

And the people who allow themselves to be "touted?" Well—they are weak, and ought to be prayed for.

What is the cure for all this? First of all, broader and better sentiment among the people—a higher estimate of the true work of the pulpit—that is, more regard for the result of work done in the study—also a care for *men* and not for a particular church—a real concern for the cause of Christ, and less for the state of the funds.

But the funds must be cared for? Oh yes. But deal with the evil at the beginning. Costly churches are not necessary—quiet consciences are. If the people of St. Jeremiah street find themselves too far in the midst of the town, and have become a weak cause, as to numbers—instead of building a large new church farther out, where other churches in too great number already exist—why not disperse themselves among those churches instead of becoming a weak source of weakness. Surely, the first and main thought is how to be good and do good, and not how to have a fine building. Church extension should be carefully, thoughtfully done. The question is—there need for us here? yes or no. And then—is there need for us there? yes or no. Churches should be built for the people, and not to minister to the vanity of this man or that. And we shall find a cure only when we have found a tender regard for others—a true humility—a true idea of a church—that is to say, when we have come to understand the nature of Christianity, and the relation of the ministry thereto. The main work of a preacher is to preach, but he cannot do that if he is compelled to go clattering about paying gossip visits. And he cannot do that if he has to move about with the shadow of a heavy church debt upon him. We have too many churches. It is not a good, but an evil.

SPIRIT AND MATTER.

Lord Blachford's admirable argument for the existence of spirit, as distinct from matter, will be strengthened if we can prove that spirit governs matter, which cannot be difficult when we consider that organized material action, in its human form, is directed, modified and changed by that which is not material. The Bible, a printed book, governs human conduct, not by virtue of so much paper with so much ink upon it, but by a certain action upon *me*, or my spirit, which the same quantity of paper and ink disposed with a general similarity, to the outward glance, does not possess; because this Bible, if material in substance, is the instrument of the Spirit that originated it, and freely pervades it. The same with the human voice. It is not so much air expelled from the lungs of the preacher, nor certain mere intonations of sound, that governs the spirits of his hearers, but something of which these are only the exponents, and that something is spirit—which we may become to a certain extent acquainted with by its manifestations, although we can neither see nor outwardly feel its essence. We know it is there, because it has affected our own spirits, and we prove that it has so affected them because it has changed the order of action of the frames with which they are clothed.

In perfect keeping with this simple thesis, we often find the Christian in the hour of death growing momentarily in spiritual power and confidence, as that very frame decays to which the positivists would ascribe all the vigour and activity of the human life; and even a determined positivist will not fail to be affected by the sight, for, with all his materialism, he attaches value to the emotions, because, being human, and having a spirit apart from all his dry reasonings, he cannot help doing so.

THETA.

A SOCIAL PROBLEM.

From the wars of the First Napoleon down to an almost recent date a question arose and for a long period agitated great social centres of populations in Europe, arising from the large increase of females in proportion to males. In the press and also in the mouths of thoughtful men came up this idea, "What shall we do with our daughters?" So greatly did this matter press itself on the minds of the people some thirty years since, that it became then seriously to be considered what positions in life were adaptable to the gentler sex. Women also, themselves, pondered the question and energetically strove to ameliorate their anomalous condition, until it may be said a turning point was reached, that at the present day we find them even competing with men in almost every branch of professional life, and also in those public and private vocations where ordinary clerical assistance only is required. Women's labour has now become a necessity, and often very highly valued: and so this vexed question which in days gone by was deemed so momentous has righted itself, and may be considered now as completely solved. A still graver question is now arising, and one which must be immediately faced in all its difficulties. "What shall we do with our sons?" Gentility and Villadom reply, clerks of course, the dear boys cannot be allowed to lead vulgar lives, or even toil with their hands. And so it has come about that all the best young men are clerks, and those yet growing up into life are also looking to that profession as their means of making a living. A more fatal error for parents to fall into than to prepare their sons for such an existence of shabby gentility, can scarcely be conceived. It is alike disastrous to the hopes of our youth, and is a beggarly heritage to leave them. The life of a clerk at the best is but that of a hireling, and in times like the present, when so many are wanting and longing for situations, is little better in some houses than that of the lowest menial. The only hope and prospect in life for a clerk is to trust, like the immortal Micawber did, that in the ever-recurring chapter of accidents "something will turn up"—in thousands of cases a most delusive hope. In business life it is not the clerk toiling at the desk that can learn the most necessary part of any establishment, but more often the office-boy or salesman—the one who handles and sells the goods; his fortune is generally within his grasp. But the bank

clerk, or indeed any other like individual, is but a necessary drone in the hive commercial, and very rarely can rise above the commonest mediocrity. It is often very heartrending to see the very flower of advancing manhood out of employment, and seeking day after day for a situation that when found could only realise a miserable pittance. These young men, mostly well-trained and well-educated, unless helped by their parents, wake up sooner or later to realise that the existence they are necessarily passing through is but one of genteel pauperism, and not that of self-reliant manhood. In England so far has this mistake in life been carried that at the present time of commercial depression and retrenchment, thousands upon thousands of clerks are literally starving, and curse the day that their parents, in their excessive gentility, taught them merely to live by using a pen, instead of those more manly occupations of honest toil always open in large communities. It looks as if in the future that fewer clerks will be needed, business men have to curtail in every possible direction, and in nine cases out of every ten the poor clerk suffers first. It seems as if shopkeepers will have to leave their villas and do as their fathers did and prospered, live over their stores, and mind their own business. We can only recover ourselves by the sternest economy. If this be the case, what are our lads to do—they cannot starve; surely then there is nothing unmanly or degrading in teaching them a trade, and if afterwards something better shall arise, well, they are all the better and truer men for having within their grasp a trade they can always fall back upon. The 'prentice boys of England were a power in the land a century ago, and it has doubtless been due to their combined toil and skill that has raised both England and America to the highest pinnacle of manufacturing perfection. In the United States the clerk is at a terrible discount, plenty are to be had at from 50c. to 75c. per diem, whilst the skilled artisan can earn from two to four dollars. How much better then is the latter than the former, though his hands be not quite so white;—in every sense he is the truer man.

This subject is a grave one, and deserves to be pondered with some degree of thoughtfulness. Disappointed lives and drunkards' deaths, can but too often be traced to a career hemmed in with difficulties in getting a subsistence. Never more pressingly necessary is it, than that our present rising youth should be true, noble, and independent.

It may be stated that the great army of unemployed clerks at the present time, the world over, is painfully increasing. It is said that in London, England, where so many of the dry goods houses have had to reduce their establishments, that the first to leave have been the clerks; and that where these young men have not had homes to return to, that they have been compelled to accept the most menial positions in life. Many are conductors of omnibusses, and even waiters in restaurants. In San Francisco they are to be seen walking the streets by hundreds seeking employment. In Australia, tending sheep at fifteen pounds a year is their sole refuge:—there, so great has been the influx the past two years of educated unskilled youths that banks can get all the help they want at salaries such as these:—nothing the first year; twenty-five pounds, and fifty pounds succeeding years. One hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds a year being regarded as an outside salary!

In New York their position is more painful still. Thousands vainly seeking situations; and yet, in view of all this deplorable condition of our rising youth, there are parents now even in Canada who, in the excess of their mistaken kindness, shun to give their sons any better heritage than this of shabby gentility and disappointing life-long poverty. Montreal and Toronto to-day can count its many scores of fine promising young men whose hearts are well nigh broken for want of employment and the difficulty of their position. Surely there should be some escape from this unsoundness in our social system? It must be patent to all that the future cannot give them employment to the extent that Snobocracy is pushing them on the market.

It is well known, in the cities of New York and Boston especially, that merchants' sons are not as a class following their fathers' profession. They are vainly seeking a more gentlemanly vocation, and which, alas! few are finding. The ranks of merchants are being filled up by country lads, who come into the city and take employment first as office or errand boys, and so work up to foremost positions in time, through sagacity and perseverance, added to a determination, which the American lad of country birth invariably possesses, to seek to rise to the highest position in business commercial life.

The question often comes up, Is not our present system of education for boys largely responsible for this unfortunate condition of society? The opinion grows that it is—a boy at most of the high schools of the country is but imperfectly taught to read and write,—and very often before he knows his own mother tongue with any degree of perfectness, is put to classics, as if in them alone the great desideratum of life were to be found. The boy's mind, therefore, is distracted from the stern realities of practical life to the love of a dreary, fictitious past—an education that in nine cases out of ten at the very least will never enable him to earn a cent. In professional life classics may be essential, but in mercantile they unquestionably are not, and but too often fill a boy's head with ideas that totally unfit him for practical everyday realities. The sooner a lad goes forth to the world's fight after fourteen the better, and our very best business men date their entry into commercial scenes even earlier than that. But to ameliorate the sad condition of our young men at the present moment is a subject that is open to the deliberations of our most thoughtful minds, let alone to remedy the recurrence of like errors in the future. Many will say look abroad at the fine lands of our North-West Territory. Beautiful they are, and fertile to a marvellous degree. Yet what could an untutored youth of classical education and unsoiled hands do, dropped down on these new lands? There are young men in Montreal to-day who have had the courage to go forth and try to begin a new life in the Saskatchewan country, and have even bought up half-breed claims; but having no experience and no training for such a life, have lost their all and returned to their friends more dispirited than before. Will some one not suggest a remedy, and afford some solution to this grave social problem—one that is going to tell more powerfully on future society than even at present? Young rising manhood is the very hope and life-blood of any country, and as it is moulded and shaped in early years, so will it tell on the future of Canada. Let this subject be well pondered and ventilated, and possibly some way of escape from our social unsoundness may yet be devised.

MERCATOR.