

of stricken homes, may well quicken the authorities to do their utmost to cope intelligently with a danger which threatens the very existence of the empire.

In some of the newspaper descriptions of scenes which are alleged to have occurred last month in the neighbourhood of Osaka, we read of falling houses, crushed bodies, burning timbers, etc. This language is liable to convey an entirely false impression. Even in Tokyo, the capital, with its more than a million of inhabitants, there are few houses that could fall very far, or beneath which any one would be very seriously injured. Rarely has one of them a cellar, consequently it is impossible that "people fled there for refuge, but were killed by falling beams." In view of the certainty of earthquakes the houses seldom exceed one storey (or one and a half) in height. They rest on foundation-timbers which are completely isolated from the ground. They are built of wood, and are purposely of cheap and light construction. Hence it is that when fires break out the unsubstantial character of these structures renders them an easy prey to the flames—with the attendant advantage, however, that everything can be so completely restored within a week or two that a stranger might search in vain for the scene of the conflagration. Even the cities of Japan are architecturally a blank, viewed from a height, only the occasional Pagodas rise above the monotonous dead level of countless low roofs. Hence the loss of one's house in Japan is not so serious a matter as it might seem. It will be quickly recognized, however, that the upsetting of braziers, which in the Sunrise Kingdom are the universal substitute for chimneys and grates, adds invariably the devastation of fire to the havoc of unquenching earthquake.

Nevertheless Japan owes much to this very scourge from which it would fain be free. It owes, primarily, its very existence. This is no idle conjecture, but is the deliberate testimony of some of the leaders in geological research. There has been of course subsidence as well as upheaval; but in the succession of the ages many of the 3,000 islands which now constitute the dominions of the Mikado have doubtless come into man's knowledge simply because they have been pushed above the level of the sea. The same remark holds true of other areas of the Pacific, much of whose bed has been repeatedly rent by remorseless volcanic Titans, and whose island-dotted surface was once a vast uninhabited waste. There is no ocean whose engulfing waves have so often parted to receive the hapless dead, or to yield to the living some domain of enrapturing beauty.

For Japan owes also some of the fairest of its landscapes to the unwelcome earthquake. Snow-capped Fisijama, to which grand upspringing mountain allusion has already been made, would not be found to-day lifting its head 12,000 feet into the air had not the surrounding hills once struggled in the throes of a terrible convulsion. So of other points among the high places of these islands, where the eye is fairly bewitched by scenes of surpassing loveliness. For nature has taken pains to obliterate, in as far as possible, every vestige of her travail and direful struggle. The wounds of other days have been healed, and where scars remain these have been skilfully hidden away beneath a mantle of verdure and flowers.

Notwithstanding, therefore, the risk even of earthquakes, travellers will continue to flock to the land of the lotus, the cherry and the chrysanthemum. There is something so unique and withal so fascinating about both its past and its future, its original jealousy of all foreign intrusion, its quaint buildings and temples and characteristic costumes, its former civilization and the rapidity with which it is now exchanging that civilization for the more modern ideas of the west—all this appeals strongly to those sentiments which are begotten by some stirring romance. We seem to dream while we are awake, and we rejoice to be assured that it is not all a dream. Japan is in truth a wonderland, which recent discoverers have as yet not half explored. Sir Edwin Arnold, over whose poetic temperament it has easily thrown its spell, describes it as "a land of gentle manners and of rare fantastic arts." To stand upon its shores is to be already captivated by it; to dwell within its borders is to make its cause one's own. Much of anxiety, therefore, and sympathy as have undoubtedly been evoked by the distressing disaster of October, 1891, that event will serve rather to turn attention afresh towards a distant island empire and to intensify that interest with which its remarkable progress is everywhere being watched and chronicled.

SUMMER SESSION.

MR. EDITOR,—Our Presbyteries must have before them soon the Remit of the General Assembly on a Summer Session for theological students, and every Presbytery having mission stations in their bounds must have seen the good done by willing workers in these stations during summer lost by want of service during winter, and hence our mission stations continue to be mission stations at a considerable expense to the Home Mission Fund instead of becoming pastoral charges, through lack of winter work. What is proposed to give needed supply to these fields during winter is a Summer Session of students who would be able to work in mission fields during winter when the summer workers leave the field for the college course in winter. The question is, can such a summer course be given? And would a sufficient number of students take such a summer course for the sake of our mission fields, and the progress and growth of the Church? Let us not doubt for a moment the want of mis-

sion spirit in our students! They will attend. Try them. Is such a Summer Session possible? Such a session has been. For instance, in the "Divinity Hall" of the Secession Church in Scotland, from which many ministers came to Canada. This session consisted of two months for five years. Most of the students supported themselves by teaching schools so that the Hall met during school vacation. The Professors were ministers in charge of congregations. Such as Dr. Balmer, Berwick, Dr. Brown, Edinburgh, Dr. Harper, Leith, and Dr. Eadie, Glasgow, and their pulpits were supplied by ministers during the session appointed by the Synod. There were no college buildings, a church being used such as Brughton Place, Edinburgh. Hence there was little expense. Students having passed their arts course in some University and examined by their Presbytery, being certified were admitted to the Hall and attended the junior Hall two sessions, and the senior three. During the long recess all students were under the care of the Presbytery within whose bounds they resided.

Such a course would not be in all its details fitted for Canada, but it may show what a Church may do to meet the urgency of a case. A three years' course in Theology would be better, and that, say, of five months, say from the middle of March to middle of September, which would be equal to our winter course of six months, minus the Christmas vacation, and would give time for students to exchange field for college or college for field without leaving the fields vacant. Since writing the above for your paper I have read the Rev. Dr. King's letter in the issue of 11th ult., which it is hoped will be read, admired, and acted on by Presbyteries in considering the Remit. It seems to open the way. There is a spirit of self-sacrifice in that letter that must be admired in our successful Principal of Manitoba College.

A PRESBYTERY CLERK.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

MR. EDITOR,—It is as certain as any fact can be—and proved by all history—that the safety of every state and people depends upon the purity of family life and the honour existing in married life between the sexes. Now whilst we have many things in the Dominion of Canada to regret—among them the looseness of political morals among politicians at Ottawa lately proved—yet as a people, especially in Ontario, our family homes are virtuous and parents strive to bring up their children in a religious way as a general rule. It is not so in many parts of the neighbouring American States. This is owing to the non-observance of the Sabbath laws and the looseness of life among married people—in boarding-houses and hotels. This looseness has no more sure proof than that lately shown by one of their eminent professors and pastors wherein it is publicly stated that within twenty years there have been 328,788 divorces in various States in the American Union. During the same period in the Canadian Dominion (wide and extensive as it is and varied somewhat in population) there have not been fifty divorces granted in our Senate. Divorces are not encouraged, whereas in the United States they are encouraged.

This fact calls for loud comment and solemn observation amongst our people. It shows how undesirable it is for us to become politically connected with so adulterous a people as the Americans are. We may well pray for them and hope God will open the eyes of that people to the final result of such things. We know how many good men and women there are in American States, but are sorry to say, as compared with the majority, they are few. I have cut from that very superior paper, the *Chicago Interior*, the following item, showing the religious state among young men of that city. There is a great deal of religious work done in Chicago, but what is the general character of the population?

"The 'Illinois State Notes,' a Christian Association publication, makes the following statement and estimate: 'In the city of Chicago there are 181 evangelical Churches. Recent enquiries were sent to all of these, asking for the total membership of the Church, the number of male members, the number of young men between the ages of sixteen and forty, and the number of boys below the age of sixteen. Replies have been received from sixty-one, fifty-seven of which report 3,906 young men in membership. As twenty-three of the Churches reporting have a membership of 400 or over, it seems but fair to regard them as fully up to the average of the Churches of the city in membership. Taking these figures at their full face value the average is sixty-nine young men to each Church, as reported. Provided the same average were maintained throughout all the Churches of the city, there would be found but 12,500 young men in the combined membership. From the census it was shown that one-fifth of the total population were men between the ages of sixteen and forty. Certainly Chicago has as high a proportion, for 220,000 young men, of whom less than 12,500 are connected with all the evangelical Churches combined—five and two-third per cent. of the young men in the evangelical Churches, scarcely more than one in twenty.'—*Interior, September 3, 1891.*

We see out of 220,000 men of a certain age only 12,500 are connected in Chicago with the evangelical Churches.

Now we doubt it will be found that there is a similar state of things in other large American cities. What can be said of New Orleans, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Detroit, Buffalo, New York and even Boston? I attribute this state of things to

the influence of immoral European populations in part, and more to the state of family home life and the divorce system in vogue. There is still another fault, and that is the want of deep spiritual appeals by the ministers in their Churches against adultery and vicious habits. The Roman Catholic Church now so large in the United States increasing all the time, has also added an increase to vice. No country thoroughly under the Roman Catholic religion was ever moral. Witness Italy and Spain of old and the South American republics now. What can be said of them?

We have abundant reason to thank God for the faithfulness of our Canadian Gospel ministers generally. Yet we reasonably expect more devotedness even from them. Then we reflect how God has denounced adulterous conduct among the Jews of old and all heathen nations how pure and holy the religion of Jesus is—how imperative the Old and New Testaments are as to these doctrines and for the sacredness of family life, the obedience of children and the constant remembrance of God in prayer. We as a people should be watchful that our country shall not decline in the love of God. It is far better for us to be less in population, not so fond of gold and riches, but pure at home. The Jews failed as a people in not observing the moral law. The old nations, like the Syrians, Babylonians, Egyptians and Romans, came to a speedy corrupt end by their adulterous and corrupt family life. Modern European nations are threatened with the same evils. Only their great armies preserve peace. The remedy is trust in the religion of Jesus—guarding family life—appeals from the pure and evangelical pulpits of all countries. As we sow we will reap as private people or nations.

CHARLES DURAND.

Toronto, November, 1891

THE PROHIBITION MOVEMENT.

MR. EDITOR, The Prohibition petitions presented to the Commons at the last session have not been without effect. Temperance people however should not rest satisfied with the temporary advantage but should follow it up with greater effort. Sir John A. Macdonald indicated the line of action when in addressing a temperance delegation he said, "If I should accede to the request of these petitions I shall alienate many voters. Can you give me reasonable assurance of increased support to counter-balance this loss?"

The Licensed Victuallers' Association with the 50,000 votes at its command rules Canadian politics and dictates to both political parties. It would transfer its entire support from one to the other in twenty-four hours if either should kick over the traces. The politicians realize this and candidly declare it political suicide for a party to take a stand that will alienate the support of the liquor association. Neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives as a party support the traffic as a matter of choice but of necessity. If a party were sure of receiving the support of 50,000 temperance men to counteract the loss of the liquor vote, affairs would assume a different aspect. The country is not ready for Prohibition, and it never will be till 50,000 prohibitionists can be counted on as safely to vote their principles as the votes of the liquor men can be counted on where the interests of their traffic are concerned. Fifty thousand electors pledged to "Prohibition first, Politics afterwards" means the death knell to the accursed traffic on Canadian soil. Fifty thousand pledged electors to counteract the 50,000 votes controlled by the Licensed Victuallers' Association will solve the problem of this century. Fifty thousand Christians who place the cause of God above the cause of party can surely be secured. If not, God help us. The *Canadian Voice* has taken up the work with a willingness which shows its inclination to branch out on broader lines than those laid down by the so-called Third Party. It agrees to print and furnish, free of charge, the following pledge for circulation by Churches, Temperance Societies, and Clubs:—

PLEDGE.

"We the undersigned electors, being profoundly impressed with the need of greater purity in Canadian politics, and conscious of the aggressive power of the liquor traffic and the overwhelming evils—political, industrial, and moral—growing out of it, believe that a strong influence would be exerted upon public sentiment and a long step taken towards the eradication of these evils if the enemies of the liquor traffic would present as united a front as the liquor dealers do when their business is attacked. We therefore agree hereafter to vote only for such party as shall make a total Prohibition of the liquor traffic a plank in its platform, and in the execution of this pledge promise to work on such lines as shall be determined upon by a majority vote of a Prohibition Convention to be called for that purpose, provided the signatures of 50,000 voters be secured to this pledge."

No one is bound until the 50,000 signatures are secured, after which each will be notified, and a monster convention called at some central place to map out plans for future work.

This is the natural outcome and supplement of the Petition movement.

Who will assist in carrying it forward?

Amherst, N.S.

J. BRYNTON.

SIR WILLIAM MACKINNON has given \$1,500 to the building fund of the new Free North Church, Inverness.