

The Presbyterian Review.

Vol. XI.—No. 49.

TORONTO, JUNE 13, 1895.

\$1.50 per Annum

The Presbyterian Review.

Issued EVERY THURSDAY, from the office of the Publishers, Rooms No. 20, 21, 22, 25 Aberdeen Block, South-East corner Adelaide and Victoria Streets.

TERMS, \$1.50 per annum.

All communications for either Business or Editorial Departments should be addressed PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, Drawer 2464, Toronto, Ont.

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ADVERTISING RATES.—Under 3 months, 15 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1.00 per line; 6 months, \$1.75 per line; 1 year, \$3.00. No advertisement charged at less than five lines. None others than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

Toronto, June 13, 1895.

The General Assembly.

TO one familiar with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, its simple and popular character will, in no small measure, account for the wide-spread and never-failing interest which the annual meetings of the General Assembly arouse. In no other Church is the same keen interest manifested in the details of its Supreme Court business, and the reason for that fact may be largely attributed to the democratic character of the system of Government which prevails in our Church. It might with truth be claimed that in this the Church has provided an object lesson to the world, which has proved of great advantage in civil affairs. Of course, there are pre-eminently the standards and doctrines of the Church which approve themselves to the membership at large, and which imprint their character on it as a whole, but the principles upon which the Church is constituted have not failed to touch the people in a most remarkable manner.

The Assembly which was opened yesterday at London, Ontario, is not an exception to the rule in having attracted popular attention. Not that there are burning questions in sight, nor great controversies expected but, we believe, the people look forward to the meeting of the Supreme body as to an event in which the welfare of the Church is bound up, and therefore the thoughts and prayers of the people are thus drawn to it.

In reviewing the past year the Assembly will find cause for thankfulness for many mercies. Coming

through a period of unwonted depression, the Church has, on the whole, held her own. There is no department of special effort in which there can be detected the signs of atrophy or retrogression. The funds of some of the Committees have suffered, but not out of proportion to the means of those whose liberality have been conspicuous in former years, and considering the financial strain in the country, a reasonable view will produce satisfaction with the general liberality of the membership, if a comparison with former years be the test. We do not believe that the Church is alive to its duty in the matter of systematic and liberal giving; and the Assembly can well give attention to the subject of "giving." It is to be feared that the general standard is not the Scriptural one, "As the Lord hath prospered you," but the worldly one, "As Fashion allows you."

Foreign Missions will occupy the time of the General Assembly in the usually interesting manner. The Board will present a valuable report which will furnish food for thought and for thankfulness.

Home Missions will naturally receive great attention. The needs of the field were never more pressing nor more evident than now, and the Committee will not look in vain to the Assembly for encouragement and help.

The question of Sabbath Observance has been prominently before the people during the past year, and extraordinary measures have been found necessary to counteract the designs of interested agitators who have made determined onsets on the Sabbath Day. The report of the Sabbath Observance Committee will, in the urgent circumstances which have arisen, be a subject of much interest.

The report on the vacant professorship in Knox College, and the resignation of the veteran professor, Rev. Dr. Gregg, will bring the well-being of the College to the front, and as a diversity of opinion of a somewhat pronounced character prevails, an interesting and animated debate may be expected. It is not improbable that the question of an appointment will be left over.

The Hymnal Committee will encounter keen criticism should the various views which have been ventilated in the press and at the Presbyteries, during the past year, find utterance on the floor of the Assembly. The work of this Committee has been most arduous and it has been conducted earnestly and with manifest ability. An element of importance in the settlement of the question will be that of securing a common hymn book for Great Britain and her colonies. A year or more could be well conceded, if time were to bring about uniformity. It is to be hoped there will be no haste, and that this great question will receive serious and deliberate consideration.

In meeting at London, the Assembly will be surrounded with mementoes of the important pioneer work