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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 1887.

THE following occurs in the Report on the State of Religion, adopted the other day by a Presbytery which need not be named:

Answers have not been received from every Session within the bounds. This may be accounted for partly on the ground that some congregations are without a pastor, or have a pastor who is too busy to attend to such small matters as the State of Religion.

That last sentence has a rather strange sound about it. To say that a doctor in practice is too busy to attend to the sick, or that a practising barrister is too busy to attend to the business of his clients, or that a merchant is too busy to sell goods, would seem like a contradiction. To say that a pastor is too busy to attend to such matters as the State of Religion, sounds strangely, to say the least of it. By the way, what are these good men so busy about?

In many countries in which the Scott Act was adopted the three years will expire next year. The friends of the Act in each county will soon have to make up their minds as to the course which they intend to pursue when the law goes out of force by effluxion of time. Many who voted and worked for the adoption of the law looked upon it as more or less an experiment, but at the same time an experiment which was well worth making. All such should now face the questions, How has the experiment been working? Has it failed wholly or partially? If partially, what have been the leading causes which led to the failure? Can these causes be removed? Are any of them being removed by the machinery that has lately been brought into operation for enforcing the Act? Are there any counties in which it has been made reasonably clear that public opinion is not sufficiently strong to enforce the Act? All these questions, and many others, should be grappled with before the excitement of the next contest begins. What the voters will demand, and must have at the next contest is *facts, solid facts*. The day for declamation is over. People wish to know how this experiment has worked, and the friends of the Act must be ready to tell them. If it can be shown that it has worked fairly well—as well as could reasonably be expected—we believe the electors in almost any county will re-adopt the Act. Even among many who believe that the law is a partial failure, there is a strong aversion to going back to the old license system. If it can be shown with reasonable clearness that the law has even materially decreased the amount of drinking, we believe most counties will re-act it.

THE death of that sweet singer of Israel, Dr. Ray Palmer, author of "My Faith Looks up to Thee," and other well-known hymns, has given rise to much interesting discussion on hymnology. One writer declares that "hardly a dozen hymns can be named as belonging to the first rank." Another thinks the good hymns "mount up into the hundreds." We have no doubt some would say into the thousands. But, after all, who is to say when a hymn belongs to the first or second or third rank? Let it be assumed that everybody will agree that "Rock of Ages," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Just as I Am," "All Hail the Power

of Jesus' Name" and a few others are in the first rank, who is to determine how many more should go in along with them, and how many should be placed in the second rank? Is not the quality of a hymn very much a matter of taste? Does not its power over one's heart and its hold upon one's memory often depend quite as much on circumstances as on the intrinsic merits of the hymn? The psalm oftenest on the lips of your sainted mother, or the hymn repeated by your little daughter when Jesus was calling her home, will always be a favourite one with you. The hymn the congregation or the prayer meeting sing best will often be a favourite. Beecher's favourite hymn was "My Days are Gliding Swiftly By." That hymn was not thought worthy of a place in our collection. There is no absolute standard by which hymns can be judged and arranged in the order of their merit. Many a ripe saint of God is cheered and strengthened by a hymn that the critics would condemn. Not long ago we read an elaborate criticism somewhere, showing that "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood" is unpoetic, unphilosophical and several other bad things. Thousands of Christian people the world over have had their hearts warmed, and their faith strengthened, by that hymn. A hymn is in one respect like a sermon—it is good if it *does* good.

REPORTS coming from the North-West to the American Government or our own about so-called "Indian outrages" or "Indian uprisings" should be carefully investigated by some person of character and good standing before one syllable of them is believed. The chances are too to one that some ruffianly white man is the aggressor. Not long ago it was reported to the Government at Washington that the Navajo Indians had made a savage and unprovoked attack upon the unoffending white citizens. President Cleveland is not exactly the kind of man to swallow that kind of a story without investigation. An able and impartial officer was sent to investigate, and the Washington correspondent of the *Christian at Work* tells us the facts that the officer found:

The facts of the case are these. A respectable Indian finding a horse astray took the trouble to hunt up its owner; he, a worthless white man, instead of showing gratitude, swore at the Indian because there was found a slight abrasion on the horse's body caused by riding it home. This white man swore out a warrant against the Indian for horse-stealing, and, taking with him a constable and another man, served his warrant in the peculiar Western fashion of opening fire on the dwelling of the Indian's brother-in-law. The brother-in-law defended his own home and family, and in doing so was killed by the murderous white gang. The survivors of his family returned the fire, and killed the constable and two of his accomplices. Telegrams were immediately sent eastward that "the Navajos had risen, and were massacring the whites." Fortunately General Miles showed prudence in investigating the matter before waging retaliation on the Indians, and the reports of two separate parties sent to investigate concur in this opinion—"that there will be no further disturbance if the Indians are not molested."

Exactly. The white man opens fire upon the Indian, and when the Indian defends himself and his family the white man telegraphs to his Government that the Indians are attacking unoffending white citizens! And this is the way Indian wars are manufactured. We hope our own Government will keep a sharp look upon the officials in the North-West who report Indian uprisings.

OUR Dominion legislators have assembled at Ottawa. It is admitted on all hands, we believe, that there are many good men in the new Parliament. That there are some there of the "other kind" we all know, but what assemblage of 200 men has not some scaly characters? Looking down upon the assembled wisdom of the Dominion, one of the pressmen says that, politics aside, they are a body of men of which any country in the world might be proud. We have no doubt this gallery man tells the truth. In watching proceedings the people should make due allowance for the fact that Canada is an exceptionally hard country to govern. We have two races, two official languages, many religions, many conflicting interests, many difficult problems to solve, and many greedy and unreasonable people to satisfy. The very shape of our country makes it hard to govern. Locally there is nothing in common between a resident of British Columbia and a ratepayer of Nova Scotia. It should be remembered too by ministers and others who are sometimes rather hard on our politicians that the Church has its unsolved problems as well as the State. The wisdom of Presbyterianism cannot de-

viser a satisfactory Probationers' Scheme. No General Assembly that has yet sat could strike our standing committees without more or less friction. Ontario is much smaller than the Dominion, and we have some knotty problems even in this wealthy, happy little Province. Whether the Baptists should have university powers is a question on which good men hold opposite views. The University Federation Scheme has clearly two sides. Nobody need envy the lot of the men who have to pilot the Dominion ship. Most earnestly do we hope that they will be restrained from indulging in any swagger on the Fishery question. That question is taking a shape just now in which it requires careful handling. A little rant on the part of a few thoughtless, loose-tongued members may make matters still more serious. We hope Sir John and Mr. Blake may be able to keep the noisy part of their battalions reasonably quiet on this question. Liberty of speech is a great boon, but on international questions the silence of a foolish legislator is a great boon to the nation. Meantime let the treatment of our rulers be thus condensed—more prayer and less abuse!

WOMEN AND MISSIONS.

SHOULD women share in all the duties, privileges and responsibilities of citizenship is a question on which there is not entire unanimity. In these days, when greater freedom of action is accorded to women, they have certainly shown beyond possibility of cavil that they are at least fit to be entrusted with the franchise. In matters pertaining to the vital well-being of the commonwealth none have been more laborious, persevering and self-denying than the patient Christian women who by effort, individual and combined, have endeavoured to advance the cause of righteousness and truth. To the pure and unselfish devotion of women our modern civilization is largely indebted for the humane treatment of the outcast and the criminal. If the horrors of European prisons were revealed by the heroic efforts of John Howard, Catharine Fry is no less entitled to blessed memory for the good work she was enabled to accomplish.

In promoting the Temperance Reformation woman occupies a large, important and influential place. She knows the depths of the misery into which her brothers and sisters can sink through the dread curse that has wrought such havoc. On battlefields, amid the red ruin of war, woman has proved a ministering angel in tending the sick and the dying. To her the novelty of an enterprise has been no discouragement. Women need only be convinced that a certain work requires to be done, that its accomplishment is possible, and they have faith sufficiently strong to enable them to achieve success.

One of the most striking illustrations of what woman's consecrated efforts can effect is seen in the remarkable progress attendant on the work already accomplished by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. As will be seen by a reference to the report on another page, its origin was quiet and unobtrusive, the range of its operations comparatively limited. Now during the ten years of its history it has attained to goodly proportions, and it will continue to grow. There is no reason why there should not be a general association connected with every Presbytery of the Church. The work of organization cannot be regarded as complete until there are auxiliaries and mission bands in every congregation and mission station in the Church from Halifax to Vancouver. This work of extending the organization is sure to advance with accelerated speed. The movement has secured for itself a place in the esteem and affections of the Church. Several good movements have in their history had to endure a period of coldness and neglect before obtaining general recognition. The Woman's Missionary movement suffered little in this respect. From the first it was generally regarded as eminently worthy of confidence and support, and now its definite place as an important Christian agency is assured.

The chief work for which the society was instituted has been extending with gratifying success. The field of its beneficent activity has been yearly enlarging. Zenana work, medical missions, educational work and purely philanthropic endeavour have all been undertaken with the best and most encouraging results. The sum raised for these purposes during last year is truly surprising, and as gratifying as it is