

THE CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

(NEW SERIES.)

VOL. I.]

TORONTO, APRIL, 1882.

[No. 4.

EDITORIAL JOTTINGS.

THE following is from a leading editorial in the *Victorian Independent*, and is worth studying in connection with the paper published in this issue on the "Weakness of Independency," specially as it regards what Mr. McHardy describes as a "denominational temper": "In looking at our special work in this colony in the light of past experience, there is one thing that stands out before us with the clearness and definiteness of a revelation, and that is the necessity of increased effort to maintain and extend our principles. We must put forth a vigour and an energy to which we have for some time been strangers. If, as some of us contend, we are not going back, we are certainly not advancing with that firm and manly step which our freedom and large-heartedness should prompt. There are occasional defections in our ministerial ranks, and suspicious whisperings are heard that we have not seen the end of such unseemly and scandalous proceedings. *There is a lamentable want of a denominational spirit amongst us. Churches, ministers, and members do petty much as they like, without respect to the interests of the body at large.* Our institutions are languishing for the want of funds, and for the still more serious deficiency of Christian workers. In the presence of the princely liberality of other Churches, we are cast down sometimes, but we are not in despair. The time has come when we must arise and shake ourselves from the dust. We have been asleep while others have been awake and working." We have italicised two sentences of our Australian contemporary, offering a few remarks. Similar words might be culled from our own columns at different times, from various pens. Why should this complaint come from all points of the compass regarding our Congregational Churches? Is it true? and if so, why? Without ventur-

ing dogmatic replies, we submit a few reflections, assuming that there must be some ground, imaginary or real, for the complaints so persistently made.

All movements that have a history and continuity carry with themselves in a greater or lesser degree the traditions and habits of the past. Congregationalism has a continuous history, and has been in the forefront of the battle on English ground for religious liberty, which liberty in the colonies has been secured, and in growing measure is being enjoyed in the old land. That struggle necessarily exaggerated the import of individual rights and liberty, whilst the common struggle compelled co-operation and fellowship unconsciously, just as upon a raft, mid-ocean, lord and servant, peer and peasant, passengers and crew, know no difference in the one common danger and struggle to sight a vessel and drift to some hospitable shore. The struggle is over; it has of necessity left its temper and tradition. Now, that liberty gained, the question of the hour is, Have we wisdom and grace to use our liberty, adapting ourselves, under Divine guidance, to the needs and calls of the hour? The belligerent attitude was a necessity, has now become a tradition; for under the changed circumstances, to talk of *compulsion, ecclesiastical legislation* in a land like ours, where even a "secular society" holds its Sunday evening concerts unmolested, is simply buncombe—nothing more. Having won our rights, we need to try an old path and strike again a grand old strain, which in the din of battle was scarcely heard, viz., fellowship—"fellowship one with another," because we are partakers of the "fellowship of the blood of Christ." In *this* respect we have a denominational right to exist, believing in the communion of saints, not on the ground of ritual conformity, creed subscription, ecclesiastical oneness, but upon the simple ground of faith in Christ and loyalty to His kingly law. The