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"DEAD LINE OF FORTY."

We used to hear of the "dead line of forty" for preachers; but the answer was that some preachers had passed the dead line at thirty, while other preachers were quite alive at seventy.

Prof. Osler, of Johns Hopkin's University, who is going to the University of Oxford, England, has been startling the world with the theory that the best work of the world has been done in the "fifteen golden years," between 25 and 40; that the work of people in the sixties is generally injurious, and that men over 60 should be gently chloroformed out of existence in the interests of mankind! Though by some Dr. Osler's speech is considered a bit of caustic satire, it is being discussed seriously.

Gladstone did a great deal of good work thirty and even forty years after he was 40; and today there are few young men in "the fifteen golden years," between 25 and 40, who could begin to compare with Lord Strathearn at 80 in vigor of mind and usefulness of service.

Prof. Angell, of the University of Michigan, says: "I would like to extend the time of a man's life instead of shortening it. The experiment of killing off old men has been tried in Africa for centuries, and I would suggest to the distinguished physician that civilization has not advanced very rapidly there."

Whether, like Pilate, Dr. Osler is jesting, or not, we must all admit that the years between 25 and 40 truly should be "golden years" of fruitfulness; and everything should be done to emphasize the call to labor before the shadows begin to close in.

Meantime, let us remember that there is a great difference between being sixty years old and sixty years young.

The Canadian Nation.

Canada has taken a step forward as a nation in carving out of the Northwest two new provinces—Alberta and Saskatchewan, and also in deciding to take over, at the Dominion's expense, the defence of Esquimalt and Halifax, on the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts respectively. To relieve Great Britain of this considerable expenditure contributes just so much to Britain's military strength as giving the Mother Country a couple of millions of dollars a year directly; while it keep the expenditure of the money under the immediate control of Canada, which is the method in accord with Canadian feeling. These steps towards nationhood emphasize what we have so often urged, that Canada is making strides and feeling the influence of vitalizing energy and hopefulness. Presbyterianism has so far done its duty splendidly by the far Northwest. But not yet is the time for flattering. All varieties of educational and other questions loom up on the far western horizon. Is it vanity or self-praise to believe many of these questions of the future may be successfully met half-way by planting everywhere the young saplings of order-loving, liberty loving, Bible-loving Presbyterian congregations?

AN INSUFFICIENT PLEA.

It is a truth of universal application that sinning people, when charged by others for their evil deeds, will make some plea which falls short of acknowledging their full responsibility in relation to particular sins. Each will offer some kind of an excuse, or, more likely, will put the most of the blame on someone else.

The Christian Herald says: "Among the criminals awaiting sentence in Judge McMahon's court in New York a few days ago was a man of aristocratic family and good education. He was charged with larceny, and there were fifteen other cases against him, aggregating four thousand dollars. It was proved that he had previously served four terms in prison, varying from one year to four. The judge said that he had received several letters from people of undoubted respectability, asking him to show mercy to the prisoner because of the high station of the family. The prisoner also put in a plea for mercy, on the ground of 'hereditary moral obliquity.' He said he had begun life with every advantage; he had been gently born and bred; he had been sent to a first-class school, and to the most famous university in the world, yet he had squandered all of his advantages and had sunk to the position of a common thief. He believed that his moral obliquity was a disease which rendered him irresponsible. The judge thought otherwise and sentenced him to five years in State prison. He reminded the prisoner that he plea made his offence all the greater, because he had sinned against light and knowledge. The

principle was sound, though it is too often forgotten by people who have sat all their lives under the preaching of the gospel, yet continue impenitent." A similar plea is made by a vast number of people, many of whom charge their bent to wrong-doing to their depraved ancestors. But all such pleading is insufficient. God never pardons any sinner simply because his parents were sinful; nor will God be merciful to an impenitent one merely because his friends petition Him to show mercy.

Gibraltar in Modern Warfare.

The recent war scare arising out of the North Sea incident makes very pertinent the question as to Gibraltar's real effectiveness in a possible war under modern conditions. Mr. C. W. Furlong, the well known artist, recently visited the place, and in the course of an interesting article in The Outlook, illustrated by many of his own drawings, he says:

The possibility of the Rock batteries, with their powerful ordnance and high-angle guns, controlling effectively the fourteen miles of water between her and the African shore, is an open question. It is true that new guns of the most effective design have recently been mounted on her highest batteries, and no one who has seen target practice from the Rock with her smaller guns can doubt the efficiency of these larger ones. None but the highest and most trusted officers definitely know their range, and as questions about heavy ordnance at Gibraltar are not welcomed, and as the rules governing the inspection of her upper works have of late years been so rigid, it is impossible to estimate the value of the batteries at that range. It seems to me there is a fair possibility that vessels at full speed, hugging close the African shore, might get through with comparative safety, even in clear weather; while in dense fogs or storms they could go through unseen. Then, again, the heavy dark mist-cloud, which so often envelops the upper half of the Rock for days at a time, would make accurate aim exceedingly difficult and uncertain. So, as Great Britain could not mine the Straits, but one thing remains to make Gibraltar really the "key to the Mediterranean," and that is, a strong and effective squadron acting in conjunction with the land batteries. This Great Britain has, and I believe her control of the Straits cannot be reasonably questioned.

DAILY READINGS FOR PRE-READING WEEK.

Mon—A paralytic (Luke 5: 18-25).
Tues—By word of mouth (Luke 7: 2-10).
Wed—An afflicted child (Luke 9: 38-42).
Thurs.—On the Sabbath Day (Luke 13: 10-13).
Fri.—A blind man (Luke 18: 35-43).
Sat.—A healed people (Rev. 21: 1-5).