

# THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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## Notes of the Week.

A party of six missionaries for Africa and two for India, connected with the Presbyterian Church North, U.S., sailed lately. A large company of friends of Foreign missions, which taxed to the utmost the capacity of the new Assembly room in New York city, gathered on the evening before their departure, to unite in a farewell service, and bid the noble band of missionaries God-speed. The President of the Board, Rev. John D. Wells, D.D., who has just celebrated his eighty-third birthday, and has been for more than forty years a member of the Board, presided.

A very sad illustration of the dangers and risks attending bicycle-riding by those who are not young and active, is given by the death in this city last week of a worthy minister of the Methodist Church, Rev. Dr. Shaw, Assistant Foreign Mission Secretary. The accident happened on the 15th ult., and is partly ascribed to the fact that the deceased, being very deaf, did not hear the car approaching by which he was struck, and from which he received injuries which resulted in his death. The notice of his life and work recalls a past phase of a minister's labours in Ontario.

"The early years of his ministry were full of pioneer experiences in the backwoods circuits. He used to prepare his sermons while riding about from one appointment to another on horseback."

Every loyal Canadian will welcome with all his heart, every measure that will tend to bind us more closely to the Mother country and to our sister colonies in the different parts of the widely extended empire of which we form no unimportant part. Every thing that brings us more closely together, in lessening distance and time between us, helps to this great end. The Colonial Conference was a most significant event and it is beginning to bear fruit. The Pacific cable scheme and a line of fast Atlantic steamships, now giving signs of materializing, are the latest fruits. *The Times* has published an article on the Pacific cable and the proposed fast steamship service to Canada direct. It says the success of the movement is largely due to Canada. In both the steamship and the cable schemes the principle is recognized that in order to have British connection exclusively, the line must, in the first instance, be carried westward from the centre. By the acceptance of this principle, Canada obtains a position she has never occupied before, as the main highway of the British Empire.

The long and most closely watched Hyams' case has at length come to an end, so far as the murder charge is concerned, by their acquittal by the jury. No trial that has taken place for a long time has excited so wide and deep an interest. The verdict will no doubt be regarded very differently by different classes of minds, but no one who has read the Judges charge will be at all surprised at the verdict being such as it is: that the accused were not guilty of the dark crime with which they stood charged. No one who has followed the proceedings can fail to be struck with the ability displayed on both sides, the immense mass of evidence presented, all to be sifted and weighed, and the patience and labour bestowed upon the case by all concerned. Looking at this, and the necessarily very perplexing effect upon untrained minds, however honest, of such a mass of evidence on both sides, almost wholly circumstantial, and the difference of opinion among medical experts, it almost inevitably follows that the ordinary mind must, if leaning is shown by the judge at all, be swayed powerfully in its decision by that leaning. The more prolonged, perplexing and intricate the evidence is, the more must this be the case. In spite of the acquittal, there will no doubt be very many who

will still regard the brothers as guilty men. They were promptly re-arrested upon other charges and the result of the trial upon these will no doubt be followed with eager interest to the end.

How deeply the interest of the country is turned toward the present Manitoba School Question is shown in the election campaign now going on in North Ontario. The one point which in interest eclipses all others, is the stand the respective candidates are prepared to take as to enforcing or not enforcing the remedial legislation for the relief of Roman Catholic citizens in Manitoba, which, should the Government of that Province not grant of itself, the Federal Government has pledged itself to introduce. While no one could be blamed for not pledging himself beforehand to the details of a measure not yet agreed upon on this subject there should, after the matter has been so thoroughly discussed in all its bearings as it has now been, be no quibbling, or evasion, or hesitation, on the part of any man of any party, asking to be elected to Parliament, in the statement of his convictions, and the course he is prepared to take, on the vital matter of sacredly guarding Provincial autonomy in matters which are undoubtedly within the powers of a Province to legislate upon.

The case of the man Holmes would, under any circumstances possess a gruesome, ghastly interest on its own account, but it possesses all the more to Canadians, because it was in Toronto that the consummating evidence of the man's guilt was found. Appeal for a new trial was at once taken by his lawyer, and, after full consideration of the reasons for a new trial, this has been refused, and the refusal agreed in by all the judges before whom the cause was heard. The reading of the reasons against a new trial occupied an hour and concluded as follows:

"Upon the whole case we are convinced that, the Commonwealth proved such a chain of circumstances as lead irresistibly to the conclusion that the defendant did kill and murder Benjamin F. Pietzel in September, 1894, as charged in the bill of indictment. If Pietzel had committed suicide and the defendant simply tried to conceal the suicide, it is not probable that he would have fled from the city. Flight is the act of a guilty man, and not the act of a cunning man. Being firmly convinced of the guilt of the defendant we approve of the verdict and refuse a new trial."

Appeal has been taken to the Supreme Court. This is all right. Justice never wears such solemnity and majesty, as when it is the final issue of every means that could possibly be taken to make it clear that, in the end it is absolute and impartial.

Presidential messages to the Congress of the United States are always important documents—sometimes of course more important than at other times. That just sent to Congress by President Cleveland has been looked forward to with somewhat more than usual interest. Probably the most important matter treated in it, certainly the most so to his own country, is the currency question which is still a very vital as it is an unsettled question. Points especially of interest to us, because of our connection with the Mother Country, are: the boundary dispute between Venezuela and Britain in which the Government of the Republic is taking a rather officious and one-sided interest as against Britain, in pursuance of what is called the Monroe doctrine; and the Behring Sea award, over which Uncle Sam grumbles not a little, and in which he does not follow the example set him by Britain some years ago in the famous Alabama case. With reference to these matters, while there is more or less difference of opinion in the English press, there is yet a somewhat general feeling that the tendency of the government of the United States, as represented by its President, is

to render scant justice to the claims of England and take every possible advantage on the side of those who are against her. Some war talk has been indulged in by hot-brained men. We cannot believe in any such eventuality; but even the thoughtless talking and writing of it is scarcely less than a crime of the first magnitude.

With its last issue in last month our contemporary *The Week* enters upon the thirteenth year of its publication. We may be allowed, as approaching our quarter of a century, to congratulate our confere on entering into its teens. *The Week* frankly admits that, like almost all other literary ventures in a new country, comparatively, as to its literature, it "has had its ups and downs, its difficulties and its disappointments," and it also is true, as it claims, "that it has won for itself a high and firm place in public estimation, and has attained withal a very respectable age. We congratulate the editor and proprietors of *The Week* on feeling "justified in believing that it never stood so high in the opinion of Canadians as it does to-day, whilst abroad it is now generally recognized as a national journal, expressing the educated and independent thought of the Dominion." We agree with this journal when it says that "*The Week* has helped many thousands scattered far and wide over this broad land to feel a deeper consciousness of the brotherhood of the Canadian people, and the great part that is theirs in the British Empire." The aim of *The Week* is a most worthy one, one which every Canadian will wish to see crowned with complete success—"To strengthen the ties which unite us to our Queen, to promote Canadian unity and loyalty, to quicken our political and literary life, to make more strong and energizing the fibres of common interests and common sympathies, to unite all who love to work in the service of our country, is the task that is given this journal to do, and earnestly would we appeal, after these twelve years, for the co-operation and hearty support of all our fellow-countrymen in the achievement of so great a task."

A contemporary refers to an article published lately in the *Montreal Star* on the Manitoba School Question in which it is said that—

"The attention of the country was called to the startling fact that there is now every probability that our fiscal policy for five years will be decided, and our national Government chosen, largely with reference to the stand taken by our public men on the question whether less than four thousand children in Manitoba shall be educated in this or that kind of school."

This is a most misleading way of putting this question. It is not really "whether less than four thousand children in Manitoba shall be educated in this or that kind of school." That is only an incident arising out of the real question, which is, whether the right of a province to legislate in a matter which has been declared to be *intra vires* is to be respected, or at the demands of political or any other kind of exigencies of either party, one as much as the other, is to be trampled upon. If the latter is declared to be the case, then the beginning of the end of Confederation has been entered upon, unless the powers of the Federal and Provincial Governments are more distinctly set forth and agreed upon. Nation-building is a large undertaking, and difficulties may be expected to arise from time to time which will try the patience, temper and wisdom of our people, and through successful trial, cultivate amongst us those qualities which make a people strong and great. We have little fear but that a basis of agreement will be reached in the end, and in order to reach it, instead of standing upon their dignity, and refusing any concession, both the Dominion and Provincial Governments would get honor and praise by putting forth their best united efforts to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the present grave difficulty.