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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY MARCH 7, 1883.

THE Hon. Oliver Mowat, Premier and Attorney-General of Ontario, is sixty-three years of age. Mr. Mowat was returned the other day for North Oxford by acclamation. There are several excellent Presbyterian congregations in North Oxford. Presumably Mr. Mowat is the choice of these good people as their representative in Parliament. They consider him well qualified to discharge the duties of Premier and Attorney-General. He is their choice as first minister of Ontario. Had Mr. Mowat been a minister of the Gospel instead of a minister of state, no congregation in his constituency would give him a call at sixty-three. It is doubtful if he could have even got a "hearing." He is young enough to govern the Province, but he is altogether too old to get a pastorate if he were a preacher. Sir John Macdonald is sixty-eight. Sir John was returned for two constituencies in June. There are several Presbyterian congregations in Lennox and Carleton. Not one of them would think of calling a pastor ten years younger than the first minister of the Dominion. A man at sixty-eight may do to rule the Dominion, but nobody would trust him with a supplemented congregation. People have queer notions about clerical efficiency.

SOME of the American Presbyterians are princely givers. At its late meeting the Synod of New York recommended the endowment of Hamilton College. The North Church of New York city made a subscription of \$68,000 a few days ago, and other congregations will no doubt follow with equally liberal sums. The late Hon. W. E. Dodge gave \$100,000 annually for charitable and religious purposes, and bequeathed \$350,000 for similar purposes at his death. This is princely giving. In his opening sermon in this city in 1876 the venerable Dr. Cook told the General Assembly that the day might yet come when hoarding money would be considered sinful by Christian men. Whether that day is dawning in New York we cannot say, but certainly the benefactions of some of her citizens within the last year or two look in that direction. Not long ago it was considered the correct thing in Canada to sneer at the American churches, or at least hint that they were not sound. It ill becomes a man who puts a cent on the plate on ordinary occasions, and on special occasions doubles his contribution to say anything about a Church that pours its millions into the Lord's treasury, and whose missionaries are found on all parts of the globe. In time we will no doubt have men as able and willing to give as Mr. Dodge was. Meantime let us be thankful that the Lord raises them up anyplace.

FIVE of the judges of the highest court in England are over seventy years of age. One is a little over that age, another is seventy-three, two are seventy-four, and one of the most distinguished is eighty. The late Lord Chancellors, Sir Leonards and Campbell, presided in the Court of Chancery when one was seventy-nine and the other eighty. The Irish Lord Chancellor Plunket was well able for duty at seventy-four, and Lord Chief Justice Lefroy at ninety-one. Had the youngest of these eminent jurists been a minister in Canada or the United States, he could not have got a call at sixty. A small village congregation could not give him \$500 a year. An elderly man may do very well for such duties as presiding over the highest courts of the first empire in the world, but for presiding at tea meetings and managing "socials" young men are

required. The Government of England can trust a man of eighty to interpret the laws of the empire and decide on matters of life and death, but no committee or Presbytery would dare to trust a man of sixty with a small mission station. These views of the ministry are popular, and some ministers help to make them popular, forgetful of the fact that they must be sixty some day themselves, if they live, but such views are very degrading to the ministerial office. We look down patronizingly on "mere politicians," but politicians take good care they do not throw away a good man at sixty.

A CORRESPONDENT asks the "Christian Guardian" this important practical question:—

"What should a minister do with a choir, some of whom talk and whisper and laugh during the prayer and sermon, much to the annoyance of both minister and congregation?"

The "Guardian" answers that the minister should speak to the choir privately, and in a kindly and serious manner call their attention to the evil, or merely speaking to the leader, the "Guardian" thinks might bring about the desired reformation. But supposing that speaking to both leader and choir failed, and supposing the "mamas" of the young ladies who simper and giggle and whisper and pass notes become offended. And supposing they induce their husbands to take up arms in favour of the choir angels, who feel hurt because not allowed to do just as they please during service. What then? The question is one of considerable practical importance. Talmage says when the Devil can't get into a congregation in any other way he always comes in through the choir. We know some excellent Methodist ministers who don't hesitate for a moment to say that they are in favour of going back to the old plan of having a psalter. We knew a choir leader—we don't say in what church—who used to walk around the choir during prayer to annoy the minister. Some choirs and choir leaders are good Christian people who worship like other Christians. Others are a standing insult to the congregation, and the God the congregation meets to worship.

IT is quite in order just now to say that a general election is a nuisance. At the close of every contest a considerable number of people heave a sigh of relief and declare they are glad the worry is ended and the excitement over. Not a few declare they will "never have anything more to do with politics." They won't until the next time. It certainly devolves upon these good people who denounce elections to tell us what they would suggest as a substitute. Self-government is a blessing, and those who enjoy the blessing must put up with the drawbacks. Nations are governed by ballots or bullets. If any considerable number of our people prefer government by bullets they must go to Russia or some other country where bullets govern. The majority of Canadians prefer ballots. Ballots are not so dangerous as bullets. To go behind the screen and mark one's ballot is not so trying a duty as to stand up before a shower of bullets. It is quite true that a general election deranges business, produces a good deal of excitement, and stirs up a considerable amount of bad blood. Nine-tenths of the inconvenience is caused by the people themselves, not by the system. There is no reason why an appeal to the electorate should turn the country upside down. If electors looked upon the franchise as a trust they would go to the polls and vote with as little commotion as they discharge the duties arising out of any other trust. The day may yet come when electors will vote as conscientiously and quietly as business men discharge the duties arising out of any trust committed to their keeping.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

AN address to the Christian people of Toronto has been issued by the Ministerial Association on the question of Sabbath observance. The address is well-timed. The dangers against which it warns are only too real. The Association complains with good reason of the growing indifference with which the sacredness of the day of rest has come to be regarded by many. This indifference is hurtful to others besides those whom it characterizes. The force of example tells on others, and thus the evil grows. The thoughtless disregard of the Sabbath by many in our midst ought to stir up the friends of that divine institution to more zeal in the diffusion of sound opinions among the people respecting the origin, obligations,

and purposes of the day. Much of the indifference arises from ignorance and thoughtlessness. There might be formed, with advantage, in Toronto, and in most of our Canadian cities, organizations whose object would be to keep the claims of the Sabbath prominently before the people, the young especially, and no doubt a considerable amount of the thoughtlessness and unconcern on this subject would disappear.

The Ministerial address also discusses the subject of Sunday excursions. Attempts are becoming more persistent year by year to establish regular excursions by rail and water. Toronto Bay on a fine day in summer is covered with boats of every description. No one, who has a regard for the teaching of Scripture, can look on this state of things without serious reflection and misgiving. Will our young people, for whom these facilities for a Sunday outing are chiefly provided, seeing all this going on with impunity, be able to resist the temptation of doing as their neighbours do? The address makes a good point regarding the wrong of making one class of the community labour for the pleasure and gain of others. They see clearly that this injustice, if not checked, will increase in magnitude. The love of gain will prove too strong for those whose principles are not sufficiently strong to restrain them from trampling on the rights of their less fortunate fellows, and insisting on enforced labour on the Sabbath day. They also see clearly that the Sabbath comes in as a protection to the tolling masses from the tyrannous encroachment of capital when in the control of unscrupulous hands. The working people are for the most part sufficiently intelligent to understand that a well-spent Sabbath is not only a present and enjoyable blessing, but it is one of the chief safeguards of their most prized rights—the right to worship God according to conscience, and to cultivate the endearing sanctities of family life, on which the exacting nature of their daily labours so largely encroaches.

The appeal of the Toronto Ministerial Association to the Christian people ought to receive a cordial response from all who do not shut their eyes to the palpable infringement on the sacredness of the day of rest, from all who are moved by unselfish desires for the welfare of the people, and from all who respect the will of Him who is the Lord of the Sabbath.

THE FREE LIBRARY.

THE great and progressive proposal for the establishment of Free Libraries in several Canadian cities, was voted for by a large number of citizens in the beginning of January last. In Guelph and Toronto steps have been taken with all due despatch to carry into effect the purpose of the people. The heartiness with which the undertaking has been gone about is a most hopeful sign. The Toronto Board is now organized. Last week a meeting was held, at which Mr. Hallam, the chairman, submitted a scheme both comprehensive and discriminating. He justly indicates that the selection of books for reference and circulation ought to cover a wide range, embracing all that is best and most interesting in literature and science, while avoiding the expense of cumbering the shelves with rare and curious works, over which book fanciers of the Jonathan Oldbuck type only would care to pore. Mr. Hallam may rest assured that he will be sustained in the opinion he expresses that it is desirable to avoid the vulgar, the sensuously sensational, which he pitilessly describes as the garbage of the modern press.

The worthy chairman seems to have been guided by patriotic as well as intelligent motives in framing the scheme submitted. It ought to be the desire of seekers after knowledge to be well informed on the history of their country. It could fit them for taking a deeper interest in the welfare of the Dominion, enable them to take an intelligent part in public affairs, and help them to discharge worthily and well the duties of citizenship. A library formed on the lines suggested will not only foster literary tastes in general, but will materially help to develop a distinctly Canadian literature, the want of which will become more felt than it is now. The classification suggested is the following:—

1. Manuscript statements and narratives of pioneer settlers; old letters and journals relative to the early history and settlement of Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island, and the wars of 1776 and 1812; biographical notes of our pioneers and of eminent citizens deceased, and facts illustrative of our Indian tribes, their history, characteristics, sketches of their prominent chiefs, orators, and warriors.
2. Diaries, narratives, and documents relative to the U.