

were occasioned by the reports of the Committees on Temperance and College consolidation. The resolutions proposed by the Temperance Committee were strong in their approbation of the Scott Act, and no less energetic in condemnation of the amendments passed by the Dominion Senate. Against these positions clearly and sharply defined speeches were made by Principal Grant, Dr. Laing, of Dundas, and others. The principal speaker in favour of the recommendations was Dr. MacVicar, of Montreal, who said some trenchant and forcible things. The majority in favour of the resolutions is described in the Montreal papers as overwhelming.

The opinion was universally expressed that a consolidation of the Presbyterian educational institutions was desirable, and it was nearly as generally conceded that the accomplishment of this wished-for end was impracticable at present, and continued but purposeless agitation was injurious to the interests of the colleges. The question was remitted to a committee, whose duty it would be to give the matter mature consideration and report a year hence.

One evening was spent in an agreeable conversazione in the David Morrice Hall of the Presbyterian College, at which Principal Dawson, of McGill College, Mayor Beaugrand, and many prominent citizens of Montreal were present. The Mayor delivered a neat little address of welcome in which he said it ought to be the desire of all citizens of Canada to cultivate feelings of kindness and unity irrespective of nationality or creed.

Congregationalism, though vigorous and influential in England and in the Eastern States, numbering as it does not a few clergymen and laymen of pronounced ability, is not numerically strong in Canada. The annual meeting of the Congregational Union was held in Hamilton, at which the Rev. John Burton presided. He gave an able and comprehensive opening address, breathing an excellent and liberal spirit, which it was afterwards resolved should be published in the "Congregational Year Book." Considerable advance was reported in the matter of theological education. A higher standard has been aimed at, not without encouraging success. The membership of the Church has also largely increased. On the temperance question there was an excellent debate, the majority pronouncing in favour of the Scott Act. Dr. Stevenson, of Montreal, one of the ablest and most accomplished ministers in the denomination, put in a guarded plea for personal liberty.

This year the Huron Baptist Association met at Owen Sound, its members giving due attention to the interests of the denomination. As in the other Churches much care is devoted to the training of young men for the ministry. The good work done at McMaster Hall, Toronto, was detailed and fully commented on. There is evidently a growing desire among the Baptists for a thoroughly educated ministry. The Association did not fall behind the other evangelical bodies in upholding the Canada Temperance Act.

ASTERISK.

SOCIAL LIFE AT WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, June 22.

THE clever author of that "smart" book, "Society in London," accounts for the absolute sway of the Prince of Wales in the social world of England by assuming that society recognizes the danger it is in of disintegrating under the pressure of the outside mob who seek to enter and, in various ways, to dominate it. True to the instinct of self-preservation it seeks in despotism a refuge from anarchy. Making allowances for differences of environment, the parallel holds good for society at Washington.

Society here is destitute of that hereditary element which is so powerful a conservator of social life in the Mother Land, nor is it yet strong in those leisurely and cultured members whose time and aptitudes, spent in its service, tend to keep it in healthful motion. Hence, democratic as the constitution of society at Washington is, and must remain for a long time, it is more in need of and dependent upon a leader than its prototype across the Atlantic.

The public duties of the President afford him very little time for the business of society, and it is rarely that the office is held by an incumbent whose tastes, training and experience fit him for participation in social life. The first President, General Washington, was fond of and highly fitted for the graceful pleasures of the polite world, and gave anxious attention to what he regarded as indispensable social duties; but his successor in the second remove, the communistic Jefferson, rudely shattered the social fabric carefully built up by Washington and kept in repair by John Adams. Jefferson's successor, Madison, was accompanied to the White House by his beautiful and accomplished wife, "Dolly," of whose charm, grace and wit some of our octogenarians yet speak with enthusiasm, and she became at once the undisputed and indisputable queen of the social world, such as it was in those early days—and this qualifying remark is not to be taken in disparagement, for the society of the Capitol, though small in numbers, was in other respects the peer of any that we have present knowledge of anywhere. It was the social position won by Mrs. Madison that gave point and meaning to the awkward phrase, subsequently coined, "Mistress of the White House."

From the renowned "Dolly" to Mrs. Tyler, who entered the White

House as a bride some months after her husband had been installed as President, is a skip of a quarter of a century, during which interval history or tradition has preserved nothing of a social kind worth repeating of the ladies who had successively occupied the Executive Mansion.

Leaving the courtly Mrs. Tyler, we pass over twenty-two years to the advent of Miss Harriet Lane, niece of the bachelor President, Mr. Buchanan. Miss Lane modestly disclaimed for herself the title or functions of "Mistress" of anything or "First Lady" anywhere; she had simply taken up her residence in her uncle's household to do the woman's part of its indispensable social duties. But the lady of the White House cannot efface herself if she would; for good or for evil she is predestined to be an influence in the society of Washington and of the country in general. The social reign of Miss Harriet Lane was as brilliant as the political rule of her poor old uncle was disastrous, and such was the personal charm she exercised over all hearts, that when the obvious impropriety of naming a national vessel after her was committed by a member of the Cabinet, even partisan tongues were hushed.

The annalist of social life at Washington who goes no further down the calendar than 1884 will stop at the name of Miss Lane when enumerating the queens of society who have inhabited the White House. Mrs. Grant was a kindly and tactful hostess of that mansion, but she had neither talent nor ambition to govern anything beyond her own threshold. Her place was measurably supplied by the wife and daughters of the Secretary of State, Mr. Fish, a New York patrician, the ladies of whose household might suggest comparisons with those of the family of a merchant prince in the golden days of Venice.

President Arthur, largely through necessity but partly through taste, restored the personal ascendancy of the Presidential office in social affairs. During his *régime* the tone of social life here was, on the whole, fleshly. It now tends towards the ascetic, and the change will do it no harm for a time.

Miss Cleveland, who presides over the household of her brother, the President, is of a philanthropic and philosophic disposition, and may be described intellectually as of the Vassar College type. That she will discharge the duties of her place with sincerity and propriety seems reasonably sure from the little experience the social world has had of her; but those to whom high life means having "a good time," in the lighter sense of that phrase, are doomed to disappointment so far as their social future is dependent upon her acts and views. And that it is so dependent, or is regarded as being so, is evident from the scurrying of fashionable people to the bookstores to hand in advance orders for her forthcoming volume of essays on "George Eliot" and other subjects. Not to the titular subject was it granted to have a rush of readers to the shops of the booksellers to bespeak copies of a work which had not yet come, in advance sheets, to the hands of the reviewers. Literary reasons for this literary success there cannot be: it must be that the fashionable world in the United States, every section of which now feels an impulse from Washington, accepts as inevitable a leadership of some kind, even if it be for the present a formal rather than a real one, and admits the propriety of associating it with the nominal headship in politics. Whether, in the near future, as a consequence of the development of what is called Society, and its subordination to a single and definite directorship, the customary examination into the availability of Presidential candidates will be extended to the constitution of their family circles, is not a pressing, although an interesting question, and therefore I constrain myself to pass it by.

Coming back to the starting-point and assuming, for the sake of the argument, the correctness of the theory by which the relation of the Prince of Wales to society in England is explained, it is interesting to note by comparison the existence of needs, forces and tendencies so fundamental and persistent as to reproduce themselves whensoever and wheresoever a social organization is attempted. An army, whether of soldiers, salvationists or the *haut ton*, must have a leader, and the parallel may be extended by suggesting that in either case the leadership must be capable. How capable it is in England, it would be unjust to the Prince and the Princess of Wales to profess ignorance of, and as for the leadership in the States, a little intellectuality now and then will be a wholesome leaven to the frivolity which, by a change of metaphor, may be characterized as the centrifugal force in the social mechanism.

Whether society, of the kind spelt with a big S, is worth serious description or study may be a question with some, which others will answer by the suggestion that, even in the millennium of democracy, people will come together for that sort of intercourse known as social; that habitual assembling begets organization, and that, if organization for any purpose be not wise and wholesome in character, it is sure to be unwise and noxious.

B.

SOME little time ago a gentleman bought for a few pence at a bookstall in London an old book, which was of no particular value, but which he happened to want. It was bound in vellum, and by the lapse of time the skin had become separated from the cardboard to which it had originally been pasted. On reaching home, and when about to commence the perusal of his purchase, Mr. — noticed a something between the vellum and the boards. Without much thought of what he was doing, he unfolded the vellum, when to his great delight he saw what proved to be nearly a whole pack of very rare and ancient playing cards. After keeping his treasures for some little time, and exhibiting them to his friends, Mr. — was at last induced to part with them for a considerable sum to the British Museum. He has spent all his leisure time since in examining the bindings of old books at stalls and elsewhere.