



Life, Literature and Education.

Whatever one's opinion regarding the efficiency of local option as a preventive of the drink evil may be, it must be admitted that its very substantial gains during the recent contest in Ontario demonstrate once more the fact that temperance sentiment is growing, and rapidly. "Drinking," among the mass of the people, is no longer in fashion to the extent that it was a score or more years ago. The man who gets drunk is very properly ashamed of his accomplishment, and even the moderate drinker, the man who treats, is not over-anxious to proclaim the practice from the house-tops. Ostensibly, intemperance among the people who uphold the business of the world is on the decline, and its death will be none the less sure because so gradual.

The most insistent grumblers at the prospect of local-option establishment are, as a rule, the commercial travellers, who complain, and not without good reason, of the poor accommodation usually afforded by the smaller "local-option" towns, where the profits from lodgers, without the support of a bar, are not sufficient to warrant the keeping-up of a first-class temperance house. Flatly, the situation resolves itself into this: These travellers, overlooking the sin and misery too often caused by drink, would gladly see the bar kept open, not because of their excessive devotion to the bar itself, but in order that they may enjoy the comforts, the liberal bill-of-fare, and the absolute independence, which the non-temperance hotel is practically bound to supply.

In the final analysis, this motive seems selfish, is selfish; and yet the travelling public has rights which should not be trampled upon. A man cannot be blamed if he objects to being literally forced to sit down to the meagrely-supplied, poorly-cooked fare of the ordinary boarding-house; or, still worse, to being exposed, in spite of himself, to the inquisitiveness of the ordinary boarding-house mistress. A "homelike" boarding-house, with the landlady sitting at the head of the table, in the most-approved family style, sounds all very well in theory, but the typical travelling man does not want this species of homelikeness in his goings about. He does not especially enjoy the presence of the landlady, in whom he has no interest whatever, at the head of the board, nor does he take any more kindly to the apparent necessity of entering into the usually indifferent conversation which characterizes such places. What he does want is independence; to be free to come when he likes or go when he likes; to have the unquestioned liberty of not opening his mouth to say a word, if he likes; and to feel that his affairs can be kept to himself, whence he comes or whither he goes being a matter of no concern to those about him.

This freedom, the non-temperance hotel professes to give, and when such an hotel is done away with, it

stands to reason that some satisfactory substitute should be supplied. This is a matter which, we believe, has not yet been seriously taken up by the temperance organizations, but it is none the less important.

What is to be done about the temperance hotel in the village or small town? How shall it be enabled to cater satisfactorily to the travelling public without dependence on a bar? Shall taxes be increased somewhat to provide assistance for such places, and shall an inspector be provided to see that accommodation is what it should be? If not, what better plan is to be offered?

Again, in consideration of the man in the street, the man upon whom the hotel has laid strong hold, the man without a home, cannot substitution be carried still further? Cannot the temperance house be made to afford the facilities for companionship, etc., which prove attractions in the hotel? The thing has not proved impracticable in other places. In the town of Taft, Montana, not long ago described as one of the "hell-broke-loose" places on the Northwest frontier of the United States, the attractiveness of the Y. M. C. A. building, and the special entertainments given in it on pay night, have practically abolished gambling. What has been done in one place, can be done in another, provided the right people, with the right enthusiasm, are at the motor. It is not sufficient to break down, without building up. The question of drink does not cover the whole problem. There are many other considerations, and all must be met if the work of the temperance element in establishing local option is to be placed on a sure and satisfactory basis.

Somewhat unlooked-for complications have presented themselves in connection with the carrying out of the Old-age Pension Bill, which came into force in Great Britain on January 1st. The difficulty of obtaining proof of the age of many of the claimants had been expected, but it now appears that quite a number possessing considerable capital, yet still eligible for the pension under the Act, as at present framed, have made application, among them one man possessing consults to the value of \$5,000. Again, the Southwestern Railway Company and the Duke of Westminster, who have been paying small pensions to a great number of people, have given notice that no more will be granted. In consideration of these surprises, much more money than the amount at first estimated may be required, but the readjustment will no doubt be made at an early date. In the meantime, the Government is being dealt the usual amount of criticism which accompanies the initiation of a new measure. Were history remembered a little more frequently in such cases, a lesson in patience might be gained. Few measures spring, like Jove, "full-armed," at birth. Time is usually necessary for the discovery of mistakes, for modification, for elaboration, ere a perfect product can be looked for.

Disgraceful rowdism characterizes

a meeting held in Toronto recently in the interests of those opposed to hotel license reduction, but at which representatives of both parties had been advertised to speak. During the first part of the meeting, while anti-reductionists held the platform, interruptions were frequent and uncalled for, the disturbance reaching a climax when the first reductionist attempted to make his voice heard. It is to be regretted that suffragette tactics should be resorted to—and by the masculine element—in Canada. Common courtesy demands that a fair hearing be given anyone who essays to speak on a matter concerning the public, from a public platform. Reason itself dictates that the only way of coming to a right decision in regard to any matter is by hearing both sides of the story, then weighing the respective arguments with as little prejudice as may be. There is neither good sense nor good manners in this boorish bellowing and hissing down of speakers, and if the public itself has not delicacy and common sense enough to refrain from such expression, it should be compelled to restrain itself. Thinking men seldom or never resort to such rowdism. The belligerently prejudiced may, and are sure enough of being reinforced by a hoodoo rabble to whom neither thought nor principle mean much, but who are chiefly out for a lark. Such specimens would be equally interested in a dog-fight or a street arrest. The more excitement, and the more "yellow" the quality of it, the better.

The amount of positive good which a man of the right character and calibre, and the requisite initiative, may accomplish within a very short time, is well illustrated in the career of Governor Hughes, of New York, as yet a comparatively young man. Not the least of Governor Hughes' victories heretofore has been his success in eliminating, in one of the most markedly "sporting" States in the Union, the evil of betting from the race-track. Recently, he has turned his attention to the very questionable methods employed in Wall Street, and has appointed a committee to investigate and report. With Governor Hughes at the back of it, the movement is bound to be thorough, and results none the less bound to be salutary.

The idea of consolidation, in regard to rural schools, appears to be gaining headway in Manitoba. Hon. Mr. Coldwell, Minister of Education for the Province, recently stated that he has received invitations to meetings to be held for discussion regarding the establishment of such institutions, at Wawanesa, Pilot Mound, Crystal City, and Birtle. In Manitoba, when consolidation takes place, the Government gives the district a grant of \$500, which is to be used towards the expense of consolidation, and for the first year pays one-fifth of the cost of transportation. In addition, the consolidated district receives the same grant as the original districts which have been merged into one, but each of the districts has to take care of its own liabilities. Consolidation of rural schools seems to have come to a standstill in

Eastern Canada, the additional expense having apparently proved a Rubicon beyond which the rural section at large has refused to advance. Such consolidated schools as have been instituted are, however, apparently flourishing, and sufficient time will soon have elapsed for the proving of their work by results. Upon the turning of the balance then will no doubt depend the reanimation of the question as to whether this system shall or shall not largely obtain in our Provinces.

People, Books and Doings

Professor Alfani, of the Florence Observatory, predicts that seismic disturbances will continue in Italy for the next three years; while John Milne, seismologist at the Isle of Wight Observatory, holds that a portion of the floor of the sea about the "toe of the boot" has given way, and that, consequently, there will be a gradual settling of the land along the fractures, resulting in a very material transformation of the structure of the peninsula.

M. Chouillon, President of the French Chamber of Commerce, at Montreal, has been made a member of the Legion of Honor.

A Mrs. Clark, of New York, was the model who made Charles Dana Gibson, the creator of the "Gibson" girl, famous. She was used for a model by many artists.

There are at present in North America 1,952 Young Men's Christian Associations, with a membership of 446,032, and 630 Association buildings, valued at \$40,716,051. More than one half of the Y. M. C. Associations in the world are in the United States or Canada.

The first aeroplane port or landing-place was opened at Jurisy-sur-Orge, near Paris, on January 10th.

"John o' London," has unearthed an interesting story in regard to the writing of "Pendennis." Thackeray, it appears, was in the habit of visiting at the house of Horace Smith, at Brighton. Upon one occasion, while there, he told the family that he was bound to produce, within a few days, the opening chapters of a new book, but had no plot and no idea wherewith to start one. Then and there the Smiths told him a true story of Brighton life. "That will do," said he, and immediately went home and began the novel.

December.

By Maud Scofield Beeson.

O, sullen sky, and leafless tree,
And brown field freezing fast,
And wintry wind, you chill not me,
For I am home at last!

At last! Dear home. My heart and I
Perpetual summer know.
Blow, icy blast! Within leaps high
The fire of love's own glow.

I kneel before the grateful flame,
And, shielded, safe, and warm,
Forget the bitter way I came,
And feel no more the storm.

At home at last! At home to stay!
Oh, merry unsurpassed!
God grant all wanderers find the way
Into their home at last!

—Century.