

## Our Contributors.

### DRIVE DULL CARE AWAY.

BY KNOXONIAN.

If the editor, and the intelligent compositor, and the proof-reader, and the postoffice officials, and the railway people do their work promptly, and the clerk of the weather does not bring on heavy snow drifts, this issue of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN should enter many homes on the afternoon of Christmas Day.

It should make its appearance about the time that the good man is loading up his briar-root, and the good woman is taking a calm view of the situation with that knowing look which indicates that she is monarch of all she surveys, and the girls are getting ready to drive or skate, and the big boys are leaving their own sisters to visit somebody else's sister, and the little boys are getting out their sleighs, and the children are blessing the memory of Old Santa Claus.

It would be unpardonable at such a time to introduce rasping topics into any good man's house. Let us have peace for the afternoon and evening. Never mind the Jesuit Bill or the Separate School question or Mowat's stubbornness in refusing to go. Let business take care of itself for one day. Let those men who have been kindly superintending the earth for a year allow the Being who made the world to take charge of it for a few hours. The men who have been carrying the whole Church on their shoulders should also have a rest. Even the Organic Unionists who fight each other for union can afford to stop until the second day of the New Year.

One of the drawbacks of advanced civilization is that too many people are constantly discussing controverted questions. A certain proportion of our population read party newspapers, polemical pamphlets, and listen to speeches on controverted questions, and wrangle at elections and argue with their neighbours until they degenerate into human porcupines. Constant threshing out of controverted questions does not produce the highest type of character. The most exasperating of men is the man who thinks he would have made a good lawyer.

Now we frankly admit that in a free country there must be a good deal of argument. Even hard words are easier to bear than cold steel. In a self-governed Church like the Presbyterian there must always be much discussion. The best of men cannot decide on the best thing to be done without turning questions over and looking at them from all sides. If we had a Pope armed with power to say "You must," there would be no discussion, but we have no Pope. We could easily get one at a reasonable salary, but the majority of our people have no liking for Popes. Were we to import or elect one, the people might refuse to raise his stipend. The mere introduction of the Pope's name into Mr. Mercier's famous Bill caused some unpleasantness. What would the people who never attend the congregational meeting say if the Church should elect a Pope to manage their Church business and ask them to pay his salary?

It may be also admitted that the man who wants to argue every question is a better man and perhaps a better Christian than the languid oriental who takes no interest in anything. Even the man who always "objects" may be more useful than the lazy fellow who does nothing but lie on his native sand and fan himself. The man who instinctively "objects" has his uses, but no well-regulated family should have any use for him on Christmas Day. This is a day of peace. Let peace reign in every home and every heart.

This is a day for kindly thoughts. If there is anybody you cannot think of in a kindly way, don't think of him at all. If there is anybody you cannot see any good in, don't look at him at all. Of course a much higher and better exercise of mind would be to practise the precepts laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, but your pastor no doubt said something on that question last Sabbath, and said it better than we can say it here.

This should be a day for charitable judgments. Equal Rights who concluded last spring that the "188" are very bad men, "slaves of Rome," who concussed their consciences and bartered their manhood for the Catholic vote, might do a worse thing than look over the division list again and see if there are not some names there that forbid any such conclusion. Catholics might look around upon their Protestant neighbours and ask themselves if it is really a fact that all these people—these good neighbours—are heretics on the high road to the bad place. Protestants might ask themselves if some of their Catholic neighbours are not just as kindly and agreeable neighbours as they have. Tories might revise some of their judgments about Liberals, and Liberals might ask themselves if, after all, Sir John Macdonald has not done some good things for Canada. It would not hurt an honest Tory to admit on Christmas Day that Mr. Laurier is an eloquent, pure, high-minded gentleman, that Mr. Mackenzie is a man that any country might be proud of, and that Mr. Mowat is an honest, wise and learned statesman who can act his part anywhere from the Privy Council down to a North Oxford cattle show and never make a mistake. It should not spoil any honest Grit's Christmas dinner to admit that Sir John Macdonald has given his life work to his country, that he is a singularly able man in certain lines, and that a country singularly hard to govern has made marvellous progress during his term of office.

Come now, gentlemen, own up. There are some good and able men in the public life of this country. Speak charitably

of them on Christmas Day, and let us be thankful for the services they render.

This should be a home day. It is no time for going to the lodge or going out to see a man or anything of that kind. But time is up, and we close by wishing a Merry Christmas to the readers of this column. We "had a thing to say" to our many friends, but let it go. Enough to thank them for many kind and appreciative words, and wish them, as we do from our heart of hearts, the best blessings that heaven bestows.

### RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY REV. DR. DUVAL, WINNIPEG.

The question of religious instruction in the public schools is evidently one of absorbing interest in the Prairie Province. Recently the Rev. Dr. Duval, of Knox Church, Winnipeg, preached a sermon to his congregation on the subject, taking for his text Isaiah liv. 13, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." After introductory remarks of a general nature he said: While it is unwarrantable for the respective sects to set up separate schools upon public funds to propagate their peculiar tenets, and while I believe the government should inaugurate one system of schools for general public education, I believe it necessary that these schools

SHOULD HAVE SOME RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE exerted upon them—it might be as simple as the solemn reading of God's word and prayer.

1. This is not by any means inconsistent with the separation of Church and State. Religious influence is not ecclesiastical influence. The Church does not monopolize prayer—prayer is native to the soul. Tacitus, the heathen, speaks with surprise of a tribe of Fins so degraded as not to pray. It was Franklin, not a confessed Christian, the philosopher friend (not in every sense) of Voltaire, who with tremulous solicitude for unity of spirit in the founders of the great American Republic, pleaded in terms akin to inspiration, notwithstanding the principle of separation of Church and State, for prayer to the source of all grace for guidance in the national councils. If, then, the people desire prayer at the beginning of their children's studies for grace to mould the mind and purify the heart, it is

#### THEIR NATURAL RIGHT

to have it. No minority, be it agnostic, infidel, Jew, or Roman Catholic, has the right to deny to the majority this natural right; while, on the contrary, the majority has no right to compel the minority to conform in any attitude of mind or heart contrary to its conscience, nor does the majority wish them to conform. Members of Congress have the right to stay away from prayer; so in our schools, those who wish can be excused. And that is all the right that a minority has in such a case. Suppose an infidel should go to Congress and say, "I am elected to Congress, but so long as your great majority have prayer I will not come in." What would the majesty of sixty millions of people reply? Would it say, "Well, we will just put it all away to satisfy you?" No; but they would say, "We do not interfere with your conscience,

YOU CAN COME IN OR GO HOME, just as you please. You can attend prayer or come after it." "The Sovereign Law is the State's collected will, which sits empress crowning good and repressing ill."

(2) And what is said of prayer applies to the reading of the Bible; the Church does not monopolize the Bible. It is the Good Book from which Churches draw their instruction and strength. But it is also the source of intellectual and moral strength to countless souls that are not allied to any Church. Christ is the Light of the World. The Christian principles which that Book contains have for ages been a part of the common law of European civilization, and especially of the people of the British Isles and their colonies. When our fathers came to this continent they came in a general sense as a

#### CHRISTIAN AND BIBLE-LOVING PEOPLE.

They read it before starting on their dangerous voyage, and prayed to the common Lord, of whom it speaks, for protection by the way. By its instruction and in its spirit, they gave thanks upon their arrival. They set up homes in its faith; their hearthstones were blessed by its presence; their marriages and baptisms were solemnized under the sanctions of its truth; their funerals were conducted with the sympathy of its grace. It has been with us the symbol of the presence of God, guarding the sanctity of the oaths of testators and witnesses in courts of law. Our liberties were born out of it and are sustained by its spirit. Our literature is filled with it. It is in the warp and woof of our whole social character and there are few, indeed, to dispute that it is the

#### SECRET OF THE VIRTUE AND GREATNESS

of the peoples whose lives it controls. This being so, call it what you will, "Word of God" by the Christian; "Great Work in Moral Science" by the Agnostic,—the people have in it a great heritage, and the majority of the people have a prescriptive right to continue its influence in some way as a factor in public education, especially when they impose on no one's conscience—religious or non-religious scruples—excusing all who desire to be excused, from any participation in its instruction. Our Jewish fellow-citizens, Agnostics or Roman Catholics, could not ask more if they have any regard for the rights of the majority, the integrity of the country, and the conscientious duty of that majority to regulate the country

and guide it toward what they deem its highest well-being. And especially do I not see why our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens should object to such an adjustment, seeing that they can hold their own Bibles in their hands or, if in the majority, choose the Douay version to be read, or be excused from all, as they may elect. The province does not wish to do them injustice. To leave the Bible out of the schools would seem to make those schools

#### MORE OBJECTIONABLE TO THEM,

upon the plea of godlessness. And, as Dr. Duryea well points out, it is not a matter of "the faith" in the Catholic Church that the Scripture shall not be read, but it has been the policy of the leaders of that Church for what seemed to them good and sufficient reasons to discourage its reading among the common people, and "a matter of policy," he well says, "cannot bind the conscience." And Roman Catholic authorities are not agreed in objection to the reading of the Bible in public schools. Cardinal Manning has published his views to the world by saying, "I am glad that the Bible is read in the public schools of England."

The Catholic and Protestant Christians have many

#### FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES IN HARMONY,

enough, indeed, to unite in a system of national schools under Christian influence, but not under ecclesiastical control. And a refusal to join in some plan equitable to all, that will make the Province homogeneous, progressive and safe, cannot fail to impress the public mind with the belief that our Roman Catholic citizens continue the mediæval pretensions to the right of absolute control; and, in the absence of that, the policy of the non-affiliation, and disposition to draw from the country the strength to ultimately control it. I hope we may not have reason even to suspect it.

And now with regard to those of non-Christian sentiments, I appeal to them to think seriously before they oppose Christian influence in the public schools. And to those younger men who, with generous impulses, are ready to do what seems broad and generous; I appeal to them to think carefully. The idea of a system of schools without any religious influence, where the Jew and Christian, agnostic and infidel, can all be on the same footing,

#### SEEMS INDEED BROAD AND GENEROUS.

But it is as specious as broad, as dangerous as generous. You are to ask on whose footing you are putting all. Is it not bringing all down to the footing of the agnostic? Is it not asking, perhaps, ninety per cent. of the people whose souls have grown to the idea that in all their ways they should acknowledge God, that He might direct their paths, to say in this most important way, "We will not acknowledge Him, and don't care whether He directs our paths or not?" And you ask men of positive faith and godly principle to do this for the sake of a small minority who are at best negative on the subject. And you do it needlessly. You do it while this great majority is willing to excuse this minority from any participation in the feature to which they object. (2) You do it to try

#### A DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT.

Daniel Webster, in a masterly discourse upon this subject, puts the question, "In what age, by what sect, where, when, and by whom, has religious truth been excluded from the education of youth? Nowhere! Never! Everywhere and at all times it has been regarded as essential."

Are we ready to venture the moral well-being of this province upon a nostrum that has had no historic warrant from the various schools of reputable psychic physicians? The experiment has proved a failure in higher education, and how much more might we expect it to fail among those less able to appreciate the motives furnished by philosophy. I have in a letter from Dr. Duryea the case of Cornell University. It was "founded as a secular school, and all religious teaching was to be omitted, if not prohibited." The object was to prevent religious bias in the pursuit of intellectual work and scientific investigation.

After the experiment had been fairly tried, and while President White was absent on his foreign mission for the Government, the vice-president, himself an avowed agnostic, entered the parlour of the Congregational pastor, the Rev. Mr. Tyler, one Saturday night, and abruptly said, "Mr. Tyler,

#### WE MUST HAVE PREACHING

at the University." The pastor, with surprise, replied, "What? Do you say that? And pray why?" "Because we cannot do our work without it." "Why not?" "Because we cannot get scholarship." "How is that?" "We have not the motives by which we can get the right spirit, and the needful application on the part of the students; they must be moved. And as matters are they can be moved by moral considerations and religious sentiments."

The result was the building of Sage chapel and the endowment of its pulpit by Mr. Sage's son. And since this Mr. Sage has endowed a chair of ethics, from which principles are set forth in sympathy with the teachings of Christ.

I am lately also informed of another college in the west founded on agnostic principles, but which had to be surrendered to a Christian control for motive power to run it—it is now a Presbyterian Synodical college. This is simple verification of the truth declared by that great German, Luthardt; "Religion is, as it were,

#### LIFE'S FORCING POWER

(Triebkraft)," and "it is an actual historical fact that human life owes to religion its best and fullest development."

The trouble with all these "no-religion" schemes is, they mistake the end of education.