

## The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, February 13, 1896.

### The Marriage Law.

THE report adopted at the meeting of the Toronto ministerial Association on Monday with respect to the Marriage Law was timely, and now that public attention has been directed to the subject by an authoritative and responsible body such as the Ministerial Association it is to be hoped that the thoughtful element of the community will persevere until the desired changes shall have been effected. The two points raised prominently by the report are the granting of licenses and the registration of marriages, both points of great though not of the greatest importance in connection with the sacred ceremony. A resolution will, we understand, be presented to the Ontario Government in line with the views approved of by the Association. It may be pointed out that in the matter of granting of licenses, the persons empowered to do so are as a rule of unquestionable respectability notwithstanding the difficulty in making selections, arising from party exigencies and pressure. There seems to be little to complain of on the score of the suitability of appointees for the duties of the office, but the law which they administer is defective in some respects and ought to be amended. It is of much importance also, that the responsibility of the minister performing the ceremony should be made as clear as possible in questions arising from flaws in the license, and such matters. We are not aware of the nature of the reforms to be urged in the registration of marriages, but are perfectly familiar with some of the loose joints in the present machinery.

While the ministers are petitioning Government for the necessary and desirable amendments to the civil code, they do not forget the great importance of instructing their people in the sacred character of the marriage tie, its obligations and responsibilities. The sanctity of marriage and of the family and the reverence which should characterize the young—these subjects are pre-eminently suitable for the pastor-preacher and their exposition was never more needed than at the present day.

### On the Alert.

Quietly, and presumably the more effectively because quietly, the friends of a quiet and orderly Sabbath in Toronto are watching the Sunday car situation, preparing for any emergency that may be sprung upon them. On Saturday evening a meeting was held at the residence of one of the trustiest friends of the cause, Mr. S. C. Duncan Clark, a veteran in good work. The result of the meeting has been that steps will be taken with a view to meet an appeal to the people should such be taken by the Sunday car party. That a vote may be demanded is not unlikely

and it behoves those concerned to be on the alert.

The churches have in the past found the workingmen on the whole, to be alive to their own especial interests, and to have given their support against the proposed innovation. The workingmen as well as others will find food for thought in the following figures given by the Workingmen's Lord's Day Rest Association, London. The statement points out that the workingmen actively engaged in defeating the Hobhouse Bill for opening places of amusement on Sunday; it draws attention to the memorial from 734 people engaged in theatres, against any modification of the Sabbath Law which secures to them a day of rest. The argument used so persistently here that the workingmen should be provided with means to take him to the parks and gardens is disposed of by the Association's figures which show that the attendance at the open museums and gardens in London is decreasing as the novelty wears off. In twenty two towns where museums and reading-rooms have been experimentally opened on Sundays orders have been given to close them again, the experiment having proved a failure. Parliamentary returns show that while in 1867 out of 25,902 postmen, only 4,491 rested on the Lord's Day, in 1894, out of 136,447 postal employees, 95,175 rested on that day. The Society had 452 sermons preached on its behalf during the past year, in addition to seventy five lectures and meetings. There have been 167,000 publications, and 42,000 postal packets and parcels of literature distributed.

Such a record is inspiring, and the working men of Toronto have in it an object lesson of the most practical character. Let no apathy come over the people and there will be little to fear from the onslaughts of the enemy of the Lord's Day.

### A Futile Task.

A recent issue of the *New York Independent* contains an editorial word for Canada on the Monroe doctrine, which elicits a passing remark on account of its weakness—an unusual quality in an utterance by our prince of contemporaries. The weakness consists in its attempt to explain away President Cleveland's message. "There was" says the *Independent*, "in the President's message not a particle of hostility to Great Britain." Again "Canadians also greatly misapprehend the prevalent American sentiment. They seem to suppose that the overwhelming determination to maintain the Monroe Doctrine is an expression of hostility to Great Britain. Nothing could be further from the case," etc. The versatility of Mr. Gladstone drew a famous tribute from Palmerston once. When Garibaldi visited London a certain countess fell in love with him and her infatuation became the theme of society talk. Palmerston pretended to regard the incident as fortunate to Garibaldi, the countess being a powerful political force, "But" remarked a friend "Garibaldi is married; he has a wife already." "Oh," replied the statesman, "that does not matter. We'll send Gladstone to explain her away." The *Independent* has undertaken a task as difficult and futile as Palmerston playfully suggested. The best element in the United States, thanks to the churches and religious press asserted itself, but the rage of the controlling rabble was hard for Canada to endure. There is no manner of doubt that a friendly feeling to Canada exists in many quarters in the United States, but when war was in the air Canada was made the objective point of United States attack, and although the delirium was brief it had an unmistakable ring of truth in it. The