

NEAR THE CENTURY MARK, STARTS STUDYING MUSIC

Thomas Collins, of Biddulph Township, Has Lived in the
Reigns of Six British Sovereigns, and Has
Remarkable Agility.

[Special to The Advertiser.]
Clandeboye, April 3.—Ninety-nine
and a half years old and starting to
take music lessons!
Thomas Collins, of the first con-
cession, Biddulph Township, who has
lived in the reigns of six British sov-
ereigns, is the remarkable individual.
From fifteen minutes to half an hour
each evening he "practices" on the
organ, and his own testimony is that
he is making good progress. He
bought a new organ six months ago,
having grown tired of a melodion, and
only six weeks ago he decided to learn
to play "by music" the "New
Method"—a system that had been
recommended for those ambitious to
be self-taught—and the venerable
gentleman with the soul of a Christian
set about to still improve his talents
and keep a cheerful heart so long as
he is blessed with life and his facul-
ties.

He pumps the organ pedals with
energy and follows the numbers from
the music book to the numbers along
the keyboard, and makes melody. He
sings a great deal and attempts his
own accompaniment, but his course
has thus far been too short to effect a
satisfactory result in this regard.

Hundred Years in November.
On Nov. 12, if he is spared, Mr. Col-
lins will be 100 years old. He is won-
derfully smart. His mind is clear and
his memory almost a marvel. Nor is
he bereft of agility and vigor.

Last fall his eldest son, David, who
lives on the homestead and who is 70
years old, was startled one day to see
his very aged parent half way up the
steel windmill tower and still mount-
ing. The son shouted, "Come down
from there, you'll fall!" But Mr. Col-
lins, senior, only looked back and
smiled and kept on climbing.

The old gentleman had come out to
get a pail of fresh water. The pump
near the house was out of order, so
he proceeded to the windmill pump.
But when he threw the windmill into
gear there was no wind. He placed
the pail under the spout of the pump,
climbed aloft 40 feet to the pump,
with his hands turned the windmill
round and round by the blades until
the pail was filled. And all the while
he was looking down, watching the
pail, from his dizzy height.

He worked outside on "the place,"
trimming trees and the hedge last fall
until the snow began to fly. During
the winter he painted and grained the
house within, and tinted the walls with
a paint brush.

The winter being unusually severe, he
has felt a few aches and had depressed
spells which he never before experienced,
and so he has taken up music.

Music Has Helped Him.
"The music has been a great lift to
me," he told The Advertiser yesterday.
"I was glad as soon as I found there was
a means whereby I could learn, and this
more than makes up the value of the
organ to me."

On account of his not being out all win-
ter to exercise his legs, the organ tries
him, he stated, and watching the figures
on the music rack and at his fingers al-
ternately, he has been feeling badly at
times," he added. "I don't know that I
am quite the same man that I was, but
the Lord has not despised me. He seems
to keep me up. He will not throw me
over. I hope to live to be a hundred. I
think I had better," he laughed, "because
there are so many people waiting for it."

Here the son explained: "He never had
a headache or was sick in his life, and if
he feels a little bad it affects him. He
fancies it is worse than it is."

"Would you like to hear me sing?" vol-
unteered the patriarch, and upon being so
assured, he announced a favorite "love
song" and sang through seven or
eight lengthy stanzas of "Betsey Baker."

"I have strange thoughts sometimes
about singing these songs, whether the
Lord likes that kind. I have always tried
to be good and to do some good to some-
one every day I could."

Came to Canada When 27.
Mr. Collins then told of his migration
to Canada from Kent County, England,
when he was 27 years of age, and of the
courtship days which followed.

He showed an immense Bible
which he had brought with him, a com-
plete volume but in loose leaflets then.
This he bound firmly and neatly and made
a hinged cover of carved walnut to in-
crease it. All through the Book he has
made notes during his numerous perusals.

He has entered statistics about himself
and his family. There were twelve chil-
dren, ten of whom are still living.

"He has read that Bible through several
times, and once on his knees," said Mrs.
David Collins, who regards the old gen-
tleman with reverence.

Mr. Collins was a carpenter by trade,
and followed this calling for a number of



THOMAS COLLINS.

years, but when children began to arrive
he decided he must have a home of his
own. He bought the 50-acre farm on
which he now lives and himself built the
brick homestead and barns. He did the
stone work, brick work and carpentry
work inside and out. The material he cut
from his farm and turned the staircase
rail himself on a hand lathe, from selected
cherrywood cut on the farm.

Is Systematic.
He always kept a careful accounting
of what he earned and spent, and can tell
almost to a cent what his assets are to-
day.

"I know what everything has cost me,
of the trouble I've had and of how much
I've been robbed," he declared. "But I
have had good crops; the Lord was good.
"I know how much my children cost
me, too," he laughed; "yes, every one of
them."

He writes in a plain, steady hand, and
reads The Advertiser every day.

"I have taken some interest in politics
and have been a life-long Reformer," he
announced proudly.

WHY HAS SIR MELVIN DESERTED THE PARTY?

Question Asked in Upper House
by Senator Cloran—Not
Enough Rebates.

Ottawa, April 3.—The Senate today
passed the interim supply bill from the
Commons and arranged for a joint
hearing of evidence on the consolidated
railway bill with the Commons. The
Upper House then adjourned over
Easter.

Before the orders of the day were
called Senator Cloran asked the fol-
lowing question, which, however, was
unanswered:

"Has the Government any intimation
that a stalwart Liberal of this House
has transferred his allegiance from
the Liberal to the Government ranks?
His name is Sir Lyman Melvin Jones,
president of the Massey-Harris Com-
pany. Is it because the rebates of his
company, of \$100,000 last year, are not
enough, and he is trying to get more?"

THIEVES LOOT PARCEL POST
Buffalo, April 3.—Thefts of parcel
post packages valued at \$5,000 were
disclosed after the arrest of three men
here tonight, and a large mail order
house, which was the principal loser,
claims their loss during the last twelve
months will reach \$15,000.

LOCKJAW FOLLOWS A FALL
Kingston, April 3.—Gerald Howes, the
7-year-old son of G. B. Howes, Par-
ham, died in the General Hospital today
of lockjaw. Ten days ago he fell on the
ice, striking his head on a stick, which
cut a gash over his right eye.

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