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## The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6th, 1889.

THE next best thing to taking a trip to Alaska is to read the admirable letters by Mr John Macdonald that are being published in the *Globe*. Like our own correspondent "K," Mr. Macdonald knows just how much to say about anything he describes, and he says it well.

THE real question that our Methodist friends have to face now is, shall order or anarchy prevail? Federation or anti-federation is a small matter compared with this problem. When a large number of ministers, called by circular, meet and lay out a plan in direct antagonism to the General Conference, and not only do so, but confer about alienating funds subscribed for the Conference plan, to the rival one, it would seem as though several long strides towards anarchy had been taken.

OUR sprightly contemporary, the *British Weekly*, has a page for young men which is to be filled with contributions from a number of distinguished writers. The second article of the series is a frightfully grim paper on the retention of capital punishment. The writer fairly triumphs through two or three columns in favour of hanging. It may be all right, but we fail to see why young men, especially the class of young men who read a first class journal like the *British Weekly*, should feel any special interest in such a grim topic.

A GOOD exercise for Thanksgiving Day would be to wrestle with this question: Have any people under heaven greater reason to be grateful than Canadians? If so, name them. Where do they live and what advantages do they enjoy that Canadians do not possess? It is quite easy to mention the names of nations or states that at first sight seem to be better off than we are, but if we know as much about their position as we know about our own we might not think so. Just name any country under heaven that, all things considered, has dealt more kindly with its people than this Province of Ontario.

WHETHER insane or not in the sense of being irresponsible for his actions, there is no doubt that the mental condition of the unfortunate man tried in Guelph last week for killing his wife and two daughters was brought about by worry. One of the medical experts testified that the type of mental disease called aneuric stupor is caused by "mental suffering, grief, anxiety or worry, especially if there is loss of sleep." To worry all night over something is unfortunately not an uncommon kind of experience, but few people are aware of its dangers. The same expert testified that this state of mind might develop suddenly, though Dr. Daniel Clark was of the opinion that it is usually of slow growth.

THERE is a good deal of indignation expressed by leading Presbyterians in the United States because the personal differences of two or three leading men led to the death of the great *Presbyterian Review*. We are not surprised that such should be the case. It is always exasperating to see a good cause suffer on account of the conceit, or stubbornness, or something worse, of a few men connected with it. How often have congregations been wrecked, or Presbyteries disturbed for years by two or three men who thought they were the congregation or the Presbytery, and that their personal affairs were of far more importance than the welfare of the Church. Such intolerable exhibitions are, unfortunately, too common. When a member of any congregation or church court begins to think that the Church of Christ is mainly a place for the exhibition of his vanity, or the ventilation of his grievances, it is about time something was done to cure him of that disease known as "big-head."

## A WRITER in one of our exchanges says:

We are living in a busy, restless, nervous, it may be, a shallow age. What we do, we must do with earnestness, making each opportunity tell, and letting nothing slip. We cannot afford to conduct a single service, be it what it may, in such a way as to make those who are vitally interested mourn over it as a failure.

That is true. One of the secrets of building up a congregation is to make every service the best possible under the circumstances. What mere Rounders or chronic pessimists may think about a service makes very little difference, but it is a great pity to conduct any service in such a way as to lead devout people to consider it a failure.

TEN years ago six theological seminaries in the American Presbyterian Church—Union, Princeton, Lane, Allegheny, Auburn and McCormick—united for the purpose of publishing the *Presbyterian Review*. It was in some respects one of the ablest quarterlies ever published. It paid, or perhaps we should say it paid at the end of a few years. Last month it died. Why? Mainly because it was many-headed. There was an arrangement by which no article was published unless accepted by at least two of the editors. This arrangement has not been working well lately. Dr. Briggs, of Union, and Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, were managing editors for about two years. Dr. Hodge was succeeded by Dr. Patton, and he by Dr. Warfield. Drs. Briggs and Warfield were in it at the death, and it is generally supposed that their differences caused the death. Any one of the distinguished men named could edit a great quarterly himself, but probably no two of them could edit a quarterly or a newspaper together. There must be a one-man power in every magazine or newspaper office to make the publication a success. Somebody must say the last word about what is to be put in or kept out. A double-headed management will kill any publication sooner or later. There was ample room for, and there is need of, this great quarterly, and we have no doubt somebody will soon revive it, or start another like it.

AS the utterances of Dr. Marcus Dods are of special interest at the present time we republish the following paragraph which made a mild sensation at the Pan-Presbyterian Council in London. It should be remembered that the Doctor was discussing the question "How far is the Church responsible for the present scepticism?" He said:

The unbelief within the Church is mainly responsible for the unbelief outside. Were the members of the Church leading a supernatural life, unbelief in the supernatural would be impossible. Were the supreme, living, present power of Christ manifested in the actual superiority of His people to earthly ways and motives, it would be as impossible to deny that power as it is to deny the power of the tides or of the sun. Offences come, and sceptics are made chiefly by the worldliness and poor unreformed lives of professed believers. These are grievous things to have to say, but we must look the facts in the face, and recognize our responsibility. If any conduct of ours, or if the tenor of our life, or any infirmity, be gradually impressing on the mind of some child, or youth, or wavering person, that there is little reality in religion, no duty can more urgently press upon us than an inquiry into our conduct and a strenuous endeavour to make our religion more real than ever.

That no doubt is putting the case strongly. Practical unbelief—worldliness—selfishness—is no doubt largely, though possibly not mainly responsible for the unbelief outside. But is there a Highland minister in the North, where they are strongly opposed to Dr. Dods, who has not made stronger statements to his own congregation a hundred times? Is there an earnest minister anywhere who has not said much the same thing? A mere hireling parson, more anxious to stand well with the godless element in his congregation than to stir up his people to a better life, would never have made Dr. Dods' statement. If Dr. Dods teaches no more deadly heresy than this to the students Scotland, will never regret his election to a chair in the New College.

## SOCIAL ECONOMICS.

SEVERAL economic questions at the present time are pressing themselves with growing energy on the attention of all thoughtful men and women. Those who are completely absorbed in their daily pursuits and whose horizon is bounded by their own immediate interests may be scarcely aware of the deep undercurrents that are flowing in different and opposing directions. Many may be satisfied that things are very well as they are, and many more may deprecate the charges they dread. At the same time there are many who eagerly desire change, are labouring in various ways to bring about a different state of things from that now exist-

ing. Change, development, whether men welcome or dread it, is a well-defined and verified law of social economics. Without it there would be no progress, no redress of wrongs, no reaching forth to better things. A changeless state would not only lay an embargo on all progress, it necessarily would result in stagnation and decay.

A nation through struggle and strife, not in every instance bloodless, has gained the unity and freedom to which it may have long aspired. The blessings of peace and security do not, however, long continue undisturbed. Conflicting interests lead to partial infringements of liberty, and, almost insensibly, encroachments on popular rights are made before a too confident people realize their danger. Hence the aphorism, Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. The conditions of social existence are very different from what they were twenty years ago. The people of to-day have to grapple with different problems from those current then. The struggle for existence in the most advanced civilizations is more intense than it was a quarter of a century since. Commercial and business organizations and enterprises are pushed with a keenness that has never been surpassed. The old distinctions imposed by feudalism have been all but obliterated, but they are being replaced by the chasms daily becoming more visible in the industrial world. Though it is questioned by some, there is a growing impression that the rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer by reason of the industrial conditions and tendencies of the time. The deepening antagonism of capital and labour, and the industrial warfare to which it gives rise cannot well be viewed without apprehension. One thing certain this antagonism cannot be permanent, but it is possible that much conflict may have to be encountered before a satisfactory adjustment is reached.

The solution of the various social problems is being attempted from radically different sides. At the one extreme we have the wild incoherency of a destructive and maddened anarchism. It is however, powerless to offer any rational substitute for the order it would violently overturn. It is destructive only, having no word of cheer or hope for those who are sighing and crying for deliverance from the evils by which they are oppressed. From the scientific side there is a disposition to regard the anomalies and contradictions of civilized life as so many natural forces that will in the end work the destruction of the miserable, the weak and the unfortunate. The fittest must survive and the weak must go to the wall.

The various branches of the Christian Church are awakening to the fact that the economic questions of the day more or less intimately concern them. The suffering masses yearn for sympathy. Even those of their number who swell the crowds of what are termed the lapsed feel in a half unconscious way that somehow the professed followers of the humble Nazarene should manifest a degree of tender concern for those on whom the burdens of life press with a severity they are ill able to bear. The Church of Christ is not a moral police force. It was instituted by its divine founder for a higher and nobler mission than merely to preach order and submission to those in high places. When the sorrow-stricken demons turn to the representatives of Him who has compassion on the ignorant and on them who are out of the way, it is hardly the fit thing to retort in peevish strain "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Churches in Great Britain are beginning to grapple with the problems of the time in deep earnest. Their pressure there is more urgent than on this continent, but even here the more comprehensive minds are discerning that they cannot well be ignored. At the recent Episcopal Convention in New York, though the question of Prayer Book revision absorbed much valuable time, earnest consideration was given to the relation of the Church to the masses. The Baptist and Congregational Churches in England have been bestowing attention on the condition of the poor and the evils that oppress them. Recent disclosures of the depths to which thousands of toilers are working like the veriest serfs for a subsistence that barely keeps body and soul together, and who are housed in dens unfit for habitation, have aroused deep concern. And this year after year has been suffered to continue in Christian lands. One of the most hopeful signs of the times is that Christian men and women in all the Churches are moving and in the most praiseworthy spirit are doing what they can in a practical way to alleviate suffering, to raise the fallen and bring to them the good news of God for their salvation. Romish aggrandisement merits only censure and resistance, but when an aged dignitary like Cardinal Manning comes forward to perform the functions of the good Samaritan and pour the wine and oil of