

Our Contributors.

MR. BLAKE'S BOMBSHELL.

BY KNOXONIAN.

The morning after the general election, while the dead were being buried and the wounded carried off the field the Hon. Edward Blake fired a terrific bomb-shell among the wearied warriors.

When the dust had settled and the smoke had blown away the question asked by almost everybody was, Who has been struck?

Some said nobody; others said everybody.

Then the party politicians came to the front and had their say.

The Tories shouted that the ex-leader of the Liberals had aimed a deadly thrust at the trade policy of his own party.

The Liberals answered that the great jurist had fairly gibbeted the poor old N.P.

They were both right as they not always are.

Mr. Blake did hit the trade policy of both parties telling blows.

As a piece of literary work his arraignment of the N.P. is unique. It is perhaps one of the best specimens of condensation in the English language. It should be studied as a work of art.

The argument against the trade policy of the Liberals is long and laboured and is designed to show that Commercial Union with the United States must bring political union.

The "real tendency" of the N.P. is also towards "disintegration and annexation," says Mr. Blake.

Either road leads to Washington. The principal difference between the policies being that the policy of the Liberals will lead us there in a short time and by a direct route while the N.P. will disintegrate us first and then bring the integrant parts under the wings of that famous bird of which we have read in fourth of July orations.

That is what we understand the hon. gentleman to say though we may easily be mistaken.

It goes unsaid that the Hon. Edward Blake is a man of whom all Canadians are proud. His splendid physique, his untarnished reputation, his lofty character, his magnificent diction, his matchless forensic power, his enormous magazine of accurate knowledge, the whole get up of the man place him so distinctly in the front rank of men that Canada may well feel proud of the ex-Liberal leader.

Mr. Blake at his best in court or in Parliament can do about as good work as any man in the empire. The number who can do any better may be counted on your fingers.

And yet Mr. Blake's position at the present moment is distinctly weak.

It is weak because it is merely destructive. He attacks the trade policy of both parties and offers nothing better himself.

The country must have a trade policy of some kind. We cannot live without trade. We must trade in some way. Mr. Blake cannot do much for his native country by simply arguing against the N.P. and Unrestricted Reciprocity. Supposing he should bury these beyond hope of resurrection the country would still need a trade policy of some kind.

A man is seriously ill.

Dr. Macdonald comes in and prescribes the N.P. pill. Drs. Laurier and Cartwright come in and prescribe the Reciprocity pill. Dr. Blake comes in and gravely tells the patient that if he takes either of these pills he must die. The patient might well be excused for saying—prescribe for me yourself.

A young lady at the Union Station in Toronto wishes to go to Barrie. As the Grand Trunk express for the East pulls out a gentleman tells her that train goes direct to Montreal. When the C.P.R. train starts he tells her that train goes to Montreal via Ottawa. That may be useful information, but what the young lady wants to see is the train that goes to Barrie. Miss Canada, a handsome and most interesting young lady as *Grip* always presents her, wishes to know the way to national prosperity. It will not help her much to show her two trade lines that lead to national extinction.

Perhaps we do Mr. Blake an injustice by saying that his present position is merely that of a destructive critic. He may have a plan of his own that he intends to lay before his countrymen at what he considers the right time. If so, his countrymen will consider it with becoming respect and attention. The source from which it comes will entitle it to the earnest study of all patriotic citizens.

Somebody has said that "Blessed in the man who makes a good suggestion" would make a useful beatitude. So it would. If Mr. Blake can suggest a feasible plan by which Canadians can improve their finances without making violent changes of a political kind the honourable gentleman will earn the gratitude of his countrymen and receive it.

We have a much higher opinion of Mr. Blake than to suppose that he will sulk in his tent and content himself with destructive criticism of other men's theories.

That would be a sad misuse of his splendid powers. Much smaller men can do that class of work. It does not require the brains of a Blake to knock holes in the old N.P., or find difficulties in the path of Commercial Union. Any fairly clever politician can do that.

A man of Mr. Blake's eminence should do constructive work.

Mr. Blake should have a seat in Parliament. Apart from the trade question he can render his country good service.

John Bright was not always in accord with his party on all questions. What Englishman would care to have seen John Bright out of Parliament.

Gladstone is not in accord with a majority of his party on some questions—Disestablishment for instance. Does any Englishman worthy of the name wish to see the Grand Old Man out of the House of Commons?

We hope the day is not far distant when Canada's great jurist will tell his countrymen just what he does think about the trade situation and that some constituency will soon send him to Parliament and give him a chance to do what he can for his native country. Canada needs the services of all her best sons at the present time.

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS.

REACHING THE MASSES.

BY CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D.

It is very sad to think that, after nineteen hundred years, Christianity, even in the countries specially professing it, should be to such an extent a failure as to make it needful to discover how to "reach the masses." Yet who can deny that, at least in our great cities, religion, so far as outward observance goes, and to a large extent in its practical recognition, is in a very poor way? Lord Shaftesbury used to say that not more than two workingmen in a hundred attended either church or chapel, and Dean Gott, when Vicar of Leeds, came to the conclusion that even this estimate must be cut down one-half.

The churches and chapels, of course, have their congregations, and their missions dot the slums round them, but the same faces look up from the pews, year after year, and the light of the missions is that of glow-worms, here and there, in the darkness, rather revealing than removing it. Yet all these agencies have their uses, for if things be bad even with them, what would they be without them? It is clear, however, that neither churches, chapels nor ordinary "missions" can win the general population for Christ. Something more is needed.

It seems as if the best way to reach the crowd must be that by which they have at various times been reached in the past; for the tidal wave of religious emotion has repeatedly swept over larger or smaller districts, though, unfortunately, the ebb has always followed it. Religious movements are like the lava streams I have seen bursting out from Vesuvius—liquid fire at their source and for a little way down the hill; then sluggish, and finally congealed into stone. It does not seem possible to maintain permanently the fervour to which spiritual revolutions owe their origin.

Look at the past. John the Baptist roused all classes in his brief day, but was it not because everything about him showed that he believed what he preached? There could be no question of his sincerity. While the churchmen of the day, cleric and lay, with too few exceptions, were cold and formal, self-satisfied and conventional, distinguishable from men at large by outward propriety and self-righteous charity, but sordid, hypocritical and selfish under this skin of virtue—John stood out in striking contrast—he was clearly in mortal earnest. Religion was evidently in his case the supreme thought. He had given up everything for it—position, prospects, ease, all that most attracts men in life. His absolute self-sacrifice to his convictions appeared in such a surrender, for their sake, of all the pleasures of existence, the opinion of society, the indulgences of luxury and the ambitions of the world. It spoke out in his rough, camel-hair garment, his rude fare, his celibate life, his comfortless shelter in a mountain cave, and in his fearless loyalty to conscience, at any cost, even to that of life itself. The spell of a personality so much above the common level stirred the heart of the nation and drew towards him all classes. In these great features, as much as in his work, he was a forerunner of our Lord Himself. Like him, Christ discarded all the ordinary aims of life. Slighting the temptations of self-interest, or worldly wisdom, or comfort or safety, He took His stand on the same basis of simple manhood in its direct relations to the unseen and eternal. Both John and Jesus were utterly poor, for if John fed on locusts, Christ had not where to lay His head. Neither made anything by religion; both suffered everything for it, and this self-denying sincerity irresistibly attracted the multitudes. It was the same with the Apostles. The men "who turned the world upside down" were humble fishermen. They had no rich organizations to subsidize them. Their incomes were limited to the "daily bread" of their Lord's Prayer, and their wardrobes were so meagre that one "old cloak" was worth bringing from Asia to Europe to keep out the winter's cold. But their poverty was a proof of their sincerity. It was clear that they sought the sheep, not the wool. They had no selfish ends to gain. Men saw that they were aglow with the Divine enthusiasm of humanity. There is an instinct in the worst bosoms which detects moral goodness and does homage to it. The masses have always been reached only by following the example of John, of Christ and of the Apostles. There is no way else to conquer them for God but an exhibition towards them of God-like love.

A few illustrations will speak for themselves. The Monks, who, in their early purity and zeal, won land after land for Christ, were as poor as the Apostles or as their Lord. St. Anthony, their virtual archetype, had been moved by the com-

mand to sell all he had and give it to the poor, and order after order acted on the same heavenly counsel. Severinus won Noricum for the cross only by such self-sacrificing love and devotion. Winfred, of Kirton, near Exeter, became St. Boniface, the apostle of the Germans, by the spell of the same enthusiasm. It was in the power of a like single-hearted zeal that the Culdees gained their wide triumphs in Scotland and England. And later than they, it was to their successors, the Monks from Rome, that Britain owed the seeds of her economical and spiritual inheritance. As long as they were poor they were zealous; when they were rich, they had lost their power and became an evil in the land. To the Franciscans was due, nearly seven hundred years ago, the bringing back of the masses to Christianity, when, as at present, they had slipped out of reach of the settled clergy, with their venerable but cumbrous parish organization. The love with which these poor "brethren," the "Friars" or "Freres," were clothed, was the one secret of their reaching the masses as they did. None could be poorer than they, but they sought out the leper the diseased, the fever-stricken, the dying, and the multitudinous army of the wicked, to give them human sympathy and tender ministrations. Silver and gold had they none, any more than the apostles, but they had better, and gave it freely. They spent, and were spent, in ceaseless offices of Christian love and piety. As long as they were thus poor the multitude thronged to them and began new lives in copying their example. When they grew rich, then their wealth corrupted them, and they grew like salt that had lost its savor. Wycliffe's "poor preachers" enforce the same moral, and last century repeated it in the amazing results of the movement of Whitfield and Wesley. Nor is the lesson of the Salvation Army in our day to be overlooked. In spite of much that offends good taste, the sincerity, enthusiasm and self-denial of the mass of its agents have done wonders, and its power is as yet spreading.

To reach the masses, then, as it seems to me, the churches must wake to a new spiritual life. To rouse them, some true leader is needed, for all the movements I have named were the circles of one man's influence spreading over society. Isolated effort is of little value. But the leader must illustrate the truths he commends. It is no use for a rich archbishop, bishop, or fat London or New York parson, who has "made a good thing of it" by choosing religion for a calling, to try to initiate a spiritual revolution such as is required. Let him first show his sincerity by acting on Bunyan's of "here little, and, hereafter, bliss." Let him give up everything beyond a modest sustenance on something of an apostolic scale. Who can believe in a man who tries to make the best of both worlds? Every one feels that he is a sham; that his religion is nicely arranged, subordinated to his worldly interests; that it is, in fact, as much a "business" as any other pursuit or profession.

Let some true man in each section of the Church head a well-organized, systematic crusade, or, better still, let some such man head it, without reference to sect. But it must not expend itself in talk. There are three gospels filled with what Christ did; one with what He said. The Friars, like the Monks, won society by healing its many wounds. To raise the fallen, to tend the sick, to take all human interests to our heart, and consider nothing relating to them indifferent to us, is the only Christianity that proves to the multitude that it comes fourfold. Try to put out the hell that burns fiercely enough in this life for so many, and do not talk only of that which is to be hereafter.

To reach the masses, in short, the religion of pulpit, pew and bishop's throne must be real. What good is it to talk of bringing in the millions by make-believe, and what else is it than make-believe on a large scale, when well-to-do sinners have bows and smiles from parsons in private, and are never troubled by any pulpit allusion to their shortcomings, while the air is shrill with denunciations of poor gutter-offenders? Call the devil by his name wherever you find him: in Wall street on the Stock Exchange, in "syndicates" and "corners," in death-trap houses for the poor, in the utter want of principle of party politics; in the thousand forms in which he masquerades in our midst. Some prophet who fears nobody but God must rise; some one with the great heart of Jesus Christ, who bearded high priest, rabbi, any one found doing wrong, and exposed hypocrisy, however high placed, and was the friend of publican and sinners, pointing them, indeed, to the Father above, but at the same time himself bearing their infirmities and healing their sicknesses, and brightening their dark lot by Divine sympathy, with its temptations and trials and by self-sacrifice for their good.

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INDORE CANADIAN MISSION.

BY REV. NORMAN RUSSELL.

An event of no small importance both as showing the progress of mission work in Central India, and especially as indicative of the complete reversal of feeling towards us by those in authority in the Native States, was the laying of the corner stone of the new Hospital for Women at Indore on February 4. The work of building has been in progress now for some two months under the close supervision of Mr. Wilkie and its strong foundations and partially reared walls already present a substantial appearance.

For the occasion the building was decorated with bunting and flags—our Canadian ensign having the place of honour—tents were reared and by the kindness of H. H. Maharajah