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THE MONTH.

IN the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, the Report of the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission has been discussed. The resolution agreed to by the Lower House in a previous Session as to the Episcopal veto, was carried unanimously. In an interesting speech the Bishop of Norwich suggested that some sort of council should be associated with the Bishop in regard to the exercise of the veto. Touching the Court of Appeal, the Bishop of Lincoln's amendment was rejected by 13 to 3. It ran thus :

"That this House, while recognising the duty of maintaining the constitutional exercise of the Royal Supremacy in causes ecclesiastical as well as civil, is of opinion that for the final determination of questions of doctrine and ritual, the advice and concurrence of the Bishops of the province in which the suit arises, or of a majority of them, shall be necessary."

A similar amendment by the Bishop of Lichfield was also rejected, by 13 to 3. The Bishop of Gloucester's proposal was agreed to, by 14 to 1, viz. :

"That in cases of appeal to the Crown for the maintenance of justice in cases involving the doctrine or ritual, it is desirable that the opinion of the Bishops of the province in which the suit arises, or, if thought desirable, of both provinces, shall be required in the specific points of doctrine or ritual which are involved, and that such opinion of the said Bishops should be made public."¹

A remarkable speech by the President closed the debate. He touched upon a vulgar error as to the Final Court in the Church of Ireland,² and spoke strongly in regard to a spiritual Court of Appeal :

The Church of England, said the Archbishop, never had a clerical court at the head of affairs, and he thought it never ought to have. It certainly would not now have it, and whenever a clerical court had been very nearly at the head of affairs then ruin to the Church had been very near, and in two or three instances it had followed. While property to so large an extent, and civil *status* did depend upon the decision of the

¹ The resolution of the Lower House was this : "That, in accordance with the constitution of this Church and Realm, the right of appeal for the maintenance of justice in all ecclesiastical causes lies to the Crown : but the House cannot acquiesce in the principle of a final settlement of questions involving doctrine or ritual by a lay court, which is not bound in all cases to consult the spirituality (as defined by Resolution Eight, passed by this House, February 15, 1882). And this House is further of opinion that a decision in respect of such questions, which had not received the sanction of the spiritual authorities, could not be regarded as the voice of the Church." The Bishop of Gloucester's amendment was to omit the words after "Crown," and add, "but that in cases"

² "The Church of Ireland," said the Archbishop, "was not connected with the State, and yet the Court of the Church of Ireland at present consisted of five—one Archbishop, one Bishop, and three laymen. In

uppermost court, they certainly could not hope, and he should be extremely sorry if he thought that anyone would hope, that the deciding power might be a clerical one. He thought it would tend to pour corruption into the Church sooner than anything else that there should be a clerical court to decide upon questions of property and civil *status*.

On the motion of the Bishop of Gloucester, resolutions in regard to a Board of Missions were agreed to.

A report of a Committee on the formation of a Provincial House of Laymen was considered ; resolutions (we gladly note) were agreed to and sent down to the Lower House.

In the Lower House, the Chairman of the Committee on the Election of Proctors brought in the report ; it was suggested that, instead of 48 Proctors for the clergy, there should be 104.

There was an interesting discussion on Friendly Societies and Thrift.

In a debate on the Ecclesiastical Courts, the following resolution, moved by Canon Gregory, was carried :

" That his Grace the President be requested to authorise the Committee on Church and State to confer with a similar Committee, appointed by the Convocation of the Province of York, to consider the best mode of complying with the suggestion of the Upper House, to draft canons for strengthening the paternal authority of the Bishop, and for supplying the means of direction and arbitration on doubtful points of ritual without resorting to litigation."

The Lower House adhered to its resolution on the Final Court. The difference between the Houses, it will be seen, is that the Lower House refuses to accept a Lay Court which is not bound, in cases involving doctrine or ritual, to consult the spirituality. Their Lordships say : " *It is desirable that . . .*" A compulsory reference which shall also be conclusive, has, in certain quarters, been pleaded for ; the majority of the Lower House, however, would not go so far as this. But even a compulsory reference (which is going beyond the Report) is never likely to be granted by Parliament.

The Prolocutor stated that with regard to the fourth resolution sent to the Upper House, namely—

" 4. That this House approves generally of the recommendations of the Commissioners with regard to the provincial court, but is of opinion that in cases regarding misconduct and neglect of duty, if the judgment of the diocesan court (or of the provincial court, if the case be first heard in that court) be in favour of the defendant ; or in cases regarding ritual and doctrine if the judgment of both the diocesan and provincial courts be in his favour, no further proceedings shall be taken."—

that Church, which was disestablished and perfectly able to consult its own freedom on that point, preponderance was given to three lay voices over those of the Archbishop and the Bishop. But then the question did not end there. Supposing the judgment of that Court was disputed, it had finally to come into the Court of Queen's Bench, the most temporal Court possible, which settled the temporal affairs of all her Majesty's subjects."

the Upper House had struck out the words "or in cases regarding ritual and doctrine if the doctrine of both the diocesan and provincial courts be in his favour." On the motion of Canon Gregory, the House (by 37 to 5) insisted on the words struck out.

The prospects of legislation, one may judge, are not growing brighter.

The Convocation of York has been in session two days. There was an important discussion on Deaconesses.¹ A resolution moved by the Archbishop "that it is important that the clergy shall take an active interest in questions affecting the homes and health of the people," was carried unanimously. The Bishop of Manchester introduced the subject of the means of bringing Christian truth before those who do not attend the usual places of worship. His lordship said the services were too stiff (more elasticity is needed²); also, the wealthier classes possess undue influence in parochial arrangements; also, sermons are too often uninteresting and not suitable. The President stated that in the next session the two Houses would sit separately. Very many, outside the Northern Province as well as within, will regret that his Grace has been driven to this conclusion.

At the Canterbury Diocesan Conference the Archbishop, in the course of an interesting opening address, said :

"What they wanted was to create an interest in the diocese in the Conference. He thought they would do well to bring in the pious women of the Church and give them votes in the election of lay representatives. The Upper House of Convocation had determined to recommend the formation of a Provincial House of Laymen to be in close communication with the Houses of Convocation, and it was suggested that this Lay House should be appointed by the Diocesan Conference. The formation of such a House of Laymen would mark an era in the life of the Church of England."

A resolution, expressing general approval of the Ecclesiastical Courts Report, was carried by a large majority.³

¹ The Dean of Chester moved : "That the establishment of a ministry of women, in general harmony with the system of deaconesses in the Primitive Church and adapted to the conditions of modern times, is an urgent need of the Church of England." This, we note with regret, was not carried. A Committee was appointed.

² We may be excused for referring to *THE CHURCHMAN*, April and August, 1883. (Vol. VIII., pp. 50 and 374.)

³ Canon Hoare said : The episcopal veto involved distrust in the laity, and could be only needed in order to give the clergy liberty to break the law. He did not want any protection from his Bishop—(laughter, in which the Primate joined)—because he always did what was right—(renewed laughter). Canon Fremantle objected to nearly all the recommendations of the Commission as most disastrous. They were calculated to degrade the Royal supremacy, which he regarded as the glory both of the Reformation and the Established Church.

Mr. Stanley Leighton has done good service by calling attention, in the House of Commons, to the subject of compulsory home-lessons, and over-pressure.

Differences having arisen in Ceylon between the Bishop and the Missionaries, the General Committee of the Church Missionary Society, at a large meeting on the 21st, resolved to send the Rev. C. C. Fenn, and another member of the Committee, to consult and report. The speeches of the Bishop of Liverpool and Canon Hoare were very weighty; and much sympathy was expressed with the Missionaries and lay-supporters of the work in Ceylon.

Three London curates have joined the Salvation Army. One of the curate-cadets, Mr. Pigott, late Curate of St. Jude's, Mildmay, is reported to have used strong language as to the "majority of the churches and chapels" in the country (*Record*, July 4th).

The amendment of Lord Cairns, on the second reading of the Franchise Bill, was carried by a majority of 59. The Government, it was then announced, decided to have an autumn session, in order to pass again the Bill through the Commons. But the arguments of the Lords in justification of their action in July will have equal force in December.¹

The reports from the Soudan are still unworthy of credence. An outbreak of cholera in France is virulent, and seems likely to wax worse. The heat has been intense.

Tributes of respect have been made to that distinguished statesman, Sir Bartle Frere.

The verdict of the jury in the Bradlaugh case was given for the Crown, the effect being that Mr. Bradlaugh is declared (1) not to have taken the oath on the occasion when he professed to administer it to himself; (2) to be incompetent of taking it by reason of his atheistic opinions; (3) to have incurred a penalty of £500 to the Crown for having voted without being duly qualified.

¹ A subsequent resolution in favour of the second reading, moved by Lord Wemyss, was rejected by 182 to 132. Lord Cadogan's amendment that it was desirable that Parliament should assemble early in the autumn for the purpose of considering the Bill in conjunction with the Redistribution of Seats Bill, which the Government had undertaken to present to Parliament on the earliest occasion possible, as a substantive motion was carried without a division. On the second reading the two Archbishops and thirteen Bishops voted with the Government; one Bishop voted with the Opposition.