

THE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

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A CHANGE OF BASE.

OUR readers will have noticed that the Rev. T. M. Reikie, and the Rev. J. R. Dickson, are leaving the Congregational communion, and are knocking at the doors of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Mr. Reikie was for many years the pastor of the Congregational church in Bowmanville; but since his resignation of that charge has had no opening among our churches for his labors. Mr. Dickson has had two charges among us, the first in London, and the second in the Northern Church, Toronto, which he has just resigned.

The change in the ecclesiastical relations of our two brethren suggests a word or two of comment. Both these brethren have stood up more than once to enunciate and defend our principles of Independency. Our records contain several sermons and addresses delivered by our brethren—notably at the meetings of our Associations and Union—which are more or less thoughtful expositions of the views peculiar to our churches. How the change has come about in their opinions, whereby they are able to forego the principles for which they have hitherto battled, and accept others radically opposed to them, will give rise to various conjectures. How Mr. Reikie can renounce his Independency for which he pleaded so strongly at Guelph a few years ago, and embrace Presbyterian control, against which he is as strongly inveighed, remains an unsolved problem. And how Mr. Dickson, who has been the redoubtable champion of Morrisonian tenets, flavoured with a considerable amount of Plymouthism, is now prepared to promulgate Calvinism, and subscribe to the Westminster Confession, which has been his *bet noir* up to the present, is alike incomprehensible. Perhaps, however, the reason advanced by James Russell Lowell in his "Bigelow Papers" is a good one:

"A merciful Providence has fashioned us hollow,
On purpose we might our principles swallow."

We have heard that our brethren have found difficulties in their late relations, which have caused their Hegira to the Presbyterian fellowship. This is very likely. We would be exceedingly foolish to deny that there are difficulties in the practical workings of Congregationalism. But there are no more—if as many—difficulties in our system as in those we oppose. Has the Methodist itinerancy no unpleasantnesses? Is it all loveliness in the Episcopal ranks? Can Presbyterianism present an undisturbed front to the world? The fact is, there are drawbacks and hindrances in all our systems, in that to which our brethren have gone, as well as in that which they have left. But after all, does it savor more of manliness or cowardice to flee from difficulty? Which is the better man, he who lets

go his oars, throws up his hands, and cries, "All is lost;" or he who clings to the oars, and tries to bring the boat through the surf, to the safety of the landing? It is not hard for common-sense to decide.

It is, however, better that a man should retire from a fellowship from which he has grown out of sympathy, than to remain in it and give it only half-hearted affection. So, although we regret the step which our brethren have taken, in one sense, in another sense it is the wisest they could take. We wish them well where they have gone. May they find it a Beulah-land of delight! We wish them full accord with their new-made brethren, without any mental reservation on any of the doctrines of the Confession. And, meanwhile, we shall go on with our work of contending for what we believe to be right. And the flag—which our brethren have cast away for another more highly embroidered—other brave hands will take up, and carry it onward to the victory which we fondly believe will come some day to our simple faith and plan.

It has been a marvel to us for a long time that the majority of the Congregational churches of New England should adhere to the custom of requiring subscription to a creed of applicants for church membership. Congregationalism should occupy the most advanced position as regards liberality, and Catholicity: but it is a fact that New England Congregationalism does not occupy such a position. The Presbyterian church of the United States asks no subscriptions to its doctrinal formularies of its members. Indeed, there is no Presbyterian or Methodist church that attempts such a thing. Is it not time for our New England brethren to change their methods? We know that this creed subscription operates very much against the progress of our denomination in many a quarter.

OBITUARY.

MRS. MARY ANN HOWELL.

In the death of Mrs. Howell which took place on Sabbath morning, Jan. 5th, in the 79th year of her age, we lose another of the early and faithful friends of the Congregational body in Canada. The deceased was born Feb. 22nd, 1800, at Deptford, Eng. She was brought up in the Church of England, her father being an Episcopal clergyman. She was early decided for Christ, and in her nineteenth year, with sixteen others, united to form the Independent church under the pastorate of the late Rev. Joseph Irons at Camberwell. From her marriage in 1821 to the time of her removal to Canada in 1833, she was in fellowship with the church at Peckham under Dr. Collyer. She was for several years an active member of the First Congregational Church, Toronto, under Rev. John Roaf, whose ministry she prized very highly. Upon the removal of her family to Woodbridge, she united with the church at Pine Grove, and remained in this communion for twenty-five years. Returning to Toronto in 1871 she re-united with Zion Church, but in consequence of failing health she could scarcely attend public worship. Her interest, in spite of this, was unabated, and during the past year she received much joy from the settlement of the Rev. H. D. Powis at

Zion Church. After becoming acquainted with him and his estimable wife, she lost no opportunity of commending them to her intimate friends.

On Thursday, Jan. 2d, an attack of congestion of the lungs seized her, and she felt that her end was near. She was undismayed, however, and replied to her daughter, who had expressed a hope that she might be spared, "Whate'er His wisdom sees most fit, must be the best for me and mine."

In the beginning of her sickness she hoped the tempter might not be suffered to buffet her at the last. Her prayers in this were signally answered. In the last twelve hours of her life she gave evidence of her strong faith in Him upon whom she had rested her hopes of eternal life. Her husband who was at her bedside repeated to her the words, "In my Father's house are many mansions," and she continued expressively, "If it were not so, I would have told you." Shortly after she repeated the lines:

"And when I'm to die, receive me I'll cry;
My Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why;
But this one thing I find, that we 'wo are so joined
That He can't be in glory and leave me behind."

Her end was truly peaceful and unclouded, just such an end as one who has lived her life so near to Jesus might be expected to realize. She was greatly gratified in having her children and friends around her in her last moments. On the Sabbath following her decease, her death was improved by her pastor, Rev. H. D. Powis, who preached from Rev. vii., 13 verse.

SOCIALISM is one of the questions of the day; but it is one that is but little understood. It seems to be a frightful thing in the estimation of many. But did it ever occur to our readers that these socialistic ideas are only an outcome—an illegitimate outcome—of Christian truth and principle? There is an element of truth in the mad doctrines of our modern Socialists. And these elements must be admitted and recognized by us. The regeneration of human society, if it is ever to be accomplished, must be effected in Christ's way, by introducing into social, and business, and political life, the principles of human brotherhood and love. "All ye are brethren."

News of the Churches.

REV. HUGH PEDLEY, B.A., will preach in the Northern Congregational Church, Sunday, the 9th inst.

A UNANIMOUS invitation to the pastorate of the Garafaxa and Douglas churches has been given to Mr. Ewing, student of C. C. B. N. A.

FROM Rev. J. R. Black's Annual Address to the Congregational church of St. Catharines, we learn that, notwithstanding difficulties and perplexities, the congregation has increased, and the finances have improved, during 1878. He speaks of 114 sermons preached and 459 pastoral visits made in the year.

ON Wednesday, January 22nd, the teachers and scholars of Bethesda Sabbath School, Oro, presented Mrs. Sanderson, on the occasion of her removal to Danville, Que., with Farrar's "Life of Christ," and Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." These works were accompanied by an affectionate and appreciative address.

THE Mutual Improvement Society of the Hamilton church held their quarterly open meeting in Mr. Edgar's house, Victoria Avenue, on the 20th of January. The programme consisted of essays, readings, music and so on. The pastor, Joseph Griffith, was felicitously introduced by the president, Mr. S. Huxley, and said a few words to the company.

MR. GEO. FULLER, student of C. C. B. N. A., who supplied the church at Lancaster, during his Christmas vacation, has had a pleasing surprise. On the 20th ult., the ladies of the Lancaster church, presented him with a purse of \$40, as a token of their esteem for him, and their appreciation of his labours. Mr. Fuller is doing a good work there.

THE friends in Bro. Robert Hay's field have organized prayer-meetings in preparation for special evan-