

Trinity University Review

A Journal of Literature, University Thought, and Events.

VOL. VII.

TRINITY UNIVERSITY, TORONTO, MARCH-APRIL, 1894.

NOS. 3 AND 4.

Trinity University Review.

Published in twelve monthly issues by Convocation and the Undergraduates in Arts and Medicine of Trinity University.

Subscription: One Dollar per annum, payable in advance. Single numbers, fifteen cents. Copies may be obtained from Messrs. Rowse & Hutchison, 76 King St. East, and Messrs. Vannevar & Co., 440 Yonge St.

Rates for advertising can be obtained on application to the Manager.

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Editorial Topics.

SOCIAL FIREBRANDS.

EVERY now and then there suddenly appear in the peaceful and contented Canadian community certain leather-lunged individuals from the neighbouring Republic who do their best to stir up discord, and set class against class by preaching doctrines which, if attempted to be carried into practical effect, would speedily lead to revolution and social disintegration. So far, the only effect wrought by these intermeddlers has been to arouse in the minds of the more ignorant and foolish some discontent with our present social system, and a suspicion of those whose worldly affairs are in a prosperous condition. But this discontent and suspicion may some day find expression in action, and then those who are responsible for it will call on the mountains to fall and cover them from the just indignation of the men of sense and strength. We have no need in Canada for the itinerant preachers and teachers, "temperance" lecturers, and socialistic demagogues, who come from the crude dominions of Uncle Sam. No doubt the foolish people who invite these fiery folk mean well; but the people who mean well, but do not do well, are the most mischievous people in the country. If our would-be social reformers and general world-improvers would but understand that far the greater part of those who lecture or preach on social problems are quite ignorant of the first principles of the subjects with which they so glibly deal, we would be spared many of the evils which now afflict the body politic. It is not very long since an eloquent young parson from over the border set the working men of this city in a blaze of discontent by preaching on their fictitious needs and wrongs, and vilifying the unfortunate capitalist

with an exaggeration of speech, which displayed even more than ignorance: it showed in the man a constitutional impotence in the apprehension of facts. Several of our churches were opened to this good young firebrand, but several were closed to him, thanks to the discernment and wisdom of their Rectors. And now Montreal has just had its turn, but we are thankful to note that the Anglican Church is not responsible for this social disturber. He delights in the name of Herron, and appears to be a Presbyterian minister, and is styled "Professor" and "Doctor." The Professor is a very learned man indeed: he has discovered that "Theology is Sociology and Sociology Theology." According to this enlightened authority American theological seminaries are now paying more attention to Sociology than to Theology with most gratifying results: the American world will soon be filled with Herrons. He seems to have been vouchsafed a special revelation, for he declares that the Almighty cares very little about creeds, and that "salvation is right relations between man and man." This is most interesting and instructive. If the Reverend Professor Herron would confine his tinkering to Theology he would probably be comparatively harmless, but when, by means of much sensational advertising, he gathers together a great mass of workingmen and tells them that they are "groaning under the iron heel of capital," and that railways and banks "live by exploitation of the weak," it is time the fellow were forcibly returned to the place whence he came—or else shut up in an idiot asylum. We are sorry for Montreal. Only the other day it had a heavy dose of one B. Fay Mills, revivalist, whose notions of Theology and morals are as crude as they are startling. We understand that Montreal had to endure also a visit from Mr. Stead. Still, it was fortunate enough to escape the "temperance" tirades of Mr. Powderly—a matter for sincere congratulation. It is to be hoped that Canada has seen the last of these sensation mongers. Yet, even more is it to be hoped that those who are responsible for these visitations will take heed to their ways and learn wisdom. Let them cultivate contentment and a cheerful acquiescence in the order of things. There are certain fervid minds that will believe anything except the truth.

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF PROPERTY.

AMONGST the whirl-wind of talk on social and economic questions by the misguided and the self seeking, it is refreshing and encouraging to hear a voice raised on behalf of moderation and sense. Professor Clark has recently delivered three remarkable discourses on the Rights and Duties of Property, at St. Margaret's Church, and the building was so crowded on each occasion that to obtain a seat it was necessary to be present long before the hour. We note this fact with gratification, for it shows that the desire for information and instruction on these weighty matters is deep and strong, and that "to catch the popular ear" it is necessary to be neither a sensation monger nor a firebrand. It is necessary, however, to have something to say and the ability to say it. This qualification Professor Clark has in abundance.

The first sermon had for subject the Rights of Property. These rights, the preacher remarked, were called in question in different ways—by Socialists who denied the lawfulness of any kind of property, by others who say that