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#### EASTERN GENERAL AGENT.

MR. WALTER KERR—for many years an esteemed elder of our Church—is the duly authorized agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power to Mr. Kerr in all the congregations he may visit.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1887.

THE next presidential election is near, and the Republicans are at their wits' end to find something to say against President Cleveland, who may possibly be in the field for a second term. Cleveland's administration has been conspicuously able and clean. Even party zeal can scarcely find anything to say against it. There is a vague general charge that for some reason or another he is hostile to the army. The fact that he was willing to return some of the Confederate flags taken during the war is given as proof of his dislike of the Grand Army of the Republic. When such trifling charges have to be trumped up at the end of several years' occupancy of the White House one may rest assured that the President has a good record. One of the worst things connected with party government is that a political opponent must be opposed, no matter how good his record. Cleveland must be assailed simply because he is a Democrat; and it would be exactly the same if he were a Republican. Nobody seems able to propose a substitute for party government, but it has some very serious drawbacks all the same.

MANY of our ministerial readers are this week packing their valises and starting for their summer trip. Whatever else they put in, we hope they will not forget to put in a few good Gospel sermons. There are fine chances for preaching during vacation time. Some of the most intelligent, appreciative audiences one ever sees are on steamboats, in summer hotels, and at seaside and lakeside resorts. As a rule the people want a Sabbath service, and enjoy it immensely. Whether a minister should suggest a service and take a prominent part in arranging for it is a question of professional etiquette we do not undertake to decide. As a rule, nothing of the kind is needed. Nearly every captain of a steamboat wants at least one Sabbath service on his boat. We never heard of a summer hotel keeper who did not wish to have service in his large room on Sabbath. The great majority of the guests always attend; and, account for it as you may, there is a solemnity and tenderness about these services, when the preacher understands his work, not often seen in the regular church services at home. The Presbyterian Church has a right to expect that her representatives at Portland, or the Lower St. Lawrence, or on the Atlantic or Pacific, or nearer home, in our fine Northern resting-places, will see that their share of the work is well done, as we have no doubt it will be.

THE following weighty words from the *Mail* show that others understand the effect of a poorly-sustained pulpit upon the people quite as well as clergymen. It is difficult for a minister to discuss this question without creating a suspicion that he is acting from selfish motives. Our contemporary says:

The clergy of a country are largely instrumental in stamping its character upon it. Given an educated and devoted clergy, and there will arise, as a result of the pulpit teachings, a high-principled and honourable laity. But should the pulpit become weak and insipid, moral weakness will surely be the characteristic of the people condemned to sit under it. From a patriotic point of view, therefore, the best men are required for the Church. If penury is to be the earthly reward of the clergy, men of ability and power

will be scarce in the next generation of preachers. This will be a public calamity; but it will be the result of public shortcomings.

The facts so well stated in the foregoing were, we believe, too much lost sight of in discussing the claims of our Augmentation Fund upon the Church. That fund does not exist for the sole benefit of ministers. The people are benefited by it as well as the preachers. For, as the *Mail* says, "an educated and devoted clergy" produce "a high-principled and honourable laity." A weak, poorly-sustained pulpit make a morally weak people. Viewed simply as an educator, a well-sustained pulpit is worth far more to the country than it costs. The people may sink below their teachers, but they never rise above them.

THE clerical vacation is receiving due attention in the press, partly because this is vacation time and partly because it is the "silly season," when live topics are few and far between. A religious journal says:

The ethics of ministers' vacations must be studied under a strong bias during such a hot season as at the present writing is parching the earth and weakening the strength of men. The necessity of a season of rest cannot be denied. But it is easy to yield to a self-indulgent spirit, inquiring not how much respite from work is needed, but how much can be secured.

Yes, but the study of the ethics of the question need not be put off until the hot season. When the ground is parched and the strength is weakening and humanity is sweltering, is not the time to study ethics. If a minister found out years ago that he can do more and better work in a year by working eleven months and resting one, the ethics require him to rest the one, and besides this, there is a huge fallacy underlying almost everything we read on this question. It is nearly always assumed that when a pastor takes his vacation his pulpit is empty and the people have no preaching. Such a thing is happily almost unknown in Canada. Somebody always, or very nearly always, preaches. And truth to say, the preaching is sometimes quite as good when the regular pastor is away on his holidays as when he is at home. And, tell it not in Gath, sometimes it is even better. The assumption that people are left without preaching during vacation is utterly baseless; and some of the people who make the assumption know it.

#### WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

THERE is an impression that the phenomenal success that has attended the efforts of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society is a matter for surprise, but why should it be such a marvellous thing that a Christian enterprise originated and conducted by women should be an assured success? Whatever in the way of benevolent and Christian activity women have undertaken has generally been attended with encouraging prosperity. The cause of Temperance owes much to the earnest and self-denying labours of women to secure freedom from the curse that falls so heavily on women and children. Why, then, should it be a matter of surprise that the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society has in a very few years reached a place of such importance and effected so much good? Its success has certainly been great, but, judging from its past history, the work yet to be done through its agency, and the prudence, devotion and enthusiasm with which its affairs are conducted may reasonably be expected to reach much greater dimensions and wield an influence for good far beyond its present capacity.

The eleventh annual report has recently made its appearance, and its circulation throughout the Church would be most helpful to the missionary cause. It ought to be carefully read by all into whose hands it may come. There is scarcely anything that finds a place in its pages that can be regarded as superfluous. It is a good illustration that women are not so garrulous as some cynics are disposed to insinuate. There is very little in the report that can justly be described as padding. It is in most respects a very readable production. There are reports, not prepared by women either, printed and submitted to public bodies, which are held as read. There they end. A great many people to whom they are sent acquiesce cheerfully in the decision, and likewise hold the elaborately prepared reports as read. And this is pretty much all the reading they receive. The eleventh annual report of the Woman's Foreign Mission Society deserves better treatment. Its careful perusal will elicit the

interest and enlist the sympathy and co-operation of many not yet identified with the active working of the institution.

The Foreign Secretary's report presents a full view of the various missions supported by the Presbyterian Church in China, on the Indian reserves in Manitoba and the North-West, in Central India and the New Hebrides. This is followed by the Home Secretary's report, in which the remarkable progress during the year is briefly sketched. No fewer than two new Presbyterian Societies, sixty-five auxiliaries and twenty-six mission bands have been formed, bringing up the organization to the goodly proportions of eighteen Presbyterian societies, 256 auxiliaries, and seventy-six mission bands. In these mission bands there is a membership of 2,059; in the auxiliaries the members number 6,484, and there are 152 life members; the total membership is now 8,563. The money for missions raised by this agency includes \$3,646.91 contributed by the mission bands; from other sources, \$435.44; and by the auxiliaries, \$14,498.70, making a grand total for the year of \$18,581.05. These results show that the women's movement for the extension of the Gospel in heathen lands has met with a cordial response throughout the churches.

The good accomplished by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society is not confined to the merely material results that can easily be recognized and tabulated. The active effort directly sustained by the society will prove a great blessing to those on whose behalf it is made. This society provides salaries and expenses of three lady missionaries, two lady medical missionaries and two lady missionary teachers, and the current expenses of schools, native teachers, Bible women, etc., in Central India. They also help to maintain educational work in Formosa, the New Hebrides and Trinidad, as well as in the schools on the Indian reserves in the North-West. Much of the awakened interest in missions is directly traceable to the energetic efforts of the Woman's Society. By their regular meetings, and through other channels, they diffuse much valuable information respecting the progress of the Gospel abroad. Through the inspiration received numbers have devoted themselves to personal labour in the mission field, and as all active endeavour for Christ's cause, faithfully and sincerely engaged in, is productive of reflex blessing, the Church generally may hope for a fuller baptism of the Holy Spirit producing a large accession of spiritual strength as a result of the prayers and labours of those who are united in the fellowship of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.

#### MATERIALISM.

In the *Atlantic Monthly* for August there is a remarkably striking paper from the pen of George Frederick Parsons. There is nothing new in the subject selected for treatment; it is old as civilization. The line of illustration does not consist in startling novelties, neither is there anything very original in the ideas expressed, but he presents thoughts with forceful distinctness that ought to be pondered. The theme on which the talented writer descants is "The Growth of Materialism." His indictment of the dominant characteristic of the age is strong and powerful. There is no prophesying of smooth things in his delineation of the leading characteristics of our time. It is no siren song lulling to self-complacent delight in the remarkable progress achieved in the nineteenth century. Those who have no more agreeable message to deliver than that contained in the paper referred to may be reproached, as was Elijah by Ahab, as troublers of Israel. The worst of it is that tellers of plain but unpalatable truths are not believed; their message is disregarded, and they are branded as soured misanthropes. It is more convenient than safe, however, to dismiss all questions that awaken troublesome thoughts than to entertain them, and examine the degree of truth they contain.

To prepare the way for the consideration of his subject the writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* describes the wild excitement in an unnamed western mining town that was struck by that most unhealthy of all visitations, a boom. He shows how the selfishness and savagery of human nature come to the surface under such conditions, and describes the moral and material havoc they produce. These characteristics are at work everywhere, and are but the natural if extreme outcome of the materialism which rules the present age. The one absorbing pursuit of men is the