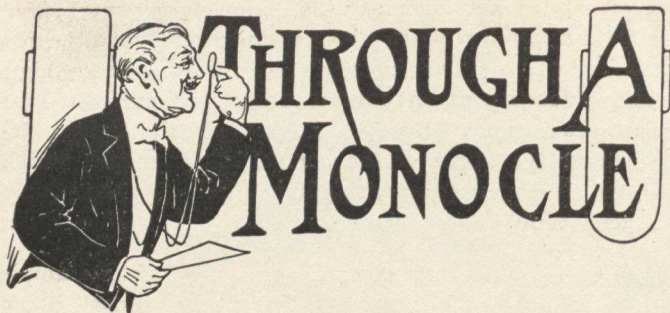




SEVERAL Winnipeg clergymen threw themselves into the Manitoba campaign just about in time to trip and fall under "Bob" Rogers' steam roller. Not that this will make the Ministers sorry they spoke. This is one advantage that a Minister who goes into politics has over the ordinary citizen—he feels almost as happy when he is beaten as when he succeeds, for he possesses the sublime consciousness of having done his duty. Of course it grieves him to see the cause of the righteous forsaken; but he himself, at all events, did not forsake it. And the fact that comparatively few turned out to be faithful in the hour of trial lends an added glory to the few. It is about a "toss-up" whether a really sincere Minister of the Gospel gets more satisfaction out of a magnificent victory or a heroically-endured defeat under such circumstances. In a victory, the straight and narrow path is a trifle crowded. As the young soldier said who was being congratulated on his bravery in a great battle—"Yes, but there were so many of us."

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Of course, there are worldly-minded clergymen who do not take this view of the matter. They want to win; and they take a riotous joy, that is almost "lay" in its abandon, in "beating the other fellows." But I am talking of the devoted Minister who always regards himself as fighting on behalf of the Almighty, and who believes that "God and one man are a majority," no matter what the returning officers may report. But I sometimes permit myself to wonder if a Minister ought really to meddle with politics. If he were to look at his calling as a "business proposition"—which he would never dream of doing—he would see at once that he should not get into any dispute which must deprive him of the "custom" of half the population. When a Minister takes sides in a political dispute, he weakens and possibly destroys his influence with the men who are on the other side of politics. He may be right; but they do not think so. The consequence is that his power to minister to them in matters of the spirit is either lost or largely curtailed. As far as they are concerned, his usefulness is gone.

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Now, of course, as a citizen, he has every right to take part in politics. I am not calling that in question, I am merely asking whether he should take advantage of this right. He has solemnly chosen to devote his life to the preaching of the Gospel. He has stepped aside from the ordinary dusty highway of human competition where men are jostling each other that he may act as a member of the moral ambulance corps and succour the morally wounded and carry religious balm to the dying. Tacitly, he has promised to give up everything that will hamper him as a moral Red Cross knight. "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." In two words, he has voluntarily assumed the role of a non-combatant in order that he may go in and out among the people on his errand of counsel and mercy without arousing their suspicion that he may be serving a selfish and worldly end. Now it cannot be doubted for a moment that when he allows himself to be drawn into a political affray, he does hamper his effectiveness as a spiritual and religious guide. I am quite

conscious that he will say that only in that way can he smite certain giant evils; but could not this two-handed broadsword side of the battle be left to a special corps of lay-workers who should be religious in purpose but who had not set themselves apart as spiritual physicians, claiming the special privileges of a non-combatant?

* * *

We have had the opportunity lately in Canada of seeing two Shaw plays, the principal roles being carried by two very different actors. "Man and Superman" came first with Loraine as "John Tanner"; and then we had Mr. and Mrs. Forbes-Robertson in "Caesar and Cleopatra." The latter, Shaw has classed amongst his "Plays for Puritans," but the former would hardly bear such a classification. Yet it surely must be plain to anyone that the former was Shaw, while the latter was—Pshaw! "Man and Superman" was written because Shaw had it in him and could not keep it back. It is the very soul of the man laid bare. It is the Truth as Shaw sees it. But "Caesar and Cleopatra" is the effort of a dramatic Carlyle to caper in a lady's drawing-room for the pleasing of fastidious superficialities. The wit of "Man and Superman"—which was merely the edge of the sword—made people think that Shaw ought to be able to write a witty play—"for Puritans"—and they seem to have cajoled him into trying it. And he has managed to get some wit into it, but no soul.

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Loraine was nothing short of a miracle as "John Tanner." He was more than a perfect actor—his understanding and presentation of the part was almost superhuman. Shaw gives him long lectures to deliver to poor "Tavie," and he delivers them without once suggesting that he is speaking a piece by rote. You can see the man think out his reasoning as he sits on the stage. Contrast this with Forbes-Robertson's wooden recitation when he first comes on and apostrophises the Sphinx. You can see that Robertson is speaking a piece from memory, and his recitation would win a prize at any school closing. Loraine would have obviously thought out his reflections on first seeing the Sphinx as he stood there in the moonlit desert. That Robertson is a great Hamlet, everybody knows; but when he comes to play a modern drama or to even a modernised picture of an ancient event, he is too much the elocutionist and too little the character. It was a great thing for Shaw that his "Man and Superman" was not burdened with a smooth-voiced lecturer like Forbes-Robertson.



An Object Lesson for John Bull.
British publications find great difficulty in getting into this market, owing to the high postal rates charged by the British Post Office.