

## Our Contributors.

### ON KEEPING YOUR HOLD.

BY KNOXIAN.

How is it that some men keep a hold on the public for a lifetime and others lose their grip in a few years, perhaps in a few months? What are the elements of character that enable a man to keep his hold?

Perhaps as good a way as any to answer this question would be to take a man who has kept his hold as an illustration, and try to find out the secret of his success. In this connection everybody will think of Gladstone. He has kept his hold for sixty years. A baby boy born when Gladstone entered the House of Commons is sixty years of age now. The Canadian Rebellion has become ancient history, but Gladstone was a rising statesman at that time, and helped to draw up the constitution under which Old Canada secured responsible government. The Grand Old Man has kept his grip sixty years, and his hold is stronger now than at any past period of his life. The combinations brought to bear against him last month would have crushed any other man England ever saw, but Gladstone pulled his party through. It is easy to say his majority is not large. No other man living, or that ever did live, would have had a majority at all under the circumstances. The majority is not large, but the old Parliamentary hand may be trusted to make it larger next time if his health keeps fairly good. It is quite a common thing to hear people say, "Gladstone can never rule the country with a majority of forty." And yet the man who tells you that seems to see no reason why the other party might not rule the country in a minority of forty. More than once we have heard men solemnly predict that Sir Oliver Mowat could not govern Ontario with the majority he had just secured at the polls, and yet the prophet did not seem to see any reason why the other party could not govern the Province without any majority at all.

What gives Gladstone his miraculous staying power? Some people have the idea that what they call "consistency" helps a man mightily to keep his hold. Well, in regard to such personal matters as honesty, purity and religion, Gladstone has certainly been consistent, for he was a good pure man from the first. But will anybody say he has been what people call consistent in politics? He began life as a Tory, and may end it as a radical. He is an advanced Liberal now. His first noted literary work was a book defending Church and State connection, a book that Macaulay fairly annihilated soon after its publication. The author of that book disestablished the Irish Church, will certainly disestablish the Church in Wales if he is in power three years, and if in office for five the most reckless insurance company on earth would not take a policy on the life of the Scottish Establishment. Consistency forsooth! Why, the Grand Old Man was actually opposed to Home Rule a few years ago. If consistency means opposing every kind of progress in Church and State for one's lifetime, then Gladstone is the most inconsistent statesman alive.

Principal Grant once told the General Assembly that one point of difference between a man and a donkey is that a man reconsiders and a donkey doesn't. The learned Principal should not have generalized in that way. He should have said *some* men differ from donkeys because *some* men reconsider, etc. Gladstone is one of the men that reconsiders, and his willingness and ability to reconsider may be taken as no small part of the reason why he keeps his hold. No man can keep his hold and resist the onward sweep of public opinion on matters on which the public have a perfect right to form an opinion. Gladstone never changed his mind on the decalogue, nor on any of the essentials in religion and morals, but he has changed his mind on questions of politics, and just because he has done so he has kept his hold.

There are few alleged virtues on earth about which people talk more unmitigated rubbish than about the thing they call consistency. If an old settler opposed the building of a railway forty years ago, when he did not know any better, they shout "inconsistent" if the old man gets on the cars. If one opposes a new street, or a new school house, or a new church, or a new town hall or a new anything, he must go on opposing until he dies or be called inconsistent. If consistency means that an honest man is never to admit that he gets new light on any question, then consistency is a doubtful virtue. To be thoroughly consistent, a man must never learn anything.

Gladstone's ability to give the people such measures as the majority needed and wanted has no doubt been one secret of his hold. A man cannot keep his hold if he merely stands and looks at, or perhaps denounces, public opinion. The public have a right to their opinion, and if you deny that right you soon lose your hold. They may be wrong, but strictly speaking they have a right to be wrong if they are foolish enough to exercise their rights that way.

Gladstone's enormous working power is another secret of his hold. He works at many things, and each line gives him a hold on different classes. He is a literary man with a style, and that gives him influence with the literati. He is a grand speaker, and all lovers of genuine eloquence admire him for his speaking power. And be it remembered the typical Briton, especially the Irish and Scotch Britons, do greatly admire a good speech. He is a theologian, and that gives him influence with the theological world. He is a reli-

gious man, and most religious people believe in the thorough genuineness of his party. Besides all these sources of strength, he has this undoubted quality of a great man, he can grasp a subject as a whole and deal with its most minute details. When Finance Minister he could handle the millions in a speech and describe a particular kind of nail with equal ease. To keep your hold you must do something well, and the more things you can do well the longer the hold is likely to last.

Another secret of his hold is his marvellous capacity for looking forward. Most men begin to live their lives over again when they are twenty five years younger than Gladstone. The moment you begin to live in the past you begin to lose your hold. The public don't care a brass farthing for the days of our youth—not a farthing. If a man frequently obtrudes his old experiences and doings on public attention, people assume at once that he is on the down grade. Gladstone makes Englishmen believe he is on the up grade, and so he is.

His intense earnestness and sincerity are also elements in his continued power. No moral trifler, no insincere man can keep a hold on Gladstone's public life for sixty years. He might on some elements of British society, but not on the men that believe in Gladstone. Beaten the veteran has many a time been, and may be again, but he has always come to the front again with renewed energy. The secrets of his hold are well worthy of study.

### A SYNOPTIC REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S SABBATH SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

A careful reader of the statistical reports must have noted that there is a decided retrogression in our Sabbath schools in many very important particulars. Only sixty four per cent. of our scholars above the infant class commit Scripture to memory, other than the Golden Text; one-third of our scholars never touch the Shorter Catechism, and not one in thirty reviews it annually; our reports confirm the statement of a prominent Sabbath school worker in the United States that "not one fourth study the lessons at home"; less than one half of our scholars are regularly in their pews at the hours of divine service; and one-third of the number enrolled are absent from the Sabbath school every Sabbath.

These facts are sufficiently startling, but they are confirmed by the statistics of successive years, and cannot be explained away. To aid in arresting this downward tendency the Committee have, after long and prayerful consideration, and advancing step by step with caution, instituted the following series of lesson helps and examinations:—

1. THE HOME STUDY LEAFLET.—This is published weekly and is designed mainly to foster the preparation of the lesson at home. Its questions are based almost exclusively upon the text of the lesson. The object is to secure for the teacher such a careful study of the portion of Scripture selected as will afford a sound basis for his instructions regarding it. It does not aim at guiding the teacher or doing his work for him, but only at preparing the scholar for meeting him on Sabbath. It does not antagonize the ordinary lesson helps, but prepares for the profitable study of them, by the study, in the first place, of the lesson narrative and parallel passages. Our examinations have brought out clearly the remarkable fact that scholars often know more about deductions from the lessons than about the simple narratives themselves. Many who could state fully the parallel between leprosy and sin could not clearly narrate the story of Naaman, or one of our Saviour's miracles, without introducing incidents belonging to other similar cases. The Committee feels that the work which the Leaflet is designed to do lies at the very foundation of Sabbath school teaching and of Bible knowledge of an intelligent sort.

Upon every Leaflet one or two questions of the Shorter Catechism are named for careful study. These will be selected so as to be reviewed once every year, and will cover the whole catechism in three years. They will always embrace the portion assigned for the examination in the Doctrinal department of the Scheme of Higher Religious Instruction.

Incidentally the Leaflet accomplishes various purposes. It gives the scholar something definite to do, promotes daily reading of the Bible in the line of the lesson topic; induces study of the lesson in the light of the Bible itself; trains the scholar in accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the text; enlists the co-operation of parents; requires the use of the Bible and Catechism (not the Lesson Leaf) in the Sabbath schools; calls for memorizing Scripture and Catechism in such portions as may be prescribed by the teacher; keeps before the scholar the obligation to be present with lessons prepared every Sabbath; secures the preparation of lessons by absentee scholars; trains to systematic giving; informs the teacher at once of any serious cause of absence; constrains teachers to visit absentees immediately, awakens an honourable and healthful emulation amongst members of a class; enables a teacher to judge more correctly of the mental capacity and general disposition of a scholar; reveals to thoughtful teachers the weak points in their own work, and supplies a new link between the teacher, the scholar and the home.

2. A WRITTEN QUARTERLY REVIEW.—This is issued in connection with the Leaflet. The number of schools that

have adopted the plan of a written quarterly review is rapidly increasing. It gives definiteness and purpose to preparation, secures accuracy of thought on the part of both teacher and scholar, stimulates to deeper study, and fixes instruction in the memory. A written review is well worth all the trouble it calls for. Ought anything to be a "trouble" that promotes the efficiency of our work?

3. AN ANNUAL EXAMINATION on the lessons, at which due recognition is given to conscientious students. This is held in connection with the Biblical department of the Scheme of Higher Religious Instruction. The next will be held on Jan 28, 1893.

4. THE SCHEME OF HIGHER RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, which supplies a broad and varied course of study in the Bible, Shorter Catechism, Cardinal Doctrines, Church History, etc. Its examinations and their awards are open to all without limitation of age or restriction to members of the Sabbath school. It is capable of indefinite expansion to meet the inevitable demands of a Young People's Guild, or Christian Endeavour Societies, for a guide and stimulus to the study of the Bible, religious literature, missions, biography, etc. The Committee are determined that Presbyterian young people shall find within their own Church better provision for their growth and Christian culture than is offered by any extra-denominational scheme.

5. A TEACHERS COURSE of study. This is inserted as one of the departments of the Scheme of Higher Religious Instruction, but is self-contained. The course is as follows:—

A.—A weekly study of the International Sabbath School Lesson.

B.—A supplementary course covering three years.

First Year, 1893.—The principles and practice of teaching as applied to Sabbath schools. Text Book, "The Sabbath School Teachers' Handbook," by Thomas Morrison, M.A., LL.D., Principal of the Free Church Training School, Glasgow.

Second Year, 1894.—Christian Evidences. Text Book "A Primer of Christian Evidences," by R. A. Redford, Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics, New College, London. One of the International Sabbath School Normal Text Books.

Third Year, 1895.—"The Bible the Sabbath School Teachers' Text Book," by Alfred Holborn, M.A. One of the International Sabbath School Normal Text Books.

It is proposed, in connection with this course, to issue a "Sabbath School Teachers' Preparation Leaflet," with an examination paper at the close of every quarter. Each year a certificate will be given to those who have successfully pursued its allotted studies, and at the end of three years the annual certificates will be exchanged for the diploma. No prizes or medals will be given in this department. It is also intended that the supplementary course shall occupy but six months of the year, so that the only work to be followed up during the whole year is the weekly preparation of the lesson. Further, the suggestion is made that the most competent persons in each school or congregation should be assigned special work in the study of special departments of the lesson, such as lesson outlines suited to the teaching of the several grades of scholars, exegetical and verbal difficulties, geography, manners and customs, doctrines, etc. A small fee will be charged to cover expenses.—"The Preparation Leaflet" will be published before New Year.

If you wish, a sufficient number of the "Home Study Leaflet" will be sent *gratis*, to enable any school desiring it to give it one Sabbath's fair trial.

### MR. CHINIQUY'S EIGHTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY.

The St. Anne Record says: There was quite a gathering at the first Presbyterian church last Friday evening, the 29th ult. It was a service held with the view of celebrating the 83rd birthday of the Rev. C. Chiniquy. The programme was made up of speeches, prayer and sacred songs.

The pastor of the Church, the Rev. P. Boudreau, presided. The meeting was opened with a song in which the congregation took a hearty part. Then the president of the evening stated the object of the service. In his remarks he brought out the fact that Father Chiniquy was as remarkable for his health and strength at the age of 83 as he was for the extent of his life's work. The work of French evangelization in Canada had small and obscure beginning; it languished for many years and slowly developed itself through severe trials and difficulties. But when the marvellous religious movement started under the leadership of Mr. Chiniquy, the work among the French people received a new life; it got from him its most irresistible momentum, and its deepest inspiration. The Canadian evangelical Church and the various missions in the States were then baptized with their pentecostal fire from Heaven. That work, which had so humble beginnings, commands now universal attention and respect, both on account of its importance and its wonderful development. The president also stated that to lead this great movement successfully, it required nothing less than Father Chiniquy's influence over the French, his large experience in the management of men, and the strong, healthy physique with which Providence had endowed him.

After this, Father Chiniquy read the 90th Psalm. Then he made an interesting discourse, in which he dwelt on many noted facts connected with his life and labours, especially expressing his gratefulness to God for all the good accomplished through his instrumentality. This venerable man gave, in his