

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING THE EXTINCT BULLY.

BY KNOXONIAN.

We hear much in these days about the evils of competition in business. "Too many people in business"; "too many young crowding into the professions," are statements as common as La Grippe in a mild January. Quite likely there is a good deal of competition in some lines. There may be no special want for a marked increase in the number of professional men. Competition beyond a certain limit may not be a good thing for the country as a whole, but competition has done a world of good for this country of ours. It has killed off a lot of bullies, and that was a distinctly good thing to do.

The corner-store-bully is extinct. Merchants in Canada are now, as a rule, honourable, obliging men who treat their customers fairly much better than some of them deserve. Some of the old time corner stores and small village retailers were odious little tyrants. They got the struggling settlers onto their books, and often treated them as inferior animals. The airs these people sometimes put on behind the counter were insufferable. We remember one little tyrant who used to hold his nose over a pail of butter and then turn it up—his nose not the pail—at an angle of forty-five degrees, and say, in lordly tones: "It is leeky, ma'am." The poor woman might venture to say that the butter could not be "leeky," because her cows were on pasture, but if she did the big man would sniff the air again, and say: "It is leeky, ma'am." If she did not at once give in she might be ordered out of the store and her husband sued for his account. Thanks to competition the corner store and small village bully is extinct. It is a pleasant thing to look through a good store now and buy goods from civil, obliging people, who know more about their business in an hour than the old-time bully knew in his lifetime. The patience of these salesmen and saleswomen should never be abused by customers who do not know what they want and perhaps want nothing in particular.

One of the worst bullies of the olden time was the "land-agent." Some of the Agents of the Crown Lands, Canada Landed Co., and other bodies that had land to sell were no doubt fair, kindly men who treated the struggling settlers fairly and perhaps even kindly but some of them were as heartless bullies as could be found to-day anywhere on this side of Armenia. They assumed that the land they had for sale was their own and treated the settlers as serfs. No judge on the Bench puts on such lordly airs as these fellows did when they condescended to speak to a poor settler about the lot on which he was trying to make a home for his wife and children. That kind of a bully is extinct in Ontario. If he lifted his head for a moment our Crown Lands Commissioner, Arthur Sturgis Hardy, would fire him out of the civil service so quickly that he would scarcely know what struck him. Hardy would take him to the door of his office and give him a fresh start in life. Hardy is likely to be the next Premier and he well deserves the honor if he had never done anything more than protect the settlers of Northern Ontario from the kind of bullies that used to grind the faces of the poor in the olden time.

"The medical bully" is nearly extinct. We once heard a very ignorant and brainless M.D. say that a medical practitioner should be in a position to kick three out of every four people who came for his professional help. He was a fair type of a species that is fast becoming extinct. Better men, better education and competition have crowded out the medical bully until he is unknown in many communities except as an unsavory memory.

The "legal bully" looms up chiefly, almost exclusively, in cross-examination.

Competition in law has made it unnecessary to pay a lawyer for doing your work and then have to coax him to attend to it. A man unfortunate enough to have a law suit no longer needs even in Toronto to hunt around the clubs, or in caucus meetings, or in hotels, or at dinner parties for the counsel he paid, and hat in hand, beg of him to come to court and attend to the business he was well paid for attending to. That day is over. The change may be a sad thing for some kinds of lawyers, but it is a good thing for clients.

The "newspaper bully" is not quite gone but he is quickly dying. May his exit be rapid and his grave unhonored. He was about the most cruel and exasperating bully that ever cursed this country. To libel a man basely and then laugh at him, to attack him week after week and shut out his defence, to slander him year in and year out in the hope that some of the dirt might stick,—to do these things was as base and brutal a business as any Canadian ever engaged in.

The "bank bully" is not extinct. At a convenient distance from the head office he can use the ledger of his employers as an instrument of blackmail, and he too often uses it with considerable success. It is amusing to read the speeches of bank presidents and directors at their annual meetings and then think of some of the local managers you have known. One can't help saying as he lays the speeches down how little even these great financial men know about the manner in which their own business is sometimes conducted.

Somebody may feel inclined to ask if there were no parsons in the good old times who had a weakness for playing the part of Popes. We believe there were some men of that kind and we believe the species is not quite extinct yet. But the Protestant Pope is having a hard time and he may be allowed to depart in peace.

The thing we should be thankful for is that competition and popular government have killed off many a bully that used to grind and oppress our fathers. Let us be careful how we use our increased liberty.

REFORM IN INDIA, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL.

BY REV. W. A. WILSON, M.A.

Among the prominent results of western influence on India are the annual gatherings of the two bodies known as the Indian National Congress and the Indian Social Conference. For eight years, or nearly since the beginning of the movement, these two organizations were closely identified, their meetings being held in the same building, at the same time, and attended by many of the same people. In its early days the platform of the National Congress included a purpose to regenerate the country "along all lines, moral, mental, social and political," but this year the orthodox Hindu party, fearing the growing importance of the social reform movement, after a long and discreditable wrangle, in committee rooms and newspapers, banished the Social Conference from the precincts of the Congress, refusing to allow the reform party the use of their pandal, or tabernacle, for their meetings. It would now appear that the Congress has concluded that the worst evils from which India is suffering are political, and that these most demand its attention. It is growing every year more evident that the Congress troubles itself little about the real evils that afflict the people, and in consequence the sympathy of the well-wishers of India is being alienated.

The Congress in its own imagination is representative of the millions of India, although the Mahomedans stand almost entirely aloof, and the masses of the lower castes send no representatives, and whole provinces with many millions of inhabitants are represented, as last year at Madras, by half a dozen out of the eleven hundred delegates chosen. Still some fifteen hundred delegates from many parts of India, mostly

of the educated classes, assembled this year a few days ago in Poona, where elaborate and comfortable provision was made for their accommodation in a large garden. A huge structure capable of seating four thousand five hundred persons had been erected for the meetings. Refreshment rooms and bazars, post and telegraph offices were set up in the grounds. Bands of students met delegates at the station, and, taking charge of them and their baggage, conveyed them to their quarters. The meetings were enthusiastic but orderly, though speakers had not unfrequently to pause while a welcome was being accorded to some distinguished delegate as he took his seat.

As in previous years the time of the Congress was taken up by long speeches on wordy resolutions which unfortunately appear to lack any real value. It might be supposed that so large a body, composed of educated men from all parts of India, professing to be in sympathy with the toiling masses below them, would be able to throw light on some of the acknowledged difficult problems in the economic conditions of India's millions, and to offer suggestions for their solution. But each year brings new disappointment to those who cherish such expectations. A mere glance at the resolutions passed is enough to show that the Congress does little if anything more than to emphasise well-known difficulties connected with revenue and expenditure, land tenure, public service, etc., to criticise the action of Government, and to propose only such measures as are fitted to increase the privileges of the classes from which the delegates themselves are drawn. In illustration of this last point we would refer to a resolution passed by the Congress opposing legislation restricting the right of private alienation of lands. It is a distressing fact that in many parts of India the land is rapidly passing from the agriculturists into the hands of the money lenders. This is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that the money lender, notwithstanding special legislation, charges from eighteen to twenty-five per cent. for loans on land security, and from thirty-seven and a half to seventy-five per cent. on small sums for short periods, with increased demands if payment is not made at the time stipulated. The Indian Government has been endeavoring to establish a system of land tenure and revenue to guard the rights of the agriculturists by restricting their right of alienation of land to the voracious money lender. But the Congress declares in favor of freedom to alienate, and professes to find a remedy in the general diffusion of education.

Resolutions bearing on the public service and judicial functions, were all in the line of the agitation to substitute natives for Europeans in positions of influence in the Administration. One cannot, on reading the report of the proceedings, resist the feeling that the Congress, so long as it works on its present lines, is not likely to do much for the good of India. Hopes, at one time cherished by those interested in the development of a national life and a spirit of patriotism, are being abandoned, and the action of the Congress in repudiating the Social Reform Organization, has alienated the sympathy of those who realize that India's greatest evils are social and self-inflicted. Apparently no relief is to be looked for from the Indian National Congress.

SOCIAL CONFERENCE.

The Social Conference was driven from the National Congress pandal, but it was afforded accommodation in a huge tent, capable of seating two thousand, in the grounds of Ferguson College. The meetings were held on Sabbath, a day usually selected in India for all kinds of social and political gatherings, as well as for horse and cattle markets.

Judging from the reports there was much less interest shown in the Social Conference than in the Congress. Still a large number of prominent Congress men were present

and took part in the proceedings. The president of the Conference, Dr. Bandarkar, a professor in Ferguson College, delivered a vigorous address, which, could it be given in full, would throw a flood of light from a Hindu standpoint on the distressing condition of Indian society. We can give but a mere outline with a quotation here and there.

He began by stating that such a conference would have been impossible sixty years ago, but that the progress of education, and contact with western civilization had invoked in Hindus feelings of justice and compassion for the various classes of society. With these feelings in their hearts, the members of the Social Conference now set before them the administration of "justice and fair play to all classes of persons, the alleviation of their sufferings, and the removal of obstacles in the free development of our activities."

Touching the education of women, he said, "one half of the intellectual, moral and spiritual resources of our country is being wasted. If our women were educated as they ought to be, they would be a powerful instrument for advancing the general condition of our country." He advocated the opening of high schools for them, and the teaching of English and literature, and a selected course of study for those who could pursue their studies beyond the high school.

Speaking of reforms in the marriage laws, he made reference to the "unjust and cruel sufferings to which our present social usages subject our women, and which no man in whom the sentiments of justice and compassion are developed can find it in his heart to tolerate even for a moment. . . . Oftentimes the marriage of a girl under certain circumstances proves her death warrant. . . . A young man of thirty or thirty-five loses his first wife; straightway he proceeds to marry another who is a girl of ten or thirteen; that girl dies by the time she has reached the age of twenty; another takes her place immediately after; she too, dies similarly; then comes a third who meets the same fate, and the fourth is married by the persevering man, and is eventually left a widow before she is out of her teens." Such cases of human sacrifice are frequent, and that too among educated men. He strongly condemned such ill-assorted marriages, and called for their reform.

He spoken of the revolution already effected in caste under the equal justice of the British in which Brahman and Sudra shared alike. A Sudra's tongue is not now cut off for repeating the sacred vedas, and a Brahman school teacher who will not teach them to the Sudra is liable to be dismissed from his post. "A holy Brahman does not scruple to sit in a third class carriage by the side of a Mahar, whose very shadow is an abomination on ordinary occasions." But caste still imposes such disabilities that while a Brahman may command only six or seven rupees a month, a stone mason can get twenty-five, and he advocated loosening the restrictions that keep men to the employment of their caste whether fitted for it or not.

He also spoke of the desirability of free intercommunion in eating and marrying among the numerous subdivisions of the castes, with a view to convert antipathy into sympathy and disunion into union.

In reference to early marriages he said, "the early marriage of boys and girls has the effect of undermining their strength, and bringing forth a progeny of weak children. The growth of the parents themselves, intellectual as well as physical is stunted, and in a course of evolution our race must become incapable of that energy and steadiness of application which are so necessary under the conditions brought into existence by the rivalry and competition of the races. In closing he urged his hearers to cherish in their hearts "a sense of justice, a keen sympathy with the sufferings of others, and a love for one's own country and race and an anxiety for their future well-being."