

Truth's Contributors.

GREAT BRITAIN.

BY H. M. H.

"Fired at the sound my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring;

There all around the gentlest breezes stray;
There gentle music melts on every spray;
Creation's mildest charms are there combined:
Extremes are only in the master's mind.
Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state,
With darling aims irregularly great."

Thus wrote Goldsmith in 1764. A wanderer in a foreign land, his thoughts turned longingly toward home. The "sea girl Isle," whose language had been to him a passport through the countries of the continent, was still the dearest spot on earth. His poetic soul overflowed with patriotic fervor as he scoured forth Britain's praises in the exquisite lines above quoted. But what was the Britain of 1764 compared with that of to-day. A century since the language was spoken by scarcely nine millions of people; at the present time over one hundred millions of the earth's inhabitants speak the English tongue.

Since the world began, and since the first nation was born, there has never existed an organic community so vast, so varied, so complex, so strangely constituted as the British Empire at the present moment. In what portion of the globe may not the ubiquitous Englishman or his equally omnipresent brother from Scotland, Ireland or Wales, be found? How world-wide and diversified are the interests which the government of Victoria guards and controls. In every zone and region of the "round world" her rule extends.

Shall I attempt to enumerate the countries over which her sceptre sways? In Europe—at home—she has her own "right little, tight little isles;" in Asia she owns India, Burmah, and Ceylon, not to mention Aden, Hong Kong, and Socotra; in Africa she now holds one foot planted tentatively in Egypt, and the other firmly pressed down at the Cape; in America she starts at the north with our own Dominion—the fairest jewel of the Empire—and ends at the south with the Falkland Islands; in Australasia she rules alone the whole continent; Australia, New Zealand and New Guinea, are already hers, while Borneo is being rapidly subjugated. She has her own Siberia in the North-west Passage; in the tropics she has the West Indies, Southern India, Ceylon, and Singapore; in the temperate zone are Canada, New Zealand, the Cape and Australia. Every sea and ocean is studded with her island gems. They sparkle beneath the shimmering Aurora; they flash forth the rays of the temperate moon, and glow 'neath the "directer rays" of the tropical sun. In the German Ocean she holds the stranded rock of Heligoland; in the Mediterranean invulnerable Gibraltar rears its defiant head; Malta gives her one station on her road to India; Aden secures her the passage of the Red Sea. In the Indian Ocean she keeps Mauritius; in the China seas she retains Hong Kong, and the recently annexed Port Harlow; crossing the Pacific she rests at Fiji; on the broad Atlantic her ironclads and vessels of trade coal securely at their ease at St. Helena and Ascension, at Bermuda and the Falklands. An empire so widely distributed, so pervasive, so territorial, so maritime, so universal, the world has never yet seen.

But the vastness of the extent of this organization is as nothing compared with its complexity. How infinitely diversified is the British subject in color, tongue and religion.

I hope my readers will not be shocked when they are told that the vast majority of Her Majesty's subjects are heathen, and that the number of Mohammedan lieges really outnumbers the Christians. But such is really the fact, a result mainly due to the teeming population of India, among whose two hundred and fifty million inhabitants about one hundred and ninety millions are devout Hindoos, and over fifty millions are fanatical Muslims.

The complexity and diversity of color, tongue and creed over which the Briton rules is in many instances almost grotesque, for, after all, the actual numerical force of Englishmen which holds in check and aways the mighty external empire of India, for instance, is something absolutely insignificant. It stands, as a recent writer has put it, to the total of the subject races in something like the same proportion as that which the British Isles bear to the entire area under the Queen's sovereignty. The surface of Britain itself—including Ireland—amounts in round numbers to no more than a hundred and twenty thousand square miles. The area of the entire empire amounts to nearly nine million square miles. In other words Britain rules a territory, roughly speaking, seventy-five times as great as itself. Another writer puts it this way: If you were to take seventy-five Englands, seventy-five Scotlands, seventy-five Waleses, and seventy-five Irelands, and stick them all together side by side, you would have an area just about equal to that of the whole existing British empire. In the same way it is probable that our British race, as a whole, the wide-world over, amounts to, as we have said before, about a hundred millions of souls. But of these, more than half, or some fifty millions, live in the United States, and are therefore a distinctly separate political organization. The other portion of the race, which still remains British in name and allegiance, is crowded into the United Kingdom itself, with a population of about thirty six millions. Between four and five millions inhabit the Dominion of Canada, and three millions live in Australia. Only about two million British altogether are therefore left to keep in check the vast subject population of two hundred and seventy millions in the various dependencies inhabited chiefly by black and colored races. India, in particular, with its two hundred and fifty million people, has a British-born population of only ninety thousand souls. In other words ninety thousand Englishmen form the whole ruling and directing force for a country as big as a eleven Englands, Irelands and Scotlands, and for a population more than six times as great as that of the whole United Kingdom.

Could anything more forcibly impress one with a sense of the greatness, the ubiquity, the all-prevailing power of the English people? Go where you will, you meet forever the wonderful picture of a handful of intrusive Britons ruling by sheer force of mental and moral superiority over a untold horde of helpless black dependants.

Of the vast empire over which the blessed Victoria rules, our own fair Canada is at once the fairest and most favored of all the British possessions. Though nominally a portion of the great empire, we are yet practically independent. We have complete and absolute Home Rule, electing our own Parliament, which is responsible only to ourselves. The Governor-General is merely a figure-head, and can in no way effect our legislation. Yet we enjoy all the benefits which come to us as a part of the empire. Should occasion require the powerful navy of the Mother Country is at

our command, and her armies would unite with our own to repel any enemy which would have the temerity to invade our shores.

A reflective Englishman, writing upon the responsibilities which must necessarily come to every thoughtful citizen of the nation thus called upon to watch over the varied destinies of so many, so great and, in many cases, so little known portions of the world, thus writes: "It is to be feared, however, that most of us nowadays, especially after dinner, when political subjects are usually broached—accept our private share in this terrible joint burden of government and administration in a very light, not to say frivolous spirit. We have all grown so accustomed to bearing the weight of half a world upon our shoulders that we bear it now almost without feeling it. Still, whether we recognize it or whether we disregard it, the fact of responsibility none the less remains. We are the citizens of no mean city, the arbiters of the destiny of a countless multitude. Our empire is at once the largest and the least consolidated ever known. It behoves all of us, therefore, to do our best to acquire a fair working idea of the component element which go to make it up in all its aspects. Most Englishmen, it is probable, do not adequately realize the comparative smallness of England herself and the comparative vastness of the immense territory over which she is called upon to watch and govern. The very width of our operations—fighting to-day in the Sudan, yesterday in Burmah, to-morrow in Afghanistan, or New Zealand, or Zululand, has so accustomed us to take everything with easy carelessness that we seldom nowadays seriously ask ourselves what land we are next going to invade or where lie the islands we are next to be driven by circumstances to annex. Familiarity has bred contempt; and the addition to our empire of two new countries, each as large as France, during the last twelve months passes almost unnoticed in a country already provided with enough territory to cut up easily into another Europe."

TORONTO, ONT.

TEMPERANCE IN CANADA.

BY THE REV. W. S. BLACKSTOCK.

The object of this paper is not to treat the readers of TRUTH to a temperance lecture, but to present some facts of the past history of this country which, in the present state of the temperance question, it is just as well for us not to forget. If Canada is to-day one of the soberest countries in the world, as we are proud to think it is, time was when it did not possess this enviable distinction. The change which has taken place among us, even within the memory of living men, is one of the most remarkable revolutions that has taken place in modern society. Time was, even in this country, when a child could not be born, a christening, a marriage, or a burial decently take place without the help of intoxicating drink; and in many places seldom did an event of either of these kinds occur without positive drunkenness. Indeed the common rites of hospitality could not in those days be properly performed without the bottle. And the humble home of the early settler was seldom without it. In some of the older settlements, persons making any pretensions to respectability generally laid in their supply of whiskey by the barrel. I had it from the lips of the late Hiram Swazy, Esq., of the Beaver Dams, near Thorold, that in the early part of this century, when swine's flesh was the principal article

of animal food among the farmers, their habit in that part of the country was to lay in just as many barrels of whiskey as of pork for the year's supply.

In those times it would not have been thought possible for a man to get a building put up, his grain harvested, his fat hogs and cattle slaughtered, or almost anything out of the ordinary way done, without such a plentiful supply of drink as to give all hands the privilege of becoming drunk. And, to do the people of those times justice, it must be confessed that most of them, so far as I have been able to learn, were only too willing to embrace the opportunity. It was only the timid and bashful sort that were disposed to live very much beneath their privilege in this respect. Those who remained entirely sober to the end of the day were exceptions to the general rule. The "ancient" people among us whose memories go back to the "bees," and "raisings" of the first two or three decades of the century, can recall scenes which, in the present state of civilization and public sentiment among us, are scarcely imaginable. Indeed, some who were eye-witnesses of these drunken orgies find it difficult to realize to themselves the fact that such things ever did exist. On these occasions, in many places, there were, especially in the evenings, about as many women as men gathered together, and often the carousal was kept up the greater part of the night. When it was done most of the men were drunk, and I am afraid if the same state of things existed now, some of the women would not be considered sober.

My own personal recollections do not reach so far back as the worst period in our history so far as intemperance is concerned. Before my day the Methodist itinerants—the "saddle-bag preachers," as they were sometimes called—the real pioneers of both civilization, social reform, and evangelization in the greater part of this country, had not only commenced their labors, but had made their influence felt in every part of the country. Scarcely a spot could be found where the wood-man's axe or the cow-bell was heard, where such men as Tuffy, and Lyon, and Neal; as Loeze and Dunham, Ryan and Case, and a host of others, who were raised up chiefly through their instrumentality, had not found their way. These were the original temperance advocates of this country and the societies which they planted all over the land were the first—and, it may be added, the most effective temperance organizations that ever existed either in this or any other part of the world. One of the rules of these societies prohibited, in the most explicit and unequivocal terms, "Drunkenness, buying and selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them unless in cases of extreme necessity."

And yet, though this agency was at work and its influence was extensively felt, even when I was a child, I can from personal recollection bear testimony to almost everything that I have written. I know that one of the most powerful obstacles that these heroic evangelists had to contend with was the intemperance which everywhere prevailed. In the wake of the Methodist evangelist, but a couple of generations behind him, came the temperance lecturer. First there was the Temperance Society, which simply pledged its members to abstinence from "Spirituous liquors," or "ardent spirits," as I think it was expressed in the old pledge. The members of this organization were at liberty to drink wine and beer so long as they abstained from whiskey and more fiery drinks. The result of this experiment was not satisfactory. There was scarcely less drunken-