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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24th, 1891.

DR. JOSEPH PARKER would like to know why a soldier who fought bravely for his country should be expelled from the army for alleged cheating at baccarat, when the whole game is a consummate fraud. That is a question which a good many other people would like to see answered.

SOMEBODY said in a speech in the General Assembly that he had never seen so many "encouraged ministers" at an Assembly meeting in Canada. Whether they all left the Assembly in that delightful frame of mind is a question we do not care to discuss. We do happen to know, however, that some of them left Kingston profoundly thankful that attending church is a small part of a minister's work.

THE Leprosy Commission appointed some time ago in England have been prosecuting their inquiries in India, and according to statements just made have been very painstaking in their researches. Microscopic examinations, it is said, have led to important and surprising results, and the hope is entertained that methods of treatment may be devised that will remove this peculiarly loathsome and fatal disease from the list hitherto found to be incurable. Whether this is an over-sanguine estimate time and experiment will determine.

THE worst feature of the gambling escapades of the Prince of Wales is the grief his conduct must give his mother. That the heir to the English throne should go around the country with gambling apparatus in his pocket, that he should patronize the turf during the day and gamble with a fast set at night, is humiliating enough, but that he should bring down the grey hairs of our beloved Queen with sorrow to the grave is an offence that few loyal Britons can easily forgive. If the Prince has no respect for himself, or for his position, or for the empire, he should have some for his mother.

THE one redeeming feature about the trial in which the Prince of Wales figured the other day was the manner in which the Solicitor-General did his duty. Perhaps nobody but himself knows how difficult that duty was, or how much pressure was brought to bear upon him, to "draw it mildly," in his examination of witnesses and address to the jury. But Sir Edward Clarke did his duty bravely, as Englishmen usually do in times of danger, and he stands before the world to-day the only figure in that group that brings credit to the empire. Chief Justice Coleridge did not add lustre to British jurisprudence when he lunched every day of the trial with the Prince of Wales.

THE rain that fell last week has made many an Ontario man breathe more freely. The crops in some parts of the country were in a critical condition and every one admits that a short harvest this year would be a severe trial for the country. Well, indeed, would it be for Canada if our people could stop talking occasionally, as if everything depended on Parliaments and fiscal policies and recognize the truth that the prosperity of the country does really depend on the Giver of every good and perfect gift. The rain of last week did more for the country in a couple of hours than all the politicians can do in a twelvemonth. We expect too much from Governments and depend too much on Acts of Parliament. The tendency in America is to mend everything by passing a law.

THE difference between English and Colonial loyalty comes out strikingly at the present time. Probably every religious body in England will condemn the Prince of Wales for his recent conduct. No Canadian Church court says anything about it. Nearly every journal in Great Britain denounces the Prince's conduct and admonishes him to behave himself. Scarcely a Canadian journal ventures to say a word about the matter. The British pulpit will ring with manly utterances against the conduct of the Prince. For the most part the Canadian pulpit will be silent. Why this difference? Do the Canadian people take kindly to gambling and doubtful morals generally? Not that exactly, but colonists are afraid somebody would shout "Disloyal" if they ventured to say it was not entirely becoming in the heir apparent to preside at a gambling table and provide the apparatus.

THE following clipping from a report of the proceedings of the Free Church Assembly shows how little an examination can be relied on as an indication of what the future of a theological student may be:—

A most amusing speech was that of Mr. Christie, of Mor-dington, who gave specimens of questions put to students, and convulsed the house with an extract from the diary of the late Dr. Somerville, dated 1st October, 1844, to the effect that he had examined a student, Robert Rainy, whom he found admirable in literature and philosophy, but "not so well acquainted with Scripture." There was an addition, however, that he was very promising.

Robert Rainy is now the acknowledged leader of the Free Church Assembly. No surgical operation was needed to get the joke into the hardest head in the venerable court. If the Edinburgh Doctor did not know the Scriptures well when a youth, he must have studied closely after he left college. The report does not say whether he joined in the laugh when the Assembly was "convulsed," but no doubt he enjoyed it as much as anyone.

SOME elderly men have seen great changes and marvellous progress in this little country of ours. Fifty years ago the Moderator of the Assembly rode in a waggon from the Township of Flamboro to Kingston to attend Queen's College. Fifty-two years ago Dr. Reid attended a preliminary meeting in Kingston to take steps to found the old University. Little did these veteran Presbyters then think that they, the one as Moderator, the other as Clerk, would meet in the same city the chief officers of a General Assembly. Many years ago Dr. Reid and Mr. Sandford Fleming met as young men in Peterborough. The other day they met on the platform in the Convocation Hall of Queen's University, the one an honoured and acknowledged leader in his Church, the other Chancellor of the University and Chief Engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Some men do see a good many wonderful changes in fifty years.

THE old question about elders not taking part in the business of the Assembly came up this year again. It always comes up. The main fact may be admitted. The elders do not take the prominent part in the business that their numbers, intelligence and business ability entitle them to take. About that fact there can be no question. Why is this so? Mainly because some ministers are members of almost every Assembly and the great majority of the elders come only once or twice in four or five years. That is one reason. If a man, minister or elder sits in nearly every Assembly he gets "the run of the business." If he comes only once in four or five years much of the business is comparatively new to him. Then we think it must be admitted that elders are themselves somewhat to blame if they do not take a more prominent part in the proceedings. They can get a hearing when no minister can. The Assembly never, so far as we know, treated an elder uncourteously, but it has put down many a clerical orator. It goes unsaid that many of the elders in every Assembly, owing to their business experience might do splendid service to the Church in many lines. If, however, an elder comes but once in four or five years it is hard for him to take up the threads of business, and if he will not try there is no help for it.

ONE of the ablest speeches in the Briggs case was that delivered by Dr. McKibben, of Cincinnati, and one of the best parts of that speech was the paragraph in which he shows that to needlessly, wantonly disturb the peace of the Church is of itself an offence that should be dealt with. That

Dr. Briggs was not compelled by conscientious convictions to say what he said in his inaugural lecture, came out very clearly in the debate. When the arrangements for his inauguration were being made he decided to discuss an entirely different subject, and changed to Biblical Theology at the suggestion of another. There was no reason why he should have taken the subject he took, and still less reason why he should have discussed it in such a way as to arouse eighty Presbyteries and lead sixty-five of them to allude to him by name. There is a species of minister sometimes in the professor's chair and sometimes elsewhere who think it is fine amusement to throw fire-brands into the Church and then laugh at everyone who feels hurt by the operation. They have no regard for the most sacred feelings of others, and sneer at the innocents who regard the Bible with what they consider undue reverence. The man who stands up for what he believes to be true they regard as an ignorant old fogey, who ought to be laughed at and put down. Some Churches deal very tenderly with heroes of that kind, and look upon the disturbances they make as something that cannot be avoided. It is gratifying to know that there is one Church in the world not afraid to deal with a disturber even when he poses as a Higher Critic.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE General Assembly completed its work in good time, notwithstanding the fears entertained in its earlier days that the sittings would be unusually protracted. The large amount of business on the docket and other reasons led to the belief that it would be near the end of the second week before the commissioners who faithfully remain to the last would be permitted to depart for their homes. It turned out that the programme was cleared on Thursday evening, and all were free to wend their way homeward, or to go wherever the path of duty led. It is true that questions of considerable moment, as well as several overtures of minor importance, received less consideration than their merits deserved, or, owing to the absence of their supporters, were dropped altogether. The real and essential work of the Church, however, was carefully done, and none of the great Schemes were neglected. Home and Foreign Missions, French Evangelization, the State of Religion, Temperance and Sabbath Schools have the advantage of a fixed place in the order of business, and, from long observance of the same order, may be said to have a prescriptive right to be dealt with while the House is at its best.

The Home Mission report, as usual, presented a clear and comprehensive view of this department of work, which is of primary importance to the Church and to the maintenance of Christian life throughout the land. Many cheering facts were related by the Convener, and progress all along the line was reported. Dr. Cochrane presented his report with his accustomed vigour and eloquence, though he was unusually brief. His expressed wish to be relieved from the onerous position of Convener, the duties of which he has so long, so faithfully and efficiently discharged, was not taken seriously by the Assembly. He was again appointed to the office which has virtually become a part of himself. It may be said that the Committee is one of the most efficient in the Church; its secretary is a man of more than ordinary business ability, and each member is immediately interested in Home Mission work. It has the advantage also of the presence of the Superintendent of Missions in Manitoba and the North-West, and the Superintendent of the Algoma and Muskoka fields, the great outlying regions to which the Church must give all the attention and help it can.

The report on French Evangelization and its consideration were of great interest. Principal Mac-Vicar made his points, as he generally does, with clearness, precision and emphasis. He, too, was careful not to transgress on the patience of the House, but in the short address he gave the main features of that most interesting and valuable part of the Church's work were vividly sketched—the educational and the directly evangelistic by means of colportage, and religious services, and the encouraging results were told. Dr. Laing gave a good and an effective address in support of the work, assigning good reasons why it should be still more vigorously prosecuted. The venerable Father Chini-quy was present, and gave a vigorous and telling address, which was listened to with great relish.

The Temperance report, clearly presented by