

Our Contributors.

THE WORK MUST BE DONE BY THE ONES

BY KNOXONIAN.

A few weeks ago the air was full of politics. The news papers were loaded down with politics. The men talked politics. The women talked politics. The children talked politics. Everybody talked politics during the whole week and too many on Sunday. Politicians crowded the trains and drove on the back concessions, harangued in halls, shouted in country school houses, argued in corner stores, wrangled in hotels, and in many cases turned their homes into a hustings.

Judging from the noise and excitement one would suppose that the destiny of every man, woman and child in Canada depended on the election. If a being from some planet in which they hold no elections could have visited this Dominion during the early days of March he would of course feel certain that everything depended on what the fifth might bring. It is to be hoped that if any rational creature in any of the other worlds should be seized with a desire to visit this country he will not come when there is an election going on. If not accustomed to party contests he may easily mistake a little political gas for a revolution.

Well, the fifth of March did come. The Government won and—and what? Why everybody had to go home and work as usual. In fact a great many people had to work harder than usual because their work had got behind during the excitement. The Tories who worked and planned as if the destiny of everything dear to them depended on the result found next day that their bread and butter and business depended on their own exertions. Perhaps one man in every thousand may find that his business gains in some way by the success of the Government at the polls but the nine hundred and ninety-nine will have to work as they always did if they are to accomplish anything.

Had the Liberals succeeded the result would have been substantially the same. The lawyer who hung up his bag and devoted his whole time to the contest would have to sit down at his desk and peg away pretty much as if the Grits were not in power. The doctor who canvassed for Laurier night and day would have to mount his sulky and drive on the concessions as usual. Farmers who shouted for Sir Richard would find that the ploughing and sowing and harrowing and stone-gathering and everything else had to be done on the farm just the same as if Sir Richard had been elected to stay at home. The success or failure of any party makes precious little difference financially to the average man. In the bread-and-butter contest in which nearly all are engaged nearly everything depends on health, brains, industry, thrift, economy and a few other qualities that nobody thinks worthy of notice during election contests. When the political boom is on men who are fairly rational at other times speak as if the success of everybody depended on the success of their party. The peroration of many speeches leaves the impression that the alternative is, success for our party or ruin. Such talk is in ordinary circumstances unalloyed, unrelieved rubbish. History proves, if it proves anything, that the power of nations depends much more on the character of the people than on the success of a party or the form of Government under which the people live. A nation of rascals cannot prosper long under any form of Government. A nation composed of honest, thrifty, heroic, God-fearing men will prosper and become powerful no matter what the form of their government may be. The character of individual citizens and the work done by individual citizens are matters of a thousand-fold more importance than the form of government under which citizens may live. To speak of making a great nation out of bad men is just as rational as to speak of making a clean, healthy population out of lepers, or a Parliament or General Assembly out of lunatics. The basis of a nation is character, and if there is no character there is no basis to build on under any form of government. National success depends mainly on individual effort and if a majority of the people are dawdling loafers no government can make the nation successful. It would be a great thing for Canada if a number of able, resolute men in both parties, who have the ear of the public, would make a specialty of insisting on every suitable occasion that the success of Canada depends much more on the character and habits of our people than on any fiscal policy or than on the political creed of the party in power. Principal Grant has done some good work in that line but there is ample room for more work and more workers.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL SIDE OF THE QUESTION

Next June the air will be filled with things ecclesiastical. Three or four conferences, three or four Anglican synods, two or three unions and a General Assembly will meet and deliberate. The newspapers will be loaded down with ecclesiastical reports. Everybody that is anybody in particular will be talking about ecclesiastical things. In the ecclesiastical world affairs will take on much the same shape as political affairs assumed in the early days of March. People will talk as if everything Presbyterian depended on the Assembly and everything Methodist on the Conferences. The meetings will soon pass over as the elections did. When the minister goes home he finds that if he is going to accomplish anything he must go to work in his individual capacity. In fact, he finds that one of the things, perhaps the principal thing, the

General Assembly did for him was to tire him out and unfit him for pulpit duty. He comes home bitious and tagged on Friday evening, sleeps long on Saturday morning and spends most of the day in turning over the contents of his sermon barrel. On Sabbath he feels in his every fibre that attending Church courts never helps a man to preach, and if he would put his feelings into words all his hearers would say amen.

The fact is, progress in Church or State depends on the work of the ones. It is extremely difficult in our day to allow that fundamental fact have its proper influence. Combined effort is always advertised; individual effort is not. Many people think everything they see in print is of overwhelming importance and that what is not printed cannot amount to much. Fifty men meet and deliberate on some matter for a few hours and their deliberations are spread out before hundreds of thousands next morning, even though they did nothing. The same men might have accomplished much good at home attending to their duties but no one would have heard anything about them.

The greatest work ever done in the world has been done by individual men. No committee helped Demosthenes to prepare his speeches. Homer did not write the Iliad at a convention. Shakespeare, so far as we know, never asked a conference to make any suggestions about his plays. Milton was probably not a member of any association. These unfortunate men worked away alone but in some way or another they managed to do work that will last until time shall no longer be. Real work is always done by the ones.

WHAT POSITION SHOULD THE CHURCH TAKE ON THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION?

MR. EDITOR,—The meaning of this question is, I apprehend, the position the Church should take in seeking to overcome and do away with the prevailing evils of intemperance, the position she should take in helping on temperance work. And I at once affirm that the position the Church should take with regard to such a matter is the position the word of God assigns her, and that is a position of open, avowed, determined and persevering opposition to all that is evil, and to all that leads to evil. I cannot conceive the Church of God taking any other position with regard to such an enormous evil as the evil of intemperance, and I think the Church of God that has been bought with such a price, the precious blood of Jesus, and that has been raised to such honour and such privileges should not be slow but should rather be forward to take the position assigned to her by her great King and Head, and all the more so, when intemperance is such an enormous barrier in the way of the Church's progress, and interferes so much with the Church's work. If the position I have indicated is the position the Church should take with regard to the evil of intemperance, and with regard to all other evils, then I say she will be avowedly and strongly in favour of the temperance cause or movement, because temperance work is a grand work, seeking to rescue those who have come under the enslaving power of a love for strong drink, and warning others of their danger in this respect, and seeking to prevent them coming under the power of the evil. It is a very necessary and a very extensive work at the present time, for the evils of intemperance are very general over the land, and the results of these evils are enormous, they are untold, they are indescribable; and the work of seeking to arrest these evils is the Church's work, and can be accomplished only by her efforts under the blessing of God. The Church of God is the great instrument He employs in the world for the arresting of evil in its progress and eradicating it, and for the propagating of the people's good, and any movement outside of the Church that may be begun for such a purpose will never accomplish very much, but God may use such movements to awaken the Church and to stimulate her to undertake and persevere in the work the Lord has given her to do. I believe the temperance movement has risen up outside of the Church, largely because the Church did not seek to arrest and eradicate the evils of intemperance that prevailed, did not assume the position with regard to this matter she ought to have assumed. I cannot see why there should be a temperance movement in the Church and another largely outside of the Church, the one seeming to some extent to antagonize and be in opposition to the other, but such is the case. And I believe that state of things has arisen because some belonging to the Church and some outside of the Church seeing the negligence of the Church and the indifference of the Church with regard to the prevailing and spreading evils of intemperance, started on their own account, apart from the Church and independent of the Church, to arrest and overcome these evils. Just as I believe the Salvation Army has arisen and is working amongst the lapsed masses because the Church did not attend to the wants of those people, and look after their interests as she ought to have done. But such movements are often the means of doing a great deal of good, and the temperance movement has done good. It has spread abroad a scriptural temperance sentiment, it has arrested to a considerable extent the evils of intemperance, and it has awakened the Church to engage in this great temperance work, for I am glad to say that the Church is not now standing aloof from this work and coldly looking on. She is awakened to the evils of intemperance, and is going heartily and vigorously although not so heartily and vigorously as she might and ought to go, into the work of arresting and overcoming these evils. There is not

a branch of the Church that has not been awakened to the evils that does not vigorously condemn them, and that is doing something to overcome them. Here is what our Church says about these evils. "This Assembly believes that the general traffic in intoxicating liquors is a source terrible and enormous evils, that it blights the prospect, destroys the health and character, and ruins the soul of the individual, that it mars the happiness, wastes the resource and degrades the life of the family, that it lowers the moral sentiment and endangers the peace and safety of society, that it greatly increases the number of the lapsed masses, intensifies every evil, and is a most fruitful source of crime that it not only hinders most seriously, and in many ways, but antagonizes the Church in the work of uplifting the race and winning souls for Christ, and that it is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and the spirit of the Christian religion."

That is a pretty strong indictment against the traffic in and use of, intoxicating liquors, and yet I believe that it is not one bit too strong, and since such are the enormous and wide spread evils arising from the traffic in, and use of, intoxicating liquors, what is the position that God indicates His Church in the world should occupy with regard to this whole matter. Can we conceive a God of holiness who has bought the Church and instituted the Church, and who preserves the Church, by the spreading abroad of the knowledge of His name, for the uplifting of the human race from the low, degraded position into which it has fallen, for the bringing of all men to Christ as their Saviour that they may be washed from their sin and made meet to become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; can we conceive of God allowing His Church to countenance these evils in any form, in any way, or to countenance anything that leads to these evils. God condemns all evil, and He warns us against everything that leads to evil, and will anyone say that the use of intoxicating liquors in their various forms does not lead to very great evils in many, very many, cases. If these liquors were never used there would be no drunkenness, and therefore no evils arising from that cause; and what does God say to us in His word about the use of that which leads to so much evil. He solemnly warns us against its use. He threatens severe punishment against the abuse of that which may not be wrong in itself, but may lead to serious results, and He points out to us the safe course with regard to all such things: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs xx. 1. "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Proverbs xxiii. 29. "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink," Isaiah v. 22. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken." Matt. ii. 15. "Abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thess. v. 22. "Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." Romans xiv. 19. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend I will eat no flesh while the world standeth," 1 Cor. viii. 13, and other passages of the same kind that might be quoted. These last two passages that have been quoted from Romans and Corinthians some think do not apply to the use of intoxicating liquors. Of course the apostle is there dealing with the use of meat that has been offered in sacrifice to idols. The use of the meat was indifferent in itself but some were led into sin by seeing others use it, and therefore on that account those who could use it without sin were to abstain from the use of it for the sake of others, and the apostle in dealing with this particular case shows how we are to act in all other cases of the same kind. He lays down a principle that is of very easy application to every other thing of the same kind. If anything we do is calculated to lead others into sin, we are to abstain from doing that for the sake of others, and in one of these passages the Apostle refers to the very thing we are now discussing, viz., the use of wine or intoxicating liquor. "It is good neither to eat flesh nor drink wine nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak," Roman xiv. 21. Surely no one can deny that many are led into evil by seeing others use intoxicating liquors, and therefore for the sake of them we are to abstain from the use of that which possibly may do us no harm. Hodge on one of these passages says: "It is morally obligatory, therefore to abstain from indulging in things indifferent when the use of them is the occasion of sin to others. This is a principle which must be left to every man's conscience in the fear of God." Some people seem to think that there is a great deal in the fact that no single passage can be produced from the word of God to show that the drinking of wine is evil in itself. There may be circumstances where the drinking of wine is not evil, and therefore the Word of God does not condemn it as an evil. It is not in that way that the Word of God deals with such evils as that to which the drinking of wine leads. It does not say that this is an evil, and the other thing is an evil, and therefore you are not to do these things. That would be a tedious and cumbersome way of dealing with such evils. But it lays down great general principles cover-