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The Canada Presbyterian.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, MANAGER.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, 1893.

THE only real remedy for the ills that afflict the church is a genuine revival of vital godliness. This may sound like a truism, but it is a truism that cannot be too often repeated. What we need is not more ecclesiastical machinery, but more spiritual power to move the machinery already in existence.

THE *Globe's* commissioners found prohibition a dead failure in the city of Davenport, Iowa. They admit, however, that license would be just as great a failure as the prohibitory law. The facts they state show with disgusting clearness that the seventh commandment is as pronounced a failure in Davenport as prohibition. A city that has adopted the Parisian method of licensing impurity can hardly be expected to keep a prohibitory law. Anti-prohibitionists will do well to say nothing about Davenport.

IT would be decidedly interesting to see some anti-prohibition orator go to Guelph and tell a representative Guelph audience that because prohibition has failed in Davenport, Iowa, it must necessarily fail in the royal city of Ontario. Or to see him go on to Brantford and try to convince the people of that enterprising and beautiful city that their community is so much like Davenport that a prohibitory law must necessarily fail among them. The man who ventured to address a Brantford audience in that style might have to leave the city rather suddenly. Whatever his views on prohibition may be, no clean man wants to hear his city compared to Davenport.

THE patriarch of the *Interior* mused in this way on a recent Saturday evening:—

Now it is Saturday night. What a relief to turn the back upon business and worry for two nights and a day. We are going to have a good sermon to-morrow—get lifted clear out of this bog, and for a day breathe the air and bask in the sunshine of the better world. We shall see kindly faces, hear the songs of Zion, listen to the message of the Master. What an awful waste people make who throw away fifty-two Sabbaths in a year! I wonder if our ministers appreciate the blessings, and the comfort and rest they bring to their fellowmen.

And we wonder if the people they preach to appreciate these blessings. If the people showed more appreciation, the ministers might be better able to do their part of the appreciating.

A LEADING English journal would like to know why old men should retire if they are doing their work as well as or better than younger men could do it? Why should Tennyson have stopped writing? Why should Sir Andrew Clark have given up his immense practice? Why should Gladstone give up politics? No living man can fill the shoes of any of the three. Is there any reason why a man should cease to work for his fellow-men just because he has come to a certain age? If the great English journal that asks these questions would send a reporter over to Canada and consult some of the churches it might get a few points that never dawned on an English mind.

SIR ADOLPHE CARON, ex-minister of war, and John Haggart, the only Presbyterian in the Dominion Government, should not have allowed themselves to be driven from their own field by Principal Grant, a mere Presbyterian parson, you know. The Principal opened fire on them with a few well-chosen and well-directed facts and figures, and they keep quiet, perhaps the most sensible thing either of them ever did. "How did you capture these prisoners?"

asked an officer, when an Irish soldier brought in a round dozen of the enemy. "O! surrounded them, sor," replied Patrick. The Principal of Queen's did not exactly surround the Dominion Government, but he gave them the hottest race they have had since they took office. Canada will be the gainer and Queen's will lose nothing by having a patriotic and capable man at its head who is not afraid to discuss public questions.

PEOPLE who think that theological specialists who have "been to Germany" are the only men on this continent who understand the methods of the higher critics, should read Mr. Gracey's papers in the *Knox College Monthly*. Mr. Gracey's style is clear as a sunbeam; his points are well made and he has a grasp of his subject that any specialist might envy. After wading through many columns of foggy matter on the subject, it is refreshing to turn to the articles written by the pastor of Gananoque. The affected air of superiority assumed by the higher critics, their pretensions to a marvellous scholarship quite beyond the reach of anybody not a specialist in criticism, have led too many ministers to think that the subject is one that no working pastor should touch. Mr. Gracey has burst that bubble. There is nothing more difficult or mysterious about literary criticism than about textual criticism. We hope Brother Gracey will follow up the studies he has so well begun and give the church some good work in a more permanent form.

THE peroration of the speech delivered by the Hon. G. W. Ross, at the St. Andrew's banquet in Toronto last week was a capital piece of oratorical work. What could be better than this paragraph:—

To us, to-night, Scotland is the special object of our devotion, and, although we are not Scotchmen in the sense of those who still occupy her sacred soil, yet I trust we are all Scotchmen in our desire to perpetuate in Canada all those qualities which have made Scotland great. It may be that an all-wise Providence settled that little portion of His universe in which to work out to a successful issue for the benefit of other nations great political and national problems. It may be that it was necessary in working out His wonderful purposes to lift before their gaze those rugged hills as emblematic of the firmness of His eternal purposes. It may be that He spread before them those beautiful lochs that they might see reflected there the serenity of the sky which was yet to bend above them when His purposes toward them were determined. It may be that He called upon His waves to lash their shores with Titanic fury, that they might learn how safe they were at all times in the hollow of His hand. It may be that He trained their souls to bear patiently the insolence or to resist manfully the vengeance of their enemies that they might become patient in trouble and courageous in resistance; and it may be that, after having thus trained them, He scattered them to the very ends of the earth, that they might transplant to other climes the many virtues which under His hand they had developed at home.

Gems like the foregoing have a good educational influence, and we wish we could find more of them for our columns. There is far too much public speaking in Canada and not enough of pains taken with nine-tenths of it.

WHY SUCH WASTE?

EVERY good business man, every man of even ordinary common sense, in laying out his money is anxious to do it in such a way as will bring in the largest returns either present or prospective. If it is a company that is carrying on business, it is equally the same. The greater the amounts involved the greater the necessity of securing adequate returns. If it is found that there are no sufficient returns, and still more, if for outlay men only reap loss, they lose no time in checking the outlay and turning their capital into remunerative channels. These are first principles in every kind of business, and the man would justly be considered a fool and courting ruin who would persist in spending his money after he had found out that he was steadily losing, and that so long as he kept on in a certain course, he could do nothing but lose, and the longer he persisted he would only lose the more until he was hopelessly ruined.

The government of a country is often compared and very fairly so, to carrying on a business. It is one which involves immense outlay, and in every respect it is of the utmost importance to the whole body politic, and to every individual in it, that adequate returns are obtained for the money laid out. The liquor traffic may be considered one department of the nation's business. Immense sums are required to carry on this department; far more than for any other. Education, religion, administration of justice

and other important and most beneficent branches of the business sink into insignificance as to outlay, when compared with the liquor department. What do we get in return for the vast amounts which the nation expends on liquor, is a fair question? It is one in accordance with common sense as well as with an intelligent self-interest. Whatever of good we may get, it is a fact declared by the most competent authorities of all kinds, that for this outlay we get as a return by far the greater part of all the poverty, disease, ignorance, vice, crime, lunacy, social and domestic misery and suffering that exist over the whole land. We spend millions upon millions in this department of our national business, and whatever of questionable good or enjoyment we may get in return, no one doubts or can deny that all this misery, domestic ruin, ignorance, vice, crime, lunacy, national deterioration and degradation is the direct and necessary return we get for all our outlay on liquor. And the more money we spend the worse it becomes. It is not as in some kinds of business, in which by spending more, business may at last be put on a sound and well-paying basis, and thus justify greater outlay. It is not so with liquor, the greater the outlay the worse the returns.

Now in the exercise of common sense, what would an ordinary business company do in such a case, especially after it had had years of experience and ever recurring loss upon loss in such a business? Why, stop it of course. Shut down at once on such utterly unjustifiable, unpardonable infatuation. If it were a railway or banking concern the shareholders would demand that the directors should be brought to justice and adequately punished for such an abuse of their office, such worse than waste of immense sums of money. If that would be a common-sense course of action in this case, why not in that of the nation? If it would be demanded and insisted upon in the one case, why should it not be in the other? If a minority of the directors or shareholders should insist upon going on spending and losing, because to do anything to stop it would be an interference with their liberty, very short work would be made with such a claim. Your liberty! What liberty has a minority or even a majority to persist in spending the means of the company until it is involved in utter ruin, in pursuing a course which can only become worse and worse the longer it is pursued, the more that money is sunk in it? This cry of interfering with personal liberty won't bear investigation. A citizen has no right to spend his own money even in a way dangerous to the well-being of the State. Much less can he have the right to compel his fellow-citizen to spend his money in a way that is both against his conscience, and for which he cannot in the nature of things, according to the testimony of all experience, get any return but vice, crime, misery, want, shame and death, with social, moral and national deterioration, and, should it not be checked by other powerful counteracting forces, national ruin. We do not at present notice the moral aspects of this subject, but looking at it simply as a matter of business in which vast sums of the nation's money are involved, and from which we do not and cannot, owing to the nature of the business, receive any returns but those which are of the most ruinous kind, and which involve at the same time shame and moral guilt, why, when we are a self-governing body, and have it in our power, and have the right to put a stop to it, should we not do so? The plebiscite gives the nation an opportunity to say whether it desires to go on with this business involving such loss, worse than waste, such self-condemnation and insensate folly.

THE most pitiful and distressing accounts continue to fill the papers of the disasters befalling property and great loss of life under the most appalling circumstances, during the terrible gales which prevailed on the British coast lately for some days. Endurance and efforts the most heroic have been all unavailing in a multitude of instances to ride out the storm or reach a place of safety. Hundreds have lost their lives, and hundreds more hearts and homes have been made desolate by the fury of the waves. Situated so far inland as we are in most parts of the Dominion, we can but faintly realize the widespread and deep distress brought to many by such a tempest as that which raged for days, and which appears to have been attended with greater loss of life than has been the case for some years. Yet it is out of those terrible visitations that have been bred those brave men who have carried the flag of Britain in the royal navy or in mercantile vessels to its triumphs of peace or war in every part of the globe.