

## Our Contributors.

### A NEW REMEDY FOR DULNESS.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Referring to an article recently published in this corner a leading writer in the literary department of the "Globe" says:

A writer in the Canada Presbyterian draws attention to the lack of humor in most of our public speakers, and it is true; a great deal of our public speaking is unutterably long-winded, unutterably tiresome, unutterably uninteresting. Our orators have plenty of ability of a sort—the ability of a hard-headed and successful man of business, with an interminable flow of language; but what they lack is imagination. There is certainly no inherent want of intellectual flexibility or vivacity in the Canadian people, for I believe that this country, as soon as every impediment is removed from its free development, will produce the ablest people in every way upon the continent; but there is a general mental and spiritual depression which necessarily results from the maintenance of an inferior colonial position. Beyond a certain point—that point, viz., when the national spirit begins to show itself, as it is now distinctly doing with us—it is impossible for a people to remain in the attitude of colonists without intellectual deterioration—especially deterioration in all those activities of the mind which call into play the imagination and the finer emotions dependant upon the imagination. As long as the status quo is maintained we must be prepared to an unusual degree of dulness in an unnecessarily large proportion of our public speakers. It is a noticeable in this connection that the most brilliant, amiable and vivacious of all our orators, the Hon. Mr. Laurier, is an advocate of independence.

The theory in the foregoing is that dulness in Canadian public speaking is caused by our "inferior colonial position". "A great deal of our public speaking is unutterably long-winded, unutterably tiresome, unutterably uninteresting" mainly because our orators are lacking in imagination and the finer emotions dependent upon the imagination", and their imagination is dull because they are colonists.

Is it a fact that colonial politicians are lacking in imagination? We may easily be mistaken but we have the idea that some of them have that faculty abnormally well developed. To say nothing about vivid predictions it would be the simplest thing in the world to mention instances in which some of our colonial statesmen draw upon their imagination for their facts. Indeed we have men who when hard pushed can call upon their imaginative faculty for their figures—not figures of rhetoric but the figures we use in the multiplication table. Quite likely a goodly number of people think that the great trouble with some of our public men is that they are millionaires in imagination.

Perhaps, however, the literary gentleman who writes in the Globe, means that they do not use the imagination in arranging the form of their speeches. The matter of a speech—the facts, arguments, and even the statistics may be a pure product of the imagination while the form may be as bald, and uninteresting, and cold as a Muskoka rock in the month of January. The thing required is imaginative power that can be utilized in lightening and polishing up public utterances so that they may be read with interest by people of good taste and may at the same time help to refine and cultivate the taste of the reader or hearer. Undoubtedly there is ample room for improvement along this line and it is not by any means confined to the political arena. There is a deluge of public speaking in Canada every winter and another in the ecclesiastical month of June but how much of it is of the improving kind as regards the public taste. There is no doubt a good deal of the informing kind for which we should be thankful, but how many speakers do we hear on the political or ecclesiastical platform that it is a real pleasure to hear. How many do we hear that can give us information, improve our taste, and please us at the same time? Not many.

Supposing this fact is admitted can we account for it by saying, we are colonists? Can we mend matters by Independence or Imperial Federation?

Let us imagine a case. Mr. Brutus sits down to prepare a speech. Mr. Brutus is a mere colonist, a believer in the status quo, in the meantime. He says to himself, "Now I have matter enough for a speech an hour long if I take it any way it may come but if I arrange it and condense it I can get through in half an hour or perhaps less. But then I am a mere colonial politician and of course must not condense so there is nothing left for me but to bore the people for an hour with a speech that would have much greater effect if delivered in half an hour."

"Now how shall I begin? Yes, here is a happy reference that will put me on good terms with my audience in a twinkling. Capital! Splendid! Just the thing I was looking for. But stop. I occupy "an inferior colonial position" and must not make happy introductions".

Good illustration! Capital; rings on the point. Must not use it. Am only a colonist.

Fine historical allusion—cannot make it. Am a believer in the status quo. Audience getting a little tired, might relieve them by a little anecdote at this point. Here is a good one. Must not touch it. Colonists must not light up with anecdotes.

Poetic selection would come in well here. Yes, capital; one in my scrap book. Fits exactly. Must not quote however. Quotations are not for Colonists. Blake may quote now as he has ceased to be a mere colonist but we unfortunates who remain in Canada must not quote anything good until we have Independence or Imperial Federation.

And this it is that colonial orators suffer from the status quo. The status quo is bad, it is ruinous to good speaking; it fetters men who would speak like the best of Britons were they not haunted continually with the feeling of colonial inferiority.

The literary gentleman who writes so well for the Globe has done one thing, though it may not be a very good thing. Every Canadian who makes a dull speech, or preaches a dull sermon, or writes a dull article may father the dulness on our "inferior colonial position." It is worth noting that Mr. Laurier was just as bright as he is now before he took up Independence and Principal Grant just as eloquent as he is now before he gave so much attention to Imperial Federation.

Seriously now—does any man feel that his colonial position compels him to make dull speeches or preach dull sermons or write dull articles. Is there any necessary connection between dulness and colonial life?

There is not.

### LATE SIR THOMAS McCLURE, BART.

The Irish papers bring the news of the death of the above named gentleman, who for over half a century has been a prominent figure in the North of Ireland.

Thomas McClure was born in Belfast in 1806. He was descended from ancestors who fought under King William, at the battle of the Boyne. His was also a Presbyterian ancestry; his grandfather was the Rev. John Thomson, of Cammeny, beside Belfast; and his brother was the late Rev. William McClure of Londonderry, the author of some sermons on the "Plea of Presbytery," among the ablest books on polemical subjects ever published in Ireland; and who, with some other distinguished delegates, visited this country in behalf of Irish missions; he was also Convener of the Colonial Mission in connection with the General Assembly.

The subject of our sketch had other relations in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

Like many others of the rugged youth of the North of Ireland he engaged early in mercantile life, and in course of time realized a large fortune, which was liberally dispensed on charitable and philanthropic objects. A large estate known as the Belmont Estate was in the market, and Mr. McClure became the purchaser, and having at considerable cost improved this property it soon became one of the attractive suburbs of Belfast. At his own cost he erected the handsome church, known as

Belmont Presbyterian Church, which was then regarded as one of the handsomest edifices of the kind in the city. Mr. McClure was warmly attached to the church of his fathers, and in those days Presbyterianism was not considered the religion of gentlemen, who often turned over to the English Church when they began to drive carriages. As an elder he was regular in his attendance on the Church Courts; and his advice on general matters affecting the interests of the Church was often sought.

Mr. McClure was in no sense an orator; and was wanting in many of the traits of character which distinguished his countrymen; still he had aspirations and ambitions for public life. In 1864 he was High Sheriff for Antrim County, and vice-lieutenant for Down County; but these positions did not satisfy the ambition of the wealthy, but humble member of the Presbyterian Church; and although his political opinions were not very generally known, still he was supposed to be a Whig, which 25 years ago meant a different thing from what it does to-day. At that time the Whigs were very aggressive, but now they would be regarded as Conservative. In fact, so far as I can remember, Mr. McClure might have been called anything at that time, except an out and out Tory. He was known to have Liberal leanings towards the farmers on the Tenant-right question, although he was an extensive landed proprietor himself. Being anxious to get into parliament at the general election in 1868 he contested the borough of Belfast, espousing the Liberal cause, although the constituency was strongly Conservative; and owing to a split in the Orange vote which always goes Conservative, to the great surprise of many he carried the seat and was declared one of the sitting members. Having voted with his chief during the parliament he fell with him at the dissolution in 1874. At the next election Mr. McClure was a candidate and although conscious that he was leading a forlorn hope, he faced the fight like a man; but the Conservatives having closed their ranks he was defeated after a hot contest. Being relegated to private life, and for the services which he rendered to the Gladstone Government he was created a baronet, and ever afterwards had the confidence of his chief, Mr. Gladstone.

By the lamented death of the Rev. Dr. Smyth, M.P., professor of theology in Magee College, Derry, in 1878 a vacancy occurred in Derry County, and Sir Thomas McClure was pointed to as the coming man, and after a hot contest in which he was supported by such men as the late Rev. Dr. Witherow and many other ministers, he was elected by a large majority.

From a variety of reasons this county was the scene of many political conflicts; for, within a period of ten years, there were five elections involving the expenditure of a large amount of money.

As vice-lieutenant and member of Parliament Sir Thomas McClure rendered valuable service to the Presbyterians of Ireland. In government appointments they never had got their full share of honors, as those were reserved for members of the English and Roman Catholic churches. It was, however, on the question of Disestablishment that Sir Thomas McClure served over church in a special manner. He was sent to Parliament by one of the largest constituencies in the empire, and had much influence with Mr. Gladstone and was thus able to get the General Assembly much better terms than could have otherwise been obtained by any other member who would have been opposed to the government.

Sir Thomas McClure was warmly attached to the G. O. M.; but it is said that since the Home Rule agitation commenced he deeply deplored the course which his former leader has adopted. He was identified with many of the religious organizations in Belfast, and was a warm friend of the Y. M. C. A. since its organization, and in many ways his death will leave a blank that will not be easily filled.

For some time he has been a resident of Edinburgh and although much advanced in life, he enjoyed good health until within a few weeks when the end came suddenly. The hon. gentleman was married in 1877 to Miss Macfie, of Dreghorn Castle, Midlothian, who survives him; but there is no family.

Toronto, Feb. 6th, 1893.

### A REVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN HAWAII.

Faith Fenton in The Week.

The Hawaiian revolt is not an altogether unexpected event to those who have watched the progress, commercial and political, of this group of islands that have been so fitly termed "The Cross Roads of the Pacific."

It is but a natural sequence in the series of events that during the past forty years has transformed Hawaii from a group of unknown heathen isles to the Christianized, progressive and valuable little tropical kingdom of to-day.

Given a two thirds native population in blood and sympathy; who, possessing all the elements of good citizenship, yet labour under the disadvantages inevitable to a people but recently brought under civilizing influences, who desire to govern but do not know how; given a one third foreign element, chiefly Teutonic, who also desire to govern and do know how; given also a queen who has always disliked the constitutional form of government forced upon her predecessor, king Kalakaua, and who has long sought opportunity to restore the ancient power of the throne—and we have the elements of the smouldering discontent that has broken out at length into open revolution.

To these existing internal conditions must be added the strategic value of the islands in the eyes of the nations, a value so increased during the past fifteen years that it has set America weaving her finest web and singing her most dulcet song, if haply she may woo this pretty Pacific fly within her meshes.

The international interest in Hawaii grows altogether out of its geographical position. It is the only convenient coaling station in the great Pacific. It is the halfway house across the vast roll of water stretching between the continents. From Vancouver to Australasia, from San Francisco to Hong Kong, from Valparaiso to Yokohama, this group of islands lies almost midway—the natural port of supply and call for the ships of all nations. More than this, it is the one intersecting point for all cable communications across the Pacific.

If Australia wishes to communicate with British Columbia, she must do so via Honolulu; if the British station Hong Kong would wire to Canada, the most feasible route of transmission is by way of Honolulu. It stands unique in its commanding position, a commercial centre in the heart of a great sea—the one coaling station, harbour, port of supply—the intersecting point of all communication between two great continents and half a dozen countries.

Because then of its position, Hawaii assumes an importance politically and internationally, that is possessed by no other group of islands of similar size in any part of the world.

Without entering into any discussion of the early history of this group of tropical islands—a history that can only go back a little over 100 years,—a brief reference to the first foreign interference in Hawaiian government will not be amiss, and will aid us in making clear the present situation.

In 1844 the quarrels between the French and English settlers upon the islands, compelled the natives to appeal for protection, which was granted, and their independence guaranteed to them by England, France and America. The government was constitutional, yet with large monarchical powers, until King Kalakaua, who was both profligate and erratic, alarmed the English and American residents by his conduct; and in 1887 they exacted his assent to a new constitution which deprived him and future sovereigns of nearly all voice or control in the government.

Queen Liliuokalani, who was then heir presumptive, objected seriously to Kalakaua's submission, and secretly encouraged a native revolt, with the view of regaining the surrendered prerogatives; which revolt, however, came to nothing. Upon her accession to the throne very soon after, there was much doubt among the