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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,

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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Manager and Editor

Ottawa, Wednesday, June 10 1903.

PRINCIPAL CAVEN.

It is with sincere feelings of regret that we have read the account of Dr. Caven's illness. We trust that before these lines are printed he will be in a more promising condition. At his time of life a painful illness is a serious matter and must naturally cause great anxiety to his relations and friends. While the members of Assembly were hastening towards their distant destination the Principal was lying on a sick bed but no doubt his thoughts were with the church and the problems that it has to face. Dr. Caven has been for long, one of the real leaders in the General Assembly, a man, who commanded the respect of the average representative by his courtesy and caution as well as by his practical wisdom. We trust that there will still be for him, some years of quiet useful ministry.

THE COMMISSION AND AFTER.

The Gamey commission has caused a great stir and it is difficult to say what the real and final influence will be. That there was considerable false swearing is evident and that is in itself a disgrace to the country. That some things are as mysterious at the last as at the beginning is also unsatisfactory. We believe that most of our political leaders desire to carry on the election and other political business honestly, but simply to desire that is not sufficient. There must be a fierce determination to get rid of unprincipled "heelers" who seek only their own gain. We are hopeful that the present agitation will not be altogether in vain. There should be some way of having united action against boodling. In a matter of this kind our Christianity is on its trial, if our religion cannot uplift the personal and social life, it fails to accomplish its mission, and moral failure cannot be atoned for by the number and the beauty of our churches. The battle against impurity is hard and continuous, but we must carry it forward to victory.

A HERO WITHOUT HEROISM.

The Gamey commission has given its report and in it we find a clear statement of a fact that was evident long ago, namely that the leading character in this political scandal is a poor creature who has played a sorry part. The Toronto News spoke at first of the cynical frankness with which, he had added a striking phrase to our political vocabulary, when he cried "Manitoulin is my politics." A little later it discovered that he was "a hero in homespun." What its final verdict will be we have not noted but there are signs that it will have to admit that while there is plenty of homespun there is not much heroism left. We quite believe that the News desired to be independent and to fight for the cause of righteousness, but we are of opinion that it banked too heavily on Mr. Gamey and by an error of judgment has injured a good cause. There is corruption in both parties that needs to be fought, but it is evident that Mr. Gamey was not the man to fight it, he has not in him the stuff of which heroes and reformers are made. He brought a serious charge against Mr. Stratton and the government, and he has failed to prove it. It is not our business to judge him but we can surely say that a clean strong man would have taken care to have a real case before he had created a scandal. The commission's report will be discussed from various standpoints, many of the comments will be influenced by personal bias or party feeling but there is one thing pretty certain that no one will be likely to contend that the Gamey case has redounded to the credit of Mr. Gamey.

A correspondent suggests the true way to get the largest measure of prohibitive legislation in Ontario would be by the formation of a coalition government, with that as its main object, while of course neglecting no other necessary field of legislation. Our correspondent thinks with the closeness of parties in the Province, it is difficult to get the necessary strength on either side of the Speaker's chair; but that a union of parties, on this moral question, would not only give the best results as to prohibitive legislation, but at the same time tend to promote a general purification of politics. We give our correspondent's suggestions for what it is worth.

"Tally Bernard," a readable Saturday writer in the Toronto Globe, often discusses the question of a simpler life for the individual and for society. If we judge from "Society" paragraphs in the dailies, a great many people must be settling the question for themselves, by having little or nothing to do with the social swim, partly because of its banality. The two principal ways of entertainment at present seem to be large afternoon tea, and the gambling whist party; the latter demoralizing, the former inane beyond words. A handful of mediocrities have their names appear with tiresome iteration in so called "Society" columns; but where are the others? Let us hope the absence of their names indicates a considerable silent revolt from the inanity and expensiveness of modern forms of entertaining.

THE NEW MODERATOR.

Rev. D. H. Fletcher, D.D., pastor of McNab street church, Hamilton, the newly elected moderator of the General Assembly is one of the oldest active pastors in our Church, having been licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Hamilton in 1860. He has always taken the keenest interest in the work of the church at large and his abilities and services were recognized by the Synod of Hamilton and London in 1884 when he was chosen to preside over the deliberations of that body.

Although he is now in his seventy-first year, the new Moderator still retains much of the energy and enthusiasm of youth, and the Highland fire in his blood has not yet cooled.

He is a typical minister of the old school. Dignified and reverent in manner, he is above all imbued with the paternal kindness of the true shepherd of the flock. A ripe scholar and a man with a broad knowledge of affairs. Dr. Fletcher has ever been pre eminently the pastor of his people, advising them with judgment and with wisdom; and encouraging them with large and comfortable words.

Yet at the same time he has always taken a prominent part in presbytery, synod and assembly, and being a man of fine tact and excellent judgment, possessed of oratorical talents of no mean order and thoroughly versed in the parliamentary procedure of the Presbyterian church, Rev. Dr. Fletcher may well be expected to discharge the duties of moderator with distinction and discretion.

Donald Hugh Fletcher was born in Islay, Scotland, in 1833, being the third son of Hugh Fletcher of Keppols. His early education was received in the Parish school of Kilmeny but he afterwards studied at a private academy. He came to the country in his eighteenth year and after teaching for some time in the County of York, Ontario, he continued his studies at Toronto University and Knox College, from which he graduated in 1860.

His first charge was at Knox church, Scarborough, which became vacant by the removal of the late Dr. Laing to Coburg in 1860. To his ministerial and pastoral duties in Scarborough were added those of local Superintendent of Education. He took a lively interest in school matters, and the persistency with which he advocated the importance of first class school accommodation was so effective that before leaving Scarborough he had the satisfaction of seeing in almost every school section a first class school house.

In April 1872 he accepted a unanimous call from McNab street, Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, which became vacant by the appointment of the Rev. Dr. David Ingles to the chair of systematic theology in Knox College.

In 1881 McNab street congregation granted its pastor a prolonged holiday, and Dr. Fletcher travelled extensively in Western and Southern Europe, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Turkey and Greece. On his return from the East he was married in May 1882 to Phyllis Eleanor, youngest daughter of the late Peter Murray of Athol Bank.

For thirty years Dr. Fletcher has been Senior Chaplain to the St. Andrew's Benevolent Society of Hamilton. He is Hon. President of the Evangelical Alliance,