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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON,

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1882.

We are glad to learn, and we are sure the Church will also, that Rev. Dr. and Mrs. G. L. Mackay reached Tamsul on the 19th December in safety. A short note has been received by Professor McLaren from Rev. K. F. Junor, announcing their safe arrival after a rather rough voyage across the Pacific. Mr. Junor was greatly delighted to welcome them back. Dr. Mackay's arrival was very opportune, as Mr. Junor had been laid aside with an attack of congestion of the lungs, from which he had not entirely recovered when he wrote.

WHY should our western Synods be called by such awkward names as the Synods of Montreal and Ottawa, Toronto and Kingston, and Hamilton and London? Is there any reason why a Synod should be named after the cities within its bounds? If there is, then the names of two of these Synods should be lengthened still farther. One of them should be designated the Synod of Kingston, Belleville, Toronto and Guelph; and the other the Synod of St. Catharines, Hamilton, Brantford, London, and St. Thomas, with Stratford and Chatham added in a year or two. How would it do to name Presbyteries in the same way? The Presbytery of Brantford, Paris, Woodstock and Ingersoll; or the Presbytery of Guelph, Elora, Fergus, and Berlin would sound rather strangely. Local feeling had probably something to do with the double names of Synods at the time they were given, but surely the Union is old enough now to make one name do for each Synod. There is something exceedingly awkward about the present arrangement. People not acquainted with the facts are apt to suppose that the Synod of Hamilton and London means *two* Synods—viz., that of Hamilton and of London. Besides, uniting two names where one should do is a nuisance.

OCCASIONALLY we hear people say that society is "honeycombed with scepticism." "Honeycombed" is good as a mere expression, but fortunately there is no evidence of the fact. People seldom spend money on things they don't believe in. If society is "honeycombed" with infidelity, why do so many people put money in churches, colleges and missions? More new, substantial, and in many instances elegant places of worship have been put up within the last year than in any former year, we believe, in the history of Presbyterians in Canada. Ministers' salaries are not nearly as high, on the average, as they ought to be, and soon will be, but they are increasing every year. Our contributions for missionary purposes, still too small, are constantly increasing. We don't believe that heterodoxy and infidelity are the principal foes the Church has to contend against. One prominent hypocrite in a congregation does it a thousand times more harm than Huxley. An egotistic, quarrelsome "crank," who has been hustled out of half-a-dozen churches, is far more dangerous than Darwin. One long-tongued, slanderous viper, whose mouth has been transformed into a sluice for gossip and slander, can do more harm in a congregation in a day than Bob Ingersoll could do in a year. Why fire heavy artillery at foes that are scarcely within range of the walls of

Zion, while Ananias, and Apphira, and Judas Iscariot are undermining the walls?

A LETTER from the Rev. P. Campbell, of Montreal, on matters connected with the recent decision of the Privy Council, did not come to hand in time to appear in our last issue, for which it was intended. It is not yet too late, however, to lay before our readers that part of it in which Mr. Campbell asks for united congregational action throughout the Church in the direction of securing the necessary legislation in the matter of the Temporalities Fund. He says.

"After all, this is the power which can make itself specially felt. If every congregation in the United Church will only join in petitioning the Federal Parliament to enact the Bill which, it is now seen, the Quebec House had no power to enact, the thing will be done. Is this too much to ask the brethren throughout the Church to do in behalf of those of their number whose interests are at stake? It will be remembered that one of the difficulties at a particular period of the Union negotiations was how to make provision for some forty odd ministers of the Synod of the Church of Scotland, in Ontario and Quebec, who were in receipt of \$200 per annum from a *Sustentation Fund* which the Synod had. The United Church was indisposed to assume the burden of providing for them, and so, with the approbation of all concerned, it was agreed to grant them \$200 from the Temporalities Fund, even though there should not be interest accruing from it sufficient to meet the demand—the capital to be encroached upon if necessary. This is the main principle of the amendments of the Quebec Act. Those forty ministers had been settled in their charges on the strength of the Church's undertaking to give them \$200 a year besides what they received from their congregations. It is clear, then, that, owing to the provisions of the unconstitutional Quebec Bill, those congregations now in the United Church that formerly raised some \$8,000 and more for the Sustentation Fund, were set free to support the operations of the United Church, and to that extent the Presbyterian Church in Canada has profited by the amendments of the Temporalities Act in question. It is true that parties to the negotiations for union always exhibited a graceful unwillingness to meddle with the Temporalities Fund, leaving it to those specially interested in it to make such a disposition of it as they chose. But it is equally true that the disposition of it made in the Bill which it is now proposed to ask the House of Commons at Ottawa to pass, was approved of by all parties to the Union, and all the legislation obtained on this and other points was obtained in the name of all parties. On this ground it is only reasonable to expect that cordial action, such as is competent to be taken all along the line, shall be taken."

SOIREES are what people make them. Quite often they are pleasant and profitable; sometimes the reverse. One thing is clear. Three-fourths of the Presbyterians of Ontario believe in them, attend them, hold them; and sneers directed against soirees are sneers directed against a large majority of the best people in the Church. A few congregations have no such meetings, on principle; a few more decline to have them as a matter of taste. Some have no tea-meeting, because in their case getting up one involves a serious amount of friction; and some have none because they have not energy enough to make a soiree. The fact remains, however, that the great majority of our people hold and enjoy such meetings. To allege that they desire or tolerate buffoonery at their social gatherings is simply to libel the Church. Nor is it true that a minister lessens his influence or dignity by attending and addressing such meetings. Any dignity that a minister loses by addressing four or five hundred of the best people in the community he is better without. A suitable speech will increase rather than diminish his influence. If the speech is not suitable, the fault is his own. To say that Presbyterian people won't listen to anything but nonsense is simply to libel them. Presbyterians listen to anything worth listening to, and occasionally to things not worth listening to. The most accomplished and influential ministers Canada ever saw made speeches at soirees without being seriously injured by so doing. Dr. Ormiston addressed more meetings of that kind than any six ministers in Canada, but he managed to live through it bravely and come out with something like \$10,000 a year. Dr. Burns made many a ringing soiree speech that roused the people and nerved them to greater exertions. The grand old veteran was only too glad to get an opportunity to fire the hearts of the people and encourage them in their work. Principal Willis was not lacking in ministerial dignity; yet the principal at times attended tea-meetings, and spoke well at them too. We could name several scores of the very best ministers, professors, D.D.'s and other dignitaries at the present moment who rather enjoy addressing four or five hundred good-humoured Christian people, and do the work very nicely too. This is a free country. If any disciples of the Oscar Wilde school, lay or clerical, prefer sitting up all night

with a lily to mingling with their fellow-men, by all means let them sit up with the lily. As regards the financial part of the question, it may be a sin to make money at tea-meetings; but we never knew a convener, or college board, or committee, or congregational treasurer, or any other official, refuse money made in this way.

OUR NORTH-WEST.

WE beg to remind our readers of the meetings in connection with the North-West, which, as advertised, are to be held in Toronto during the coming week. We have no wish to anticipate what Mr. Robertson will bring forward on these occasions. He is, perhaps, as yet not so well known to Toronto audiences as he ought to be, and as he will, we hope, be eight days hence. He is thoroughly conversant with the whole subject on which he is to speak, and all may rely upon his uttering only words of truth and soberness, even at this time of universal "boom." Naturally he feels very strongly on the subject, and is anxious to have the Churches in Ontario duly interested in that land at once of his adoption and affections. But he would not be the man he is, and would not deserve to occupy the position he so worthily fills, if it were otherwise with his feelings and aspirations. We shall be astonished, and not a little disappointed, if all the meetings at which he is advertised to speak be not crowded to overflowing. When everybody is talking Manitoba, and the openings that are there being presented for those who are enterprising improving their worldly circumstances, it would be strange if God's people did not take a correspondingly deep interest in the spiritual condition of the people who are crowding into that land of mighty capabilities, and especially if the Presbyterians of Canada were not determined to leave the country with the Gospel from the very first. There is no use in saying, "Let them stay at home and enjoy their Gospel privileges where they are,"—for they won't do this. Whether the messenger of the Cross follow them or not, thousands and tens of thousands are bound to go; and the question is not about the prudence or the propriety of such emigration, but about the duty in the premises of those who call themselves the followers of Christ, and acknowledge that it is at once their duty and their privilege to do all that lies in their power to extend the knowledge of that Name which to them is above every name, and of that Saviour who has to such become precious above all estimate; by whom they say they live, and for whom, according to their very profession, they say they are ready, if necessary, to die. Already the Presbyterian Church of Canada has her representative and agent as far off as at Edmonton, and she is bound never to be satisfied till the whole of the intervening territory is fully taken possession of in the name of the Lord—aye, and not even then, for there are regions beyond which have to be occupied as well. In the meantime all who wish to hear what an able, practical, clear-headed Christian man who has seen and judged for himself thinks of this much-talked-of North-West and its future will not miss hearing Mr. Robertson during his present visit to Ontario. Some, indeed, may imagine that he had just as well leave the marriage matter severely alone; but he thinks differently, and so do we.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

A LATE census of Church attendance in Toronto gives the very gratifying fact, which many have been inclined to doubt, and not a few altogether to deny, that the population in the metropolis of Ontario is very largely a church-going one. No doubt the estimate made by the "Globe" is simply an approximation, but we are convinced that an attempt was no doubt honestly made, so the result is, upon the whole, to be taken as reliable. Some, indeed, have objected to some of the details, but generally there has been a wonderful consensus as to its substantial accuracy. Nor are we inclined to believe that this church attendance gives no reliable idea of the spiritual condition of the population. It is quite true that people may attend church merely from custom, and from some measure of traditional superstition. But they will not from such a feeling persist in expending large sums upon such work, and keeping up extensive and varied instrumentalities of a benevolent and religious character, such as are to be found in