

**THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.**

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 1883.

THE "Scotsman," published in New York, with other decided improvements, appears in a handsome new dress. It presents a large weekly budget of well selected news, interesting to Scotchmen and their descendants. They are a reading as well as an ubiquitous race, and the "Scotsman" deserves a wide circulation.

SINCE the days of the late Dr. Burns probably we have had no minister in the Church who has less patience with ministerial inefficiency and incompetency than the present Moderator of the Assembly. The following tribute paid by Dr. Cochrane to his brethren in his twenty-second anniversary sermon is therefore of all the more value:

"It has been my lot," he said, "to know much of the lives and labours of the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Canada during the past twenty-one years, and I unhesitatingly declare and testify that for courageous endurance and steadfastness of faith and purpose, for self abnegation and self sacrifice; for all that constitutes moral heroism and manly struggle against manifold obstacles, the calendar of saints contains no grander names. Such men deserve, and shall yet receive, better treatment at the hands of their Master than has been accorded them by their fellow men. The world in this instance, as in many others, only knows its real benefactors when they have gone. Then it rears its monument, and laments over the prophets whom it stoned or starved."

It has always been pretty much that way. If congregations always spoke as kindly of their ministers as they do after they have moved or died, there would not be so many short pastorates, and perhaps not so many funerals. It does not help a minister any to speak well of him when you walk behind the hearse that carries him to the grave.

THE Presbyterian ministers of Chicago have given up preaching an "action sermon" in connection with the Communion, and declare that they find it more profitable to devote the time to "prayer, praise, remarks on the sacrament, silent meditation and thanksgiving." We know of two congregations in our own Church that tried this plan. The minister, office-bearers, and most of the members in one of these congregations declared that they found the Communion service, without a formal sermon, most delightful and profitable. In the other it was considered a great failure, the minister and people declaring that a sermon was needed to put the people in a proper frame of mind for the Communion. Of one thing we are thoroughly persuaded—the action sermon should be shorter than an ordinary sermon. The special service of Communion Sabbath is not preaching—it is the Communion. Few things mar a Communion service more than to begin the celebration of the Supper at the time the people usually go home. There is no use in saying that our fathers often remained until four o'clock. We must deal with people as we find them. The people who talk about our fathers would not wait till four o'clock themselves. The real question is, what is it best to do now and here?

ARE NOT ministers themselves a good deal to blame in some cases in which they are badly treated by their congregations? Do they always enquire into the record of congregations before appearing as candidates or accepting calls? Here are two vacancies. The one treated their last minister handsomely; the other treated their last minister badly—perhaps cruelly. Probably the one gave their minister a fair retiring

allowance as things go; the other turned them out in his old days as callously as an old horse is turned out to die. Is it not a notorious fact that as many preachers will appear as candidates for the pulpit of the congregation that treated its minister badly as for the other? Before the mangled remains of the abused minister have been dragged from the scene, perhaps fifty candidates are clamouring for a hearing in his pulpit. Only one of them can get it. Can any one pity him if he too is harshly dealt with? Perhaps we judge uncharitably. Probably the reason why preachers desire congregations of that kind is because they have a burning desire to convert the people who treated their last minister so badly. Possibly. Intense zeal of that kind, however, usually seeks a foreign field. Would it not improve matters all round, if every preacher who thinks about getting a hearing, would ask this question—"How did they treat their last minister?"

**THE LICENSE BILL.**

IT is particularly unfortunate that in Canadian politics there should be so much trimming. There is far too much attention directed by politicians to the immediate effect of certain measures, and too little regard to the ulterior consequences of time-serving legislation. The anxiety of party leaders to control the votes of opposing interests is discreditable to them and humiliating to the country. The effort by one party to secure at the same time the support of Orangemen and Roman Catholics, leads both to ludicrous and disappointing results. A higher style of statesmanship would not be bad for Canada. A line of political action that had more respect to the good government of the country, and less for sectional interests that are clamorous, defiant and subservient by turns, would create confidence in the wisdom and integrity of our rulers, and better laws would grace the statute book. Unhappily we have the same confusion entering into temperance legislation at the present moment. Scripture tells us that we cannot serve God and mammon, but some people in these enlightened days think it worth while to make the attempt. The votes of temperance men are well worth having, so are the suffrages of those engaged in the strong drink traffic. But to get both these to unite their votes in the interest of a particular party is a consummate piece of statesmanship. And this adroit endeavour has led up to the present effort at temperance legislation. That the result will be satisfactory to any party, or what is of more importance, to the community at large, is what nobody at present pretends to believe.

There are certain public questions the consideration of which ought to be kept outside of strictly party lines. Surely temperance is one of these. Eminent temperance men are to be found in the ranks of both our great political parties, and others, whose eminence is the other way, occupy seats both to the right and left of the Speaker. It is really hard to understand how a question of such immediate practical importance to the entire community should be made to serve the ends of political parvenuship. Such, however, is unfortunately the case at present. The measure now under discussion in the House of Commons may be helpful to the cause of temperance, not so much for what it may enact, for it seems so far a piece of patchwork, a kind of eclectic incoherence that for the most part leaves legislation restrictive of the liquor traffic pretty much where it was before, with the added confusion of making more pronounced the apparent antagonism between Dominion and Provincial jurisdiction. This antagonism will inevitably lead to a demand for more advanced temperance legislation than we have yet seen. It will lead people to insist that the prerogative of legislating on this question shall be clearly defined. If authoritative enactments restraining the sale of intoxicants are blocked by rival legislatures, the people will see that this rivalry is brought to a speedy and satisfactory termination.

Another result may also be confidently expected from the present untoward effort at temperance legislation. It will give unity to the aims of temperance workers throughout the Dominion. Public opinion on the drinking usages of society has undergone a marked change for the better within the last few years. What was regarded with indifference a short time since, is now condemned. The dreadful effects of intemperance are no longer ignored. It is conceded on all hands that it is destructive of the best interests of the in-

dividual and the community. The ruinous consequences of indulgence in strong drink are rousing public sentiment against a traffic that has not a single redeeming feature. Restriction is all but universally admitted as absolutely indispensable. Many earnest temperance men and women are far in advance of mere legislative tolerance for a trade that is so destructive of the best interests of society; they are prepared for prohibition. That is the next phase of the temperance agitation. These temperance reformers will not rest contented with any measure short of prohibition. That may not be obtained speedily; but it will be obtained, perhaps sooner than the most sanguine now expect. The cause of temperance has never receded. Many a moral enterprise has had its dark days, and its best friends have had their fits of despondency, but the temperance movement has, particularly of late years, been advancing with accelerated pace. If the public sentiment goes on deepening and extending as it has done within the last few years, it would be a wise thing for those who have capital invested in a doomed traffic, to transfer it with all convenient speed to other and more honorable and beneficial enterprises. The present License Bill may be disappointing in itself, but it is destined to lead to results over which the friends of moral progress will have good reason to rejoice.

**THE POPE AND IRELAND.**

OF TENER then once in these columns the opinion has been expressed that the priesthood in Ireland has to a large extent been responsible for the disaffection existing in that distracted country. That it should be so is comprehensible enough. Many of the priests of the Irish Church have sprung from the peasantry. Around the turf fires in the humble abodes of their infancy they have heard many legendary tales that roused resentment against the Saxon. Traditional hatred was easily imbibed, and strong prejudices continued to colour all their subsequent thinking. Their after studies did little to remove these prejudices. Liberal ideas they had been taught to dread. Again it was supposed to be in the interest of the Romish Church in Ireland to keep the mass of the people in a state of chronic disaffection, thereby rendering it more easily to obtain governmental favours for the Church. The personal influence wielded by the priest over his parishioners was of the most direct and powerful kind. Inclination and interest alike prepared the average priest to wink at, if not to encourage, a revolutionary spirit amongst his flock.

In the present agitation many priests and several bishops have been conspicuous in the ranks of the Leaguers. On the other hand there have been those who stood aloof and some have even gone the length of discountenancing the rebellious inclinations of the Irish leaders. It has been known for many months that the Pope looked with displeasure on the more violent aspects of the Irish movement. He has addressed occasional words of caution which have not been received with the docility with which Papal utterances are usually regarded by the adherents of Rome. Now he has spoken out in clear and forcible expressions his disapproval of the course pursued by the agitators, especially does he condemn the collection of a fund for the Parnell testimonial. This has carried consternation into the camp. Indeed several of the leaders have spoken of His Holiness in a manner by no means respectful. They tell him in effect that they are willing to receive their theology, but not their politics from Rome. Some are threatening to withhold Peter's pence. The circular has exploded like a bomb in their midst. What the mass of the Irish Roman Catholic people will think of these things it would be difficult to say. They have much to think of just now. On the one side their political leaders are urging them on in the direction of rebellion. On the other they see at last the ghastly results of the defiant crime to which reckless men were hurried by designing knaves. The gallows is getting its grim work to do, and the black flag flutters in the breeze before the eyes of thousands. But if their leaders audaciously question the wisdom of the infallible head of their Church in warning them against certain courses of conduct, how long will their questionings be confined to the sphere of practical politics. If it be competent to reject with contumely the political teachings of the Vatican why may it not in time become legitimate to criticise the spiritual teaching of Leo XIII?