

CITY MORALITY.

A GOOD deal has been written of late in reference to the morality of Toronto and other Canadian cities. Some of the lowest dens of vice have been visited, and what goes on in these places described with great gusto and verve. The shrieking about them has been both so loud and so shrill as to be almost hysterical, while the moral homilies which have been read to all civic and other authorities in reference to their duty in the premises have been both very earnest and very declamatory. Toronto has been represented as about the most wicked city on the continent, its officials the most indolent and neglectful of their duty, and the general tone and feeling of society very far indeed from what might have been expected in a city so remarkable for the number and the beauty of its churches, the earnestness of its preachers, and the general religious profession of its inhabitants. It may be somewhat risky to put in a caveat against such sweeping accusations, or to hint a doubt about the sufficiency of the evidence adduced in support of them. Yet we cannot help doing both. We do not think that Toronto is so pre-eminent in wickedness; and whether it is or not, the evidence adduced in this case we are sure is anything but sufficient to support the charge. The changes have been rung even to weariness on the moral cesspools of York street, and the sweeping generalization has been drawn that these are but typical of the city. The police have been goaded on to making a raid upon one sufficiently degraded and offensive place, and the effort at prosecuting and punishing the wretched inmates has been hailed as a sign of returning virtue, so that mutual congratulations have been the order of the day.

We have not a word to say in favour of Bob Berry and his miserable company. They no doubt deserved all they got, perhaps a great deal more. But to parade the existence of such persons and such places as indicative of something specially and peculiarly wrong in Toronto is not in accordance with anything like common sense, while to speak of such places as specially dangerous to the morals of the community, is equally wide of the mark. We make bold to say that such places will be found in every town and city on the continent, while the very grossness of the conduct and the utter sudden degradation of the offenders make them to be shunned with horror by all except those who have already sunk so low that they can sink no farther. There are far more crying evils and far more dangerous resorts in Toronto and elsewhere against the existence of which not a voice is raised, and for the suppression of which not a demand has been made, not an effort put forth. It is not by the reeking sties of York street that our youth are being entrapped to ruin and the fair fame of our city specially compromised. These are bad enough, and we shall never use a word to palliate the injury they are doing or to excuse their wretched keepers and frequenters. But what of those places of a far higher kind which are supported by a far different class? That such resorts exist and flourish is beyond all contradiction. It is not many years since one of our most honourable and respected citizens, accompanied by a policeman, visited eleven of those places in a single night, and gave the result of his inquiries in a lengthy communication which was published in one of our morning papers. The details of that document were as saddening and shocking as could well be imagined. The gentleman found the places visited fitted up in a style of luxury which he never saw surpassed, though he is familiar with the best furnished houses in Toronto. None but the wealthy married men of the city, he affirmed, could afford to keep up such establishments, and the extent to which they were frequented may be judged from the fact that at one door the cabman counted eleven men going in during the time the gentleman we speak of was making his inquiries. What was the great fear which that visitor had in making these melancholy rounds? None for himself, for he went openly under his own name and escorted by a policeman. He was afraid he might meet some of his brother merchants and acquaintance to the great annoyance and mortification of both parties. Has there ever been anything done to put down these places? Has a voice ever been raised in their condemnation from that day to this? Have the police ever "pulled" one of these establishments, or been asked to do so? Never. And yet each of them is doing a thousandfold more deadly

work in sapping the morals both of old and young than any number of Bob Berrys or than all the "dens" of York street put together. It is of no use to say that they are not known. Our "golden youth" as well as a good many others who are "golden" enough, though no longer young, would laugh contemptuously at any who should question their existence or affect to believe that their whereabouts is unknown. It takes a good while for the wrecks to float down from these to York street or even to Yonge, and by the time they do so their attractions and consequent dangerous influences are greatly passed. But it seems a poor exhibition of moral earnestness and a sad display of something very like cowardice to shout oneself hoarse in denunciation of vice in its most worn out, and therefore, most disgusting form, while a discreet silence is maintained in reference to "dens" equally well known, but indefinitely more dangerous, and that to a far wider and more influential class for whose safety apparently no one cares. It is as absurd and inconsistent as to denounce the low, coarse illustrated papers displayed in the periodical stores of third-rate neighbourhoods, while the photographs of good looking harlots have the place of honour in too many of our respectable print shops,—nay, even in the collections of some who are fain to persuade themselves they are of our "best sets." The worn out trulls of Berry dance houses are awfully bad, but the Sara Bernharts of "society" are, it seems, quite different, "you know," and rather to be admired than otherwise!

AT the World's Conference of Young Men's Christian Associations, in Geneva, Switzerland, August 20th, 1878, the second Sunday in November, with the week following, Nov. 9th to 15th, was set apart as a season of special prayer for young men and Young Men's Christian Associations.

CORNELL University and President White are getting somewhat of an overhauling for the character of literature he recommends to his students and for the general infidel tone of the institution. Some of the papers in that region speak out plainly, as they ought, if the charges be true.

So far matters have gone favourably enough with the British in Afghanistan, but a formidable enemy is creeping gradually upon them in the shape of winter, and unless very great care is taken there may be very deplorable occurrences before all is satisfactorily settled and British authority finally and fully established.

THE Belgian clergy are now refusing the sacrament of marriage to the teachers of the public schools; but, notwithstanding this, eighty-seven per cent. of the teachers employed by the State have remained faithful to their service, and a great number of the seceders have been attracted chiefly by the higher pay and position offered to them in the clerical schools.

MR. MOODY objects very much to any obstruction between himself and his audience. On entering the hall in Cleveland, last week, where he was to speak, he found a large ornamental glass stand in front of the platform, filled with water and plants. "That is very pretty," he said; "but it must come away. It would feel like an iceberg between me and my congregation."

THE harvest prospects in Scotland are as gloomy and unsatisfactory as they well can be. In many districts the grain will never ripen, and even in the earlier sections comparatively little of the crop had been secured when the latest news was sent. The suffering during the coming winter cannot but be very severe in spite of all the aid supply from this side of the Atlantic.

OUR readers are aware that some time ago the case of Professor Smith of Aberdeen, was again referred back by the local Presbytery to the Assembly for further direction. The minority appealed to the Synod of Aberdeen against this decision, but the Synod by a very decisive majority confirmed the action of the Presbytery so that the case now lies definitely over till next May.

MR. JOHN B. GOUGH has recently returned from Europe, where he has been for the last fifteen months, partly for the sake of his health, but chiefly, if one might judge from the extent of his labours, for the ad-

vancement of that cause with which his name has been so long identified. From all accounts, Mr. Gough has never appeared to greater advantage than during his recent tour, and the results of his labours, especially in Scotland, have been very marked and very satisfactory. This was the third visit paid to Great Britain by Mr. Gough since leaving it a poor boy to push his fortune in the New World.

QUITE a controversy is going on at present in the States over a recent order of the Postmaster-General forbidding all postmasters to deliver letters to any who are advertised as lottery agents. Suits have been entered by some of the aggrieved parties against particular postmasters in order to test the validity of this order. It is expected that the result of these discussions and suits will be the introduction of a Bill into next Congress prohibiting the delivery of letters to any one who advertises himself as a dealer in lottery tickets or in any way connected with lotteries; and to exclude from the mails those newspapers which publish lottery advertisements. We, in Canada, are not very much troubled with the evil complained of except sometimes when it takes the form of church-raffles, bazaars, lucky bags, and other such ways of raising money, always questionable, but specially so when done professedly for a good cause. With so much gambling of one kind and another on every side the friends of religion and the young cannot too carefully guard against resorting to any plan for raising funds which is not only of the world but of its worst section.

THE Chicago pastor, says the "United Presbyterian," who has suffered so severely by being detected in preaching one of Dr. Parker's sermons, has not been careful to learn from the misfortunes of his brethren. It is only a few months since a case similar to his was described in the newspapers, and nearly every community has its story to tell of like pilfering and its consequent reprobation. The disgust which it occasions shows how deeply the public dislikes pretence and surplised dishonesty. Very many—too many, perhaps—are offended by the meanness rather than the crime. It is the effort on the part of ambitious ministers to be popular and great that leads them to the commission of such offences. Dr. Jos. Parker's sermons, F. W. Robertson's sermons, Dr. Talmage's sermons, or some other distinguished preacher's sermons, are considered very fine indeed, and the tempted pastor who forgets his Master in thinking of himself takes one of them to preach, as an invitation to public praise. It is but rarely that sheer laziness leads to such an excess. The experience through which the suffering brethren pass is a terrible one, but it will be a profitable one also for the profession and the cause of the Gospel, if it teach pastors to look higher than their own distinction for the inspiration of their calling.

THE Toronto Presbytery met on Tuesday last in Knox Church, Toronto. Rev. Mr. Macdonnell, Moderator, in the chair. A considerable portion of the morning sederunt was taken up in ascertaining how far the different ministers of the Presbytery had read the Address of the Moderator of the General Assembly on the matter of Home Missions. It was found that while in some cases the Address had been read, in others it had been thought advisable to delay bringing the matter before the congregations till nearer the time for holding the annual Missionary meetings. It was agreed to resume the consideration of this matter at the next meeting of the Presbytery, and in the meantime the following minute was adopted: "The Presbytery recognizing the vital importance to the church of having the Home Missions prosecuted with increased vigour, pledges itself to use its best efforts to have all the congregations and mission stations within the bounds adequately impressed with the gravity of the situation in which this great interest is at present, and to urge upon them the advisability of increasing their contributions on behalf of it." The Convener of the Committee on the subject of Dr. Topp's decease, submitted the minute which had been prepared. This was unanimously adopted. The Presbytery then resolved itself into a Committee of the whole for the purpose of considering the additional hymns sent down by the General Assembly's Committee on Hymns. The Committee sat till six p.m., when it rose, reported progress, and asked leave to sit again. It was agreed to hold a meeting of Presbytery on the 25th inst., for the further consideration of the hymns and for the despatch of other necessary business.