

**Christmas Boxes.**

Whether the result of old age pensions or of general social unrest, there is no doubt that in the Old Country there is a growing disinclination to give Christmas boxes. If and when the demand is confined to people, who, like postmen, are fairly entitled to consideration, people are, as a rule, very ready to keep up the old practice, but where the demand is wholesale the refusal is apt, like the demand, to become unreasonable. The Christmas box and its abuse is very old. In the fifteenth century it had become such a nuisance in the City of London, according to the old records, that an ordinance was passed in 1419 forbidding "any valet or other servant of the Mayor, Sheriffs or City thenceforth to beg for money from tradespeople at Christmas time under colour of an oblation as heretofore they had been accustomed to do with threats or promises."

**Criticism of Sermons.**

There is plenty of criticism in these days of preachers and sermons, but far too little criticism of those whom our Lord held up as the first objects of criticism. We must never forget that the Lord's first parable was that of the sower, and there attention is focussed, not on the sower, but on the kind of soil on which the seed fell. Canon Newbolt, in a splendid sermon on this parable, reminds us: "When St. Paul preached at Athens his sermon was a comparative failure. And when we consider the attitude of his hearers, is it to be wondered at—'What will this babbling say?' 'Some mocked; others said, we will hear thee again of this matter.' 'He seemeth to be a setter forth of new gods.' Was there likely to be any crop in hearts which withheld so completely the moral confidence which a noble nature will give to an earnest man?" Much of the present-day criticism of the Church and pulpit is irrational and unscriptural, because it ignores this fundamental truth, that much depends on the state of the hearts of the hearers. Our Lord in His first parable laid the emphasis on hearing, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

**Opportunity.**

To many of us life lacks the power and influence for good that would have been possible had opportunity been keenly looked for and quickly and deftly used. The game of life brings but little profit to the listless onlooker, the man who is mainly content to stand at the street corner and look on at the passing throng. If he but knew it, most of those he sees hurrying to and fro are people who are either looking for opportunities or taking advantage of them. And the unexpressed but insistent message to be gathered from the thoughtful gaze and moving form is, "Go thou and do likewise."

**Honesty in Trade.**

The recent reference by a Dominion official to part of the product of a Canadian cheese factory being found short in weight gives point to the advice given from time to time to our producers by the press to be honest. The dishonest dealer, like the unscrupulous partizan writer, is a blot on his class and his country. The evil influence of such men can hardly be computed. The wise man never wrote a truer word than this: "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord." The honour of the country demands that our Government should make the burden of the man with the "false balance" so heavy that he should be compelled, even against his own will, to put in its place a "just weight."

**Political Manners.**

The political contest in England, whatever in other respects may be its consequences, has produced one very bad effect. It has lowered the style of address and the language used by the

speakers. Even in the House of Commons and out of it the example set has been deplorable. Poor men have been encouraged to believe that it is the duty of the well-to-do to support them. Classes in the community have been held up as objects of general detestation. It is one thing to point out wrong principles if they are wrong, or to show how the customs of society bear hardly upon one class in it. But the old style of statesmen were able to do so with withering oratorical invective. Now, the leaders employ denunciation, not oratory, and resort to abuse of everyone who presumes to differ from the placeholder or to defend an institution which stands in his way. Such a descent cannot stop with the introducers.

**An Oxford Story.**

From the last number of the "Periodical," from the press of Henry Frowde, amongst several diverting references to Vernon's "History of the Oxford Museum," if the "Churchman" may be permitted to repeat a bit of humour, we reprint the following: "Mr. Tuckwell recalls Daubeny as 'a little, droll, spectacled, old-fashioned figure in gilt-buttoned, blue-tailed coat, velvet waistcoat, satin scarf, kid gloves too long in the fingers, a foot of bright bandana handkerchief invariably hanging out behind.' His portrait is certainly reminiscent of Mr. Pickwick's immortal features. . . . A story is told of an occasion when the professor, holding up a vessel, thrilled his hearers by asserting that it contained a liquefied gas, and that, if he were to drop it, the gas would vaporize, and they would all be immediately suffocated. The next instant the vessel slipped and crashed to the ground, but—nothing happened. 'John, why aren't we all suffocated?' demanded the professor, and John had to confess that before the lecture he had substituted distilled water for the dangerous gas." How well this graphic story illustrates the positive good of the timely exercise of the sense of humour, even when brought in to play by a learned professor within the walls of an old, historic building and under most trying circumstances.

**Early Rising.**

The proposal to go earlier to bed and rise earlier by putting on the clock, and so deluding people into better habits, having fallen flat, we are glad to find that the principle still finds favour. Dr. Matthew Hay, the Medical Health Officer of Aberdeen, suggests in his annual report, that those in charge of offices and workshops where sedentary occupations are carried on should arrange to commence work in the summer months an hour sooner, finishing an hour earlier. He claims that there would be a great gain in health for the employees. If that is to be expected in Aberdeen, with its cool climate and long summer days, a similar change should be still more beneficial where the summer days are sultry, yet the nights and evenings as a rule pleasant and cool.

**The Chili Arbitration.**

The newspapers announce that the King has placed in the very capable hands of Lord Macnachten the unravelling of the twisted skein which the Governments of the United States and Chili have placed in his hands as arbitrator. The leading facts, we gather, are: Bolivia in 1876 borrowed a sum of money from Alsop & Co., a firm doing business in the countries on the west coast of South America. To secure this debt Bolivia hypothecated part of the customs receipts of the port of Arica and granted to Alsop & Co. the right to work the silver mines in the Caracoles district for twenty-five years. Of the receipts from this mine sixty per cent. went to Alsop & Co. absolutely and the forty per cent. was to be applied by the firm on this debt. After a war Chili occupied Bolivia's place. Since then

there have been endless negotiations, which proved abortive until the present treaty, the Government of the United States standing in the place of Alsop & Co. and Chili in that of Bolivia. The original amount was 835,000 Bolivianos, then each worth about a dollar, now a little over thirty cents.

**British Temper.**

Could it be possible for any other than British people to pass through the great and trying ordeal of their present political struggle without bloodshed and civil war? It is, indeed, evident that the fused races of which they are composed, their vast and varied experience in government, and the splendid balance maintained by their spirit of fair play and just dealing have largely contributed to this admirable and beneficent result. History in the making is largely the product of the historical experience of the past. It is a sad confession, but it seems as though some of the greatest triumphs of liberty could not have been attained without the shedding of blood. The French Republic is traceable to the French Revolution, the freedom of the Southern negro issued from the internecine struggle of the North and South, and the Constitution of South Africa is the product of the Boer war. We of the great Empire have just reason to be thankful that the British temper—so determined and unyielding when fully roused, is so largely controlled by the love of liberty and the spirit of justice.

**THE PRACTICAL TRAINING OF MEN FOR HOLY ORDERS.**

The training of all professional men falls into three divisions, viz., the educational, the theoretical or technical and the practical. In other words, it is required of a man filling, say, the position of a physician, lawyer or clergyman that he shall have a "liberal education," shall be thoroughly trained in the general principles of his work, and have some experimental knowledge of its actual conditions and requirements. Of the educational standard required for candidates for the ministry we recently spoke; of their theoretical training in standard theology we do not purpose to speak in this article. It is with their practical training that we purpose at present to deal. Do our candidates for Holy Orders, as a rule, get anything like an adequate practical training? We very much fear they do not. A generation ago, as a rule, to which, indeed, no exception ever came under our own notice, they received scarcely any at all. Thirty or forty years ago the training of the candidate for the ministry was wholly scholastic and theological. He absorbed a certain amount of classics and divinity, got his commission, and stepped into the arena. Matters, no doubt, have improved since then. The very general employment of students as lay readers has helped a good deal, not to the extent that might naturally be imagined, because the young divinity student taking Sunday services or in temporary charge of a parish stands in a special and exceptional relationship with the congregation, and is as likely as not to imbibe some radically mistaken notions, which later on he finds he has to unlearn. But, of course, we will not attempt to deny the obvious fact that this practice of sending out divinity students has its uses and advantages. A young man learns how to conduct the services of the Church, conquers the tendency to "stage fright" and self-consciousness, which is so painfully apparent in young beginners in England, who seldom have any preliminary training of this kind, and it certainly gives a young man an insight into the routine of parish work. But on the whole at least as valuable, if not more valuable, practical training can be given within the four walls of the college. What of elocution? Thirty years

ago it was divinity colleges but of sympathy as our own little or not read the there it be This, it seems if only in their distinctness mannerism conditions in the Orders t again, in as a rule are quite sometimes quently le vet to learn been reduced, as taking st be called, done for date argu mental, s be "dug champions nition bei which, in foundly i word, is Holy Orde wish to scholastic By all ma possible, trained cl plication the portant, l yet being men are find out unfortuna

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