

Putting up old stovepipes is a good test. Many years ago we knew a worthy elder who was sorely tried in this way. He had to run the pipes from the kitchen stove through a partition, and across another room into the chimney. The operation was extremely difficult. When he got the pipes put up in the room they fell in the kitchen and when he got them properly fixed in the kitchen they always came down in the room. When they had fallen several times he asked his wife to take the children away. Perhaps he was afraid the pipes might fall on them. More likely he was afraid he might say something that would not edify the little people. That elder was a good man—one of the best men we ever knew. He would have gone to the stake serene as an angel had his master so willed but those stove-pipes tried him sorely. When he got them up he did seem greatly relieved. Putting up old stove-pipes is a much severer test of piety than telling one's experience.

A political election is a severe test of a man's piety if he takes an active part in it. The committee room and the hustings, and the polling booth are slippery places. Many a fairly good man has been hurt there. Far be it from us to say that good men should not take part in election contests. This country has cost too much to hand it over to political salawags for purposes of government. We don't want politics in our religion, but we want more religion in our politics. The best men in every community are just the men that ought to take a controlling part in public affairs. Still, it is well to remember that the heat of an election contest is a pretty severe test of personal character.

A considerable number of people have another kind of test applied to them at this season of the year. The family have worked hard all spring, and have made a very nice flower, or very productive vegetable garden. The good man wakes up some morning, and finds half-a-dozen of his neighbor's cows devouring his vegetables and destroying his flower beds. If he can conduct family worship that morning with the usual amount of composure, he has more grace and more self-control than most men have.

Perhaps the severest test that can be applied to a woman's piety is to see her clothes line fall after it has been loaded with the nicest things in the house. Some uncharitable man says that if there is one moment in a woman's life when she wants to be alone it is when that line falls. This is a high compliment to women. Most men would say something naughty in that trying moment whether alone or not.

A very good test of a man's piety, or at least of his self-control, is his ability to meet abuse with silence. Anybody can reply to a slanderer. Anybody can strike back when a cowardly assassin strikes, or tries to wound when he is too cowardly to strike. The temptation to drag the coward from his hiding-place is often very strong. As a rule it is better to let him severely alone. As Goldwin Smith once said, there are some opponents, and whether they fall uppermost or undermost they are always sure to leave their mark.

To be worth anything a test of character must be a real one. It must touch at a point where self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-control are brought into action. Going to church is really no test if one is as comfortable there as at home, probably more so. Giving \$10 is no test if a man has \$10,000 in the pile from which he took the \$10. Keeping one's temper is no test if one has the temperament of a clam.

Let no man think he can stand a real test because he may have stood that which really is no test at all.

## UNSEEN INFLUENCES.

By Rev. Dr. John Wilkie.

Last Sabbath afternoon six young Brahmins came over to see me, led by one of my old students from Indore, who saw my name at the entrance of our compound and desired to meet with me once more. It was pleasing to find that he not only was grateful for the instruction he received in the mission school, but seems to have profited by it. He is the leader of a band of young fellows, all speaking English and all in Government service here who meet every Sabbath day to talk over the most important topic that can engage them. He in a most open and decided way expressed his reverence for Christ, but he has been strongly influenced by the Theosophical Philosophy preached by Swami Vivek Anandi, who created a little stir at the Parliament of Religion in Chicago. It is strange the fascination and the subtlety of this vedantic or pantheistic philosophy, which is the foundation of the Swami's teaching. Apart from God there is nothing, though by the deception occasioned by the flesh and the world, we think ourselves separate existences; there is no such thing as sin; we continue to appear and reappear in different bodies from age to age; our great aim is by contemplation to get into oneness with the great Spirit, when we shall obtain *mukti* or freedom from all consciousness and individuality by being absorbed into the great Spirit.

But what leads me to mention this young man is the fact that here are a group of intelligent, thoughtful fellows, earnestly seeking to solve these great problems, to such a large extent groping in the dark, and yet with an enthusiasm and earnestness not always found in Christian lands, seeking to reason themselves into a position that will bring them some satisfaction. This young man, in spite of the adverse teaching, is influenced continually by the bible teaching that was given in the Missionary School, that has colored all his philosophical conceptions, and practically led him out from amongst his old ecumenicalists, and enabled him also to lead out a number of others. It was just a little glimpse behind the screen that shows the unseen influence of the mission schools, and makes one take courage in carrying on such work. I am glad that I have come in contact with them, for they are to come back next Sabbath afternoon, bringing some more of their little company. Will you not join in prayer with me for these young men, and for me that I may be able to lead them into the clearer light?

Last week I received a strange letter from one of my old students in Dhansi, now in Lucknow in the college there, asking me to give him a more definite statement of what he should do that he might obtain peace. He, too, is a Brahmin, the brother of one of the most aggressive opponents that the Government has in these provinces, and when he joined our school he in a most decided way advocated views that were very far from Christian. Strange to say, he was led to drop these entirely, and before he left seemed to be more or less under the influence of Christian truth. May I not ask you to remember him also in your prayers?

School work brings you in contact with a class that are today largely outside of the influence of the missionary efforts, and even though we do not see direct results, the schools are today moulding the thought and religious conceptions of the people of India as probably no other agency is doing. It seems slower and less fruitful than the ordinary evangelistic methods, but as a permanent influence in regenerating the whole land its power is very great.

## SPARKS FROM OTHER ANVILS.

We have received "Young Men," "The Family Friend," and "The British Workman" from the publishers, Messrs. S. W. Partridge & Co., of London, England. They are all of a class of publications we can heartily recommend to our readers, although the last mentioned needs no introduction to Canadians, having been a welcome visitor to many homes for more than half a century. The new postage rate renders it easy to subscribe for these excellent papers; they are all published at a penny per copy, and should each have thousands of readers in the Dominion.

The Contemporary Review for April offers its readers an excellent and varied table of contents. Among the more outstanding articles will be found the following: "Modern Attacks on Christian Ethics," by J. Kenneth Mozley; "Lord Cromer and Government by Journalism," by W. T. Stead; "The Razing of Lazarus," by Professor H. M. Gwatkin; and "Can Science Abolish War?" by Col. F. N. Meade, C.B. "Foreign Affairs" are dealt with in a comprehensive manner by Dr. E. J. Dillon; and the "Literary Supplement" contains reviews of a number of notable books, among them being "Lord Cromer and Egypt," "The Awakening of China," and "Martin Luther's Letters."

Canada will send large delegations from the several provinces to the International Sunday School Convention at Louisville, Kentucky, June 18-23. Justice MacLaren, of Toronto, is president of the International Association; Principal E. I. Rexford, D.D., of Montreal, and Principal William Patrick, of Winnipeg, are members of the International Lesson Committee, and other speakers and workers who will be heard at the convention are Rev. Robert Johnston, D. D., of Montreal; Rev. A. C. Crews, D.D., of Toronto; Dr. Frank Woodbury, of Halifax, N.S.; William Hamilton, of Toronto, and General Secretaries J. A. Jackson, B.A., of Ontario; W. H. Irwin, of Manitoba; Stuart Muirhead, of Alberta and Eastern B. C.; Rev. J. B. Ganong, of N. B. and P. E. I.; and Rev. A. M. McLeod, of N. S. Rev. Aquila Lucas, of Nova Scotia, is the International Field Worker for the West Indies and South America, and the record of his work during the past five months rings the clear and true note of triumph for the Cause of Christ through the service agency of the Sunday School.

That English families are leaving the province of Quebec is one of the facts that is regretfully noticed by all who are familiar with the conditions which prevail in that province. If the movement continues, The Aurora points out that there will not be an English Protestant family left in the Eastern Townships fifty years hence, and they will be found only in the cities of Montreal and Quebec. From the standpoint of the French Roman Catholic hierarchy this is probably a consummation devoutly to be wished; but from the national standpoint it is surely a grievous blunder. A good many of our French confreres themselves realize this, and the editor of The Aurora says: "The day when the last Englishman shall have left the province, the French-Canadians who believe in their departure will cry out victory and chant a 'Te Deum.' Nevertheless they will have lost the best corrective influence against their defects, and the most sincere censors they ever had. When there are no more English in Quebec, clericalism will double its audacity, and its iron hand will weigh down on the already too docile people. Then will the situation turn to tragedy." It is well for true patriots, French and English, to look carefully, and without prejudice, into this matter, aids the Christian Guardian.