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## The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 13th, 1892.

WE have not seen anything from the versatile pen of Dr. Cochrane more vigorous or more timely than his recent sermon on "The Negative Theology and the Larger Hope." Ministers who use their pulpits to undermine their own Church are handled without gloves, as they richly deserve to be. The Doctor is clearly of the opinion that a minister of the Gospel should have at least as much common honesty as a politician or man of business. There was ample room for a few sledge hammer strokes on this point, and the Doctor has delivered them in good style.

A LITTLE over a year ago the cry of everybody was "if we don't have rain the crops will be ruined." The rain came and instead of ruin we had the most bountiful harvest for years. A few days ago the cry was, "if the weather does not dry up the crops are ruined." The rain has ceased and the prospects for a bountiful harvest never were brighter. How would it do if people would stop growling when the weather does not suit them and allow the Almighty to have something to do with the government of His own world?

WHATEVER may be thought of Home Rule no one can doubt that Gladstone is the most striking personage of this or perhaps any other century of British history. His splendid powers seem unimpaired at eighty-three. Even his silvery voice has all its old resonance when he is roused. Some of his campaign speeches equal any of the best efforts of his long life. If he wins he will owe his victory as much to British admiration of pluck as to any love that Britons have for Home Rule. The Grand Old Man should stop writing on theological topics and give the world a book on "What I know about keeping young at four score."

THE delegates sent by the General Assembly to the Pan-Presbyterian Council are fairly representative, but, though that may be true, one cannot help regretting that some of the best-known scholars in the Church have no seats. Principal Dawson, Dr. Kellogg and Prof. Campbell have a world-wide reputation for scholarship in certain lines, but not one of the three is a delegate. The morning after the recent County Council elections in London the *Times* observed that there is no use in asking why people mark their ballots in any given way. The observation may be somewhat cynical, but there is a good deal of truth in it. There is never much use in asking why individual or ecclesiastical bodies vote as they do. The Assembly itself could not give any reason why Principal Dawson is not a delegate. It just happened so. Perhaps nobody noticed that three men well known by their books

on the other side of the water were not appointed. Voting, especially voting in a hurry, is often a very unsatisfactory business.

CHARGES of plagiarism are running riot in England. A short time ago Dr. Woods, the new Secretary of the Congregational Union, was charged with appropriating a large part of a sermon published by Dr. Dykes. Dr. Parker was one of the accusers. Now the London *Christian World* charges Parker with taking the introduction to his "Apostolic Life" from Dr. Plumptre, and a correspondent says he took a large part of the commentary on the first chapter of Acts from the same author. Another correspondent charges him with taking the matter of a published sermon from Addison. The most noted case is yet to be mentioned. Lecky, the historian, says Gladstone stole a passage from one of his books. Lecky should consider himself the most complimented man in the Empire.

IN a vigorous article on the Report on the State of Religion presented to the General Assembly, the *Halifax Witness* disposes of the paragraph on ice cream about as successfully as an average member of Assembly can dispose of the cream itself. Our contemporary declares that the Assembly "never yet has missed its ice creams"—iced-cream by the way is the proper expression—and therefore should not condemn congregations for having an occasional iced-cream "social." The point is well taken. If the Assembly ever met and parted without partaking of iced-cream and strawberries, it was because nobody offered the fathers and brethren a feast of these popular delicacies. In '89 the Supreme Court actually adjourned and went across from St. Andrews Church to the Lieut.-Governor's grounds to do justice to vice-regal iced-cream and strawberries. One prominent member of the Assembly declared the feast was the only government "pap" he ever received. Doubtless dozens of others might have said the same thing. It is quite easy to say far too much about the little receptions that our ladies hold at this season of the year. If such things are wrong, or even inexpedient, the Supreme Court should set a better example to the people.

THOROUGHLY trustworthy statistics, recently published, show that one half the population of the State of Maine never attend church, and in fifteen counties of the neighbouring State of Massachusetts about three hundred and fifty thousand people never darken a church door. Maine was once a church-going State, and Massachusetts was the home of the Puritans. How did those people lose their church-going habits? Were the Churches to blame, or was it the fault of the people, or were both partly to blame? We have often wished some competent journal would go into this whole question and state the causes that have emptied so many New England churches. Are any of the causes at work in Canada? We could easily name Presbyterian congregations that are not as strong now as they were thirty years ago. Some of the old settlers have died, some have moved away and the young do not fill their places. Why? Various reasons might be given. Does the Church keep as watchful an eye on its growth in some places and decrease in others as it should do? The General Assembly heard the other day that in an important part of the Church there was a decrease of over five thousand, but the Assembly did not spend ten minutes looking into the matter. Shall we go on until we become like Maine and Massachusetts?

THE *Christian at Work* asks: "What is to be done next" in the way of resisting the liquor traffic, and among other replies receives this one from the veteran temperance reformer, Dr. Cuyler:—

After forty years of hard work in the good cause I have reached the following conclusions:—

1. Stringent law for the suppression of all dram-shops—when backed up by the majority of the people in any locality—is the most effectual method of dealing with the drink-curse.
2. I agree with D. L. Moody's late declaration at Edinburgh that "a dead law is worse than no law."
3. There is too much reliance on legislation to remove the terrible curse. And there is too little moral and educational effort to break up the drinking usages. We need more of the old-fashioned total-abstinence organizations and more suasion work in pulpits, Sunday schools, and press and platform. There is not enough moral steam to drive our machinery.
4. We must fight the bottle in social life as well as the accursed saloons.
5. Our "third party" brethren must stop denouncing all temperance men and women who prefer to fight the drink-curse outside of their regiments.

6. Millions of dollars are being made by medicines and nostrums for "curing drunkenness," but very little money is spent in teaching people not to drink at all. Total abstinence as a prevention is worth all the nostrums yet invented.

The next thing done will not be any more successful than some of the last things done, unless temperance men stop quarrelling among themselves and agree upon one issue and one alone. Why in the name of common sense should a great cause be hitched to female suffrage and other questions on which temperance men disagree?

THE news received every day from the old land increases one's admiration for British institutions, but it puts Canadian politics in a very unpleasant light. There is a breadth, and a manliness and an amount of fair-play and good nature about the contest now going on in Great Britain that is unfortunately unknown in Canada or the United States. Though the contest rages under the very shadow of the throne there is scarcely a word about "loyalty" or the "old flag" or anything of that kind. Loyal himself, an Englishman takes for granted that his neighbours are loyal also. The non-resident cry is unknown. Any number of Londoners go down into the provinces as candidates, and there does not seem to be a word said about where they live. Large numbers of Englishmen contest Scotch constituencies, but no racial cry is raised. Many Canadians are under the impression that the ordinary British elector is entirely under the power of the aristocracy. All that is pure fiction. Our former Governor-General, the Queen's son-in-law, went down in Bradford the other day just as easily as a plain man would have done, and perhaps more so. We do not hear a suggestion of bribery or corruption of any kind. Perhaps not one candidate out of the hundreds running has promised his constituents anything in return for their votes. English members of Parliament legislate for the Empire. There may not be a protest in the 670 constituencies. Of course a few of the boys in Ireland are having a little diversion, but that is inevitable, and no doubt the "scrimmages" are greatly exaggerated. After all, Great Britain is the only country in the world in which popular government is thoroughly understood and fairly worked.

DR. WILLIS used to speak about a class of commentators who look difficult passages of Scripture boldly in the face and pass on. Our General Assembly seems to be slightly afflicted with the same kind of weakness. The census returns, if correct, show a somewhat serious decrease during the last decade in the number of Presbyterians in the Maritime Provinces. The Convener of the Home Mission Committee explained the decrease by saying that the census of 1881 was not correctly taken, absent people having been reported. It never seemed to dawn on the good brother's mind that all the denominations were taken in the same way in 1881 and in 1891, and that in his own Province of Nova Scotia three denominations increased considerably during the decade, while the Presbyterians decreased 3,536. The explanation explained nothing. The Assembly either looked at the difficulty silently and passed on or passed on without looking. Nothing was said. Inequality in giving has almost grown into a scandal, but the Supreme Court never looks at it. One Presbytery gives at the rate of \$28 per member for all purposes, and another at \$7.63. One gives \$25 per member and another \$6.77. Dr. Torrance makes the inequality painfully evident in his admirably-arranged statistical tables. The Assembly never says anything to the six and seven dollar Presbyteries. Dr. Torrance pointed out a serious discrepancy between the census returns and our own figures—a discrepancy which shows there is something wrong somewhere, but the Assembly had no time to discuss any theories on a question of that kind. If Churches are made up of people and if the Church cannot exist without people, it might be well to ask where the three thousand Nova Scotians have gone, and also to discuss the whereabouts of the two hundred thousand the census enumerators find that the Church does not find.

## FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

THE Report of the Board of French Evangelization presented to the last General Assembly was more than ordinarily encouraging in its tone. The hopefulness of the report was amply borne out by the facts and statistics it contained. The address of Mr. Bourgoin, principal of Pointe-aux-Trembles School, produced an excellent impres-