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The Canada Presbyterian

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12TH, 1893.

Will Conveners of Presbyterian Committees on Systematic Beneficence forward their reports, at their earliest convenience, to Rev. E. D. Millar, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

Owing to the absence of Rev. Dr. Mackay at the Free Church Jubilee Assembly, Synod Conveners in the West, and Presbyterian Conveners in the East, will send their reports on the State of Religion to Rev. Dr. Dickson, of Galt, Ont.

There is no dead line of fifty in politics. Nearly all the men who figured prominently at the opening of the parliament buildings last week were grey or white or had nothing on the roof to turn either colour. Whatever the average citizen may think about his spiritual interests, he likes to see people of experience taking care of his property.

They were a fine looking body of young men those twenty-seven graduates who received their diplomas in the Convocation Hall of Knox College last Thursday afternoon. Most of them looked as if they had been a little over-worked but the examinations are over, and they can take sleep and rest. As Principal Willis used to say about each graduating class no doubt they are "equal in ability and scholarship to any of their predecessors."

We hear a good deal about the humbug of politics and not a little of what we hear on that unedifying topic comes from clergymen and other leaders of religious opinion. Is there anything in politics more utterly absurd than the conduct of a minister or professor who wantonly throws firebrands into the Church, and as soon as the conflagration breaks out begins to whine about "disturbing the peace" if anyone asks him to stop throwing?

The friends of the Presbyterian College of Montreal celebrated the 25th anniversary of the institution by presenting Principal Macvicar with a purse containing \$3,650. The students and alumni gave the esteemed gentleman \$500 additional on their own account. That is the right kind of an anniversary to have. Four thousand dollars is a tidy little sum; but the learned Principal well deserves it all and every other good thing the Church can give him. He has put in a quarter of a century of noble work at Montreal.

After the work and worry of the closing exercises on Thursday last, Dr. McLaren left by the night express for Winnipeg to resume his labours as one of the lecturers for the summer session. The Doctor is one of those men who thrive on hard work. In the good old times he used to ride on horse back from Amherstburg to Hamilton to attend Synod. Later on he drove on a Hudson Bay trail from Winnipeg to Prince Albert to look into our mission work out there. The distance is only about a thousand miles. Men of the Doctor's style help immensely to lay the foundation of a church.

Most of our readers are aware that the type of the Canada Presbyterian is now set by machinery. The machine does not seem to take kindly to Presbyterian matter. In fact we believe it is American in its tendencies and falls from grace occasionally and makes some serious mistakes.

Brother Dewart, we understand, is about to set up the Christian Guardian by machinery and then we shall see whether the thing works any better on Methodist matter. Our machine must adapt itself pretty soon to Presbyterian doctrine and policy or leave the church.

It can hardly be said that the Dominion Parliament covered itself with glory during the session which came to a somewhat abrupt end the other day. The most interesting part of the proceedings was the revolt of Mr. Dalton McCarthy and one or two followers of the Government. The Premier left for Paris before the close and it is no unkindness to the Finance Minister to say that he is not so successful as a leader of the House as he used to be as a lecturer on prohibition. If the session bulks in history it will be on account of the large number of things it didn't do.

The Province of Ontario has a connecting link with the last generation in the person of Sir Oliver Mowat; and the Presbyterian Church has a similar link in the person of Dr. Reid. Sir Oliver, as he said in his address on opening day, remembers when almost every kind of Ontario institutions began. Dr. Reid remembers when Ontario Presbyterianism began and has seen as many wonderful changes in the Church as Sir Oliver has in the State. Both of these esteemed public servants are as strong mentally as they ever were in their lives. Sir Oliver speaks and writes just as well—some people say better—than he ever did. Dr. Reid manages his most important department with all his old time wisdom and accuracy; and may be just as vigorous when the Assembly meets in June as Sir Oliver was at the opening of the new parliament buildings last week. Some men never get old, we mean mentally old.

The healing virtue of the blessed Saviour cannot be overestimated either in its preciousness or in its power, nor has it ceased to be wonderful in its transforming energy. To-day, as ever, the evil spirit is exercised, and the freed soul found clothed and in his right mind sitting at the Healer's feet. But there is another aspect of the Saviour's work which the present age in its evangelistic fervour is very ready to forget; the power that keeps from falling, the spirit that edifies builds up. Christ not only healed, he fed. Those wondrous meals to the thousands as they hungered; that command to give something to eat as the resuscitated girl was restored to her friends; the fire of coals on the shore of Galilee's lake with the "Come and dine" to wearied, disappointed disciples; present an oft forgotten truth that Jesus is not only the Saviour of sinners, but the Sustainer of men. Without him life languishes, character fails, activities cease. He is "No dead fact stranded on the shore Of the oblivious years:— But warm, sweet, tender, even yet A present help is he; And faith has still its Olivet And love its Galilee."

There lies on our table an able speech delivered in the Manitoba Legislature a short time ago by Mr. James Fisher, M. P. P., on the much vexed Manitoba School question. Mr. Fisher was brought up in Ontario, has great admiration for Ontario's school system, and is strongly of the opinion that the Ontario system modified to meet the circumstances of the Province is the best one for Manitoba. Apart from the merits of the case Mr. Fisher makes a point which seen at this distance and in the light in which he puts it, does seem to require explanation. He states most explicitly that about two years before the famous School Law was passed he heard the author of that law, then Attorney-General of Manitoba, distinctly pledge himself and the Liberal party to a meeting of French electors that the Liberals if they secured power, would never interfere with the Separate schools of the Province. Mr. Fisher was then President of the Provincial Liberal Association and the Attorney General referred to his presence at the meeting as a guarantee that no Catholic institutions would be interfered with. In the face of this assurance Mr. Fisher says

he always thought the agitation begun a year afterwards and which culminated in the Act of 1890 was "a gross wrong." It is not easy to see how he could have viewed it in any other light.

Let those people who never cease talking about Canada as a slow unprogressive place, ponder the following suggestive sentences uttered by Sir Oliver Mowat the other day when replying to the address presented to him at the opening of the parliament buildings: "I call to mind that in my own time and within my own memory a transformation has been accomplished in the political condition of the province, and in everything which goes to make up a great and civilized community. I remember when neither our province nor any other British province, had responsible government. I remember when the conduct of provincial affairs was not by the elected representatives of the population, nor by persons of their appointing, or having their confidence. I knew the province when it had no municipal institutions, now known to be essential to local interests and local progress. I knew the province when the various Churches amongst which its people were distributed were not equal before the law; when the established church of old England was practically the established church here, and when there were claimed for it the exclusive rights and privileges of an establishment, and one-seventh of the whole land of the country. I remember the province when there was in it not one university, not one college, and no system of public schools. I remember when at every election there was but one polling place for a whole county, no matter how extensive; when the election lasted for a week, and when (except in towns) the only voters were freeholders. I remember when the province had not a mile of railway, nor I believe a mile of macadamized road. I remember when the principal cities of the present day were but villages—when this great city of Toronto was 'Little York,' and its population three or four thousand. I remember when the whole province had—or was supposed to have—a population of but 150,000, and therefore less than the population now of Toronto alone."

Sir Oliver is not an old man in the sense of either looking or feeling old; and yet he has seen this province change from a forest into one of the best little countries on this earth. The question we ought to ask ourselves continually is, whether the people have improved as much as the province?

KNOX COLLEGE CLOSING EXERCISES.

The annual closing exercises of Knox college are always attended by a large number of the warm friends which that institution possesses in every part of the Dominion, and, as the strength and influence of the college increases as the years pass by, the interest shown by the public becomes more marked at each successive convocation. At the closing exercises yesterday accordingly, the large hall was crowded and the proceedings watched by the visitors with the greatest attention.

The venerable principal of the college, Rev. Professor Caven, occupied the chair and with him on the platform were: President London, of Toronto university; Rev. Principal McVicar, of Presbyterian college Montreal; Chancellor Rand of McMaster university; Professor Gregg, Professor McLaren and Professor Thomson, of Knox college; Rev. Dr. Boyd, Rev. W. G. Wallace, Rev. Dr. Middlemiss, Rev. R. N. Grant and W. Mortimer Clark, Q.C.

In the audience the following gentlemen were seen:—Revs. J. A. McDonald, S. H. Eastman, A. Blair, J. Neil, J. McD. Duncan, Dr. McCurdy, Dr. Reid, P. Straith, J. Mutch, A. Henderson, D. M. Ramsay, Dr. Fletcher, H. G. A. Reid, J. McP. Scott, W. Frizzell, P. Wright, Dr. MacIntyre, W. A. Hunter, R. M. Craig, S. S. Craig, W. Patterson, R. Hamilton, M. Fraser, Dr. McTavish, J. F. McLaren, J. Campbell, F. O. Nichol, J. A. Grant, W. A. Wilson, W. Burns, S. Lyle, C. Fletcher, J. Ballantyne, J. Stuart, A. Gilray, H. McKellar, D. J. Macdonnell, S. Achison, Dr. Robertson, T. F. Fotheringham.

The proceedings were opened with religious exercises, Rev. Principal Caven reading a chapter from the Scriptures, and Rev. Principal McVicar offering a prayer.

THE PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS.

Rev. Principal Caven then addressed the assemblage. He expressed the gratification

it gave him to see so many ladies and gentlemen in the audience and to have on the platform such a number of representatives of sister institutions, both in arts and theology. He was glad to welcome Principal McVicar (applause)—one of the most distinguished graduates of Knox college. (Applause.) When the names of distinguished graduates of this institution were mentioned that of Principal McVicar was never forgotten. He was very glad, too, to see their old friend, President London. (Applause.) He might be permitted to call him the old friend of Knox college. The institution of which President London was the head was so intimately connected with Knox college that it was unnecessary to introduce him at such a meeting as the present. He was glad, too, to have Principal Rand of McMaster present. The Presbyterian had never regarded their church as the church but as a branch of the church of Christ, and, while maintaining and defending their own system, they were in hearty accord with other Christian denominations. He had received a note from Chancellor Burwash of Victoria college regretting that a sudden call to discharge duties in connection with his position precluded the possibility of his being present. Principal Caven then spoke of the work of Knox college during the past academic year. During last session, he said, the classes had been exceptionally large. The graduating class had been the largest in the history of the college. The number of those who had finished the curriculum was 27. The largest class previous to that had been 22. It was a matter for regret, he said, that one member of that class, Mr. MacLair, was prevented by illness from being present. In his absence it was only right that he should say that all of the professors and students regarded him with the greatest affection. His course as a student had been a very honorable one. The number of students in the second year class during the term had been eighteen. In the first year there had been 40. Of this number 25 had taken the regular course prescribed by the college. In all there had been 85 students in the theological classes during the session, and 31 in the preparatory class, making a total of 101 who had received instruction in the institution. There were, too, a good many others in Toronto who were studying for the ministry, but who were taking the regular course at the University of Toronto, and were not now in attendance at Knox. There were probably 130, however, in the city who were preparing for the ministry of the Presbyterian church. The number of graduates, he said, was not too large. It was sometimes whispered that the church was over-supplied. That, however, was not the case. The church was not over-supplied with good ministers, with consecrated and devoted ministers willing to do the work of teacher and pastor. There was abundance of room for them. There was the field in the Northwest and there was that in French Canada. There was no fear that the Spirit of God would put into the hearts of too many to devote themselves to His ministry. The regulation of this matter might be safely left in His hands who was wise and good. Last year, the speaker continued, Mr. McLaren of Buckingham had left \$20,000 for the benefit of the college library. It had been decided that this sum should be funded and devoted to the library. He was glad accordingly to be able to tell them that the library would occupy a better position than heretofore. There was already a good list of books on the shelves but as they were to a large extent gleanings from the libraries of ministers there had been too many duplicates and triplicates and even quadruplicates. Many of these had been sent to the young and vigorous institution in the Northwest. The bequest mentioned would put the college in a position to buy books and keep the library in a shape which had been impossible while they were dependent on sporadic efforts. He had, Principal Caven said, to announce that Professor Thomson had with great liberality paid in \$1,200 to endow a scholarship in memory of the late Mrs. Thomson. (Applause.) This would be added to the college scholarships. The late Rev. Mr. Fenwick of Woodbridge had paid in a like amount for a prize in memory of his father. This would be placed in the hands of the literary and theological society of the college. (Applause.) The scholarship would be competed for biennially, and would be a prize for attainment in the study of physical science in its apologetic aspect. It was his sad duty, the speaker said, to announce the death of one intimately known to the students and professors of Knox college, one who had given valuable service to the institution, Mrs. Fullerton (wife of the steward). Her name would be cherished by many, especially those who in times of illness had known her loving care.

In closing his address Principal Caven directed his words to the students, and expressed for the members of the faculty the feeling of affection and interest which they cherished for them, and especially the interest which was felt by the teachers who had been so closely identified with them.