

The Canadian . . .

Epworth Era

ORGAN OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUES AND
OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES
IN THE METHODIST CHURCH.

Published Monthly at TORONTO, ONT.

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REV. W.M. BRIGGS, D.D., Publisher.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE. 50 cts. per year, payable in advance. For every five subscriptions received, one free copy of the paper will be sent.

SUBSCRIPTIONS should be sent direct to the office of publication addressed to REV. WILLIAM BRIGGS, Wesley Buildings, Toronto; or to C. W. GOATES, Methodist Book Room, Montreal; or REV. S. F. HURST, Methodist Book Room, Halifax, N.S.

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Editorial.

No Lasting Impression.

A brother who labored under the delusion that he could preach was continually belaboring the pastors for taking so much time in pulpit preparation. "Why," said he, "very often I do not know what I am going to preach about when I am trying my horse before going into the church." "That is not at all improbable," replied a listener, "for the people do not know what you have preached about when you are untiring your horse after the service."

This illustrates the fact that the unprepared preacher or leader makes no lasting impression upon his audience. It is simply presumption to expect that the Holy Spirit will help us to such an extent as to make careful and prayerful preparation unnecessary.

The Beginnings of Anarchy.

Since the lamented death of President McKinley at the hand of the anarchist, preachers and editors everywhere have been discussing anarchy, and many theories have been advanced concerning its cause and cure. Briefly stated, anarchy means contempt for all government, and an attempt to destroy it by murdering its representatives. There may be few who are prepared to go to the extent of Mr. McKinley's assassin, but it is to be feared that there are in every country multitudes of men who in heart are real anarchists. They hate the law and those who administer it, and are only prevented from murder by the fear of consequences. There can be no doubt that the main cause of this lies in the lack of home discipline. Many foolish fathers and mothers do not take the trouble to make their children obey, but allow them to have their own way regardless of consequences. Like Eli

they fail to "restrain" their sons when they "make themselves vile."

The Warden of the Central Prison, Toronto, gives it as his opinion that the chief cause of crime is disobedience to parents. He declares that there is a whole generation of boys growing up in this country who were never subjected to any control at home, and when they come to years of manhood they treat the laws of the land with the same disregard as they have been accustomed to treat the wishes of their parents. In this way criminals and anarchists are bred. Every home should teach respect for constituted authority.

Oversight.

The membership of the Baptist Temple, Brooklyn, numbering 1,500, is divided into sections containing one hundred each, and placed in charge of one person who is called a centurion. The hundreds are divided into tens with one at the head named a captain. Every month the captains report on their tens to the pastor at a special meeting appointed for that purpose. From these reports are received notices of sickness, or lack of interest on the part of members, and any other information that might prove helpful to the work of the church.

Theoretically we have a plan similar to this in our church classes with their



Toronto Conference
Epworth League
Convention
AT BARRIE
Nov. 12-14

leaders, but as a matter of fact it is not worked in one case out of a hundred. In most churches a very small percentage of the members attend class, and very few leaders make it a practice to visit those who are not seen at the weekly services. Many members would resent a regular call from a class-leader as an attempt to induce them to attend class. In large congregations and Leagues there is room for a more systematic oversight of the members. Some such plan as that of the Baptist Temple ought to be practicable.

Making a Life.

Dr. Meyers' book, "Making a Life," in this year's Reading Course, has a title which in itself conveys an important lesson. We hear a great deal in these times about "making a fortune," and "making a living," but "making a life" is something decidedly out of the ordinary. It is, however, peculiarly appropriate to the Epworth League, inasmuch as the declared object of our organization is the building of character.

In nearly all the books and papers on success published for young people the emphasis is always placed upon the material. One would suppose from the

illustrations constantly presented that the great object of human existence is to make money. Every note is keyed to the tune of dollars and cents. With so much of such literature flooding the land, it is refreshing to open the pages of such a book as "Making a Life," and find ourselves inspired to nobler ideals and grander ambitions. It is possible for the man who has never succeeded in obtaining wealth or fame to make a life that shall be a benediction to all around him, whose influence shall be felt for years after his body is lying in the grave.

One of the noblest characters we ever knew was a poor man, who brought up his family respectably, lived honestly and peaceably, and when he died left behind him a reputation for genuine goodness that many a greater man might have envied.

Whatever other ambitions they may have, our young people should aim at making a life that will be pure, useful, and helpful to others.

In this purpose they cannot fail to be strengthened by this virile and inspiring book.

Soulful Singing.

It has often been noticed that very little of the solo-singing that is heard from our choirs makes much impression upon the people. It may be artistic and correct, but as a rule it lacks soul. On the other hand the simple music rendered by some of our singing evangelists reaches the hearts of the people, and sometimes accomplishes more than the preaching.

During the past summer we heard a solo in a Methodist church at San Diego in Southern California which we shall never forget. The lady's voice was not remarkable and the piece she sang was a simple one, but the effect was marvellous. She seemed to feel every word that was uttered, and as the song went on her face lit up with a soul glow that thrilled every listener. She was evidently pouring forth her own experience, and using the words of the hymn as an expression of her love to the Saviour. Many people were wiping their eyes before the song ended. Why do we not hear such singing more frequently in our churches?

In many cases the reason is that our church soloists have no religious experience whatever, and they are totally unable to impress others with what they themselves do not feel.

It is highly important that those who lead us in song should be persons who have an intimate personal acquaintance with the Master.

How to Reach Men.

Not long ago we met one of our ministers who related rather a unique story of how he spent his holidays during the past summer. Feeling the necessity of a complete change on account of ill-health, he determined to go back to his old trade as a stone mason, for a few weeks. Donning the overalls and apron of an ordinary workman he took his place among the men who had been selected to put up the stone work of a railway bridge, and worked with them from seven in the