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CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

TOPICS—	PAGE
The Question of The Age	135
The Source of Socialistic Agitation	135
Varieties of Socialism	135
The School of The Future	135
Corruption in Ontario Politics	136
The Rancoured Dissolution	136
The School Act of Manitoba	136
Radical University Changes	136
The Prince Edward Island Tunnel	137
The British Parliament	137
Nicaragua's Canal	137
CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM	L.L.D. 137
THE TRUTH ABOUT IRELAND—III	Fairplay Radical. 138
PARIS LETTER	Z. 138
AS FROM THE NECTAR LADEN. (Poem)	Arthur Weir. 139
THE GHOST OF A GARDEN	Professor Archibald MacMechan, M.A. 139
HILLSIDE	Achemist. 139
THE RAMBLER	139
MAKERS AND DOERS TOGETHER	H. Sanders. 140
THE ABORIGINES OF NEWFOUNDLAND	The Rev. F. E. J. Lloy. 140
A SONNET	J. H. Brown. 141
THE CURSE OF A GREAT NAME	141
WORDS ABOUT WORDS	G. T. 141
CORRESPONDENCE	
The Truth About Ireland	Isaac E. Pedlow. 142
Old French Pear Trees	C. Mair. 142
THE DECLINE OF RURAL NEW ENGLAND	A. D. Stewart. 142
A SAILOR'S SONG. (Poem)	143
THE GENESIS OF THE UNITED STATES	143
ART NOTES	143
MUSIC AND THE DRAMA	143
OUR LIBRARY TABLE	144
LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSPEL	145
READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE	145
CHESS	146

All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

THE advent of Father Huntington to the city, an address of Principal Grant, and other circumstances have just now brought prominently before the Toronto public the great question of the age—that question which underlies all the numerous theories and projects, such as the land-tax propaganda, with which the name of Henry George is so intimately associated, though he was not its originator; the various socialistic schemes, whether secular or "Christian"; the great experiment about to be attempted by Mr. Booth, and similar movements, which are now agitating the world—the irrefragable question of the relations between rich and poor. However impatient we may be of whatever threatens to disturb us in hours which we would fain have sacred to business or repose; however vehemently we may deprecate or anathematize many of the objectionable proposals which are constantly being brought forward by credulous enthusiasts or knavish agitators, the stubborn facts remain. They will not down. They confront us by day and by night, in office, street and parlour. Great masses of the people are dissatisfied with life under modern conditions, and their dissatisfaction is growing from day to day. This dissatisfaction is stimulated not only by designing agitators, working for their own selfish ends, but by disinterested philanthropists, who believe that there are radical wrongs in the existing social systems, and that radical reforms are needed. As a matter of fact there can be, we suppose, no doubt in the mind of anyone who takes the trouble to study life as it exists below the placid surface on which most of us are content to move, and who is willing to go a little beyond the narrow sphere of his own surroundings, that the times are terribly out of joint, that there is something rotten in every so-called Christian state. This conviction must force itself upon everyone who compares the present, not with the historical past, but with any high standard of social achievement. We know no sufficient reason for believing that the state of even the poorest or most degraded classes is worse to-day, or that those classes are proportionally more numerous, than at any previous period in the world's history. We believe, in fact, that the tendency is upward, that the average, both of social comfort and of social morality, is higher than ever before. The rich are no doubt growing richer. Witness the fact that a prominent gentleman in New York, who is in an excellent position to judge, explained the other day, in an address,

that by "rich man" in that city he meant a man worth from twenty millions upwards. But it does not follow that the poor are growing poorer, and we know no reason for believing that they are, except, it may be, relatively. But what matter, so long as it is still true that millions in every land are sunk in the lowest depths of poverty and degradation, and that the condition of other millions is one of incessant toil for the bare necessities of life. To such an extent is this the case that we do not suppose there is anyone of those who are now living in comfort or luxury, even in this happy and prosperous city of Toronto, who, if he were endowed with the gift of clairvoyance, and could look upon the scenes constantly presented in hundreds of hovels in the city, could any longer relish the good things with which he is surrounded.

ALL honour then to those who, from motives of philanthropy, force themselves to look upon such scenes. Is it any wonder that they soon begin to ask themselves whether such an unequal distribution of the good things of life can be a legitimate outcome either of the laws of nature or of the beneficence of God—if there is any difference in meaning in the expressions—and to answer in the negative? Who then, or what is to blame? The sufferers themselves? In many cases, no doubt, but not in all, perhaps not in the greater number. Thousands are in poverty and wretchedness in spite of their best efforts; hundreds of thousands because they have been born into their present state and have never had a chance to rise above it. But not till we reach a higher stratum do we come upon the home of dangerous discontent. The ferment of agitation which sometimes threatens to overturn existing institutions and whelm all in promiscuous ruin is at work amongst those, who by dint of unremitting toil and privation are able to provide themselves and their families with daily bread, but who see or think they see those for whom they toil, heaping up riches and living in luxury on the products of their labour. We are not saying that their views are reasonable or right, nor are we advocating any theory. We are merely trying to get an inside view of the facts and conditions of these growing agitations, as they exist. It cannot, we suppose, be doubted that it is in this conviction—whether false or true, or partly false and partly true matters not—that the labourer is not receiving his fair share of the products of his labour, that the great and growing agitations have their rise.

WE thus state in brief what seem to us to be the conditions, not with any wild hope of being able to solve in a paragraph the problem which is perplexing the world's philosophers and statesmen, but simply to aid ourselves, and possibly others, in getting a dispassionate and sympathetic view of the case. Without endorsing the wild schemes of any enthusiast, it may be well to remember that most great reforms have been made possible by enthusiasts before they were wrought into action by practical men. The doctrines known by the common name of Socialism are very diversified and some of them wide as the poles asunder in point of morality. The law of property is a corner stone of the science of sociology. Any scheme which refuses to recognize the rights of property, or proposes to make common distribution of the fruits of industry, puts its advocates at once outside the pale of reformers, or even of peaceful revolutionists, and brands them as anarchists and enemies of mankind. But it cannot be denied that there is some ground for the distinction which John Stuart Mill and Henry George and others after them make between property which is the product of human industry and property which is the immediate gift of nature, as there is also a difference between one's inherent right to a value which is created by his own labour, and a value that incidentally accrues from the labour of others. If society in a given locality could be reconstructed from the foundation on a scientific plan, by intelligent men of to-day, it is pretty certain that these distinctions would be carefully observed and that the tendency to inequality of social condition would thereby be greatly counteracted. But what is to be done when for generation after generation the one kind of property has been exchanged for the

other until the complicated state of affairs now existing has been reached. Then, again, the broad difference between what we may call secular socialism and Christian socialism needs to be carefully borne in mind. Strangely enough, while such men as Father Huntington pose as Christian socialists their great land-tax scheme is a purely secular expedient. The true Christian socialist, he who would abolish the law of supply and demand as a ruling force, or rather supersede it with the law of the Sermon on the Mount, occupies an impregnable position. If and so far as he can induce men to accept that higher law and act upon it, the problem will be solved and poverty abolished. When each individual becomes quite as anxious about his neighbour's, that is every other man's, welfare as about his own, there will no longer be any great extremes of wealth and poverty, or any perplexing questions about the division of the fruits of industry. Those who despair of the early coming of that day may well seek to effect the great reform by secular methods, but they should be careful to distinguish between things that differ so widely. Meanwhile the agitations will go on. May it not be the wiser part to avoid indiscriminate condemnation, and while resolutely opposing whatever tends to practical wrong, or social disorder, to preserve a sympathetic attitude towards the honest reformers, even though they be religious enthusiasts, and a readiness to recognize and reduce to practice the modicum of good, the admixture of truth that is pretty sure to be found in their doctrines? These great social and moral questions will be discussed and ought to be discussed. If all will help to garner the wheat the chaff may be left for the winds to scatter.

PRINCIPAL KIRKLAND'S address at the opening of the Normal School Session a few days since contained many good thoughts and suggestions. One of these in particular should be sent abroad through the press, with all the emphasis the printer's best modern devices can give it. In the schools of the coming century, said Mr. Kirkland, the cheapest and poorest teachers will not be employed to teach the youngest children. The speaker went on to show what can need no proof for any mind that has thought to any purpose on educational questions, viz., that the very best teaching should be deemed even more indispensable in the lowest than in the highest forms. Nothing is more wasteful and disastrous in our educational methods, or more discreditable to the popular intelligence, than the prevalent notion that any school boy or girl will do well enough as a teacher for small children and beginners. If there is any such thing as a science of education, it is almost self-evident that no one who is not, to some extent, master of that science, should be trusted to lay the educational foundations, upon which the whole superstructure must rest. The loss resulting from the want of correct training at the most critical period in the mind's growth is incalculable. The negative damage, if we may so speak, far exceeds the positive. It is bad enough that errors in fact and solecisms in speech and manner become so ingrained in the texture of the mental furnishings, as to be to a large extent ineradicable. But what is far worse is that when the mind is not trained to right habits of thinking, reasoning, and investigating at this most susceptible period, its action is impaired in all the future. It would, indeed, be scarcely too much to say that if the child were put into the hands of a skilled educator during the first six or eight years of the school life, the future might be left to take care of itself. All that the best teacher can do is to direct the pupil in gaining the right use and mastery of his own powers. The mind thus trained may pretty safely be trusted to keep up its progress to the last, no matter what the future circumstances may be. Here, we venture to think, is the weakest point in our educational system. It is, of course, much easier to point out the evil than to show how it is to be remedied, since no effective remedy can be applied without a considerable increase of expenditure. The Minister of Education warmly endorsed Mr. Kirkland's views. And yet under the system of which he is the responsible head the mental and moral training of the children during the most susceptible period of their lives is, to a very large extent, entrusted to boys and girls yet in their teens, very