

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

Activities of Protestant Laymen.

ON Tuesday of last week, the people of Ottawa and Aylmer were greatly interested in celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of Dr. Francis E. Clark, founder of the Christian Endeavour Society. Dr. Clark is a native of Aylmer, but early in life left that village to be adopted by an uncle in the United States. His real name is Symmes, but he has always used his uncle's surname. The celebration last week included a memorial service to Dr. Clark's mother, Mrs. Lydia Clark Symmes.

Dr. Clark was one of the first to realize the value of giving the children and young people in the churches a broader religious education, and of allowing them a larger share in church work. His example has led to other movements of a similar nature, such as the Student Volunteer Movement, the Laymen's movement, and the Men and Religion campaign. The latter movement is the latest, and is dealt with in a special article elsewhere in this issue. The organizers of it have been at work for nearly two years, but the active, broad campaign commences this week.

Laymen's movements are perhaps but a natural feature of a democratic age. There is a growing feeling that religion is as much a question of conduct as of faith. The weakness of Protestantism has been its failure to permeate the daily life and conduct of its adherents, and the consequent looseness of the tie which bound the majority to the faith. In recent years there has been a decided change in this respect. Humanitarianism and morality have, as it were, been merged with religion and religious activity. Religion is less a seventh-day garb and is becoming an every-day garb. As the movement proceeds, its effect on business, social and political conditions may be expected to be more and more pronounced.

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The Saloon and the Church.

REV. DR. GRANT, of Montreal, has been working among the "unwashed" of Montreal, and he tells the Montreal Presbytery that there are more men and boys in the saloons on Saturday than in the churches on Sunday. If this is true, is it the fault of the saloons, or the churches, or of the men and boys themselves? I wonder if Dr. Grant would agree with me, if I were to state that in my opinion the fault was largely with the churches?

In the first place, the men and boys are not forced to go into the saloons. They do not receive personal invitations. The saloons do not advertise in the daily papers. They go because they want entertainment, diversion and companionship. They go because they have nothing better to do and because they are welcome.

Now what do the churches do to counteract this? What do they offer to these men and boys on Saturday afternoon? They cannot answer that it is none of their business to provide entertainment for these people. If it is their business to keep them out of the saloons and if this can be accomplished only by providing counter attractions, it should be done. If throwing open the church rooms on Saturday afternoons and evenings, and providing places where men and boys can find entertainment and companionship, why should not the church take up the work?

Perhaps the real trouble is that the priest and the preacher are more concerned with church ceremonial and church finance than with keeping men out of saloons. The preacher spends Saturday afternoons preparing a sermon for the empty pews which he faces on Sunday, instead of spending his time in leading the entertainment which the workingman demands on his half-day off. The church lawn is being mowed and raked on Saturday afternoon when it might be used as a playground for men, boys and children. The church rooms are bolted and barred for fear some one should enter and emit a hearty, healthy laugh.

It does seem to me that in this country religion is too closely connected with black clothes, clean linen and new boots. It needs humanizing. It needs more of the milk of human kindness and human sympathy. It should be uncluttered and brought out into the fresh air and the beautiful sunshine. Then and then only, will it grip the men

and the boys. Surely the lesson is clear that the remedy is in the hands of the clergy.

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The Romance of a Great Daily.

THE story of the *Manitoba Free Press*, Winnipeg's great daily paper, is most interesting. Its founders struggled with it for some years, but it first took its premier position in the West when the Canadian Pacific Railway found it advisable to play a part in western affairs. After the "Young Napoleon" from Brandon, Hon. Clifford Sifton, broke into Dominion politics about fifteen years ago, he managed to secure a controlling interest in it. How he induced the Canadian Pacific people to part with it and how he secured the funds to make the purchase Mr. Sifton has never revealed. It has often been reported that the late Walter Massey, of the Massey-Harris Company, was associated with Mr. Sifton in the purchase. If that is true, the secret has been well kept.

When Mr. Sifton left the Government at Ottawa and ceased to be a Cabinet Minister, he allowed the *Free Press* to continue to give the Laurier administration as full support as it had previously given. This year, when Mr. Sifton made a further breach in his relations with the Laurier administration and declared against reciprocity, the *Free Press* continued the even tenor of its way. It seemed curious to many people that Mr. Sifton should not have ordered the paper which he controlled to adopt his policy. But he did not. He

After the Elections.

ONE of the first duties of the new Postmaster-General, after the elections are over, will be to appoint a new postmaster for Montreal, in succession to the late Mr. Harwood. Will he study only the best interests of Montreal and seek for the best man in the service to fill this position? Or will he allow the patronage committee in Montreal to nominate a politician for the place?

In the post office service at present there are a score of well-trained, experienced men who would, any one of them, make a good postmaster for Montreal—the most important post office in Canada. Will Hon. Dr. Beland encourage the men in the service, by promoting one of themselves; or will he yield to the dictates of the political element which believes that such an appointment is the legitimate property of the local patronage committee?

probably is too shrewd a business man not to recognize that such a course would have disorganized the paper's relations with its readers and have caused it to lose its present importance. Not even a well established party organ may change its political allegiance without endangering its earning power.

Now comes the announcement that several moneyed Liberals in Winnipeg have made arrangements to take over the *Free Press* from Mr. Sifton, for a consideration somewhere in the neighbourhood of a million dollars, and thus ensure its remaining the leading Liberal organ of the West.

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Another General Election.

RUMOUR has it that Ontario will have a general election of its own in December. Eight members of the Legislature resigned their seats to contest Dominion ridings, and one seat is vacant by the death of the sitting member. The Government of Sir James Whitney is face to face with a choice between nine bye-elections or a general election. The Legislature has another year to run, but a general election now would save nine men from two contests in twelve months.

Those who resigned to run for Dominion honours were all Conservative except Mr. R. E. Truax, of South Bruce. The seven Conservatives are Lieut.-Col. Hugh Clark, Centre Bruce; W. F. Nickle, Kingston; J. H. Fisher, North Brant; Gor-

don Wilson, North Wentworth; A. E. Fripp, of Ottawa; J. J. Carrick, Port Arthur; and W. J. Paul, in Lennox.

The reason why so many Conservative members of the Legislature went into the Federal fight may be traced to the influence of the Hon. Frank Cochrane, who has become the greatest political force in Ontario on the Conservative side, and who has been the provincial director-general of the campaign which has just closed. Mr. Cochrane, apparently, was determined to have the best men available as Conservative candidates in the reciprocity battle, even if he depleted the local house. In this he probably had the full approval of Sir James Whitney, who also threw himself heart and soul into the Federal campaign.

If Ontario goes as strongly Conservative in this week's battle as it did at the last Dominion election, then the Province may prepare for another general election before the year is out.

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Eliminating Taxation Follies.

A TAX on improvements is a questionable tax. So say the newest critics. In Vancouver, improvements on property are not taxed in the slightest degree. In Winnipeg improvements on buildings are taxed only sixty per cent., while vacant land is assessed at the same figure as the adjoining occupied land. In Ontario improvements are taxed at the same rate as the land. In this matter, the West is more progressive than the East.

But the East is waking up. At its last session, the Ontario Legislature passed acts providing for the abolition of the farm lands exemption in cities and for the expropriation of land in cities where such land would be benefitted by public expenditure. The latter Act enables a municipality to gather in a profit which rightfully belongs to the municipality but which would otherwise go to private owners.

There is a further movement on foot to get an Act through the Ontario Legislature to enable municipalities to reduce taxes on buildings, improvements and business assessment, and to throw the increased tax on land values, as is now commonly done in Western Canada and in the United States. A bill for the purpose was introduced last session, but met with much hostility. It will be introduced again and backed up by many petitions. At least, this was the decision arrived at when the Tax Reform Association of Ontario met the other day in Toronto.

The larger cities of Canada are face to face with a slum problem, and the slum is too often the product of an inefficient tax system. The land-owner with a poor house on a valuable lot pays a lower tax than the man with a good house on a lot of equal value. To get a tenant for his poor house, the owner must look to the foreign element, which desires cheap lodgings. Hence the slums which might be eliminated by the reduction of the tax on improvements.

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The Ready-Made Farm.

FIFTY miles north of Edmonton, the Duke of Sutherland is inaugurating a system of ready-made farms to be sold on the instalment plan to Scotch immigrants. The Duke divides his land into suitable portions, erects the necessary buildings and does sufficient preliminary work to enable the new farmer to maintain himself in comfort. These farms are then sold on easy terms to new settlers.

The Canadian Pacific Railway, the Duke of Sutherland, and one or two large land companies have adopted this principle, and why should it not come into general use? It would eliminate the hardships which debar many good men from taking their wives and families into the newer districts of Canada. It would induce a better class of immigration. It would hasten settlement and speedily increase the country's annual agricultural product. There are a score of reasons why it should be done, and not one against it.

Further, if this scheme is good in the West, it is better in the East. It takes a longer period to bring a farm into a state of profitable cultivation in Eastern Canada than it does in the treeless West. If northern Ontario, northern Quebec and central New Brunswick are to be opened up rapidly, some such system must be adopted. The settlers that Canada is now getting must go into regions where they would starve if they had to wait more than one season for their first crop. Further, they cannot farm successfully with the small amount of capital which the average immigrant can supply. If the ready-made farm is a good investment for the C. P. R. and the Duke of Sutherland, why should it not be a good investment for the rich provinces of Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick?