

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING DISGUSTED PEOPLE.

BY KNOXIAN

Looking over the newspapers you sometimes see letters signed "Disgusted Conservative," "Disgusted Liberal" and "disgusted" citizens of various other kinds.

Besides the people who have become disgusted with their political affiliation there are disgusted Presbyterians, disgusted Methodists, and perhaps a few in all the other denominations who are not in as happy a frame of mind as a Christian should be and might be.

If we knew all the facts about disgusted people, perhaps we would not waste much sympathy upon some of them. What are the facts in a good many cases.

A DISGUSTED TORY

is not unfrequently, a man who has become dissatisfied with his party mainly because he could not get what he wanted. Perhaps he wanted the nomination for his constituency. Years ago, when Sir John Macdonald was on one of his election tours, the old leader slapped this friend on the back in a familiar way and told him that he hoped to see him in Parliament before long. Perhaps the Premier added that he wanted just such clever fellows in Parliament to help him to fight the Grits and give the country good government. From that time forward the innocent man set his heart on Ottawa. He thought of Ottawa by day and dreamed of Ottawa by night. He imagined himself in the Commons defending Sir John and demolishing the Grits. The general election came round but his friends did not send him to Ottawa. In fact they did not even nominate him and the disgust of the good man went up ninety degrees above zero. Then he wrote a letter to the newspapers and signed himself "Disgusted Conservative."

Another patriot wanted an office of some kind from Sir John Thompson. Sir John had no office to give him. Forthwith he became disgusted and wrote a letter to the papers saying that he would have nothing more to do with the old parties. "It is needless to say he signed the letter "Disgusted Conservative."

Another specimen of the disgusted family is a typical man. He belongs to the class that Sir John Macdonald used to nurse and humour. Sir John was good at that kind of exercise. Sir John Thompson does not excel in the nursing and humoring business. The patriot sorely misses the nursing and humoring. He feels out in the cold. When he can stand it no longer he writes to one of the papers saying that he has given his last Conservative vote and that henceforth he will be found in the ranks of the Patrons or the P. P. A. Of course he signs his letter "Disgusted Conservative."

The man who professes to be disgusted because Sir John Thompson is a Roman Catholic is beyond the pale of discussion. If any Methodist wishes to turn Roman Catholic he has an undoubted right to turn. We may not admire the transition, but the man has a perfect right to make it.

DISGUSTED GRITS

are made much in the same way as disgusted Tories. They wanted something from the party and because they could not get it they rushed into print with the solemn declaration that they had given their last Liberal vote. They stopped taking the *Globe* and borrowed the next number from a neighbour to see if the paper was in mourning and Sir Oliver Mowat out of office. They are astonished to find that the *Globe* appears as usual and that Sir Oliver refuses to go. Then follows letters on fees and on separate schools and extravagance and on the general wickedness of the old parties. Of course these letters are always signed "Disgusted Liberal." The correct facts of the case often are that the "disgusted Liberal" who writes so pathetically about his last vote wanted the Government to do some wrong or doubtful thing for him. The Government refused and the patriot at once rushed into the newspapers, made his dying declaration about his last vote, declared that he intended to join some of the new combinations and of course signed his communication "Disgusted Liberal."

The old campaigners who used to manage elections before the election law came into force could "fix" that last vote in five minutes so that it would not be the last one. In the good old times when twenty or thirty thousand dollars were sometimes spent on a single contest disgusted Liberals and disgusted Tories were not nearly so numerous as they are now.

THE DISGUSTED PRESBYTERIAN

is usually a man who tried to "run" his congregation or minister and found he could not do it. Sometimes he is a man under discipline. Not unfrequently he is a man who wanted office and could not get it. For some reason or another he becomes disgusted and strange to say as the disgust increases he begins to doubt the validity of infant baptism, or to admire the Episcopal service or to gush about the superior zeal of the Methodists or the alleged holiness of the Plymouth Brethren. The disgusted Presbyterian is a queer fellow.

THE DISGUSTED METHODIST

we do not know much about. It is said that when some Methodists get a little up in the world and want to combine the maximum of shoddy with the minimum of religion they always join the Church of England. We don't know how that is, but we have known some cases that looked suspiciously that way. In such cases it is more blessed to give than to receive.

There are various other kinds of people who pretend to be disgusted; but time is up and we must stop.

MORAL—Never take much stock in people who pretend to be disgusted with other people quite as good as themselves.

A NOVEL HOTEL IN EDINBURGH.

BY MISS FRANK DAVIS.

I wonder if there ever was, or is another like it? From all that I have ever seen or heard of hotels, to me it seems entirely unique.

It was recommended to us as "a quiet family hotel, being conducted on temperance and religious principles." We found it all that and more, luxurious and supremely comfortable; as far from any of my previous ideas of a "Temperance Hotel" as anything could be conceived, for in our own country, I am sorry to say, the very name precludes all idea of either. It is on a convenient part of Princes Street, just opposite the Post Office, a few moments' walk from the station. In all its ordinary appurtenances, there was nothing out of the ordinary; pleasant, cheerful rooms, good beds, especially good food and service. The tables were always profusely decorated with flowers, not those stiff abominations, hot-house bouquets, where the poor flowers are jammed in, to the utter loss of any individuality or beauty, but lovely natural and graceful arrangements which had a home-like look. In fact, home-like is the most fitting term I can apply to all the arrangements of the hotel, and a Christian home, to all intents and purposes.

The first thing that we noticed out of the usual order of hotel life, was the grace before meals, a ceremony which was never omitted, for if the host, Mr. James Darling, was absent, detained by some of his many philanthropic occupations, some guest took his place at the head of the table, when every head was bowed, even the most thoughtless seeming to imbibe the atmosphere of the place and preserve an air of seeming reverence at least. I remember one most amusing incident. A commercial traveller, one of the bustling see-it-all-in-a-moment and catch-the-next-train kind, not being aware of this peculiarity of the hotel, as soon as his soup was served, attacked it hurriedly, noticing nothing around him, when his attention was attracted by the sudden hush, and then the voice of supplication. The face of that traveller was a revelation, and if you ask me how I know, I can only do as the little boy did (who was "fairly caught" with the same question from his teacher, when he told tales on his school-mate after prayers), and answer "I saw him." Don't imagine that the religious atmosphere of this hotel is at all oppressive or obtrusive, and that none but the clergy and temperance "cranks" patronize it. The only difference I observed between guests there and at other

hotels was an air of greater refinement and culture and a more general desire for the pleasure and convenience of each other. It seemed to be a rendezvous for quiet, intelligent, intellectual people, who wished a retreat and rest from travel for body and mind, and were sure of meeting congenial spirits.

For a party of ladies travelling alone it must have been just perfection. Such parties were always there, having the appearance of being very much at home and thoroughly comfortable. Numbers of bright, chatty young maidens, principally Americans, chaperoned by lady-like, middle-aged ladies, whose composed, business-like air, inspired confidence in their capability for what they had undertaken, were to be met there.

We spent three delightfully restful Sundays there, always having the feeling of having got back home when we arrived, to be met by the hearty welcome of the host, and the beaming face of that fine specimen of manhood the head-waiter. Afterwards when Sunday arrived, after a week's hard work of travel and sight-seeing, we often wished ourselves back at the Regent Hotel, Waterloo Place. The head-waiter and factotum, is "a host in himself," large, portly, dignified, yet genial and genuinely solicitous for the comfort of the guests, with his bright ruddy face beaming with good nature and warm-hearted, though respectful interest; a man to inspire one with confidence at once, that whatever was his special department would be scrupulously looked after. He has been a fixture there for a great many years, and if ever I am fortunate enough to go back to Edinburgh and the Regent Hotel, I hope to be greeted by his honest face.

To give you an amusing idea of this most imposing magnate (only second in dignity to the famous two who serve you off solid silver plate, at the "Old Ship Hotel," at Brighton, England), let me quote from the letter of an American clergyman who was very much impressed with the whole hotel: "On entering the large, brilliantly illuminated and well-filled dining-hall, I was met by the magnificent specimen of the major-domo, who ushered me to my seat with such royal port as seemed to compress me into the quintessence of littleness; then with a tone and gesture equal to Burke at his best before the House of Parliament, he informed me that the proprietress desired to see me in the office at the close of dinner. I do not believe that if I travelled all my life I should ever cease being awe-struck before a hotel magnate, but this was a little the most superlative example of infinite majesty ever presented to my naked eye."

It was a most sociable place for those who wished to be sociable. Immediately on grace being concluded, there arose a perfect buzz of conversation on all sides, experiences of all kinds being exchanged, amusing anecdotes, repartee of the brightest and sharpest, advice about next day's outing, etc. Such a contrast to most English and Scotch hotels, where meals are eaten in the most profound and dismal silence, each one seemingly afraid of the sound of his own voice; and of course not on speaking terms with his next neighbor, even though said neighbor may have been sitting at his elbow for a week, without a certificate of four or five grandfathers at least.

During dinner at Darling's it was not unusual to hear some gentleman call out a question from one end of the room to some one at the other, all listening for a moment, interested in the answer, which was more than likely to be of equal moment to all. Dinner over, the company broke up into little knots, chatting together, or continuing some absorbing discussion all through the corridor. At ten every night, in the large parlor, there were evening prayers, conducted by the host, or any guest, transient or otherwise who would preside, the musical part efficiently led by Miss Darling, a magnificent contralto singer, one of the foremost in Edinburgh, who also presided at the organ if no substitute were found available. I do not ever remember being more impressed by any religious ceremony in my life, not even excepting the service in Westminster Abbey. In a hotel, in a great and historic city, to see that large staff of servants, the neat maids in their prim white caps and aprons, the waiters in full evening dress, file in so quietly, take their places in

their allotted corner so decorously and join in the worship of family and guests, was certainly something novel in the extreme.

The chairs were arranged in circles round the room, and not one ever seemed to be vacant. There were two hymns sung, in which every voice in the room seemed to join, the melody and magnetism being perfectly thrilling. Then a short scripture lesson with a few simple, pithy comments by the host, or some willing guest, then a short season of prayer, several voluntarily taking part; all so quiet, yet so impressive as never to be forgotten. All the guests were informed of this privilege, and, though never urged to attend, were made very welcome. Men of the best talent in Britain and the United States have taken part in these exceptional devotional exercises. Sunday evenings, after the ordinary meetings were over, many remained to enjoy a fine musical treat. Miss Darling's rich contralto rolling out in some of the grandest solos from the best oratorios. To many hundreds who have enjoyed them, the memories of those services of song must be reminiscences of pleasant reunions of congenial spirits, made doubly interesting by the peculiar environments.

A clergyman who had stayed at the Regent for months speaks of those nightly gatherings as "wells in the desert;" another as "a channel of grace and perpetual joy;" another says, "this worship throws over the hotel a charm marking it as a Christian home. From that home altar waves of blessing have rolled out to the ends of the earth, borne by the ever-changing company of visitors from all parts, who there found that the worship of God was not confined to so-called holy places or times, and that at no time, and nowhere, was it more fittingly offered or more welcome to God, than at the evening hour around the hearth in the home. It was always a disappointment to me, when Mr. Darling called on any one else, even of his frequently distinguished guests, to take part. I do not remember any occasion of his reading the Scriptures wherein I did not obtain a new light on some verse or verses. I never had a similar experience with any one else's reading."

Speaking of Mr. Darling's personality, a distinguished lecturer in an Edinburgh College, who had made his home at the Regent for months, says: "One seemed to feel that he was carrying on the hotel more to give employment to others, or to afford means to assist others, than for any personal gain. He was a father to the servants and a friend to the guests, a man with a big heart. His ever cheery smile and the warm grip of his hand gained your liking ere he said a word, and when he spoke it was generally to tell you some good news of the rescue of some poor drunkard, or to enlist your sympathies in a bereaved family. The only thing he said nothing about was the immense sacrifice of time, and the substantial help in money that had come from himself. Of his prayers, one calls them "humble, fervent, direct, always asking for some definite thing."

Another clergyman says, "those who were brought into intimate and frequent intercourse with him, felt his example acting on them as a moral tonic, and making it easier for them to do good."

A casual guest once aptly remarked that "Mr. Darling truly made room for Christ at the inn."

He was a man of unbounded energy; it would have taken a man of sound health and steady zeal to have followed in his footsteps for a day. His charities were as numberless as they were unostentatious, ministering to poor and destitute in garrets up five pairs of stairs, in cellars and in those dreadful regions the closes in the Old Town; picking up waifs and strays, allowing nothing to hinder his benevolence; even washing them himself, clothing, feeding and putting them in the way of earning; even then not losing sight of them. He was a great favorite with the news-boys, who would flock around him in numbers on the streets, many of whom he had rescued from squalor and degradation. Even over the "roughs" in the closes he had great influence, always being able to quell any threatened disturbance.