

Our Contributors.

THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN ABOUT THE NEW YEAR.

BY KNOXIAN.

Once upon a time a group of visionary people, of a little sect we need not name, were seated upon a rock at one of our St. Lawrence watering places, engaged in conversation. A matter-of-fact theological professor chanced to pass near the rock on the way to his morning dip. One of the visionaries told him that they were conversing about the *unwritten* words of the Saviour, and asked him if he would join in the conversation. The matter-of-fact theologian modestly replied that he was quite well satisfied with the *written* words, and always preferred *them* to the words that were *unwritten* and are now unknown. Conversing about unknown words must be a very unsatisfactory kind of exercise. It does no more for one's spiritual nature than was done for Ephraim by the diet that Hosea alludes to in the first clause of his twelfth chapter. In fact it is very much the same kind of diet. That kind of diet may do fairly well for the sect those visionaries referred to belonged to, but no Presbyterian ever thrives on it. It does not agree with the Presbyterian constitution.

Talking about unknown words, however, is not much more unsatisfactory than talking about unknown events that may occur in 1887. "Nobody knows what may happen this year," says some one fond of peering into the unknown future. Well, that is true as a mere proposition. It is also true that the probabilities in favour of certain things taking place are so great that for all practical purposes they amount to a certainty. There is nothing absolutely known about this new year, but the probabilities are a million to one that certain things will take place.

Your note falls due at the bank in thirty days. Now it is not an absolute certainty that the bank will try to collect that note. The probabilities are, however, a million to one that you will hear from the bank or its solicitor about that time. In fact the probabilities come so near an absolute certainty that you had better have the money ready.

The minister does not know any more about the future than any other man. Still every minister is reasonably certain that if his health does not break down he must prepare and preach between fifty and 100 sermons during the year. Things may occur that he now knows nothing about, but he may rest assured that when the clock strikes eleven on each Sabbath forenoon he will be expected to enter his pulpit with a new sermon or an old one touched up a little. In view of this fact it is much more sensible to get ready the sermons than to sentimentalize about the unknown quantities of the future.

A professor of theology does not know the future any more than a "mere pastor," but the probability in favour of his having to deliver a certain number of lectures is so great that for practical purposes it amounts to a certainty.

Even a student does not know the future. He does know, however, that, unless some very unusual changes take place, he must go up for examination in spring and pass or be plucked. The probability that the examination will take place is so great that he prepares for it as diligently as if he had a special revelation telling him of the day and hour that he must enter the hall.

An editor is supposed to know everything. In fact he generally does know almost everything. It must, however, be admitted that even an editor cannot foretell all the events of 1887. There is one thing, however, about the future that the editor does know. He knows that on a certain day the "boy" will come in and yell for "copy." Knowing this, it is the editor's duty to make the "copy." There is no use in telling the "boy" that, not knowing the future, you did not know "copy" would be needed. A printer's boy has no respect for that kind of reasoning.

The future of the students of Knox College is unknown in regard to matters matrimonial. There is a strong probability, however, that eight out of every ten of them will be married within two years of the time they are inducted. This probability is so great that it almost amounts to an absolute certainty. The most conservative insurance company in the

Dominion—even the old Canada Life—might take a risk on this contingency at a very low premium, and be reasonably safe.

In what are called the ordinary affairs of life there are many things in the future that may be considered almost certain. For all practical purposes they are certainties. The bread-winner of the family knows that food, raiment and shelter must be provided for wife and children. The mother knows that the little flock must be cared for. The home must be attended to.

In short, most of us know that there is one thing reasonably certain, and that is that we must all *work* during 1887. Whatever else the New Year may bring, it will be certain to bring its duties. The wise course then is to attend to the *known*, and leave the *unknown* to us in the hands of Him who knows all. Bravely, hopefully, cheerfully, let us prepare for dealing with the known. Let known duties, known responsibilities be met in the spirit of faith and courage, and if the unknown and unexpected comes, "the Lord will provide."

CO-ORDINATE CAUSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIND.

BY F. C.

Companionship—wherein does companionship differ from friendship? The one differs from the other not so much in kind as in degree. The choice of one person in preference to another is common to both, but they differ in the points. The one is distant, but the other is close; the one is occasional, but the other is frequent; the one is just begun, but the other has been carried on for a time; or the one is the first stage, but the other is the advanced stage, of personal intercourse. Companionship is therefore the inauguration of friendship, and opens out to us a series of things as subjects of inquiry. The first is the intercourse of the one sex with the other. This was the purpose of the Creator in the creation of woman as a special means toward great ends. Woman was created as the helpmate of man, and, true to her mission, she is ever found associated with him from the dawn to the close of his existence on earth.

The very first

Of human life must spring from woman's breast;
Your first small words are taught you from her lips;
Your first tears quenched by her, and your last sighs
Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
Of watching the last hour of him who led them.

As designed, woman is a power with man for good—woman's presence forbids the use of improper language, all rudeness and bad conduct; her gentleness tends to soften his obstinacy, to sweeten his temper and to improve his bearing toward others; her sense of propriety tends to polish his manners, to refine his taste, and to elevate his character. Great, indeed, is the influence of woman on man, but he exerts a corresponding influence on her—she is weak, but he strengthens her by his energy; she is timid, but he emboldens her by his courage; she is circumscribed in her ideas of things, but he widens the range of her mental vision by his general notion of things; she instinctively confines her attention to domestic affairs but he awakens in her an interest in things outside of the domestic circle by his own interest in the republic, of letters, in the domain of politics, and in the arrival of news from all parts of the world. The one acts and reacts on the other with mutual advantage, and the outcome is the rational development of both in their respective natures.

Man may the sterner virtues know,
Determined justice, truth severe;
But female hearts with pity glow,
And woman holds affliction dear:
For guiltless woes, her sorrows flow,
And suffering vice compels her tear;
'Tis hers to soothe the ills below,
And bid life's fairer views appear.
To woman's gentle kind we owe
What comforts and delights us here;
They its gay hopes on youth bestow,
And care they soothe and age they cheer.

The one, it is clear, is not complete without the other, and the union of the one with the other is, therefore, the plain intent of nature, as the one is the necessary complement of the other. Toward this union there is implanted in the bosom of each an inclination, which is awakened, nourished and completed by the companionship of the one with the other; but, when the tender passion is once excited, there are often

doubts and fears mixed with expectations in a painful struggle, before the two become one flesh.

In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.
It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.
The little rift within the lute's lute,
Or little pitted speck in garnered fruit
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.
It is not worth the keeping: let it go:
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.
And trust me not at all, or all in all.

Many other facts and arguments might have been adduced in support of the point at issue; but enough has been said to show that the intercourse of the one sex with the other is a prime factor in promoting the intellectual, social and moral welfare of the human race. There is here a tumult of diverse emotions, which shows the agitation of the heart in regard to the beloved object; but there is withal a real sense of pleasure, which shows that there is deep down in the heart the secret of sweet repose in the beloved object, as set forth in the strain:

One, whose unconscious smiles were wont to dart
Ineffable emotion through his heart—
A nameless sympathy, more sweet, more dear,
Than friendship, solaced him, when she was near.

How can it be so, when there is in the heart a strong current of disturbance? The heart can worry itself by its own fictions, just as reason can entangle itself in its own speculations, but without entering into the metaphysical causes of the fact, we appeal to the experience of mankind. If any, over whom love has exerted its potent influence, cast their thoughts inward upon themselves, they will find that such is a transcript of their own hearts, and that is in perfect accord with truth or with the psychological conditions of the mind. The second is the intercourse of the young with one another. An infant is for awhile totally ignorant of the use of the senses with which he is endowed. At first, he does not see objects, and when he sees them, he does not know that he can touch them. He possesses the faculties of knowing, but he has no knowledge of anything, and he will remain in that state of ignorance until his faculties of knowing be awakened into activity by what is external to him.

When man with reason dignified is born,
No images his naked mind adorn;
No sciences or arts enrich his brain,
Nor Fancy yet displays her pictured train.
He no innate ideas can discern,
Of knowledge destitute, though apt to learn.

It is long before he learns how to use his five senses, or to exercise his reason. On the one hand, many are the attempts he requires to make before he comes to form the idea of distance, or to know the properties of things, or many are the processes he requires to carry on before he learns how to walk and how to speak; on the other hand, he requires assistance in every step he takes in the direction of using his five senses or in the direction of exercising his rational faculties, and any one can see that assistance tends to quicken the faculties, by observing how much faster a child improves when daily surrounded by little brothers and sisters, or when acted on by other children outside of the domestic circle. As thus set forth, it is clear that the influence of the young on one another is a reciprocal agency to draw out the faculties of the human mind—it begins to do so in the early days of children, when they mix with one another in the several neighbourhoods. It continues to do so with great force in the days of boys or of girls, when they meet each other in the schoolroom and in the playground. It continues to do so with still greater force in more advanced years, when young persons associate with each other from similar pursuits, or from similar tastes, or from similar pleasures. There is in this way, whether viewed in quantity or quality, a great confluence of forces at work in the formation of character among the young. Multifarious are the influences which they exert on each other, when they meet at common resorts to while away time, to engage with each other in sports, and to contend with one another in games; when they meet to enjoy themselves at socials, picnics and excursions; when they meet together on public occasions, on holidays and on visits to each other. Since it is so, in a sense, pregnant with great issues, it behooves the young to choose their companions with discrimination, as on that choice depends in no small degree the practice of virtue, purity of heart and