

Our Contributors.

SOURCES OF NATIONAL DANGER.

BY KNOXONIAN.

An able writer in the *Obse*, in an article on the uses of universities and the advantages of a generous education for our young people, gives four sources from which he thinks trouble may come to Canada and the United States if it has not come already. These are

THE WORSHIP OF WEALTH.

THE LOVE OF NOTORIETY.

ADMIRATION FOR MERE BIGNESS, AND

THE GROWTH OF SELF ASSERTION

In a former paper we discussed "The Worship of Wealth," and say no more about it now, though much more might be said. The evil does not exist here to the same extent that it exists on the other side. Dr. Cuyler broadly states that money controls Congress and the Legislatures over there, and hints that some day soon it may buy the Presidential chair. It may do a much worse thing than even that—it may buy the courts of justice. Some of these—not far from Dr. Cuyler's church—are supposed to be pretty well under the influence of money even now. It was said that Mr William Tweed and his friends used to keep one or two New York judges for their own use. In the same city saloon keepers seem to have a marvellous amount of influence in certain courts. Probably the influence is purely moral and intellectual; perhaps it arises from the inherent and unvarying goodness of the causes they always bring into court, but there is room for some doubt on both these points. Money working in the polling booth and in Parliament is dangerous enough, but money working on the Bench is certain to bring on a crisis sooner or later. New York, however, is not the American Union. So far as we know it has never been publicly stated by anybody entitled to much notice that money has ever found its way to the Bench of Canada. Many a time and oft has it been asserted that it does a full share of work in Parliament and at the polls. How long it may take to find its way from the people who make the laws to the people who administer them is a point we shall not discuss. Of one thing everybody may rest assured—a man who buys a member of Parliament will buy a judge if he can. Perhaps one of the worst features of Canadian society at the present time is the growing feeling that money can do anything. This feeling will increase as the rich grow richer and the poor become poorer. The best way to counteract it is to judge every man according to his merits, and treat every man as he behaves himself. There is no merit or demerit in being either rich or poor.

THE LOVE OF NOTORIETY

is more likely to make men fools than knaves. A notoriety-hunter once asked a distinguished Englishman what he could do to distinguish himself. The Englishman replied: "The only way I know of that you can gain distinction is to shoot somebody that is distinguished already." Booth and Guiteau got distinction in just that way, and there are thousands of men on this continent willing to take risks or make asses of themselves in order to make people talk about them. It is to be hoped the number who are ready to risk their necks for notoriety is comparatively small, but the number who are willing to make lesser sacrifices is much larger than one who has not looked into the question might think. A close observer of men and things can see the craving for notice in many directions. You see it in all its glory in the newspaper office where the notoriety-lover schemes to "get his name in the paper." You see it in the fantastic dress in which he masquerades in order to attract public attention. You hear it in the whoop and yell of the chap who "cuts up" on the sidewalk or in the market simply to make people look at him. In a more serious form you see it in the crowd who always force themselves to the front in times of excitement, and utilize the excitement to advertise themselves. They mount the wave and try to shoot themselves into notice while the wave lasts. They know very well that in a quiet time nobody pays any attention to them and they utilize every excitement to bring themselves into notice.

Love of notoriety shows itself in many ways. The last craze is racing round the world. Anybody who has money enough, and sense enough to sit in a railway car or steamboat without falling off can go round the world, but at the present time it advertises people to go, and they go. Walking tight-ropes is another way that used to be popular. Pretending to commit suicide or fight a duel are favourite methods. Jumping Niagara Falls is out of all sight the best method because in that case the notoriety-hunter generally closes his career and troubles the world no longer.

Beginning with George Francis Train, and going down or up, you find notoriety hunters in every class and condition of men. Truth to say, the clerical profession suffers as much as any walk in life from the presence of men who seem to think that the main thing in life is to keep themselves and their doings constantly before the public. Just why any sane man should desire to have people constantly talking about him is not easily understood. A student of by-gone days used to explain almost everything by saying, "human nature is a curious animal."

Popularity is a more respectable thing than notoriety, and yet popularity, even when honestly secured, is a long way from an unmixed blessing. Except in so far as it enables a man to do good to his fellow-men it is not worth thinking

about. It makes a man a target for the misrepresentation and abuse of envious and jealous rivals. It exposes him constantly to the assaults of mean and malignant natures, who hate to see anybody esteemed. The only popularity worth a straw for a minister is the good will of the people he has been the means of helping.

The other national dangers—Admiration of mere Bigness and Self Assertion, and a discussion of the manner in which a generous education will counteract them—must be left over for the present.

THE CHOIR.

THE VILLAGE CHOIR.

(Some distance after Tennyson)

Half a bar, half a bar,
Half a bar onward!
Into an awful ditch
Choir and Precentor hith,
Into a mess of pitch
They led the Old Hundred.
Trebles to right of them,
Tenors to left of them,
Basses in front of them,
Bellowed and thundered.
Oh, that Precentor's look,
When the sopranos took
Their own time and hook
From the Old Hundred!

Screached all the tenors here,
Boggled the tenors there,
Raising the parson's hair,
While his mind wandered.
Theirs not the reason why—
This psalm was pitched too high—
Theirs but to gasp and cry—
Out the Old Hundred.
Trebles to right of them,
Tenors to left of them,
Basses in front of them,
Bellowed and thundered.
Stormed they with shout and yell,
Not wise they sang, nor well.
Drowning the sexton's bell,
While all the church wondered.

Dire the Precentor's glare,
Flashed his pitchfork in the air,
Sounding fresh keys to bear
Out the Old Hundred
Swiftly he turned his back,
Reached he his hat from rack,
Then from the screaming pack,
Himself he sundered.
Tenors to right of him,
Trebles to left of him,
Discords behind him,
Bellowed and thundered,
Oh, the wild howls they wrought!
Right to the end they fought!
Some tune they sang, but not,
Not the Old Hundred.

Looking at the subject of praise from a practical point of view we are forced to confess that it has been shamefully neglected in our common worship. It is a personal act. It cannot be done by proxy, or by any mere mechanical agency whatever. Silent individual praise is untrammelled by the precision and modulations of music, but audible public praise requires a suitable melody in which all can unite. To enable a number to sing harmoniously together a teacher and leaders are required. Where skilled singers cannot be employed congregational singing is seldom a success. It is true an average congregation can sing a limited number of tunes with fine effect without any leading and supporting aid, but through time these few often-repeated melodies will lose their inspiring power, and the singing must become uninteresting and formal.

Taking for granted, then, that a teacher and leaders, in other words, a choir, is a necessity—a necessary evil some may say—the next thing to determine is its character. It takes, at least, four to make one—a quartette, that is, one person to sing each of the parts in our common music, and nothing more. As helpers to the congregation this kind of a choir has often been valuable but there is a strong temptation on its part to soar aloft to unknown and undesired musical heights, and leave the ordinary worshipper dumb in the flats below. There is also a tendency to sing trashy anthems at sight, or difficult selections with but little practice that produce rasping discords on the sensitive ear of the listener making the dumb and agonizing hearer to wish he had another affliction for the time being and be deaf as well as dumb.

It may be easier to train a few fine voices than a large number of medium ones, and for this reason the choir is often unwisely limited, but it is very rare to find the voices of a quartette so well equiposed and thoroughly blended that the tone will be melodious, rounded and full. The result of a few ill-trained and ill-balanced voices is, judged from a musical standpoint, a distracted failure.

In what way, then, can we improve on the quartette? Simply by establishing a full chorus. Let every one in the congregation who has a good voice and a quick ear be induced to join the choir. Swell its numbers up to fifteen, twenty, or even thirty reliable and especially Christian men and women. Secure the young people, if possible, for this work, and show them how much they can help the direct praise of our Master by blending their sweet and plastic voices in harmonious song. Place this company under the jurisdiction of the authorities of the church to which they belong, and let them know that they are amenable to the powers that be in all things. The Presbyterian rule is as follows:

"Due provision should be made by the congregation for the service of praise under the direction of the Session and

subject to its control. The precentor, or conductor of the service of praise may be chosen by the congregation, but his appointment must, in all cases, be approved by the Session to whose authority he is subject, and whose orders he is bound to obey; and he must be fitted by his character for the service which he renders in the house of God."

Having obtained this chorus of male and female singers, have a weekly rehearsal—a meeting that should be considered very important by both pastor, office-bearer, choir and people.

The choir must understand that it is very necessary for every one to be present, solemnly promising, in fact, to do so when they become members of it. To add to the binding nature of the obligation, it would be well that some initiatory service be performed by the Session in a suitable and reverent spirit, so that the contract entered into may never be forgotten. Now, with an even-tempered, long-suffering, proficient, and above all things an enthusiastic Christian leader, the chorus choir will be a success, and good results will soon appear in the praise of the sanctuary.

The results may be classified as three.

In a religious paper over a year ago I noticed an article by a very sensible writer on this very subject but the title and name are now forgotten.

I have followed him closely, however, because his ideas seemed the most reasonable I had ever met with, and will certainly bear repeating.

The first result is a more united congregation.

A quartette is a dangerous thing. It too often forms a third party in the house of God criticising and being criticized and, metaphorically speaking, belonging neither to the heavens above nor to the earth beneath. With the chorus this is happily removed. The critical spirit is disarmed from the first, because the members of it do not pose before the public as a company of artists.

Besides by a judicious selection nearly all the family circles in the congregation can be represented and a kind, thoughtful interest will be manifested by every one in its continued efforts. The success of the choir will enhance the pleasures of the people.

The second good result will be a more devout congregation. A musical taste is developed. The chorus inspires the worshippers with a higher kind of music than that they have hitherto employed, and creates in them a more cultivated taste for it. There is too great a tendency to be satisfied with the simple and often-times tame Gospel hymn melodies so common now, so that the chorus has a work to do in raising the standard higher, for old and young can enjoy music of a better quality when it is faithfully rendered. Then again, the trashy anthems so easily learned have disgusted the purer tastes of the music-loving listener and it becomes the solemn and important duty of the choir to satisfy as well as to educate the people in all departments of praise.

The third and last good result of such a choir is a more attractive congregation.

I here quote the words of the writer.

"There is an attractive power in such a choir which will help the size of the congregation. People will gather there is good music. The evening service particularly may be rescued from its depressed condition, and made bright and popular by its help. The enthusiastic singing of the better Sunday school melodies varied with solos and quartette selections seem to possess a perennial charm. The singers rally with zeal: non-church goers will come to hear the music, and the youth are encouraged to feel that they are needed, and their interest is aroused accordingly. If such a choir were organized for the evening service alone, I am sure that the advantages accruing from it would more than repay the necessary labour."

Let us then aim at having as high and pure a service of praise as possible by using all the consecrated powers our people possess.

There is much to be done by the Church of God in this respect, and a great deal that would be better left undone. Farmer Eno strikes the keynote of acceptable praise when he says:—

I've been a listener to the birds
And hummin' of the bees,
A blending in the chorus of
The wind among the trees.
The world seemed like a meeting house,
The congregation there—
All joinin' in the joyful hymns
That 'pear'd to fill the air.

The Lord's old fashioned meetin' house—
Old fashioned hymns of praise—
The world has sung an' sung unchanged
Since them creation days.
No bang and bustle worship there
Got up for show and hire—
But everything that had a name
Was in Jehovah's choir.

I wish they'd quit the proxy plan
Where you and me be long—
And take the Lord's old fashioned way
Of worshippin' in song.
Let everybody with a voice,
In pulpit, and in pews,
Just shout the glory in his heart
And swell the halleluws.

The firing of a Welsh clergyman in costs up to \$750 has tended to check ecclesiastical ardour in the recovery of tithes in South Wales. In Denbigh the payment of the hated impost is being facilitated by the giving of beer to every one who settle his tithe debt.