

## Our Contributors.

### TIME THE TRUE TEST OF A REVIVAL.

BY KNOXONIAN.

A year hence a fairly correct estimate can be formed of the spiritual value of the work that has been done in Toronto by the Georgia evangelists. It is impossible to form a correct estimate now, for the simple reason that all the data on which a conclusion, even approximately correct, are not within the reach of any body. "By their fruits ye shall know them." There has been no time for the work to bear fruit. Fruit-bearing requires time, and until a reasonable length of time has passed, no one can speak definitely and positively as to either the quality or quantity of the fruit.

How much is known now? It is known that a very large number of people attended the services conducted by Messrs. Jones and Small. What does the presence of these large numbers prove? To say that the presence of large numbers of people proves nothing is to say that which is not a fact. The gathering of a large number of people always does mean something. The average Canadian is not a fool. Carlyle said that London had a population of four millions, mostly fools. Carlyle was a cynic; and Toronto is not London. The gathering together of six or seven thousand people, two or three times a day in Toronto, for three weeks, does prove something. It proves that those who met had at least an interest, passing or permanent, in the purpose for which they met. The assembling of large numbers of people always proves that those who assemble are more or less interested in some common object. The interest may not always be deep; it may not always be permanent, but *it is there*.

If ten thousand people meet to see a fool cross the Niagara River on a tight rope, their presence there at some inconvenience and expense shows that they feel an interest in the fool and his performances.

If two or three hundred citizens of Toronto meet in a hall, and pay \$5 each to see two short-haired slug-gers pound each other's handsome faces beyond recognition, their presence shows that a number of the citizens of Toronto take a lively and appreciative interest in the refined business of slugging.

Forty thousand people at "Canada's great show" prove by their presence that they take an interest in the show.

Four thousand people at one of Mr. Blake's meetings make it quite evident that they take an interest in Mr. Blake, and the subjects he discusses. If they felt no interest in such matters, they would not be there.

Six or eight thousand people at the meetings held by Messrs. Jones and Small prove by their presence that the community is taking an interest in religious matters, and that interest, we affirm, is itself a good thing. A community is never in a worse condition, spiritually, than when it is in a perfectly torpid condition. Spiritual stupor is more to be dreaded than any thing else. Sometimes—alas too often—one sees a congregation whose spiritual condition might be aptly described by the phrase, "Nobody takes an interest in any thing." A congregation can scarcely be in a worse condition than that. Any agency, not unscriptural, that rouses a congregation from this spiritual lethargy does good. If Messrs. Jones and Small, aided by the press of the country, have increased and intensified the interest of the people in matters of religion, in so far as they have done so, they have done a good work. And still it must be admitted that a good degree of religious interest may be excited, and few or no souls be saved or sanctified. The interest is a good thing, but it is not a sufficient test.

Nor is the amount of feeling displayed at any kind of a religious meeting a sufficient test. Nothing dries more quickly than a tear. Hundreds of men shed tears in church on Sabbath, but take no decided stand for Christ during the week. Still it is not a bad thing to see men moved under the truth, if it really is the truth that moves them. Their condition is certainly more hopeful than if the truth made no impression. It is quite true that such hearers often cool down somewhat suddenly; but if the fear of a reaction keeps a preacher from applying the truth vigorously, he might as well not preach at all. It is said that Mr. Jones could move his hearers mightily at times,

and if he did, we are on the whole inclined to think he did a good thing when he moved them. But still it must, we think, be admitted, that mere emotion is not a sufficient test of the genuineness of a revival.

The fact that mere sensuous excitement is no evidence of spiritual work need scarcely be discussed here. No reader of THE PRESBYTERIAN believes that animal excitement and the work of the Spirit are necessarily connected. It is quite true that souls may have been saved in scenes of considerable excitement, but the excitement did not save them. Perhaps they were saved in spite of the excitement. Mere animal excitement never saved nor sanctified any body.

We are quite aware that some of the points raised in this paper are sometimes discussed in circumstances that make the discussion seem very absurd. For a preacher who cannot keep a handful of people together by his pulpit efforts, to belittle the importance of numbers is a rather needless kind of effort. A preacher whose hearers are as cold and hard as a graven image is scarcely under any necessity to denounce emotion in church. The brother whose people go asleep regularly every Sabbath, long before he comes to "thirdly," need scarcely waste his breath in preaching against excitement. There is no excitement in his church, except an occasional flurry, caused by some pillar of the church falling out of his pew.

What true tests does time apply to religious movements, such as that lately made in Toronto? The reply is easy. If a fair proportion of the people impressed at these meetings unite with their churches—if they work and pray and pay, as good Christians should do, and keep on working and praying and paying, then the work is genuine and every good man should thank God for it. The real test is continuance in well doing, and time alone can apply that test. Of course our Methodist friends do not attach as much importance to continuance as we Presbyterians do. Their doctrine comes to their relief. If a convert, or any number of converts, turn out badly, they solve the difficulty by saying they fell from grace. Calvinists have no such doctrinal safety-valve, and we are therefore forced to insist on continuance as a test.

If the converts of Mr. Jones, or any other revivalist, come out of the alleged revival, puffed up with pride; if they go about swaggering, as the converts of Sam Jones or Sam Small or Sam Somebody else; if they conclude that there is no church pure enough to unite with, and try to set up a little Zion of their own, such conduct will make it reasonably certain that the movement was in the main—well—not a good one. And we are certain our Methodist friends will be the first to say so.

It seems to us that the proper attitude toward any such movement may be thus described—hope for the best, pray for the best, but wait until time has applied the real tests before you speak positively of the results.

Of course we have nothing to say to those prigs, pedants and dudes, lay or clerical, who would rather see men lost than saved by a preacher who says "ain't."

### RAMBLES AMONGST SWISS HILLS.

#### A WEEK IN THE JURA.

During our stay in the Val de Travers we visited the

#### CREUX DU VENT

(hollow of the wind), examining it first from the summit (4,807 feet), and afterwards from below; we shall now attempt a brief description of this singular opening, from which blows at certain seasons the *joran*—the terror of Neuchâtel. In walking toward it on the grassy plateau above, a stranger never suspects that he is approaching such a frightful gulf. One of the party suggested that this exemplified certain events in human life. One goes on without foreseeing any obstacle in his path, when suddenly the earth opens (figuratively) beneath his feet—a catastrophe overtakes him, and it requires long and painful detours to find the path again and—hope. Happily the "Creux" occasioned no such consequences to any of our party, and we proceeded with our examination.

It would be difficult to find a spot where the grand and the charming are better blended. You approach, and before you is an abyss, some 500 feet deep, in shape resembling a horseshoe, and some three miles in circumference, bordered by perpendicular rocks. Through an opening you see pine forests covering the

sides of the mountain, at whose feet flows a river, sometimes brilliant as a silver ribbon, at other times brown and sinuous as a snake. Farther in the distance is the fading line of the Jura, concealed in vapour. Here are all the conditions of artistic beauty—variety and unity. One can see the whole at a glance, but one may also contemplate the scene for hours without being wearied. While we are thus engaged, the geologist of the party hints that this was not the one object of our visit—that science must also have its due, seeing we have before us a magnificent theme for

#### DISSERTATION AND HYPOTHESIS

—that there is nothing arbitrary in the phenomena of the world. As our knowledge of visible things advances, we find they are submitted to laws at once simple and invariable. Modern naturalists—he goes on to say, guided by the inspiration of the great poet Goethe—are beginning to think that the infinite variety of beings on earth are related to a single type—as plants, in all their transformations, are but one leaf incessantly modified, according to the geometrical figure of the screw. From whatever side we look at the "Creux," it is only a great hollow or pit. It is but natural, then, for the unscientific portion of our party to suppose that it was produced by the sinking of the rocks and earth, which had been undermined by some unknown agency. But to this theory numerous objections were at once presented. A solid body cannot sink unless a vacuum occurs beneath, and it cannot sink indefinitely. Nothing, in this case, justifies the hypothesis of a subterranean cavern, or of a liquid mass of mud or dirt incapable of bearing the weight of the rocks above. Again, where are these fallen rocks? The exterior layer of the bottom of the Creux du Vent is of a much more ancient formation, and is a continuation of that which extends at the same level under the portion of the hill standing. The successive strata above this primitive floor are neither depressed nor overturned upon it—they are, on the contrary, opened out, made to stand aside to expose to light what has been buried for millions of years.

But how has this movement been produced? Doubtless, says our geologist, by a sudden and violent catastrophe. Some Titan, says another, raised it on his shoulders, breaking the vault, and, extending his arms, forced back the walls to right and left. But when these events occurred, and by what agencies they were effected, neither had any knowledge. This is and will remain a secret.

#### THE JURA HAS SEVERAL BREAKS

or folds like this, all being closed on the west. Three-fourths of these "breaks" look to the north, which gives a monotonous and regular aspect to the chain, as seen from the south and east. Heights like the Chasseron (5,285 feet), the Chasseral (5,276) and the Dole (5,505) appear but slight swellings of the crest of the range when thus seen; but when looked at from the north their bold relief rivals in picturesque beauty many of the other chains of Swiss hills.

#### THE CREUX SEEN FROM BELOW.

Descending into the abyss, we find all changed—a multitude of chaotic details meets the eye, such as heaps of stones and rubbish, overturned trees, which Time—the destroyer as well as repairer of all things—strives to cover with shrubs and flowers. Seen from below, the rocks forming the walls appear gigantic, the great trees beside them looking like dwarfs. The little delicate plants which abound become more beautiful and charming by contrast. We know that it is as impossible for man to create the smallest flower as to raise the highest mountain; but still the sight of these tiny and beautiful objects modifies the painful feeling of human weakness. The collectors of Jurassic plants and the makers of herbals have a great veneration for the bottom of the Creux du Vent, for here flourish apart the rarest species and the most precious specimens of their collections. Let me name only one of these—the "Sabot de Venus"—quite a poem in itself, as our botanical friend alleged; but when he gave it its scientific name—the *Cypripedium calceolus*—all the poetry vanished. The base of the rocks is hidden by an accumulation of rubbish from landslips, which in the course of ages has assumed the form of a cone. Upon the slopes of this cone the snow gathers in quantities, and from the north, where the sun does not shine for nine months of the year, the snow scarcely ever disappears.