

Our Contributors.

BROTHER NIBBLE, LAY DOWN YOUR PLAN.

BY KNOXIAN.

About a year ago Canada's most eminent jurist published a political letter that attracted the attention of everybody. The literary form of the letter was unique, its logic was iron, and its distinctive criticism embraced almost everything and everybody connected with Canadian politics. In one paragraph the writer pounded the poor old N. P. until it could scarcely be recognized by anybody that it protests less than thirty-five per cent. In another he laid out Unrestricted Reciprocity, and further on showed that Political Union with the United States is not the necessary or inevitable destiny of this country. Having demolished everything and everybody the great jurist—*stopped*. So far as the general public know he has not spoken since. The people would like to hear from him, but he seems to be in no hurry to address them. Not being a representative of the people now, perhaps he is under no obligations to develop plans for their benefit. All the same the people would like to hear from him again. If party feeling in Canada were anything less than insanity, some constituency would give the hon gentleman a seat, and tell him to develop his plans and use his splendid abilities for the benefit of his native country. Were he in Great Britain he would probably have his choice of a dozen seats. But they do things differently over there. Thick-headed English and Scotch men are so intensely stupid as to put eminent men into the House of Commons without even asking where they live. The electors of Edinburgh so far forgot themselves as to send Macaulay to Parliament though he resided in England and rarely visited his constituency. One of the Lothians has so little self-respect as to send Gladstone to Parliament though he does not live on any concession in the constituency and is not as sound as he might be on the question of disestablishing the Kirk.

But we have made our introduction far too long, as the preachers sometimes do. What we want to say is that the General Assembly is coming on, and Brother Nibble is no doubt getting ready to do his part. His part is to do what his name indicates—*nibble* at the work of other men and suggest nothing better himself. The brother may have his uses, but the history of Canadian Presbyterianism has not made them visible to the naked eye. If our history teaches anything it is that the only men who have done any real permanent work as ecclesiastical statesmen have been men of constructive ability who were capable of forming and developing plans for carrying on work. Generations of mere critics are not worth as much to the Church as one man of fine constructive talent. If Brother Nibble had a tittle of the commanding ability of the great jurist referred to, one might respect his strength even though his usefulness is not very apparent. But the brother is seldom strong. Generally he is soured in the centre and weak in the upper storey. If his blows, like those of the jurist referred to, knocked the breath out of everybody for a time, the performance would be well worth seeing as an exhibition of strength. A blow that merely shows the bad temper, or bad manners, or vanity, or conceit, or craving for notoriety of the striker is a poor lean thing.

The Augmentation Committee will not have a very pleasing story to tell the Assembly. Towards the close of their report they may perhaps say that one dead woman had to do for the fund what the living Church failed to do. They may not say it exactly in that way, but those are the facts. No doubt Brother Nibble will be on hand to dissect the report. That is right. Reports should be considered. That is what they are brought in for. But dearly beloved Brother Nibble, after you have dissected the report, would you just say how the work of Augmentation should be carried on. Your dissection will not put a dollar into the treasury, but, if the press men catch it, may take a good many out, for there are not a few people on the lookout for an excuse to keep their money. Now, dearly beloved brother, do tell us what ought to be done. Give us your plan. Just say exactly what you would do if you were an Augmentation Committee. Mr. Macdonnell will give you the strictest attention. There is no fairer man in the Church, no man more willing to listen to suggestions, no man more capable of looking on all sides of a question, no man who has more respect for the opinions of others. Now, Brother Nibble, just say what you would do if you were an Augmentation Committee.

Perhaps the Foreign Mission Committee may receive some attention from Brother Nibble. Foreign Mission work is not easily managed. Every Christian Church finds considerable difficulty in carrying on its Foreign work. Some of the difficulties are known and understood only by those who are directing the work. Now, Brother Nibble, you, if you were a Foreign Mission Committee, tell us exactly how you would carry on the work in India and China and among the Indians of the North West. Tell exactly how the thing ought to be done.

The Home Mission Committee might perhaps be willing to consider a few original suggestions provided they are not too original. The ground to be covered is extensive, and the variety of missionaries is almost as great as the variety of fields. To manage the affairs of 800 mission stations scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific with too many men one-half of the year, too few the other and too little money all the year

round, is no easy task. Now, dear brother, tell us how you would do it if you were a Home Mission Committee.

There has been very little said about colleges lately, but perhaps our brother may wish to make some observations on theological education. If so, it is to be hoped that he will tell the Church how he would train students if he were a college.

It is a fine thing to be an editor, because everybody tells the editor frankly how his paper ought to be published. Church officials are not so highly favoured. Their friends often find fault with the manner in which the work is done, without making the faintest suggestion of a better way.

Moral. If you feel it to be a duty to find fault with the work of any honest man who is doing his best, always suggest some better way.

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE.

A STUDY FOR YOUNG MEN.

BY REV. E. WALLACE WAITS, D.S.C., OWEN SOUND.

"After he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep."

It was once remarked by a venerable and saintly expositor that one of the most striking characteristics of the Psalms of David was their free, unrestrained appreciation of what we call nature, whether in the moral or the physical world, that they began with commending the honest, upright man—"the noblest work of God"—and they ended by calling on every creature, animate or inanimate, to praise the Eternal. This sympathy with the natural man and the natural creation was the more remarkable in the Psalter, because of all the sacred books of the Old Testament it was the one which was confessedly the most spiritual, the most intimate in its communion with the Divine. And they learned from that, as from many like characteristics of the Bible, that the modern distinction, drawn from the middle ages downwards between nature and grace, between the secular and the spiritual, between the Church and the world, however difficult it might be altogether to avoid such phrases, was no essential part of the Christian religion, and in no way corresponding to the opposition drawn in the Scriptures between the flesh and the spirit, between the holy and the unholy—that it was the product of an artificial condition, whether of barbarous or civilized society, which had stunted rather than forwarded the upward growth of the spirit of man towards its Divine original. To these artificial separations the mass of mankind readily accommodated themselves. It was more easy for the worldly to be entirely worldly, and for the religious to be exclusively religious, each in an isolated mediocrity, whether we call it golden or leaden, which tended to produce a false standard of religion and a low estimate of the world in which our duties were cast. It was for this reason that they ought to prize as amongst God's best gifts, any characters, any phenomena that broke through this common-place level, and which like mountain crags, countersected and united the ordinary divisions of mankind, or, like volcanoes, burst forth at times and revealed to them something of the central fires within and underneath the crust of custom, fashion and tradition. Such were those whom they sometimes saw, who appeared to cynical critics or to superstitious formalists to have chosen a mistaken position in life, apparently alien to the bent of their inclinations or their antecedents—a religious man, for example, becoming a politician, or a bold, gallant youth, born to be a sailor or a soldier, led by circumstances into the career of a clergyman. Here we find an illustration of this principle in the life that closed in the first hour of the Easter Sabbath morning—a life which was passed in active endeavour for the promotion of the welfare of the Canadian people, with a fidelity and conscientiousness, alas! too rare among those who aspire to leading positions in public life. Mr. Mackenzie's life was beautiful in humility; it was majestic in strength, it combined calmness and resolution, it was a child's word and yet a king's command. But its chief characteristics were faithfulness to principles, guided by a strong, well balanced, intelligent, energetic manhood. He was an honourable and a noble man. From being a man in humble circumstances he rose, by his talents, to a position that has told, and will more increasingly tell, upon the lives and characters of his fellow-men, and upon the destiny of this country. He is appropriately described in the text as "serving his generation by the will of God." We come into existence not as isolated units, but as members of a vast family. Millions come about the same time, grow up with us, pass from the nursery to the school, from the school to the arena of life, and from life's arena to the grave with us. These constitute our "generation," our age. As our generation advances, the old one fades away, and as ours decays, another one rises to take its place and keep the scene alive. Thus the world goes on. One generation forces off another, as the buddings of new life throw off the foliage from the woods. Now this generation we have to serve. We have a necessary connection with it. We influence it and it influences us. We cannot, if we would, live unto ourselves. David served his, and so did the illustrious statesman whom we delight to honour; and so should we ours. How did the Hon. Mr. Mackenzie serve his generation? He served his generation by sterling integrity. We say sometimes, "Very few honest politicians." He lived the life of an honest man, an honest politician. And perhaps in this respect, more than in any other, he deserves to be held up to the young men of Canada as a type for all time to come of true nobility and personal honour. He said, "I have been told that I com-

mitted a great mistake in 1878 in adhering too rigidly to my principles—that if I had adopted another course I could have kept the Reform party in power a few years longer. Such is not the feelings under which I conduct myself in public life. My notion of the duty of a public man is that he should maintain sound principles, advocate them honestly, and trust to such principles working out a right solution."

Living in an age which was not particularly distinguished for staunch adherence to principle, he never wavered from what he thought to be right, as God gave him to see the right. Living in an age when success was very often held to be a primary condition, success with him was never a primary nor even a secondary condition. Indeed it is a matter of history that when he was sitting in office he could have conciliated public opinion, and, perhaps, continued to enjoy power if he had consented to deviate ever so little from those principles of political economy which alone he held to be true. But on this occasion his stern character again asserted itself. He risked everything and he lost all, and he did it cheerfully. The Hon. Mr. Blake said of Mr. Mackenzie in 1872, "I know no man of equal diligence, of equal self-sacrifice, of greater integrity, of a nicer sense of public and private virtue: no man more sternly devoted to the cause which in his conscience he believed to be right, and more willingly and incessantly lending his effort to the success of that cause."

Mr. Mackenzie said: "I warn you that when the interests of the country conflict with the interests of the party I stick to the country." He put principle before party. Beware, young men, of falsehood. Be true to yourselves and to your convictions. Falsehood always implies a corrupt heart. A pure one supplies no motive for it. Vanity, avarice, ambition, cowardice, are the parents and patrons of all lies. Falsehood always has a bad social tendency. It disappoints expectations, shakes confidences, loosens the very foundations of social order. "Whatever," says Steele, "convenience may be thought to be in falsehood and dissimulation, it is soon over; but the inconvenience of it is perpetual, because it brings a man under an everlasting jealousy and suspicion. So that he is not believed when he speaks truth, nor trusted when perhaps he means honestly. When a man hath once forfeited the reputation of his integrity he is set fast, and nothing will then serve his turn, neither truth nor falsehood."

We all, at this time, realize the political importance of morality. Hence, I place this characteristic in the forefront of my address. "Righteousness"—rectitude of character—"exalteth a nation," but "sin"—immorality—"is a reproach to any people." It exalts it in many ways. In material wealth—Truth, honesty, integrity in a people are the best guarantees of commercial advancement. Credit is the best capital in the business of a nation as well as in the business of an individual, and credit is built on righteous principles. The more credit a nation has the more business it can do; and the more business, if rightly conducted, the more will be the accumulation of wealth. Men who are ruled by righteousness are the men most to be valued in a country. It is not the warrior, the merchant, or even the men of science and art, that are the most valuable to a state. It is the man of goodness. Goodness is to the country what breeze is to the atmosphere, preventing stagnation and quickening the blood of the world. The promotion of true morality is the best way to promote the interests of a state. Upright statesmen, a healthy press, useful schools, enlightened pulpits, to promote these is to give peace, dignity and stability to kingdoms.

What constitutes a State?

Not high-raised battlement, or laboured mound,
Thick wall or moated gate;
Not cities proud, with spires and turrets crown'd,
Not bays and broad-armed ports,
Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;
Not starred and spangled courts,
Where low-browed baseness waits perfume to pride,
No! Men—high minded men.

—Sir William Jones.

Mr. Mackenzie served his country as a true patriot. In 1875 the then Premier of Canada visited his native land. Probably the speeches which he then made at different centres were the best of his life, and they certainly ring with a strong patriotism and with the fire of British loyalty. As he said at Perth, July 16th, 1875, so he often repeated. "The British Empire is not one of conquest, but one of love and affection, and of those ties that bind together the different families of a great, and proud, and honourable people. We believe in Canada as I am sure you believe in Scotland, that it is our peculiar mission upon the continent of America to carry that flag unsullied from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and down, we hope, through long generations." Young men, love your country. Be prepared to make sacrifices for her. At the same time, your patriotism should not blind you to your country's faults. He is no friend who is blind to my faults, and flatters me for virtues I have not; and he is no patriot who shuts his eyes to his country's crimes, and pours into her ears the most fulsome eulogies. The parent who has true love for his children will not only be charmed with their virtues and delighted with their prosperity, but grieved to the core at their vices and intensely alive to their sufferings and mishaps. All that is great and good in our Britain to-day must be ascribed to righteous principles. These principles, scattered broadcast by our ancestors, have taken root, grown and worked off the superstition, the barbarism and the tyranny of former times. Who is the true patriot and real benefactor? Not the man of brilliant genius, oratoric power, or skillful finance, but the righteous man. Righteous men are the salt of society, preventing it from putrefaction; the pillars of the