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The Canada Presbyterian.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, MANAGER.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14TH, 1894.

THE Home Rule members of the House of Commons are now divided into McCarthyites, Healyites, Dillonites and Parnellites. In the business of splitting up they almost rival Scotch Presbyterians.

IT is not a little ominous that the bill in favour of taxing churches has been introduced by one of the two P. P. A. representatives in the Legislature. Is the taxation of church property one of the planks in the P. P. A. platform? It is not easy to see how Protestantism can be helped by taking churches out of the long list of exemptions and taxing them.

THE economy cry furnishes an excellent opportunity for the agnostic and the infidel and every other enemy of Christianity to make a determined assault on the church under the guise of an attempt to abolish tax exemptions. Church property is but a small fraction of exempt property, but the assault is always on the churches. Decent men who are in favor of taxing churches must sometimes feel uneasy when they think of the company they are in.

GLADSTONE got a mandate from the British people to pass a Home Rule Bill. The Grand Old Man fought his measure through the Commons in the face of tremendous opposition and never gave up the struggle until nature failed. The United States Democrats got a mandate from the people to reform the tariff and after haggling over the bill for weeks, arranged the duties to suit a number of themselves. The difference between the Grand Old Man and the American Senators is the difference between a statesman and a politician.

ONE of the methods used to impress clergymen with the power of the P. P. A. is to inform them that influential men in their own congregations belong to the mysterious order. The inference of course is obvious. There are, we hope, not a few ministers in the Presbyterian church who do not propose to be frightened by any such thinly veiled threats. It would be interesting to know if the clerical members of the order approve of this method of menacing their brethren. If they do they deserve a heresy trial much more than any higher critic in the country.

THE selection of Rosebery for the Premiership of England furnishes a fine illustration of the fact that you never get everything exactly right in this world. Rosebery is a model statesman, but—a but must always be put in—he is a member of the House of Lords. Had he a seat in the House of Commons the selection would be just perfect in the judgment of the Premier's friends and in the opinion of no small number of his opponents. Statesmen, how-

ever, especially British statesmen, are practical, sensible men and they do not expect absolute perfection even in a Premier. The only people that expect absolute perfection are small congregations that pay the minimum salary or less. They always want an absolutely perfect pastor.

THERE has been a good deal of comment on the modest way in which the *Globe* spoke about itself and its record in its semi-centennial article. The article was refreshingly modest. But, after all, the *Globe* is not tempted to "blow" as some journals are. It is easy to refrain from speaking about yourself when any number of other people are doing the thing for you. Edward Blake does not need to tell anybody that he has handled a number of important briefs in his time. Sir Oliver is under no temptation to swagger about the number of elections he has carried even if he were capable of swaggering. Gladstone does not need to tell anybody that he has made some good speeches, nor John Hall that he has preached a number of sermons that his congregation seemed satisfied with. The *Globe* has passed the "blowing" point.

HELPING the deserving poor seems easy until you try it in a winter like this one, in a large city. The first duty is to select the deserving poor from the alleged poor who ought not to get anything, or at most get very little, and that little not for long. You have not wrestled with this problem for any length of time until you find that the most acute suffering is generally the kind that tries to conceal itself. Ostentatious poverty takes care of itself and approaches you without any ceremony; the kind that almost prefers death to publicity, has to be sought out. When you have found it, new problems arise. How much can be done to help without breaking down the self-respect of the recipient, and turning a man temporarily poor into a confirmed pauper. How can work be provided for the unemployed without attracting a crowd from other places? Any number of questions continually arise and the citizen who honestly tries to solve them, soon finds that distributing charity in an intelligent and conscientious way, is no easy problem.

THE temperance cause never was in a more hopeful condition in Ontario than it is at the present moment. The different sections of temperance men are in co-operating humour. The Government is pledged to prohibition. The people have asked prohibition by an immense majority. Thousands who marked their ballots for prohibition did so for the noblest of reasons, the welfare of their weaker brethren. Thousands are willing to accept on account of their fellow-men what they do not personally need. A vast majority of the people, in fact nearly all not specially interested in the liquor traffic, are willing to give prohibition a fair trial. It is the easiest thing imaginable to spoil all this and send the cause back fifty years. Just threaten to turn men out of the church of God if they do not take the pledge, or raise a big fuss about the strength of communion wine, and all the advantage gained during the last few months may be worse than lost. Men who voted for prohibition on public grounds, some of them against their feelings, if not against their conscience, will rise in thousands against any attempt to turn them out of the church they love and have helped forward for many a day.

REFERRING to our Separate schools, the *Christian at Work* says:—

Canada, we imagine, would do much better to take up with the American idea. That idea is that it is the province of the State to furnish secular instruction; that to the support of that instruction every taxpaying citizen must contribute, regardless of creed or sectarian preferences; that the school funds are an inviolable tax never to be divided or diverted to sectarian purposes; and lastly that no taxpaying citizen must be relieved of his school tax because of sectarian preferences. This is the American idea, and we hope to see that idea incorporated in the amended Constitution of this state.

It may indeed be the "American idea" that the State should furnish secular instruction, but a good many Canadians agree with that distinguished American, Dr. Charles Hodge, in holding that it is primarily the duty of the parent to educate his children, and that he may do so by the State if he thinks proper so to do. Anyway, what would Canada gain by adopting the "American idea." Are your boys and girls, Mr. Christian-at-Work, any better than ours? Do you find that the purely secular system makes young America a model youth? In another column of the same issue you ask:—

What is to be done to bring decent conduct and gentlemanly behavior back to our institutions of learning, and to rescue them from the awful gulf of blackguardism and recklessness into which they have fallen, is one of the burning questions of the day. Colleges and universities will suffer if this misconduct be not suppressed. Less license must be permitted, otherwise sensible fathers and mothers will be compelled to deny collegiate finishing to their growing youth, and sacrifice literary acquirements in order to save them from becoming rowdies and outlaws.

Were these boys who got the institutions into the "awful gulf of blackguardism," trained according to the "American idea?" Manifestly they were "regardless of creed and sectarian preferences."

GLADSTONE.

THE retirement of Mr. Gladstone from the public arena in which he has so long played so distinguished, and in every way so worthy a part, when over four-score, only under the pressure of infirmities which his splendid constitution has so long withstood, after having rendered his country for two generations services such as no other man has ever done, is an event at once pathetic, suggestive and inspiring. As we watch the receding figure and compare it now with what it was sixty years ago in its outward appearance, as we reflect upon the unparalleled services which he has rendered his country and mankind, and see the universal respect or admiration and good wishes which follow him into his well-earned repose, we say again that there is in the picture a great deal that is pathetic, suggestive and inspiring. It recalls the memory of the past and of the many great men who were his contemporaries and fellow-workers in the cause of human weal and of his country's good, but who have all before him passed away beyond that "bourne whence no traveller returns." Not only this, but although all would wish it delayed as long as may be, we know that what remains of time for him can only be short, and for one who has spent so long and busy a life to withdraw into quiet and retirement at four-score and four suggests strongly that last event which comes to all.

"Who is the champion? Who the strong?
Pontiff and priest, and sceptred throng?
On these shall fall
As heavily the hand of death,
As when it stays the shepherd's breath
Beside his stall."

Looking over all his labor and work that he has done, the times that he has lived in, the great events of which he himself has been so large a part, one cannot help being struck by his splendid mental endowments, both natural and acquired, his great capacity for dealing with, and his mastery of affairs, his unequalled genius for government. Mr. Field, of the New York *Evangelist*, referring to a conversation he at one time had with Mr. Bright about Gladstone, says, "Then you look upon Mr. Gladstone as the first of living statesmen?" "Oh, dear, yes! there is no one to be mentioned beside him." Every statesman of the type of Mr. Gladstone, of far-reaching and far-seeing views, seeking not simply to serve a sovereign, but to serve his fellowmen, of the most elevated moral character and ideals of what he owes to God and man, is necessarily greatly limited in his work by the baser material with which he has to deal, so that what he has done is often only a small instalment of what under more favorable circumstances he would have done. Mr. Gladstone has often in his speeches dropped hints of work for the good of his country and of his kind that should be done, which he would have liked to do, but for which the time was not yet ripe. Hence the noblest lives are often, compared with their own ideals, the most fragmentary and incomplete, and therefore to themselves the most unsatisfactory.

Splendid as his mental endowments and equipment have been and still are, they have been greatly aided and ably ministered to by a physical constitution almost unique in its quality, its elasticity and power of endurance. Again and again it has been a marvel to see how he could bear up under the terribly exhausting demands of the cares of state, and with what wonderful rapidity and buoyancy even in old age, he would after a short rest appear again upon the field fresh and bright, and more youthful than many of not half his years. Even now with care, humanly speaking, there may be years before him of a happy, hale, far advanced age which it will be the wish and delight of millions in every part of the globe that he may enjoy.

But, above all, that which, having the qualities referred to, especially his high mental endowments, has enthroned him in the hearts of millions, and has given him capacity for such noble service as he has