

fertile soil must assist them. The old sheep cheerfully yields up her mantle, and cunning snares hold many unwilling captives. With the wisdom that would shame a statesman, that family of boys and girls is clothed and fed. Years after, when the old farmer and his wife sit around the fire-place, they look with pride on their accomplished daughters and their sons just returned with honors from college. The fact that ruled that household is stamped on the minds and characters of the younger generation. Like the down of a thistle strewn by the autumn wind, the commonsense practised in that little home in the forest, has spread far and wide.

With the lamp of truth in our hand let us search for this jewel in our country's transactions during the past decade. The rays of light that illuminate the past show nothing so interesting as that which affects us now. Does this gem sparkle with unwonted brilliancy in election times? Does it reflect all the colors of the rain-bow in the laws of our country?

Our election customs are the curse of the country. When a man gets hungry for fodder in the public crib, no bolts and bars will keep him out. The ballot-box is tampered with, characters are ruined, and blood is shed, when he wishes to sacrifice himself for his country. Newspapers, instead of chiming out the sweet song of liberty, dance attendance on either party and flood the country with the virtues of the one and the vices of the other. Public movements for good are held in check for fear the ruling party may become unpopular, and must step down and out. Every few years commonsense hides her head with shame, while this election-custom, this hydra-headed monster, this argus-eyed creature, stalks through the land, peering into factories and knocking at church doors. Surely it can say with the Psalmist, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Then the strikes that deform society are only the bugle-sounds, calling men to arms to break down the walls of peace. Trenches are thrown up, fortifications are built, to protect every man against his neighbor. Turn where you will, the

bayonet of "combine" is presented to you; from the "Sugar Combine" to the women at the wash-tub. All people must sign the Act of Conformity or be boycotted, all must pronounce the "Shibboleth" or be slain. Commonsense has taken leave of everybody but the drunkards, who will never combine against the brandy-bottle.

Another blot on our country's escutcheon, is the drinking custom. Whether the Crook's Act, the Dunkin Act, or the Scott Act have failed or not in suppressing it, our young people are becoming dangerously familiar with King Alcohol. Will we have half-drunken men to fill our legislative halls, to occupy our pulpits, to protect our homes? Like the grain of mustard-seed, it will grow and spread, until all the fowls of the air lodge in its branches. Like distant rumblings in a thunder-storm, the Mosaic Law warned the people, and all through Bible History the rumblings became louder, till with a deatening clap came from the Saviour's lips "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Under the surface of public actions, is a mighty current carrying all kinds of debris to the ocean. Whirling along, comes the romantic people whose ideal life is found in some novel, whose jelly-bag minds are tossed by every wind and doctrine. Then like great boulders come the dynamite throwers, who would rectify society at one blow. Like bats and moles, the light of commonsense hurts their eyes. They prefer to bury their talents and complain of the unequal distribution of property. They long to spend their neighbor's wealth, but he must first earn it, before they condescend to "have all things in common." O! that with the laugh of Cervantes, we might laugh these evils out of existence.

But there is another side to this picture, and with glad hearts we turn to it. The progress of the past ten years has marched to the music of commonsense. Knowledge has advanced with gigantic strides. Every morning the school-bell rings myriads of the coming men and women to their tasks. Constant improvements are made in the educational