

Our Contributors.

ON KEEPING YOUNG AND FRISKY

BY KNOXONIAN.

Spring is the most delightful season of the year, mainly because in that season there is so much about us that is young and fresh. Young plants, young flowers, young blossoms, young leaves, and young animals of many different species abound in spring. The colleges supplement the efforts of nature in spring time. The young preachers come out in spring, so do the young doctors. Young lawyers come out all the year round. That may be one reason why lawyers are rarely fresh and green. New doctors in divinity are generally made in spring. Spring is the time for the fresh, the young, the hopeful and the new, and that is one reason why so many people like spring.

Some of us would like to have spring all the year round. A perpetual spring, however, might not be so pleasant as a spring that comes closely on the heels of our Canadian winter. The contrast between January and May increases the attractions of May just as a dull, cold paragraph in a sermon helps by contrast the lively, vigorous one that follows. Whether a perpetual spring in nature would be a pleasant thing or not, there is no doubt that a perpetual spring time would be a fine thing in the life of a man. It is a great thing to be able to keep young and frisky. It is a calamity to become prematurely old. An aged man with a cheery, hopeful mind is a grand sight. There is just one finer sight in this world than a young old man and that is a young old woman. If a man of seventy-five or eighty stands up before any assembly in the civilized world and declares that he feels as young as he ever did, he is absolutely certain to bring down the house. People may think he is mistaken, but they cheer him all the same. If Gladstone were fifty the House of Commons never would have given him the rousing welcome they did when he entered to deliver his Home Rule speech. An Englishman's natural admiration for pluck produced those cheers. Probably half of Sir John Macdonald's influence over his followers arises from his age. The old leader is gamey and frisky and the Tories admire his style. If he and Gladstone were to adopt a groaning, whining style they could not hold their places a year. It is a great thing for a public man to keep young and frisky.

How is the thing to be done? How can we avoid premature age? How can the mind be kept young, fresh and hopeful even in old age? Of course we cannot prevent the years from passing. Some clever single ladies are said to be able to keep themselves somewhere about twenty for many years, but no man can hope to do that. Owing to some defect in the male intellect men cannot keep themselves at twenty. Thirty, and forty, and fifty, and sixty, come down upon the men in spite of all they can do. It may safely be assumed, then, that no man can stop the years from passing. But can he do nothing to keep his mind young and fresh? The answer to this question must depend a good deal on the kind of a bodily frame he keeps his mind in. If his physique is fairly good there is no reason why his mind may not be as fresh and powerful at sixty as it was at forty-five. In fact he ought to do better brain work at sixty than at forty-five, provided his bodily powers are in fairly good condition. But the trouble arises just here. Some part of the mortal machine may have broken down, and for want of that one part the machine works badly. One bolt taken out of a locomotive might stop the whole train or throw the engine off the track. One very weak point in the bodily organism may derange the working of the whole system. When the bodily system is deranged it is very hard, in some cases impossible, to keep the mind fresh. A man who has to devote his attention to an ailment usually has very little time or inclination to attend to anything in the way of keeping his mind fresh. Digestive organs that "stir" with painful frequency for less work or shorter hours are almost certain to make the mind dull and inactive. A torpid liver is the sworn enemy of mental activity. Liver is king, as the patent medicine men say, and when the king goes to sleep and refuses to do his duty all the subjects have a dull time. A minister who fights a torpid liver for twenty-five years, and keeps up his reading, increases his pulpit power, and is a stronger all-round man at the end of that time should be made a Doctor in

Divinity. In such a case there should be no further questions asked. The fact that he has "worked well under such conditions is of itself sufficient proof that he is worthy of all the honours the Church can give him. Now, will the College Senates make a note of this point and govern themselves accordingly?

The first rule, then, for keeping the mind young is, "keep up the bodily health." It is possible to have a fresh mind in a weak body, but it is just barely possible. A semi-invalid must make a terrible fight if he keeps his mind youthful and active. The worst feature of the case is that the person who needs most to make this terrible fight, as a rule, has no fight in him. Fighting is the business of a hale man. Let it never be forgotten then that the best way to secure mental vigour in advanced life is to keep up the bodily powers.

Another good way to keep the mind fresh is to keep up with the times. A man must know what is going on in the world if he is to keep young in spirit when he is old in years. If a man gets fifty years behind his generation, he thereby adds fifty years to his age. If he is fifty years behind at fifty he is practically a hundred years old. For all practical purposes a man may be as old as Methuselah when he is forty. It is not at all necessary that one should approve of all that is going on around him in order that his mind may be kept fresh. The point we wish to make is that he must know more or less about it. He must at least know what the world is saying and doing in his own line. And here is the rock on which some ministers make shipwreck. They live and move in a little isolated world of their own, and take no interest in the world outside. Now let us admit, for the sake of argument, that everything ancient is from above and everything modern from beneath, and that is a large admission. Let us assume that no book worth reading has been written in the last fifty years, and that is an awful assumption. Let it be assumed that all new methods of working are essentially wicked, and that is a frightful assumption. In fact, let it be taken for granted that everything the most ultra conservative says about modern church life is true, and that is taking some frightful things for granted. The fact remains that a minister who does not know what the world is thinking and saying about the ministers' work cannot do the world much good. To keep one's mind fresh a man must at least know what is being done in his own line. There was a world of condensed wisdom in Dr. Willis' motto: "A minister should know something about everything and everything about something." He should know something about every other man's work and everything about his own. If he knows this he will be young at seventy.

It is a fact, then, that to keep fresh one must keep well read in his own specialty.

To keep young, too, one must not only know what is going on, but he must keep in sympathy with his fellow-men. No man can keep young if he walks behind his fellow-men, and does nothing better than curse the age. That is exactly what too many do. Keep in the procession, and keep in living sympathy with all that is good in it, if you wish to be young at seventy. If you fall out of the procession you are certain to fall behind.

Travel is one of the best things in the world to keep the mind young. It is hard to keep the mind vigorous and remain on one spot all the time. An occasional run to any place altogether unlike the one in which we live is a capital refresher. Contact with sharp minds outside of our own calling is also very good. The clergy suffer much from the fact that many of them are rarely brought into living contact with strong minds outside of their own profession.

However you do it, remember it is a good thing to keep young and frisky.

THE movement for uniting the Waldensian Church and the Free Church of Italy is progressing satisfactorily. The Synod of the latter body, held the first of this month, has found that, while all its churches favour union, the name of the united body is likely to give difficulty. The provisional decision reached was for the name Evangelical Waldensian Church, as applied to the whole united body, while the designation of Evangelical Church of Italy should be preserved for the Free Church section of it. By an overwhelming vote women were given the right of voting in church meetings.

THE MISSION CAUSE.

BY MRS. GORDON HARRINGTON, ONT.

[The following admirable address, delivered at the annual meeting of the Woman's Foreign Mission Society in London, is published at the request of those who were privileged to hear it.]

We have set up one more "stone of remembrance to witness that 'hitherto the Lord hath helped us.' It is indeed manifest that He has called us as a society to this work. Our growth in numbers and influence—our unity and mutual love—our financial success, our strong desire and purpose to make the future excel the past—all these prove to us that our work is of God. It is with profound humility and unfeigned gratitude that we recognize this. What are we, and what is our father's house, that God should so use us?

We are standing as it were between two years of work, and we look back on the past with mingled sadness and thanksgiving and with an earnest and prayerful purpose into the future.

The record of the past year's work is finished. Not a page, not a line can be cancelled or amended now. The report has been handed in. It is sealed up in the book of God's remembrance, to be called for and examined when the King shall come in His glory. But the record of our work for the coming year is yet unwritten, and our repentance for past failures may bear fruit in noble fulfilment in the future. I am quite sure this is the one desire and purpose uppermost in every heart to-day.

We are resolving to bend our energies to the work of securing a large increase of membership and greater financial success.

I do trust that in both these respects the results reported at our next annual meeting may surpass our most sanguine hopes. And yet, dear sisters, the standard of our true progress and of the highest measure of success is far other than the number of workers and the amount of work accomplished. In comparison with the nature and quality of the work done, these are minor considerations indeed.

It is to this aspect of our work that I most earnestly, though with great diffidence, ask your attention for a few moments.

The comparatively few members of our annual meeting represent 5,000 members of our society, and we may hope that our gathering here is to tell for good not only on us, but, through us, on the several auxiliaries and mission bands which we represent. It is, after all, in these that the main work of our society is to be done. If then, while gathered here our hearts are made to burn within us, as our Saviour speaks to us, and opens to us the Scriptures, let us constrain Him to abide with us, that when we scatter to our homes our fellow-workers in these little gatherings may share the blessed impulse. While seeking to add to our numbers, and to the amount of our contributions, let us not forget that there is something beyond these which we are to seek even more earnestly. Let us remember that these are, in a sense, but the externals of our work; they are of the nature of things seen and temporal; the inner springs of action—the zeal, the love, the self-denial, the heartfelt sympathy with mission work—these are the things not seen and, in their nature, eternal. We should in every meeting aim at nothing less than the felt presence of our blessed Master, felt in the responsive heart throbs to His great heart of love, that our prayers be with the faith and fervour that come of the Spirit's indwelling, our giving with the joy that comes of knowing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who became poor to make us rich. We shall be greatly helped in these respects by the regular and careful study, in the meetings, of the glowing predictions of the Saviour's universal dominion that crowd the pages of Scripture, and side by side with these the appalling facts of the world's heathen condition—such truths as were presented to us last evening, 1,000,000,000 non-Christians to 440,000,000 Christians! More heathen in the world to-day than ever there were!

In view of these tremendous facts we feel that we must take a firmer hold of the immutable covenant promises of the Father to the Son, and gladly seek and find in our monthly missionary letters and in the pages of our missionary periodicals the beginnings of their glorious fulfilment.

That we may see clearly the true ideal of service, let us judge our work as individuals and as a society by the word of Christ. The measure of the value of any service as judged by Him is the degree of love and