

Our Contributors.

LITTLE MEN WHO THINK THEY ARE BIG INSTITUTIONS.

BY KNOXIAN.

Not long ago the *Edinburgh Scotsman* had a sharp controversy with a Scotch Doctor of Divinity. Among many other rather tart things the *Scotsman* said this: "The Doctor thinks that because we are opposing him we are opposing religion." Whether the Doctor in question did or did not think this we do not know. Quite likely he did not think anything of the kind. But whether he did or did not thousands of men are guilty of the kind of presumption that the *Scotsman* was driving at. The moment you say a word about them or their methods of working they shout that you are opposing some cause that they may have elected themselves to represent. The smaller the man, the louder the shout. The less he has to do with the cause, and the less credit he is to it, the more likely is he to declare that you are opposing the cause when you are only using the slipper gently on the little man himself.

These little men swarm around the temperance cause. They never swarmed to any extent until the cause became popular. Their name is legion now. Say an unfavourable word about any of their modes of working, and they instantly shout, "He is opposed to temperance." Suggest that they are not doing something as wisely as it might be done, and they instantly yell, "He is opposed to Prohibition." Dare to suggest some way of working that they don't like, and they accuse you of trying to injure the cause. Try to put better men in their places if they hold office, and the chances are a thousand to one that they will insinuate you are working for the liquor interest.

Now, the trouble with these people is that they imagine *they* are the temperance cause. Perhaps they are doing the cause more harm than good. Quite likely real temperance men would be only too glad to get rid of some of them. But they are so swollen with self-conceit that they consider anything said about *them* as said about temperance.

These little men are too often found airing their self-conceit at revival services. Dare to criticise their methods, and they at once declare you are "opposed to revival." Say you think it would be better not to employ some itinerant evangelist they want, and they modestly tell you that you are opposing the Spirit. Affirm that certain modes of presenting truth they like are misleading and therefore dangerous, and although the half truths are as deadly and dangerous as the worst forms of error, they mildly tell you that you are in favour of sending souls to hell. Their inflated self-conceit makes them think that opposing *them* is opposing revival! They cannot understand that a man may be in favour of revival and not in favour of *them*. You may have been a believer many years before the inflated creatures were born—you may have been the honoured instrument in bringing many souls to the Saviour, you may have helped many now in the Church above to fight the good fight during life, and have aided them in their struggle with the last enemy, you may have taken part in real revivals more than once, and have had the young people coming to Christ in your own congregation for years,—and yet if you dare not to say "ditto" to these little men, seriously suffering from "big-head," they denounce you as unfavourable to revival! Modest little fellows, are they not! They are so inflated with self-conceit that they fancy every man who does not uncover and go down on his marrow-bones in their presence must be opposed to a revival of religion! Men with so much self-conceit to the square inch are a good deal more likely to get their inspiration from beneath than from above.

Little men who imagine themselves big institutions are not by any means confined to the Church or the temperance cause. They are found everywhere.

An editor basely libels somebody against whom he cherishes feelings of personal malice. He delights in the power which he has in his printing press to injure his neighbour. It gives him intense pleasure to know that he has given his neighbour pain. The neighbour instructs his lawyer to take proceedings for libel. A writ is issued. The moment the libeller sees the writ he begins to mutter about "the free-

dom of the press." He thinks he is the press. The venomous little libeller thinks he is a big institution.

An incorrigible bore makes a long speech on some subject quite sufficiently discussed. It is dry as a lime-burner's shoe. The people become wearied out, and put him down. When he sits down he begins to mutter terrible things about "British liberty," "freedom of speech," "the graves of our forefathers," etc. That long-winded, dry, prolix man modestly assumes that he represents liberty of speech! The trouble with him has always been that he has taken far too much liberty with speech.

An Englishman goes over to Paris, gets drunk, insults a Frenchman, who gives him a sound and well-deserved kicking. When he comes to he mutters awful things about the Magna Charter, the British Lion, the British Constitution, the army and navy, etc. That man imagines he is the British Empire!

A Canadian goes to Chicago or New York, poses as a great man, talks big, tells of great connections over here, and airs himself generally. He thinks he is all Canada. When around home he may not be known beyond his own yard. Perhaps you could hardly find him with a search warrant.

Who has not seen Americans on a tour through Canada who acted as if they owned the whole United States, with Mexico and several other places thrown in?

Some Presbyterians are apt to think that anything said against them is said against Presbyterianism. Many Methodists are prone to think that criticism of their personal acts is a deadly thrust at their Church. This is a failing too many Methodists have. They don't fail in this way now as much as they once did.

A mild remark about Sir John Macdonald's boot-black could scarcely be construed into an attack on the Conservative party, even in the city of Ottawa.

A gentle criticism on the cab in which Mr. Mowat rides at times could scarcely be called a deadly attack on the Grits.

To say that a brakeman on the C. P. R. was not an apostle could scarcely be construed into a violent assault on the management of our great railway.

And yet Sir John's boot-black has as much right to represent the Conservative party, and Mr. Mowat's cabman to represent the Liberal party, and any brakeman on the line to represent the C. P. R., as some noisy, fussy, impertinent little men have to elect themselves representatives of such great causes as temperance, revivals of religion and "the whole Bible."

BIBLE INSECTS.

BY R. K. DUNCAN, MITCHELL, ONT.

ANTS (*Formica*).

Thou little insect, infinitely small,
What curious texture marks thy tiny frame?
How seeming large thy foresight, and withal
Thy labouring talents not unworthy fame,
To raise such monstrous hills along the plain,
Larger than mountains when compared to thee.

The industry, foresight and unconquerable perseverance of this wonderfully intelligent insect far surpass anything that Solomon, its only Biblical narrator, has written concerning it. This royal naturalist, the foremost entomologist and botanist of his age, places the ant among the "four things that are little upon the earth, but are exceeding wise"—a statement once ridiculed, but now confirmed by the greatest naturalist of the day. Sir John Lubbock declares that "when we consider their habits, their social organizations, large communities and elaborate habitations, their roadways, their possession of domestic animals, and even in some cases of slaves, it must be admitted that they have a fair claim to rank next to man in the scale of intelligence." This is a description coinciding accurately with the advice of Solomon: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise."

The "wise man" also says that the ant "provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest"—an assertion corroborated to the very letter by the "harvesting ants" of Syria, which, according to the observations of well-known scientists, who have visited the Holy Land for the express purpose of studying its zoology, not only lays up grain, but actually prepares the soil for the crop, plants the seed, keeps the ground free from weeds, and finally reaps the harvest. Truly, an ant may teach us many

things! 'Tis a little index; but, like the needle to the pole, it points to the Divine Hand.

HORNETS (*Vespa crapo*).

These insects are very numerous in the East, infesting, in particular, some parts of Palestine. In the Scriptures they are referred to only as the means employed by Jehovah for the extirpation of the Canaanites.

To illustrate the destructive power which these insects possess, we quote the following from "Oriental Illustrations," by Joseph Roberts: "The sting of the hornet of these regions is much more poisonous than in Europe, and the insect is larger in size. I have heard of several who have died from receiving a single sting; and, no, many days ago, as a woman was going to a well to draw water, a hornet stung her in the cheek, and she died the next day."

Hindus often curse each other by saying: "May all around you be stung by the hornet," meaning the person and his relations. The god Siva is described as having destroyed many giants by hornets.

BEES (*Apiaria*).

This is an insect that from the earliest ages of the world to the present time has universally attracted man's attention and nurturing care: a little creature that has perhaps excited as much admiration from all classes of men as any animated being not of the genus *Homo*—an insect that the most exalted and purest minds have ever singled out as a wonderful evidence of the design and handiwork of God. It is surely enough to crush all thoughts of atheism and materialism to observe that within so small a body is an apparatus for converting the sweets which it collects into one kind of nourishment for itself, another for the common brood, and a third for the royal; glue for its carpentry, wax for its cells, poison for its enemies, and honey for its master; but when we add to these its system of order and economy, its prodigious industry, wonderful instinct and indomitable perseverance, we perceive indeed that by the study of this little insect, it causes the mask to fall from the face of the infidel or atheist, and compels him to believe in, kneel down and adore the omnipotence of the Almighty God.

Palestine is still, as it was long, long ago, "a land flowing with milk and honey." Dr. Thompson speaks of immense swarms of bees which made their home in a gigantic cliff of Wady Kurn. "The people of Malia, several years ago," he says, "let a man down the face of the rocks by ropes. He was entirely protected from their assaults, and he extracted a large amount of honey; but he was so terrified by the prodigious swarms of bees that he refused to repeat the exploit."

This forcibly illustrates Deut. xxxii. 13 and Psa. lxxvi. as to "honey out of the rock," also Deut. i. 44 and Psa. cxviii. 12 as to the fearful nature of the attacks of these insects when irritated. The passage in Judges xiv., concerning the swarm of bees, and honey in the lion's carcass, also admits of an easy explanation.

The lion which Samson slew had been dead some time before the bees had taken up their abode in the carcass; for we are expressly told that "after a time" Samson came back, and "turned aside to see the carcass of the lion," which he found replete with life.

His wondering ear
Perceived a murmuring voice; discerning not
From whence that strange confusion was, or what.
He stays his steps, and hearkens. Still the voice
Presents his ear with a continual noise.
At length his gently moving feet apply
Their paces to the carcass, where his eye
Discerns a swarm of bees, whose laden thighs
Reposed their burdens, and the painful prize
Of their sweet labours, in the hollow chest
Of the dead lion, whose embowelled breast
Became their plenteous storehouse.—*Quarles*.

It has seemed to many, judging from what happens to the dead body of a beast in our own climate, almost incredible that so clean and sensitive a creature as a bee would establish itself in so offensive a domicile; but we must not suppose that the carcass was a putrid and corrupt mass; for in the East vultures and numerous swarms of ants will, in an astonishingly short space of time, completely clean out all the softer parts of a carcass, leaving the skeleton and integuments entire, and these, after being thoroughly dried by the hot sun of that climate, become a clean and convenient habitation, and one in which a swarm of bees would be very likely to settle.