

THE  
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

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UNCALLED FOR ALARM.

A LITTLE incident occurred at the recent Episcopalian Synod in London, Ont., which to us outsiders is rather amusing. The question of appointing clergymen to vacant parishes was being considered. Suggestions were made to the effect that on a vacancy occurring, the church wardens and lay-delegates should be a Committee to wait upon the Bishop, and assist him in the selection of a new minister, the appointment to be the joint work of the Bishop and the Committee. Several expressed themselves favourable to this plan, believing it would save the friction which sometimes occurs when the Bishop is left to do this work alone. Short and racy speeches were made in support of this view.

In the midst of the debate, a member of the Synod, Rev. John Gemley, arose, and said that the suggestion was a very undesirable one. He then took up an alarming air and said, "they were drifting into Congregationalism in some of the remarks which had been made here to-day. Every denomination in the land has a centre, and our Synod is our centre and makes its own laws." He then concluded with a remark about the authority of the Bishop.

This is not the first time we have heard this same alarm raised in the convocations of the more highly organized churches. It is not yet beyond remembrance when the Rev. Mr. Punshon at the Cobourg Methodist Conference bade his brethren "beware of Congregational Independency, for ye are not independent men." And the same tocsin has been sounded in the halls of the Presbyterian Assemblies. Now it peals forth from a grave Episcopalian Synod. What does it all mean? What is there so terrible in Congregationalism that other churches need to raise so piercing a cry of warning about? What element is so dangerous in our system that the patrons of other systems need to shout out so excitedly "That's Congregationalism?"

Our contention has been, and will be, that each church has private rights which ought to be respected, that it is in most matters the best judge of its own affairs, and that its own free voice should not be drowned by the declarations of Episcopal Officer or Church Court. The common sense of any Christian church controlled by love to Jesus Christ may be trusted in matters of office and doctrine and worship. And, pray, what can there possibly be in that position to excite people so in the other communions? So far as we can see, there is absolutely nothing to warrant excitement. The New Testament, common sense, and the spirit of our age, alike demand that the popular voice should be consulted in all things which affect the people's well-being.

And we are not at all afraid of such consultation, even though others may be.

After all, is it not a false alarm? And is it not possible that many are beginning to believe it the hollow cry of "Wolf?" Not a few of our secular papers have strongly asserted that all the Protestant churches are drifting certainly towards Congregationalism. And the mere pointing of the index finger, and the alarming exclamation "That's Congregationalism!" will not be sufficient to hinder the inevitable.

THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.

THERE would appear to be no end to the fatality which has marked the course of the Zulu war. The British forces have been strained by the demand made upon them by this unfortunate campaign. Many brave soldiers have fallen in the noble guerilla warfare, who might have lived to render distinguished service to their country on other fields. Not a few sons of leading families in England have thus prematurely found a grave in the soil of Africa.

Amongst others who had gone to take part in the war of Britain with Zululand was the youthful Napoleon. He had attained distinction in the military schools of England. He now went forth as a volunteer to learn the art of war upon the actual field. But he is struck down ere yet he has had much opportunity of proving his prowess. The number of cruel wounds inflicted upon his person shows what odds were against a small force when they were hemmed in by a lot of fierce savages.

It is a melancholy sight. Here is the only child of the exiled Empress of France, her stay and hope, forever removed from the conflicts of life. He had reached the years of adolescence, and there was before him the prospect of a noble career. The hopes inspired in the breast of the widowed mother gilded the unknown future, like a silver lining in the cloud. There was before the young man the prospect of an honourable if not a distinguished career. But such hopes are now blasted. The reaper whose name is Death has reaped the bearded grain at a breath and the flowers that grow between.

It is the old lesson rendered more impressive by the fact of the victim being the scion of an illustrious house, that there is but a step between us and the grave.

The death of the young Prince will without doubt prove a fatal blow to the Imperial cause in France. The Buonapartists were counting much on the future. The restoration of the Empire was with many only a matter of time. Possibly, bright visions floated before the mind of Eugenie in regard to Imperial honours for her son. But the death of the Prince almost ensures the future of the Republic being undisturbed by revolutions. Amongst the people generally there

is no great desire to return to Imperialism, having so long as a Republic enjoyed the blessings and advantages of peace, and having anything but happy remembrances of their dynasties of kings. From the wonderful recuperative progress France has made since the Imperial disaster at Sedan, it is not likely that the people will again desire the empire.

Whatever be the feelings we may cherish in regard to the Republic, there can be only one sentiment experienced by all in behalf of her who is called to mourn the untimely death of her son. There is something inexpressibly sad in the lot of the beautiful Empress. A Queen in more than one sense, her court was but yesterday the attraction of the world. She was the admired of all admirers. To-day a virtual exile, the remains of Napoleon lying not far from her residence, with the dust of her child soon to be placed beside that of her husband, Eugenie has before her a life of sad bereavement and solitude. There can be only one feeling entertained for her, and that is of tender compassion, and one which the Queen and her subjects have not been slow to manifest.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

DEAR SIR,—As we have taken considerable interest here in Montreal in the doings of the Congregational Union held lately in Kingston, I venture to make a few remarks in reference to it. My only source of information has been through the columns of the INDEPENDENT, which, I presume, are on the whole, correct.

We have frequently discussed here the question of the desirability of a Union at all.

Independency rejoices in its entire freedom from the control of ecclesiastical courts or the sway of any other hierarchical system. Each church exists only by the spiritual force that dwells in it. If this dies out its career is finished. Its effete existence cannot be lengthened out, as in other churches by the force of its external connections; and knowing this, it is the earnest work of our congregations to keep alive the vital flame of spiritual activity.

Each church too and each church member has the right of free-thought on all matters of Christian doctrine.

The questions then, which have arisen are: Is there not a danger of the Union becoming a controlling power in our system and establishing itself as a central court of our body? Does it not tend in a measure to cramp freedom of thought by framing, if not direct creeds, yet certain rules of belief and doctrinal declarations and by opposing itself to original expression? The first question I do not propose to touch as although it refers to a danger more remote yet is one which the lovers of Congregationalism in should watch with steady earnestness.

The onus of the second question I consider the last Union brought upon itself by the course of its leaders the only discussion of the last meeting.

There is no body of men that meets at regular intervals but will eventually try to form general rules of action for the guidance of itself and others and will endeavour to formulate its principles. General rules are an evidence of weakness in man. The man of genius or originality has always disdained them and sees in every event new combinations of circumstances to which a general rule would never be applicable with its unbending stiffness, and the evil of formulating principles, especially in religious belief where so much expansion goes steadily on, is folly