

town. But Parnell has passed, and we must hasten up-town to have another view of the procession. Teddy gives the orders to One-ninety-nine, and we drive rapidly up the dark, squalid street, then along William, past Clendinning's long line of foundries, and remembering the poor people's pitiful remarks on the want of work, we wish the great manufacturer good-luck, and heartily trust that the trade which brings bread to so many mouths may flourish and increase. Up Inspector street, past the handsome church of St. Stephen, and again we are on the brightly-lighted thoroughfares where the jingling sleigh-bells fill the air and every steed seems urged in the same direction. Again we are at Victoria Square, where the first torches are just coming in view. There are many sleighs waiting here, but One-ninety-nine manages to get his squeezed through to the front, and we soon see that the surroundings give the spectacle a much grander effect. The torches no longer bring to view a shivering, poorly-clad crowd with a back-ground of squalid shops and dilapidated dwellings. Here the lights fall on happy faces, well-clad forms, handsome equipages, and are finally reflected from the great glass windows of the massive buildings that rise so grandly on every side. Again we hear the agitator discussed, but this time it is by two gentlemen in fur coats who are seated in a sleigh near by. "Did you see in to-night's *Star* that Parnell has collected \$140,000 for the relief fund and \$20,000 for the agitation?" "Yes, and I'd like to know what he has done with it. It's to be hoped he has sent his relief fund home before this." "I fear we'll need a relief fund in Canada soon if we don't look after our poor people that are out of work. Sir John gave them nothing but fair words, and few of them, when they went to him." "That's so, still I would give to the relief fund, and have given to it, but why should we burn torches and freeze brass bands in honour of a man who comes to carry money out of this country to raise a row in another?" "Here he comes again!" shouts Teddy, who is with Tommy now perched on the driver's box; but I no longer care to watch the twinkling torches, or list to the stirring strains—my heart is heavy, thinking of the men and women who would willingly work, but can find none. Our good Governor and the Princess cannot be expected to look lower than the cultivation of the fine arts. Sir John and Sir Samuel bid us trust to the great N.P., and we listen eagerly for the hum to herald the boom of busy trade. In vain we cry—"Hark, 'tis the hum!" but echo and Mr. Fuller answer, "Nay, 'tis the hum-bug!" Our preachers, teachers and governors continually do cry, "Give, give to Ireland!" and we do give, especially when we know that our names will appear alongside of our neighbours; but who will raise the cry of "Give, give work to the poor of Canada!" With our business men the watchwords are, "hard times, retrench, economy, cut down expenses," but this means less work and lower wages, while work and wages have already ebbed so low that men with families can scarce keep bodies and souls together. Not long since I heard of a business man who gave one hundred dollars to Ireland. Generous man! you exclaim. Ay, but wait, he immediately set about saving the sum by dismissing two of his employés, and dividing their work among the others, saying "these are hard times, when people are starving in Ireland, Canadians should be willing to do a little extra work." Clever man! he holds forth help to Ireland with one hand and hastens ruin on Canada with the other. While I am moralizing, Parnell has again passed 'mid smoke and flame, and we drive on among the myriad sleighs coursing in every direction. Sometimes a horse's nose comes in unpleasant proximity to my own *nez retroussé*, but we escape with a few frights, and proceeding through St. James street we turn down at the Post-office corner and wait to get a third and last glimpse of Parnell's procession. Here again we are edified by the remarks of the bystanders, and it is evident all are not admirers of the great agitator. One asks does he pay his own travelling expenses or are they paid out of the relief fund. Another would like to know what he has done for his own tenants, &c. The mounted torch-bearers now line St. James Street to let King Parnell and his people pass by. I become nervous at the proximity of the prancing steeds, but Nin assures me that they are all war horses and accustomed to martial music; while a young man near by remarks that the reason they couldn't pelt Parnell with rotten eggs was because the torch-men had all the rotten 'ags in the city. This time Parnell is lustily cheered, and being now safely housed in the St. Lawrence Hall, we turn our faces homeward, thoroughly chilled, but well satisfied that on the whole it was worth while coming out to see for ourselves. Home again, and glad are we to find fine fires and that Ann has thoughtfully prepared some hot cocoa and a cosy supper. Ninus comes in remarking, "Well, we've spent a dollar on Parnell which we might have saved for the relief fund." But I reply, "No, indeed; One-ninety-nine is a poor, hard-working man, and needs the dollar he has earned. Canada first! after what we have heard to-night. Help Ireland as much as you can, but don't save your subscriptions out of the working people of Canada."

Euphrosyne.

It is easier to understand the "Queen's English" than the Queen's Irish.

SIMPLENESS.—That simpleness I prize that seasoned is with wit;
But a witless simpleness I value not a whit.

TRUTH, charity, diligence, and reverence are the four cardinal virtues of all controversies be they what they may.—*Gladstone.*

CHURCH DEBTS AND DIFFICULTIES.

A discourse delivered in Zion Church, Montreal, by Rev. Alfred J. Bray, March 7th, 1880.

You have probably seen by announcements that I am to speak on church debts—the difficulties consequent thereupon—in which I intend to dwell upon matters personal and matters in general, as they concern this church and people, and the community outside of ourselves. I do so partly—mainly, I may say, at the request of the deacons of the church—and for the rest, of my own proper volition. The course of events, so far as we are concerned, has made this necessary. At some time or other the explanation would have to be given—it is wise and well we think to do so now.

For some time past the attention of the public has been drawn to the financial condition of our churches—Catholic and Protestant alike, for one can boast nothing as against the other. That the city is extravagantly over-churched no one will deny. It was done when inflation was lord of the ascendant. You had some years of great and most dangerous prosperity, as to trade of almost every description. Great as it was, it was exaggerated, and in the nature of things altogether fictitious. It was the result of a set of circumstances which could hardly happen again. Men were able to do a big trade upon an absurdly small capital; they thought it would last forever, and built fine houses, and lived expensively; and, as being among the better class of luxuries, built many and fine churches. But the fine churches—like the fine houses were not always paid for; it was held to be fair, almost a duty, to mortgage the future by laying a tax upon coming generations. That did very well until the times changed. Spring tides come in very far, covering all the shores—but then, they also go out very far, showing long wastes of sand and rock and mud. The tide of prosperity turned, and the ebb was long, and left a great dreary waste in sight. Nature was readjusting things, and law was restoring the balance. The small traders felt the pressure first, and soon collapsed; the big traders felt it next, and they collapsed; the banks came next; and now it is the turn of the churches. I believe that, as a rule, churches are the last among institutions to which people subscribe, and the last from which they withdraw subscriptions. When men reduce their pew rent depend upon it they are poor—when they reduce the amount they give to collections they do it from necessity, and when they break their promises to pay, it is because they are either very poor, or very mean. I am not referring now to those who habitually attend popular places of worship and give only a meaningless stare or a nod when the plate is passed—for it is just as impossible to reduce the value of their contributions as it would be to squeeze life out of a handful of mud. The majority of our regular churchgoers contribute of their means, some from habit, some from pride, some from a profound sense of interest, and all from what they call, and in many cases truly, conscientious motives; and when they cease, or even diminish, it is because they must. The time came to many when that imperative *must* rang in upon them—and then it was seen how weak we were, and what a ruinous policy had been pursued. In summer time, when the grass is up and trees throw great arms out to the sun, you cannot tell which is rooted deep, and which is rooted shallow—when the storms of early winter beat on all the trees, the one can be told from the other. When commercial depression deepened almost to the verge of despair it was found that even the affairs of churches had not been wisely and prudently conducted. Even!! Well, I need not say that qualifying word, for I have a theory that very often—very generally—the financial affairs of our churches are conducted in a most unbusiness like manner. Men, who out in the world are shrewd enough and careful enough, when they come to deal with what is secular in our ecclesiastical institutions, appear to lose their ordinary business aptitude. It is very much with them there as it is with professional men who go into business. And I am sure it arises from an idea that the ordinary financial working of a church need not be carried on in the practical manner which obtains in the commercial and trading world. I need not say that this is a mistake, and the sooner we acknowledge it and act upon it the better.

Now let me speak a little of our own affairs. You know that Zion Church has for many years been prominent and powerful in this Dominion. From very small beginnings, it grew, under the able and patient ministry of Dr. Wilkes, to be a church of most honourable position and distinguished influence. There must be need for a congregational church in every numerous church-going community. For there are always certain people who prefer to live under a system of self-government. They cannot bear the yoke of Synods, and Presbyteries, and Conferences—but desire to have methods of working suitable to their own mental and spiritual faculties. Congregationalism is the very ideal of Democracy—it is rule by the majority—theoretically, at least, all are equal—the vote of the member who contributes nothing counts as much as that of the large subscriber. Of course that is not so in the actual working of Congregationalism. For energy must command influence everywhere, and whether it breaks out in active working, or active giving, it must add to the individual power of the man. But when a community undertakes to govern itself it means that each man undertakes to govern himself—to rule himself—to repress himself, to please not himself, but gladly accept a functional place in the body corporate and join each in