

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Proprietor.
Office—No. 3 Jordan St., Toronto.

ADVERTISING TERMS.—Under 3 months, 75 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line; 6 months, \$1.50 per line; 1 year, \$2.50. No advertisements charged at less than 50 lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

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MR. JOHN MACAULEY is our authorized Agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power. Mr. Macauley in all the congregations he may visit.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY MARCH 14, 1883.

DR. COCHRANE has received another contribution of £100 from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (through Dr. Wilson, of Limerick) in aid of Home Missions.

CERTIFICATES, enabling the members of Synod of Hamilton and London to travel at reduced rates will be sent this week (those for the elders enclosed to their respective ministers). Should any not receive them, they will please correspond with Dr. Cochrane.

THE first number of "The Regina Leader" has reached us. It is welcomed with pleasure. Mr. Nicholas Flood Davin publishes an excellently tempered, neat and well written salutatory, in which, we are glad to see, he promises that the influence of his paper will be on the side of religion. "The Leader" is bright and sparkling, undisfigured by slang or vulgarity. The get-up is as neat as new type, excellent paper, and good taste can make it.

A NUMBER of friends have favoured us with excellent papers on various subjects of importance and interest to readers. Our space large as it is, not being sufficient to enable us to overtake these contributions as speedily as could be wished, we are compelled to ask the forbearance of contributors. The increased advertising patronage with which we are being favoured, has necessitated the frequent addition of extra pages so that the reading matter may be encroached upon as little as possible. We may also be permitted to state that we are in receipt of letters from various parts of the Dominion containing flattering expressions of appreciation of our endeavours to make THE PRESBYTERIAN worthy the confidence of the Church, promoter of its true interests, and the cause of the Master. These expressions of kindly interest and good will instead of inducing self-complacency will stimulate to unremitting effort, to advance the high ends for which it exist. The following from a leading minister in Montreal is subjoined as a specimen: "We congratulate you on the growing improvement in your paper. Besides the interesting information you furnish weekly from the Home and from the Missionary churches, there is much spicy and wholesome reading. We like your fresh, fearless, and vigorous editorial notes. May your prosperity continue and increase!"

IS THE MINISTRY A DECADENT INSTITUTION?

MANY United States religious journals are earnestly discussing the prospects of an adequate supply of students for the ministry. Of late years there has in some communions been a marked decrease in the numbers of young men offering for the work of preaching the Gospel. This seems to be a matter of general interest, not only to the Churches across the lines, but in Britain and in Canada as well. In the report of the proceedings of the Quebec Presbytery which appeared in last week's PRESBYTERIAN, there is a resolution bearing on this subject. That Presbytery urges upon its pastors

"To bring this need of our Church before the young men of their respective congregations, that such may be led to study for the ministry, and also before parents, that they may be induced to dedicate their children from earliest years to the ministry of the Gospel, and to encourage them to seek that office; that the present deficiency may be supplied."

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has given

special prominence to the work of providing an educated and efficient ministry. The theological institutions have in the circumstances attained a wonderful degree of development. In Dalhousie, Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, and Winnipeg there are well equipped theological seminaries. Men of scholarly attainments and enthusiasm are to be found in all of them. The youth of the Church have fairly availed themselves of the advantages thus provided. Those entering these institutions have had many encouragements to help them through their college terms. While in the past there has been little room for complaint as to the adequacy of the supply, the rapid growth of the Church is such that unless there is a largely increased attendance at our theological colleges, the present rate of supply will very soon fail to meet the requirements of the new fields of labour constantly opening up. The expected influx of settlers into Manitoba and the North-West will for years to come tax to the utmost the Church's resources.

Among the many suggestions offered for meeting the difficulty it is satisfactory to notice that there is no desire to dispense with any of the recognized ministerial qualifications. There are no efforts to decry an educated ministry. It is still one of the prime requirements of the sacred office. In these days of hypercriticism an illiterate and narrow-minded ministry would fall to obtain a hearing. Still less can earnestness be dispensed with. To reach men's hearts as well as their understandings is of the utmost consequence, and unless a man's soul is aflame with earnest devotedness to the cause of Christ there will be no satisfactory response. It is not of the ministry as one of the learned professions that we here speak. For those who view it in that light chiefly its claims will rise and fall with the remunerations it brings in the market place. In this age, as in past ages, the work of the ministry demands life-long consecration, and requires many sacrifices.

One of the prevalent complaints is that the best and most distinguished of our university students are too seldom found devoting themselves to the study of theology. Supposing this to be the case, what is the explanation? Are other spheres of activity so much more attractive? Would we be justified in concluding that these young men are too worldly minded, too much captivated by the glitter of worldly ambition to enter on a career that calls for a life-long exercise of self-denial? To come to such a general conclusion would be ungenerous and unjust. The question again recurs why this disinclination of so many of our gifted young men to prefer other vocations to that of the ministry? Above all why is it that so few comparatively who have been born and trained in our manes desire to follow the life work of their fathers? Are such questions as these capable of satisfactory answers?

The suggestions contained in the Quebec Presbytery's resolution are worthy of careful consideration. The first commends itself unqualifiedly to judgment and conscience. A pastor has many opportunities of observing the qualification and inclination of young men in his congregation, and though his judgment may not be infallible, he can do an important service to the cause of the Gospel in enlisting the enthusiastic devotion of ingenuous young minds in the noblest of all pursuits. Besides he may by his counsels and sympathy be eminently helpful to such. The other suggestion, that addressed to parents, is excellent in its way, but it has its limits. Dedication from earliest years sounds well, yet it would seem better to dedicate them to God for whatever sphere He designs them; and then, if they show aptitude and predilection for serving Him in the Gospel of His Son, well and good. Parents are fond; their geese are mostly all swans. From this overweening belief in the exceptional brilliancy of very commonplace children many heart-aches and painful failures have arisen. Christian parents ought neither to do nor say things disparaging to the office of the ministry. If they respect that office themselves their children will. They could also use all reasonable endeavour to guide the choice of their sons for the work of the ministry, if possessed of the qualifications of head and heart. That choice, however, to be worthy must be voluntary. It would be a poor consolation for a mistaken calling to reflect that it was entered on in deference to a father's urging or a mother's pleading.

To be an ambassador for Christ is one of the noblest works a young man can undertake. To speak the words of eternal life to the people of one's own gener-

ation is a work and a privilege an angel might desire. Divinely called and endowed men will arise as they are needed. There has been an unbroken line of faithful witnesses, even in the darkest ages of the Church's history. Her Divine Head is not to forsake her now. Let the Church realize her responsibilities. The field is white unto the harvest. Let her pray in faith and He will send forth labourers into His harvest; and the right men, too, will be forthcoming. "Lord here am I, send me," will be the willing response from many an ardent and loving heart.

FRENCH AIMS IN MADAGASCAR.

PRETEXTS for French intervention in Madagascar have directed general attention to that interesting island. Within the last century the French have made occasional, though feeble, efforts to obtain a foothold among the Malagasy tribes. Occupying the islands of Reunion, Ste. Marie, and Nosibé, they have made several attempts to obtain a portion at least of the principal island. Since the failure of their Tunisian enterprise, and the withdrawal from the Egyptian complication that led to the recent campaign, French national vanity has been wounded, and there has been a vague and erratic desire to rehabilitate their lost prestige by interference in the affairs of Madagascar. The French press has failed hitherto to give reasons sufficient to justify so grave a procedure as the commencement of a war with the Malagasy. To forward their designs they have been endeavouring to stir up tribal jealousies on the island. The most numerous tribes are the Hova and Sakalava, with several smaller clans that have long since ceased to be influential. The first named are the governing tribe, and the latter, though possessing several tribal rights of self-government, accept the sovereignty of the Queen of the island. To foster rebellion among the Sakalavas seems to have been the policy recently pursued in order to afford a colourable pretext for interference in the affairs of Madagascar. The Malagasy Government are anxious to avert what they have good reason to fear would prove a national disaster. Nor is it at all certain that the Sakalavas are disposed to welcome such questionable champions as the French. The rulers of Madagascar have sent an embassy to France and England. Their reception in Paris was far from reassuring, and there is no evidence that their mission there has been helpful to the cause they came so far to plead. In England they were welcomed by various representative bodies and some of the most distinguished personages. Whatever may be the political results of their visit to England, they have obtained earnest expressions of sympathy, and the most friendly assurances from members of the English Government.

While disclaiming all designs of acquiring ascendancy in Madagascar, English people naturally have a keen interest in the question now raised by the recent action of France. It would be difficult to find a parallel to the rapid advances of civilization and religion that have been made in Madagascar within the last sixty years. In 1820, under King Radama I., missionaries sent by the London Missionary Society began the work of Christianizing the people. Making Antananarivo, the capital, their headquarters. The king was favourable to their undertaking and the work of enlightenment advanced with great rapidity. These missionaries reduced the language to writing; the Scriptures were translated; schools established, churches formed, and the industrial arts of civilization were introduced. Queen Ranavalona, succeeding to the throne on the death of Radama in 1828, was bitterly hostile to Christianity, its teachers and its followers. During her reign a relentless persecution was directed against the Christians, in which Ranavalona took a terrible interest. The fidelity to their faith, and the unflinching firmness with which many of the converts faced a martyr's death, bore testimony to the genuineness of their convictions. Over two hundred perished in the persecution while it lasted. She was succeeded by Radama II., a weak, vicious, and vacillating ruler who fell under the influence of designing Frenchmen, by whom extravagant concessions were fraudulently obtained. The people, on learning the danger that threatened, rose in revolt against the king, in which struggle he lost both his throne and his life. The present Queen Ranavalona then succeeded, and the cause of religion and civilization has advanced with wonderful rapidity since her accession to the throne. The changes wrought are marvellous and