

well excite our astonishment. It is quite clear that the law of marriage in Ontario, as now in the statute books, requires very careful revision, and we heartily commend to the powers that be such immediate action as may best promote the consideration of the subject in the next session of the Legislature.

THE GENERAL AND PROVINCIAL SYNODS.

BY JUDGE ERMATINGER, ST. THOMAS.

Now that the smoke has somewhat cleared away from the scene of friendly conflicts in the Provincial Synod, it may not be unprofitable to look over the field and gauge results. A full week's time of members and a very considerable sum of the Church's money was, or will be, consumed as part of these results. Do the other results compensate for these? Two matters were mentioned by the Metropolitan in his opening address as of importance and requiring to be disposed of—first, the relation of the General to the Provincial Synods, and secondly, the future of Algoma. The last named matter was disposed of, temporarily at all events. That and the amendment of a few canons of not very grave importance are all we can call to mind of the net practical results, so far, of this large gathering of Eastern Canadian Church people. Other matters of practical importance, it is true, were relegated, without discussion, to committees to report at next Synod—remaining virtually undisposed of, so far as the mind of this Synod was concerned. The matter given the first place in importance by the Archbishop was shelved, with the maxim, *solvitur ambulando* endorsed, and without serious discussion. The solvent thus recommended for the inevitable clashing which the overlapping jurisdictions of General and Provincial Synods must, unless re-adjusted, entail, may in the end produce order out of chaos, and harmony out of possible conflict. But are the Church's interests likely to suffer while this slow *ambulando* process is evolving the new state of things? That is a question worthy of consideration. The debates on the subjects of "Marriage and Divorce," "The Revised New Testament," "The State of the Church," and the "School Question," occupied the chief part of the time of the Synod, exclusive of the day given up to the Missionary Society, and the large amount of time spent in settling points of order. The first of the above subjects was sent to the General Synod; the other three might with equal propriety have been similarly disposed of. Upon these and similar general questions the General Synod can speak with authority derived from the whole Church in Canada—the Provincial Synod with authority from only a section of it, and with risk of conflict with the other section, and consequent nullification of the action of the Church in general, not to speak of the waste of time and money consumed in debating questions without practical results. Glance over the whole range of subjects to be dealt with by the General Synod under its constitution, and it will be seen that little is left for the Provincial Synods but the establishing and re-arranging dioceses within the province, a power, expressly and exclusively reserved for the provincial bodies. It is true that a reservation of the jurisdiction of Provincial Synods on all subjects over which they exercised jurisdiction prior to the establishment of the General Synod, was made. Is this anomalous provision to be adhered to? Are the General and Provincial Synods to continue to deal with the same class of subjects—and, if so, which is to be supreme? One member of the Provincial Synod questioned whether the General Synod was as

competent to deal with the subject in hand—the divorce question—as was the provincial body, the greater weight of numbers being instanced as a point of advantage in the latter. Though this member's view did not seem to be shared by many, the incident serves to illustrate the danger to be avoided, if a united Canadian Church is to be preserved. The Church in Canada has been united, and we believe it is the desire of Churchmen throughout the Dominion to keep her united. Only by so doing can she be kept from falling behind the other religious bodies. Only by building up her General Synod can she obtain the influence and pre-eminence which she should possess in the land. If the General Synod be found too small in numbers, the defect can, and will, no doubt, be remedied—much more easily than would a reduction in number, were it already too large. If its meetings are too infrequent, it can meet oftener. No set period has, we believe wisely, been fixed between its meetings. The Provincial Synod, on the other hand, under its constitution, meets triennially. Whether fixed meetings of this body might not, with propriety, be now done away with altogether, is a subject well worthy of serious consideration. At present, it may be necessary that a special session be called at any time in regard to Algoma, or the formation of the new diocese in Eastern Ontario. On the other hand, if no such necessity arise, its regular session might, under ordinary circumstances, be dispensed with, with a saving of time and money as a result—until some such necessity called for special legislation by the Provincial Synod. As it is, a special and a regular session may tread on one another's heels with inconvenient proximity of time. Unfortunately no change in the constitution can, we believe, be made without its being approved at two succeeding sessions of the Synod—which means, possibly, for the space of six years. The possibility of an early special session, however, renders it not inadvisable to discuss the matter, that the special committee to whom this, with other subjects, has been referred, may have their attention drawn to it, together with the views of any who desire to express their opinions in regard to it, and be prepared with a recommendation whenever called for. The Synod of Huron has already embodied its opinion in favour of the abolition of regular sessions of the Provincial Synod, in a memorial already in the committee's hands. The question of the proposed division of the present ecclesiastical Province of Canada into three provinces, with boundaries corresponding with those of the civil provinces (the Maritime Provinces to form one, and Ontario and Quebec the other two), has also been referred to the same committee. Legislation in this direction may be advisable and convenient, while the same argument may, and probably will, still apply in favour of the abolition of regular sessions of the provincial bodies. The Diocesan Synods will, for the despatch of the duties connected with their local and temporal needs, no doubt require to meet annually as heretofore. The General Synod will probably meet not less frequently than once in three years. That is the term fixed between its first and second sessions, and, if the practice of other religious bodies be any guide, that term is more likely to be shortened than lengthened in the future. Considering these things, and considering further the greatly lessened call for action upon general subjects by the Provincial Synods, and the intermittent character of their specific duties in regard to the erection and re-arranging of dioceses—is it, or is it not, too much to expect Church members to tax their own

and the Church's resources, of time and money, to provide for regular periodical sessions of Provincial Synods? That is the question we should like to hear discussed—such discussion having no reference necessarily to the Province of Rupert's Land, where, we believe, special conditions prevail which do not exist in Eastern Canada. One provision in the constitution of the General Synod may be thought to prevent the abolition of the regular meetings of the Provincial Synods—that provision which makes it necessary that Canons of a coercive character must be adopted by the Provincial Synod before becoming operative within an ecclesiastical province. Such Canons will, however, it is to be hoped, not be numerous, and may, if not of paramount importance, perhaps with advantage await the accumulation of business sufficient to call for a special session of the provincial body, or if of pressing importance, may of themselves justify such a session being held.

BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW - ONTARIO PROVINCIAL CONVENTION.

The local committee in charge are sparing no pains to make this convention, to be held at Toronto, October 25th, 26th and 27th, an extremely successful affair. Several members of the Brotherhood in the United States outside the set speakers have signified their intention of being present, and special letters of invitation have been sent to a large proportion of the clergy throughout the Province of Ontario.

Emphasis is laid upon the fact that any layman or clergyman taking an interest in the aggressive work of the Church is welcome at the Convention, if he comes in any way accredited by his Rector. The programme committee have had several meetings and have succeeded in filling up the names to take the different conference addresses, amongst them being such well known names in Brotherhood circles as Mr. R. V. Rogers, Q. C., of Kingston, Judge Senkler of Perth, and the Reverend J. C. Roper of Toronto, and several others besides those already announced on the programme as published. The Brotherhood men in the Maritime Provinces having held such a successful gathering, should be a sufficient incentive to the Ontario men to turn out in large numbers.

REVIEWS.

BILL PRATT, THE SAW-BUCK PHILOSOPHER. An appreciation of the Life, Public Services, and Speeches of one who for over half a century ministered to the entertainment and edification of the Students of Williams College. By John Sheridan Zelle, of the Class of 'Eighty-seven, and Carroll Perry, of the Class of 'Ninety. Williamstown, MDCCCXCV.

It is not easy to bring this book within the range of ordinary criticism, as the subject is in so far unique, and restricted in its interests to one narrow area, but at every college there is always some Bill Pratt, who lives in the memory of the oldest men. It is fortunate that here we have authors whose associations with their subject are recent, intimate, and on the kindest footing. They have photographed the man and his foibles with a masterly touch, and in all his eccentricities have never made him lose our respect. We close the book with a feeling that we really wish we had seen him and heard but one specimen from his ponderous vocabulary—a vocabulary so characteristic that the enquiry into the history of its formation is one of the most interesting chapters in the book: to a stranger the favourite oratory must have been more than unintelligible. The volume is handsomely got up in antique style, liberal margins, uncut edges, and fanciful title page. The following is from the time of the Civil War: "The farmer in whose employ Bill was, had recently received a bad injury to his leg, and able only to hobble about. One day, being alone in the field, out of sight and hearing, Bill, after a good look around him, said in a low tone, 'Gosh! Dan, they ain't no use your limp'in'—not way out here: I won't say nothin.' We mention this merely to show that while Bill was harmless as a dove, he was not lacking in a certain sagacity."