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The Canada Presbyterian

O. BLACKETT ROBINSON, MANAGER.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 31st, 1895

IF our Canadian poets do not stop quarrelling about the merits of their work, somebody may be tempted to ask whether any of them are poets. That question goes to the roots.

THE Irish Home Rulers showed that they cannot govern their own tempers, and John Bull concluded that if they cannot govern themselves, it would not be safe to trust them with the government of Ireland.

THE "sweat box" is fast becoming the leading feature in the administration of what they call justice in the United States. The operation consists in putting a person suspected of crime or even a witness into a cell and brow-beating and bullying him by a lawyer or detective for four or five hours. Signs are not lacking that the "sweat box" will soon become, if it has not already become, an Ontarian institution.

THE Liberal party in England is not merely defeated it is almost annihilated. It went to the country too closely allied with Home Rulers, Socialists, Labour candidates, and we know not how many other kinds of people. A church composed of Episcopalians—high, low and broad—Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, and a hundred other denominations, would be about as effective as Lord Rosebery's party, and it would probably meet about the same fate.

THE Halifax *Witness* does not show its usual wisdom when it takes seriously the report started in Toronto by a Roman Catholic paper that Knox College received from the Mowat Government lands in Muskoka to the value of \$300,000, and "soon to be worth a cool million." There is no such land in Muskoka, and if there was, Knox College would be the last institution in the country to get it. More than that, if it were offered, Knox College would not take it.

A WRITER in *The Ladies' Home Journal* says:

I want a minister who will preach the gospel, and not politics, prohibition, sanitary science, etc. Ministers who think to draw people by preaching everything but the gospel make a great mistake. There is nothing that draws like this "old fashioned gospel."

Had the writer said there is nothing that wears, or nothing that draws in the long run like the preaching of the gospel we could add our hearty amen. Stern facts, however, show with painful clearness that sensationalism often gains temporary triumph over good gospel preaching. The crowd is fickle and often vulgar, in its taste. The morbid craving for something unusual, something startling, something that will amuse and entertain is continually increasing and intensifying; and the worst feature of the case is that it seems to grow faster in places that call themselves the "centres" of intelligence than in any other.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT must be a manly kind of temperance man. He lost his election in Derby mainly by the beer vote, but he has got a seat in another constituency and stoutly declares that he means to stand by his Veto Bill. That is the kind of temperance man we like to see.

WHAT has Ontario done that we should be threatened with the duty of trying the alleged murderer Holmes. Surely we have criminals enough of our own to try. The spreading out of that man's alleged crimes in sensational columns before the people is something to be dreaded.

THE ecclesiastics who make violent attacks on the Ontario school system do not show much skill in selecting weak points. A generation has grown up since Free Schools were established. Instead of attacking the children, why not ask what kind of men and women the system has produced. Are those people who crowd to hear trials for murder or violations of the seventh commandment, fair specimens of our school training? Are the men and women who would turn a hanging into a holiday, were the hanging public, natural products of Free Schools? People not by any means pessimists believe that under our school and college systems there has been a steady deterioration going on in our public men for many years. It would be interesting to hear the Minister of Education try to show that the present Ontario Legislature is not the poorest for twenty years. There are many questions about our school system more important than the existence of Separate Schools about which we hear so much.

IN a recent paper Professor A. B. Bruce, of Glasgow, says:—

The vices springing from clerical ambition are more than can be numbered. Among them are restless discontent and neglect of duty. The man who is in an obscure position wants to be in one of greater prominence and influence, I do not say of larger income, for money considerations are not as a rule the dominant ones, nor are they most to be dreaded. How few can honestly sing or say:—

Content to fill a little space

If Thou be glorified.

And when this contentment is lacking, what neglect or perfunctory performance of duty is sure to prevail! Slackness in study, half-hearted preaching, routine pastoral visitation, or no visitation at all. It is not thought worth while to work in earnest in such a small place, to put soul into work, to do one's very best. Wait till I get a larger sphere, and then I will take off my coat and show you what I can do. Foolish as well as undutiful. As if the best road to a large sphere were not loyal, manful, devoted service in a small one, as if that were the only place you were ever to fill. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things."

It may be taken as an axiom that no pastor can do his best work in a congregation that he considers a mere stepping-stone to a more prominent sphere. But how often do congregations by hero-worship of prominent ministers tempt their own pastor to desire a more prominent position. He sees his people lionizing, perhaps without much cause, some minister who has attained to nothing more than newspaper distinction, and he says to himself, "it is much more pleasant to be lionized than ignored. I'll try and get into a position in which I can be lionized too." Who can blame the man if he does at times feel that way. Congregations often help to create the clerical ambition that makes their own pastors restless and neglectful of duty.

THE "GLOBE" ON FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

FIRST and last, the *Globe* has taken a good deal to do with the French in Quebec. It has thundered against priestly interference in elections, has had much to say about the subject of schools, has denounced the extravagance of its government, and forcibly protested against its efforts from time to time to get "better terms," and been indefatigable in its endeavours to teach benighted Quebecers, and defend sound political doctrines. That is all right of course; only narrow bigots could object to such conduct, and anyone who would be so thin-skinned as to take offence at the methods of the *Globe* and the political and economic missionary efforts and undertakings of itself and others, were deserving only of ridicule if not of contempt. But of late our powerful and able contemporary has become solicitous about French Evangelization, and, strange to say, that course, of whose correctness and wisdom no doubt ever crossed the *Globe's*

mind when employed in reference to any other subject, becomes at once all wrong when applied to the comparatively unimportant matter of religion. That is, to use the press, the school and the living voice, and active personal effort to give our French Roman Catholic fellow-citizens in Quebec what a great many believe to be more correct and enlightened views with respect to religion and spiritual truth, is a piece of effrontery, and little, if any, better than an insult, but these same means are rational, are patriotic, and noble when employed to teach what the *Globe* and many others believe to be sound and enlightened political and economic truths. We confess that we do not ourselves see any good ground for making such a difference; but accepting the kind of argument adopted by the *Globe*, we need not trouble ourselves, because it never will be guilty of insulting us, as Protestants do Roman Catholics, as it says, when they attempt by reason, argument or persuasion to change their views and show them a more excellent way. It might lead to "bad feeling" and the use of unseemly language a thing of which our esteemed contemporary has never been guilty.

When last it wrestled with this subject a few days ago, it made a valiant attempt to blow both hot and cold. It began by vindicating in a mild way the social and intellectual character and standing of Protestant ministers of Ontario, against certain supercilious and offensive remarks, should one choose to notice them, of a Dean Harris, when comparing them socially and intellectually with the priests educated at Laval University. It then turned to the general subject of one religious denomination engaging in the work of converting another, and the evil results to good feeling and good manners which follow from such a course. In this connection it quoted approvingly the *Toronto News*, which has undertaken to inform Protestant ministers where they should go to preach, and that the methods they are supposed to pursue are not calculated to advance Christ's kingdom, and that in effect everyone should be left to that form of worship and system of doctrine to which he has been accustomed, and which accordingly he prefers.

With respect to Dean Harris's indictment of the Protestant ministers of Ontario, a great many of them, we have no doubt, will be inclined to ask, who is this Dean Harris? and not one in a hundred, or ten hundred, will care one straw what is his opinion of their social and intellectual standing as compared with priests educated at Laval or anywhere else. In making such a comparison the Dean excepts himself, of course, and the vanity of the man who sets himself on a level so far, as he supposes, above his fellows, is better left to silence than words of scorn. It is rather a curious commentary upon this opinion that so many thousands of French Roman Catholics in Quebec should have been willing to accept the teaching and follow the leadership of Protestant ministers from Ontario who have gone preaching among them. Evidently their opinion does not agree with that of this polite Dean.

With regard to the *Globe's* argument against French Evangelization, it is quite unnecessary to enter into any detail. It is in substance, that the attempt of one to convert another, that is to change his opinions and conduct in matters religious, is likely to interfere with good feeling and become little better than an unseemly wrangle, and therefore men should be left to hold the doctrines and follow the course of life they have been accustomed to, and which consequently they prefer.

With regard to the first argument, there need be no ill feeling, and no wrangling; for those who do not wish to hear preaching or any views contrary to those they have been accustomed to hold, can stay away. If Roman Catholics choose to attend Protestant preaching, if they even choose to discuss earnestly, warmly if you will, doctrinal differences, surely this does not constitute a wrangle. It is only by such means, by earnest, prolonged discussion and exposition, often unfortunately at the expense of good feeling, that the truth on all subjects has been discovered and propagated. Would the *Globe* say that, rather than this loss of good feeling, it would have been better that the truth remain unknown and untaught? If not so in other matters, then why in religion? Surely it does not mean to say that however it may be in other things, religion is one of such indifference that it is not worth discussing to find out whether there is truth in any religion.