

Our Contributors.

THE GLORIOUS ARMY OF THE INAUDIBLES.

BY KNOXONIAN.

"Did you hear Mr. A preach yesterday," asked a gentleman of his neighbour? "No," said the neighbour, "I saw him preach." Mr. A had conducted the service in such an inaudible tone that he was not heard by anybody a few feet from the pulpit. He was merely *seen* preaching by all the rest of the congregation that did not go asleep. A man must be much handsomer than most preachers are if merely looking at him does a congregation much good.

The pulpit is not the only place in which inaudibles are found. They are found in all places where men speak, or read, or preach, or pray, except, perhaps, at camp meetings. They abound in Parliament. They bob up in the Council. They mumble at the Bar. They mutter in the witness-box. They spoil public meetings. They sit in the General Assembly. They attend the Synod. They deliberate in the Presbytery. They are found in all places where men meet for deliberative purposes.

Inaudibles may be divided into several classes according to their station in life. There is the clerical inaudible. He rises in a church court, say the General Assembly, to speak on some question. His lips move, he gestures mildly for a moment, and is saluted with shouts of "can't hear" from all parts of the house. He goes on for a moment, and then comes another volley, "can't hear a word." Nine times out of ten he declares that he can be heard quite easily without speaking louder or going on the platform. Surely the people who are trying to hear are the best judges of that matter, but the inaudible rarely thinks so.

There, too, is the Parliamentary inaudible. He always speaks as if his desk were his only auditor. Parliamentary inaudibles abound in the Local Legislature. You drop in some evening to see the assembled wisdom, during routine, while petitions are being presented and bills introduced. Some of the members thus engaged never speak—they simply mutter. A debate begins in which you feel an interest. Some members show excellent elocutionary qualities; but, oh, how some of the others do mutter and mumble! They seem to be afraid that a pure tone or distinctly spoken word might void their election. Visitors turn their best ears and the reporters crane their necks to catch the sound, but it is no use. The inaudible member for Blank goes on muttering to his desk until he has spoken his piece.

Exasperating inaudibles are sometimes found in business. Prominent among these is the bank clerk inaudible. This gentleman stands behind his fortification and whispers. Perhaps it is a violation of the rules of the institution to speak so that he can be heard. In many cases it may be proper to speak low, as a customer may not wish all in the bank to hear the conversation; but there is very little use in asking questions if the answers cannot be heard across the counter. The civil service inaudible is very exasperating. So is the salesman, or office man of any kind, who is too nice to speak distinctly. The business inaudible is very trying.

The causes of inaudibility are various. Nature has made some voices more penetrative than others. Chief Justice Cameron has perhaps the most easily heard voice in the Province. When he was at the Bar you could hear his voice ring through any courthouse without the slightest effort on his part. The most casual remark from him as he sits on the Bench to witness or counsel can be distinctly heard at the other side of the court-room. Feeble health makes some speakers inaudible. A clear, resonant, flexible voice is rarely found in company with weak bronchial tubes or impaired digestive organs. There is no vigour in the voice of a weak man. Sound health is indispensable to real good speaking. Nervousness makes some people difficult to hear. When physical infirmity is the cause the sufferer should have the sympathy of all good men. Some speakers are inaudible because they feel no interest in what they are saying. Lack of living interest in a subject usually makes a man mumble over it. A flabby mind, without vim, vigour, or grasp, is very liable to express itself in muttering tones. Some people mumble because they think mumbling is genteel. They mince and

simper because they think that kind of thing is evidence of high breeding. Life is too short to hold any discussion with them. It is perhaps well for the human family that they are not heard. The world loses nothing by their being inaudible.

But the principal cause of inaudibility is bad articulation. Nine men out of ten who fail to make themselves heard in any reasonably-sized room fail simply because they do not speak distinctly. Some fail because they mistake loudness for distinctness. A man may easily speak so loud that you cannot hear him. This may seem like a contradiction, but it is not. Loudness is not distinctness. Noise is not voice. The more noise the worse if it is not distinctly vocalized. A minister preaching in a church considerably larger than his own is almost certain to make this mistake when he begins his sermon. The distance to which he has to extend his voice seems much greater than usual and he begins too loud. Happy is he if he can get his voice down again. That is one of the things that very few men can do. What is wanted is not loudness but distinctness. A speaker who has good control over his breathing apparatus, and articulates distinctly, can be heard at any reasonable distance without shouting.

An intelligent lady of lively temperament is always a good elocutionist, though she may never have taken a lesson in elocution. She speaks with beautiful distinctness, goes up and down the scale instinctively, puts the emphasis in the right place, gives the right inflections, and, perhaps, without knowing it, talks just as the greatest masters of elocution would say she should talk. If speeches and sermons could be delivered just as that woman talks, only a little louder, humanity would not suffer so much from the glorious army of the inaudibles.

How should the army of inaudibles be treated? Everything depends on the cause of inaudibility. If any good man is inaudible through age, physical infirmity, or any other providential cause, and is trying, notwithstanding his disability, to do good to his fellow-men, he should be sympathized with and helped. He should get all the more credit for his efforts. Such cases are, however, widely different from that of a man who is inaudible simply because he does not take interest enough in his subject or his audience to speak so that he can be heard. There should be some mild way of letting such a speaker know that the public are not grateful for the mere privilege of looking at him. When one has to pay for the privilege of looking at a speaker or reader who mumbles and mutters so that he cannot be heard ten feet from where he stands the case is still more aggravating. We spend more than half a million annually in this little Province on education. Part of it might be expended in teaching the rising generation how to use their vocal organs.

MR. TASSIE'S REPLY.

(Concluded.)

MR. EDITOR,—I now turn to Maine, where a prohibitory law has been in force for years. Hon. Wm. McDougall says (o): "As a model of legislation the Maine law may be considered a failure;" and Dio Lewis (p): "I affirm that its influence in New England has been disastrous up to this time." We learn from the Prison Report (q) that the gaols are overcrowded and drunkenness on the increase. The report of the British Consul (r) at Portland, which was presented to the British Parliament, August, 1883, says: "The execution of the law has fostered perjury and fraud, and it has been necessary to change the rules of evidence applicable to ordinary criminal trials in order that conviction may be obtained." It has embittered neighbour against neighbour and members of the same household against each other. Rev. S. W. Dike (s) says: "There were 587 divorces in Maine in 1880, probably one to at most ten or possibly nine marriages." The liquor law was passed in 1851. At the end of 1850 there were seventy-five convicts in the State Prison, or one in every 7,776 of the population (t). At the end of 1884 there were 163 convicts, or one in every 4,012 of the population, showing an increase of ninety-three per cent. of the worst class of criminals on non-prohibition times. Of these 163 convicts (u) about one-fifth may be classed as murderers. Turn to the gaols. The committals in 1873 (v), which is as far back as the report goes in this respect, were 1,548, or about one in every 405 of the population, and in 1884 3,072, or one in every 211 of the

population, showing an increase of nearly double during prohibition times. The criminal codes of Maine and Ontario are not uniform. But, for what it is worth, I may state that while the committals to the gaols of Maine (w) have increased ninety-nine per cent. between 1873 and 1884, those of Ontario have increased only fifty-four per cent., and we must remember more than half (fifty-five per cent.) of the inmates of our gaols are not native Canadians.

Will Prohibition do away with pauperism? There were (x) 110,263 paupers in the United States in 1880, or one in every 454 of the population, of whom 4,917, or one in every 132 of the population, were in Maine. This is just three and one-half times as much as the average pauperism of the United States. Temperance orators have made merchandise of religion by appealing to our selfish instinct in asserting that Maine has saved \$24,000,000 annually since the prohibitory law was passed.* Why, \$24,000,000 saved annually, invested at five per cent. compound interest for thirty-four years amounts to more than two billions of dollars, or nearly ten times as much as the taxable property of Maine, and nearly as much as the taxable property of all the New England States! There should not be a pauper in Maine.

With regard to insanity, less than four per cent. (y) of the admissions to asylums in Ontario in 1884 were caused by drink. While lunacy has steadily increased during the last twenty years in Canada, intemperance has decreased. The same remark applies to England, Ireland and Scotland. It is less among the wealthy than among the poor who drink less than the wealthy; less among males who drink deeply than among females who drink little, and less in the great commercial centres where drinking is common than in rural districts where it is uncommon. Ontario, with a population of 1,923,228, and Maine, with one-third the population, 648,936, had precisely the same number, 19, who became insane through drink in 1884. Some of the admissions in Maine were caused by opium; not one in Ontario. Nor will (z) Maine bear comparison with the rest of the Union. There was one insane in every 420 of the population of Maine in 1880, while the average for the Union was one in every 545. There was one idiot in every 489 of the population of Maine in 1880, while the average for the Union was one in every 652. The population of Maine in 1850 was 583,169, and in 1880, 648,936. The daily average number in the Insane Hospital during 1850-51 (a) was seventy-five, and during 1880, 454. So that while the population has increased only eleven per cent. the insane population has increased 600 per cent. It is a matter of infinite regret to me that space will not permit me to enter more into detail. I have appealed to public documents to prove that less evils arise from liquor under license law than under Prohibition. I needed not these to assure me that man's law, opposed to divine law, must fail. I therefore repel the aspersions cast upon me and upon those who in some degree think as I do, and I charge my accusers and their accusers with ignorance or with impatience in investigation, or with wilfully aiming at bringing about a deplorable state of affairs through deplorable means—the violation of the rights of man and of the rights of property.

It is idle to discuss a question in political ethics with one who knows not that liberty is the result of order, and who claims "the more degraded and debased the social condition the wider is the range of personal liberty." The example Mr. Wright gives of an Indian and his squaw is not one of liberty, but of license and slavery. His squaw is the slave and his Indian the slave owner. Liberty may be said to consist in the right to do as one pleases, provided one does not trench on the right of another to do as he pleases. It is only negatively coercive, and by preventing aggression on others maintains their liberties. We are not told to love our neighbours better than, but as ourselves. This injunction, which gives to the individual natural rights, repudiates a scheme of asceticism by which a certain class must suffer more than their neighbours—as, for instance, the sacrifice of their property for the general good. It simply urges man to seek out the relation between rights and duties, since knowledge of a neighbour's rights and duties is gained by understanding his own. The divine law, "the kingdom of God, is within you." The knowledge of our duties to God and man comes through our own consciousness. A law which visits with fines and im-

(*) 2 Peter ii. 2.