

## Our Contributors.

### GENTLEMEN THAT SHOULD BE WATCHED.

BY KNOXIAN.

*"A reforming age is always fertile of impostors."*

So wrote Lord Macaulay in one of his best essays.

Is this a reforming age? Certainly it is. Is it fertile of impostors? Most assuredly it is. They abound. They swarm around every reform. They are often so numerous and so insolent that they disgust and drive off decent men.

Take, for example, the temperance reform. So far as Canada is concerned, this is one of the greatest reforms of the age. Middle-aged men can remember when no gathering of any kind took place in this country without whiskey. It was used at births and burials, and everything between. A very large number of people are total abstainers now, and many who are not total abstainers are willing—some anxious—that whiskey should be banished from the country. Should the temperance sentiment of the country grow for the next twenty years as it has grown for the last twenty, we might have liquor almost banished without a prohibitory law. Perhaps that is how it will be banished in the end. Strong public sentiment will do more toward banishing it without a prohibitory law than a prohibitory law can do without public sentiment. Perhaps both are best.

Growing at such an unparalleled pace, this temperance reform has gathered about it many impostors. Were we to describe them all, we would need a page or two of THE PRESBYTERIAN instead of a column.

First comes the *political* impostor. He professes to be a temperance man simply that he may bring votes to his party. He generally likes to "take something" himself, and takes it behind the door. He often plays the Scott Act, and stands in with the liquor men at the same time. Watch this impostor. He may send the temperance reform back twenty-five years, if not watched.

Then comes the *popularity-hunting* impostor who talks about temperance simply because he likes to hear himself talk. He never worked for temperance when the cause was unpopular. Not he. He never suffered for that cause, nor for any other. But he saw the huge temperance wave rolling along; he jumped on the crest, and shouted like a little man. About the only thing he does is shout. Watch this impostor.

Now make way for the *office-hunting* impostor. He is a mighty temperance man as long as temperance gives him a small office of some kind. Take away the office, and his views seem to change rather suddenly.

And here comes the *dollar-and-cent* impostor. He is a good man, and burns with zeal as long as the cause brings business to his store, or benefits him in some other way; but should the cause injure his business his zeal suddenly wanes.

The worst of all impostors is the *semi-infidel* impostor who makes poor, weak, sin-stricken men believe that an Act of Parliament, or abstinence from liquor, can do for them that which no power but the power of God can do. In fact, any man who does not believe in God is an impostor in moral reform work.

Nothing can show more clearly that the temperance cause is a good one, and is supported by thousands of the best men in the country, than that it flourishes in spite of the impostors who fasten themselves on it. Let them be well watched.

In the last half-century great reforms have been made in

#### THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.

Doctors no longer bleed men to death, in order to keep them alive. They rarely bleed anything but men's pockets now, and many don't even do that. Fewer patients are now found howling for a drop of water. Doctors, as a rule, are humane, self-sacrificing gentlemen, who don't swear and swagger in the sick-room because Abernethy or some other great man is reputed to have been rough in his manners. Medical men do a great deal more to relieve suffering humanity without a cent of remuneration than some howling reformers who take good care to advertise themselves.

There has been great reform in medical treatment, and great improvement in the character of the men

who practise medicine taken as a whole. And what is the result? More impostors cluster around this noble calling than around any other calling on earth except preaching. There is not an inch of the human body, from the roots of the hair down to the corn that adorns the toe, but a score of impostors are ready to treat. More than a score are ready to treat the extremities. There must be several hundred who can keep the hair from falling out, and fully as many ready to go to work on your favourite bunion. Some of the largest fortunes in America have been made out of patent medicines. We have prepared a short description of some of the leading impostors that hang on the sides of the noble profession of medicine, but we must hold it over for an enlarged issue of the paper.

Great reforms have of late years been made in the laws of many countries. Wise and beneficent laws have been enacted, the operation of which promotes the happiness of the individual, and the welfare of the body politic. For an illustration compare the Canada of to-day with Canada under the Family Compact. Confederation is not yet twenty years old, but many unprejudiced men will admit that during these twenty years Ontario has been greatly benefited by wise and useful legislation.

The passing of these good laws, and the satisfaction with which they are regarded by the people, has given rise to a horde of political impostors, who try to make the people believe that laws can do everything for them. We have one impostor telling the people that Acts of Parliament can make them rich, another that Acts of Parliament can make society moral; another that legislation can elevate them socially, and so on. It is said that the remedy for every evil across the lines is found in legislation. "Pass a law," say our neighbours to almost everything, "and that will make it right." Perhaps our neighbours do not talk in that way any more than we do.

Political demagogues thrive on this disposition of our people to cure every ill by legislation. The demagogue says: "Send me to Parliament, and I'll pass a law, and make it all right." Perhaps he knows quite well that he could not pass the law. Perhaps he knows that if the law were passed it would be no remedy. But he makes the promise, and gets the votes all the same. The number of impostors who cluster around Parliamentary reform are legion, and they seem to be on the increase.

The condition of the poorer classes in some of the older countries of the world has been greatly improved of late years. There is abundance of room for more improvement, but things are mending. The liberty of the subject is more sacredly guarded; human life is more highly valued, and the poor man is given a better chance in many ways. Right on the back of the social reforms come a horde of impostors who tell people that no man has a right to hold the property he has earned by years of toil, that liberty consists in doing just as you please, and a number of other pestilential doctrines that would wreck society, and reduce human beings to the level of brutes. Impostors of the most dangerous kind gather around every effort made to improve the condition of the poorer classes.

Of late years educational reform has made great progress. The impostor bobs up here too with his "French at Six Lessons," and "German Made Easy."

Around all religious reforms impostors gather in thousands. They often give far more trouble than the opponents of the reform. This subject is too large for treatment here.

Lord Macaulay knew whereof he affirmed when he said, "A reforming age is always fertile of impostors."

#### SABBATH OBSERVANCE

##### IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

This subject has recently been brought prominently before the public not only in Canada and the United States, but in several countries of Europe. The following notes, therefore, bearing more or less directly on the question, may not be altogether out of place. To begin with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, a resolution was adopted, at the last meeting of the General Assembly, expressing concern at witnessing the extent to which secular labour, especially by railway traffic, had invaded the rest of the sacred day. The Committee on Sabbath Observance was instructed to correspond with the Presbyterian and other branches of the Church in the United States, in order to secure

concerted action on this question—an instruction which has been admirably carried out.

The views of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher on Sabbath Observance have just appeared in the public journals, and, while stating that he has never been superstitious on this question, he says distinctly that those who make the Lord's Day a working day, destroy the very characteristic of the day by so doing—that no works, except those of necessity and mercy, are permissible on the Sabbath.

Great latitude is allowed in Britain in the views of the Anglican clergy on all subjects; but it is unusual to hear from the national pulpits language such as the Rev. Baden Powell a distinguished Oxford professor, once used, when he advocated the total abolition of the Sabbath. It is to be hoped that such doctrine is rarely taught in a Church which exhibits the Decalogue, in large characters, in her places of worship, and which, when she repeats from her service book the fourth commandment, instructs her people to reply in solemn response, "Lord, incline our hearts to keep this law."

The poet Cowper, after referring to perversions in his day from the English Church to Unitarianism, went on to say that those comparatively honest Unitarians who denied the God-head of the Saviour "with a martyr's zeal," and quitted office for the sake of their error, were

Worthy, compared with sycophants, who kneel,  
Thy name adoring, and then preach the Man!  
So fares Thy Church. But how Thy Church may fare  
The world takes little thought. Who will, may preach,  
And what they will. All pastors are alike  
To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.

A distinguished Scotchman—Hugh Miller—quoting these words once, added, "It would be, perhaps, well were Unitarians of this covert class restricted to the English Establishment, and not to be found drawing the State money nearer home." We do not know to whom he had reference in uttering these words, but we all remember a debate in the Glasgow Presbytery on a proposal to issue a pastoral address on Sabbath Observance, when Dr. Norman Macleod created a sensation by saying: "The fourth commandment has produced in our country notorious Judaism, Judaism of the worst description, for which I have no respect whatever." Again, "I do not believe in the continued obligation of the fourth commandment. I have no faith in it. My opinion is that the whole of that commandment, and the whole Decalogue, is abrogated—that the whole thing is stamped with that which is partial, and that which is to pass away." Explanatory of his meaning, he said: "I do not mean that we are not under law; but I say, *qua* the decalogue as a decalogue, the whole of that was buried with Christ in the grave. I have something infinitely better in and through Christ and His apostles—something very different." This explanation, however, was far from satisfactory to several members of the Presbytery.

We all know how the Sabbath is desecrated on the Continent of Europe, though a change for the better has been going on for many years. In several countries members of the Reformed Church have been exercising a favourable influence in this respect, but what I desire particularly to note is that the Romish bishops are taking a decided stand against the desecration of the sacred day. A late number of the *Semaine Religieuse*, Geneva, contains an exhortation by the Swiss Roman bishops "to all priests, and the faithful in general, in the various dioceses, on the sanctification of the Sabbath." After pointing out the importance and necessity of the Sabbath, from a social, intellectual and hygienic standpoint, the bishops proceed to call attention to it as a religious duty, and close by giving details of the ravages made through Sabbath desecration. After quoting the words of St. Paul—"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"—the bishops add: "The doctrine of Jesus Christ, the grace of Jesus Christ, these are the elements of spiritual life in the heart of every human being. If these are absent, virtue, justice and order disappear at the same time. Now the Sabbath Day is, as it were, a canal in which the current of these two supernatural forces flows and waters and refreshes the soul." Again, "The distinctive character of this generation is dissipation. There is no truce made with restlessness, no repose or quiet for the soul. This fever of excessive distractions is like a gulf which is continually getting larger and larger, swallowing up an ever-increasing