral people in the British Empire, the truth however is now beginning to leak out, that intemperance prevails to a greater extent there, than in any other part of the United Kingdom, or perhaps of Europe. It is not a little remarkable that the highest ecclesiastical courts of the three great Religious Denominations in Scotland—the Established Church, the Free Church, and the United Presbyterians—have had their attention directed to this subject at the same time; all of them having appointed committees to "enquire and report;" for it must be considered decisive evidence of the awful prevalence of this vice, when it has led simultaneously to anxious deliberation and inquiry in all these reverend bodies. We would direct attention to an article from the Greenock Advertiser on the Report of the Committee of the Established Church. It is instructive to notice the action which these three bodies have taken respectively, especially as regards the Temperance Reformation. All of them have acted on the principle of non-committal. The United Presbyterian Synod speaks, indeed, approvingly of the Temperance Society, but refuses to identify itself with it as a church; the Free Church keeps it at a still greater distance from it (yet in both these churches, large total abstinence associations have been formed, of ministers, elders, preachers and students, which will soon tell upon the churches at large); but the Established Church has kept at the greatest distance from it of all. "Very few of the ministers support the last remedy (total abstinence), the greater part of them apparently believing that abstaining entirely is a violation of Christian freedom, which should be discouraged; and the Committee appear to approve of this sentiment, as the report does not recommend total abstinence as one of the means of cure."

The remedies which these reverend gentlemen recommend for the crying vice of intemperance, are of such a nature, that many of them will give our readers equal surprise and pain. One recommends "the encouragement of beer drinking!" as if intemperance in the use of fermented liquors were not a sin, as well as intemperance in the use of spirits. Another recommends "ministers setting an example!" good! but if the ministers set an example of drinking, which we suppose they have been doing, it must either leave matters just as they are, or render them worse. Another recommends "the payment of wages on some other day than Saturday!" The gentleman seems to think that the people have no desire for drink except on Saturday night, and if by any means their pockets can be kept empty till Sabbath is over, all danger will be avoided. Another recommends that "excisemen only should be authorised to sell spirits!" This appears to us to be the oddest of them all. Scotland is to be delivered from intemperance by excisemen! Is it because Scotchmen have such a horror of an exciseman that they would not even go to him to buy whiskey? Has the history of Scotland proved that men can easily supply themselves with whisky without the exciseman's knowledge?

It is wonderful what mistakes even good and learned men will commit upon a plain question when the truth happens to be unpopular, or when it is viewed through the mists of prejudice. It appears to us so plain, as to be almost self evident, that the intemperance of Scotland arises from the drinking customs of the people, and the only way to remove that intemperance, is to reform these customs. But these gentlemen, and many others, seem to think that it is possible to avoid intemperance, and still keep up all these customs as they are; they will find out the method of squaring the circle first. We believe this to be a moral impossibility, all experience is against it. Some individuals may indeed conform to these customs, and suffer no apparent injury, but these will constitute an exceptional minority; a drinking community will always be an intemperate community.

We have extended these remarks to a greater length than we contemplated. We have a strong conviction that the day is not far distant when these Reverend Courts, like some more celebrated councils of an earlier day, will see cause to amend their decision, and come out on the right side—the side of Scripture and common sense. "Leave off intemperance (and intemperance) before it be meddled with!"