

Our Contributors.

HOW WOULD YOU ARRANGE IT?

BY KNOXIAN.

Complaints about the open winter are general. Some complain on general principles. Some because they have had no skating or curling, or sleigh rides; many because the open weather has injured certain lines of business; and many more because they don't feel well in murky, foggy weather. Frost makes a Canadian feel frisky; fog and damp make him dumpish, and when men are dumpish, they always growl at something or somebody. It is a way they have.

It must be admitted that the lack of sleighing and low prices for agricultural produce have seriously lessened the volume of trade in certain lines, and more or less affected every line. Agriculture is the basis of everything in Canada, and when things are not going well with the farmer they don't go well with anybody except assignees, bailiffs and other officials whose business increases in hard times.

All this is true, but it should be remembered that a certain percentage of people would complain anyway. The habit has grown upon them until they don't know when they are complaining. If an old-fashioned winter had begun in November, some of the very men who grumble about mild weather would salute you every morning with such exclamations as these: "Terrible climate this," "Awful winter." "Never saw such weather." "Enough to freeze the life out of a man." "Must move to a warmer climate." "Canadian winters are dreadful." "Terrible cold country this," etc.

And some of the farmers who complain bitterly for want of sleighing would say that the winters are so long and cold in Canada that all the stuff raised in summer is needed to feed the cattle in winter.

It should be remembered, too, that a considerable number of excellent citizens do really like a mild winter. The very thought of going through a severe winter gives them the shivers every autumn, and they fairly smile with delight these days because every mild day makes the winter a day shorter. These people who like an open winter have feelings that ought to be respected. Most of them are good citizens, who pay their taxes promptly. Why should not they have some weather to suit them? Then there are old people, and weak people, who have scarcely enough vitality to live through five or six months of severe weather, and there are hundreds of poor people who have neither clothes nor fuel to keep them warm when the mercury runs low. Did you ever see a family of small, hungry, ragged children crouched around an old, dilapidated stove, with nothing in it but bits of sticks the ragged children had gathered on the road-side? If you were more familiar with such sights perhaps you would not scold so much about a mild winter.

But supposing the weather is too mild, what are you going to do about it? If you had your own way, under what management would you put the weather? Tell us how you would arrange it.

Imagine, if you can, the storm that would rise if it were decided that the management of the weather in this Dominion should henceforth be put into human hands. In one moment there would be a big fight as to whether the management should be entrusted to the Church or State. This fight would last a century or so, and would perhaps end in a compromise. Then about a century would be spent in drawing a line of some kind, and arranging that the weather on the one side be fixed by the State, and on the other by the Church.

Supposing the fight did not end in a compromise, one party or the other must win, and get the management. If the State won, then there would be a fight between the Dominion and Provincial Governments. Sir John would insist that the weather, like the railways, was for the general benefit of Canada, and that its control should be vested in the Dominion Government. Mr. Mowat would avow that the Ontario people have a right to control their own weather, and would pass a good sound constitutional weather Act. Sir John would veto the Bill, and then we would have a suit in the Privy Council, to be followed by a heavy bill of costs. The other provinces would likely insist on controlling their own weather, and in a short time this country might be smashed into its original atoms, and we might have no weather at all.

Then think of what a time we would have if the politicians could blame each other for not bringing on the right kind of weather. There is wrangling enough now, but who could live in the country if politicians could charge each other with bringing on blizzards from corrupt motives?

The Church would not manage the weather any better than the State—probably much worse. The moment the management was put into the hands of the clergy, denominational jealousy would come in like a whirlwind. The first question would be, Should the Catholics be allowed to have any say in the matter? The men who heard the Constitution crack, and saw the pillars of Protestantism tremble when Archbishop Lynch suggested that "which" be changed into "who" in the Lord's Prayer, would, of course, not allow the Catholics to have anything to do with weather management, and the Catholics might insist that they should have their say. Believers in the historic Episcopate would want to ostracise the mere dissenters, and the dissenters might not take kindly to ostracism. Dry ecclesiastics might naturally want dry weather to prevail, and Baptists might

want to have rain nearly all the time. The only conceivable way in which the denominations could manage the weather would be to appoint a committee of leading men from all the Churches. That plan would not work, because the moment the committee reported in favour of any kind of weather, the leading men who did not get on the committee would begin to kick against the report. Leading men from all the denominations prepared the Ross selections, and the bitterest denunciations against the book came from some of the ministers who appointed them to the work. The committee plan would not work.

"Leave the weather to the people," says somebody. No three people could even agree on the kind of weather needed. That would not do.

Perhaps some one is strongly of the opinion that the Equal Rights Association should have charge of the seasons.

How would it do to leave the matter as it is, and try to feel grateful that there are a few things in this world *not* under human control.

A SAN FRANCISCO LETTER.

No lack of matter of varied and startling nature has caused delay in sending notes from this coast, but rather aversion to deal with the dark side of things, and that is the view that is most visible everywhere. There seems, in looking back over the past year, to have been not a single day without its sensation—murder, suicide, violent death, divorce, social scandal in high life, some new fraud or dodge, defalcation, notorious lawsuit, clerical cheap John, church feud, etc.—to say nothing of the political pot, which is always boiling, throwing its scum athwart the more decent grades of the community at intervals in this metropolis.

There is doubtless nothing new under the sun in the sense Solomon meant. But in accordance with other Scriptures there are manifestations in these last times of evil and the Evil One hitherto unknown. Certainly there are new methods of evil without number. The Judases having got hold of the balance of power, instead of hanging themselves and throwing away the price of blood, metaphorically hang the true apostles, and put the thirty pieces of silver in the bank against a rainy day!

Take a single specific item of the dark phase and its cause. A published circular by a leading citizen gives 4,459 saloons and places where liquor is sold by license—no account of illicit or unlicensed places, which must be very numerous, as all laws are evaded when money is gained thereby, is given. The population of the city is variously estimated at from 300,000 to 350,000. Chicago with 1,100,000 inhabitants has only 2,100 odd saloons.

There are twenty-three murderers now in the county jail. New York and Chicago evangelists who worked here were appalled at the glaring—often unblushing nameless places of shame on every hand. There is a big lawsuit over a dead millionaire's estate dragging along for months with its daily quota of sensational tid-bits—perjury, embezzlement, new heirs, all claiming to be the children of the dead man, who was never married. These are little items of the by-play of the leading acts and scenes continually being enacted in the grand arena of city life. One hears on the streets or in shops this exclamation, "What's the matter to-day that the daily papers have no murder? no suicide! Something unusual has come to pass—no murder to-day!"

There is a sadder fact still—the truth must be told—it has been left out of all former letters. Some of the worst things in the black record of this city have been enacted by Scotchmen and Canadians. Without touching individuals two general cases may be cited, viz.: It is common to hold the Caledonian games on Sunday. The Dashaway Hall Association (of Canadians), now defunct, has a reputation that "smells to heaven" for consummate villainy. This is the sombre aspect—often before has it been shown that some of the noblest men here are Scotchmen and Canadians, clergy and laymen, in various spheres of business and usefulness.

Gladly I turn to the bright view, the silver lining to the dark clouds.

The year opened with the Moody work for a month, one of the best ever realized here or anywhere by him. Then followed Sam Jones for another month or more. It must be admitted that he roused and reached the people, especially the non-church-going elements, more than Moody. As Mr. Jones put it himself in regard to his preaching and methods, "Hell drives a large part of my machinery." Hell is a word never heard in the most orthodox pulpits—ignored by all, denied by many preachers rated "thoroughly evangelical" by the elastic slipshod conscience and theology of this place and time.

Sam Jones' old style Methodist denunciation of sin and its punishment forever in hell—for all sorts of sins and sinners, paupers or millionaires, low-bred or high-toned transgressors—burst like a western cyclone on this community. It was an unprecedented sight to see 500 conscience-stricken men out of an audience of 5,000 men—no women or children—go forward to the altar after an hour's scorching sermon on the judgment. He raked every evil-doer from the governor down—legislators, politicians, etc., to the common policeman or saloon-keeper—with red-hot shot from the arsenal of the law and Gospel. What was the effect? The same as of old. Some were "cut to the heart," and went out of the meeting stamping and cursing the preacher (Acts v. 33). Others were "pricked in their hearts" (Acts ii. 37) and saved as those of old. Saloonists and corner grocers went home and

knocked in the whiskey barrel-heads and gave up the business—did not wait to sell out their stock to some one else. Inevitably drunkards were made new men, no half-way reformation for the moment, while the excitement lasted like so many temperance and other spurt revivals. "Strange women" of the street, like the woman of Samaria at the well, not only quit their evil life but became messengers to others. Many lives and persons once darkened and cursed by sin now bless God that Sam Jones ever came to this coast. Moody benefited Christians more, but Sam Jones reached sinners more than any or all the evangelists that have ever come to this coast. His is the style for the case-hardened, conscience-seared old sinners, pioneers, forty-niners, to whom Moody's monotone of love I love I only "soft sawder" and falls off like water from a duck's back.

It was very striking in the Moody meetings when he chanced once or twice to preach both sides—the law and the Gospel there were more inquirers than in the after-meeting than from any other of his meetings when he preached in his usual way.

Of course the so-called religious people and churches—except the Methodist—stood aloof, yea aghast, as the Episcopal and a few others did from Moody. The van-guard of real Christian workers of all sects rallied around both Moody and Jones. The writer has the best means of knowing and judging the work of both evangelists. Moody is more after his own training and preferences yet a true estimate must be given of the results.

The National Convention of Charities and Correction was held in this city this season. It brought from most States of this Union some of the best men and women in the nation; hence the papers read, reports and discussions thereon were unusually interesting, profitable and practical, as the whole range of charity, punishment of crime, and treatment of paupers, insane, blind and all helpless or mendicant classes were treated by those whose life-work is in these various lines—being officials in State institutions. The proceedings will be published in book form and will be a mine of information of rare value to all who have to deal with these classes. It can be ordered from the Secretary, Mrs. Barrows, Boston.

This city has been privileged to hear Prof. Rainy and Prof. Blaikie, and Dr. Ormiston preach such sermons as are not often delivered—since the late Dr. Scott passed away—in the pulpits here, with one or two exceptions—one a Scotch minister, another of Scotch-Irish descent. With these exceptions of the local clergy any of the sermons of the above visitors contained at a moderate estimate fifty times more Scripture or solid theology—practical, too—than the average Sunday essay (miscalled a sermon, having only a text as a sort of motto) in the Presbyterian or other orthodox pulpits of the city.

The San Francisco Presbyterian Theological Seminary has had a "boom" lately, raising its endowment to half a million. An adherent of the Church outside the city has given his cheque for \$250,000 on condition that a friend of his, Rev. Dr. McKenzie, be appointed a professor. The gift has been accepted and Dr. McKenzie has accepted the new chair—Apologetics and Missions. He had been recently called to the church in New York Dr. Ormiston formerly ministered to. Dr. McKenzie retains his pastorate in the First Church, the people generously furnishing an assistant. Dr. McKenzie is a native of Scotland.

As one of the little varieties of life of the west it may be mentioned that this generous benefactor of the Theological Seminary not long ago was married by a Presbyterian minister while a revolver was held before his face to brace him up for the ordeal. Take another trifling vagary. One of the older professors in the aforesaid Theological Seminary relieves the monotony of lectures to the incipient clergy by devoting his time partly to a grape ranch to make wine, brandy, etc.—"that maketh glad the heart of man." Such is life "out west."

Were space not over-drawn there is a strong inclination to touch old country matters, bearing on theological discussion, and the Revision of the Confession there and in America—of which the air is full. Since the "new departure" in the Andover case or the Robertson-Smith case, no subject has taken such hold of the Presbyterian clergy and laity.

This must now be postponed with the suggestion that you give your readers what Spurgeon says on the subject in the December *Sword and Trowel*, both in the leading article, "This must be a soldier's battle," and his review or notice of Dr. Dods' (Prof.) sermon, "What is a Christian?"

Prof. Briggs' book "Whither?" tempts a remark. The whole solution is in a nutshell. Unconverted and unconsecrated professors, preachers and similar hearers cause all the stir. The Holy Spirit is the only Conservator of orthodoxy.

San Francisco, Dec., 1889.

KNOX COLLEGE.

Mr. W. Mortimer Clark, Chairman of the Board of Management of Knox College, writes:

As the season has now arrived at which our congregations usually apportion the results of their liberalities during the past year, it is desirable that they should possess full information as to the requirements of the various schemes and colleges of the Church.

The supply of a well-educated ministry lies in the very foundation of all our schemes of home and foreign effort. The maintenance in full efficiency of our institutions for the training of those who are to be the ministers of our Church is therefore our paramount duty. Among the seminaries for