

## The Coming Plebiscite.

(TORONTO GLOBE.)

The announcement that the plebiscite on prohibition will take place at the end of next month brings the individual elector face to face with a great problem and one of surpassing interest. It is not too much to say that students of sociology all over the world are watching for the result of the coming vote. The plebiscite itself is a novel thing on this side of the Atlantic, for, although it has been used on several occasions in certain States and in our own Provinces to determine public opinion on such questions as the suppression of the liquor traffic, this is the first time of its application in the national sphere to a great issue of social reform in the settlement of which party ties and prejudices are cast aside. It must be gratifying to all patriotic Canadians to see in the discussion that has been in progress for months no sign of party spirit, no attempt to make party capital, but rather a desire to raise the question above the level of partisanship and deal with it solely from the standpoint of good citizenship. In this spirit it is to be hoped the campaign will be conducted to the end.

In the discussion of prohibition one can scarcely fail to be impressed by the fact that an overwhelming proportion of the people of Canada believe strongly in the effectiveness of legislative action following upon and securing the fruits of temperance work. There are still some among us who oppose prohibitory or restrictive legislation on the ground that the State has no right to dictate to the individual as to what he shall eat or drink; that it is the abuse of liquor that constitutes the evil, and that those who use it properly should not be deprived of a natural right because a few in the community cannot control their appetite. Those who still cling to this position are either extreme individualists, who advanced similar objections to vaccination and Public Schools and sanitary laws, or they are engaged in the liquor traffic and use the argument for individual liberty as the one most likely to appeal to the average man. It is true that were the drunkard only injuring himself as the glutton does, a large part of the excuse for united public action to suppress drunkenness would be removed. But the cases are not at all analogous, and the sneer of the anti-prohibitionist who says "they will be regulating what we shall eat next" is not warranted. If the glutton while under the influence of his vice sallied forth to do murder, or beat his wife and neglected his children, if our prisons and hospitals and poorhouses were filled with the victims of gluttony, it is entirely probable that there would be a strong movement against it. Drunkenness in its effect on the community is all embracing. It may be a natural right to use liquor, just as it is a natural right to dig a well in one's garden. If, however, the whole community is put to great expense, and its safety and health endangered because the well provides fever-producing water, our natural right to use the water vanishes, and if we would remain in the community the well must be filled up.

This brings up for consideration the "moral suasion" and "voluntary action" wing of temperance reformers. In effect they tell us that if prohibition is attempted the result will be to arouse against it the feeling that is always roused among free men when coercion is attempted. Some indeed go so far as to say that men who do not drink now and never think of entering a saloon would at once develop an uncontrollable thirst and drink out of a bottle in the cellar of some dive to vindicate their right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Admitting that there are some men so constituted, and that this would occur to a certain extent and would be accompanied by more or less deceit and perjury, there is the reverse side of the shield. The average man who becomes intoxicated does not do so of set purpose. It is the open door that entices him. On no other basis can we explain the very great decrease in drinking in Toronto of late years. The cutting off of a large proportion of the licensed houses and the refusal of the commissioners to give licenses in the residential districts have made it possible for one to walk miles along the uptown streets without passing a saloon, and the men who, when walking together, would go in and take a drink if a saloon were near are too indifferent to walk a mile or so to find one. In the matter of treating, therefore, which is the commonest road to intoxication among those who are not habitual drunkards, half the battle is won by the removal of the saloon. The question of compulsion versus voluntary temperance does not enter into the transaction. The treating habit is largely continued because of the opportunity afforded by the open saloon door, and very few of those who now treat would continue the practice if it involved a visit to some disreputable, out-of-the-way dive.

The advocates of natural liberty and voluntary action constitute but a small part of the people of Canada. The great mass of the people are not only strongly in favor of temperance but also of legislative action. In large sections of the Maritime Provinces there is even now practical prohibition. It has been said that Quebec will

oppose a national prohibitory law, but if this should prove true it certainly is not less temperate than English-speaking Canada. In a notable speech in the House of Commons Sir Wilfrid Laurier pointed out that throughout whole tiers of counties in that province there were no houses licensed to sell ardent spirits, and that Quebec, through the devoted philanthropy of its clergy, was in the very forefront of temperance reform. If, therefore, that province votes against a prohibitory law it will be largely because of the failure to realize the need for it rather than because of opposition to the temperance movement. The question that seems to be most frequently asked in Ontario is not as to the justice of prohibition but whether temperance sentiment is strong enough to secure the enforcement of a prohibitory law. It is recognized by the leaders of the temperance movement that a prohibitory movement that had not behind it the active sympathy and support of a large majority of the people would be a serious blow to the temperance cause, and that it would be better to wait longer for such a condition of public opinion as would ensure the permanent retention of prohibitory legislation than to force prohibition upon an unwilling people by a majority of a few thousands. It cannot altogether be forgotten that prohibition will involve the levying of some \$7,000,000 of taxation that is now obtained from liquor upon some other article of commerce, or the raising of revenue by way of death duties, a poll tax or the like. No matter how this burden is imposed there will be grumblers, and the tendency will be to lessen the popularity and estrange the supporters of abstract prohibition. Looking at the question as a whole, however, and recognizing its difficulties, but recognizing also the advance in moral and material well-being that would unquestionably follow effective prohibition, we cannot see any reason why temperance men at the supreme crisis in the history of the movement in Canada should fail to record their votes for prohibition. To stay away from the polls means moral cowardice. To vote against prohibition, even when one has doubt as to whether the time is fully ripe for it, will be wrongly construed both at home and abroad as a vote against temperance. Every vote for prohibition, on the other hand, even if the measure is not adopted, is evidence of the strength of temperance sentiment, of the ripening of public opinion in favor of prohibition and of the desire that Canada should occupy a high place among the enlightened nations of the earth.

## P. E. Island.

Notes by a Pastor who Re-visits Scenes Once Familiar.

BEDFORD, P. E. I.

His ministry began here in 1862 and was completed in '69. The years have wrought many changes in families and within the church, but the appearance of the place of worship gives pleasing evidence of progress. This has been remodelled within and without, so that one would not take it to be the same as of old. About \$2,000 have been expended in the reconstruction, and the result is a structure pretty and comfortable. The church had been united with Summerside. It has now to stand alone, while really too weak to give a competent support to their pastor. In Bro. Warren they have one of our best preachers, and one greatly beloved. He is at present in England with his wife and son. Meanwhile the church is without the regular ministrations of the Word. This field comprises Bedeque and Freetown. The scenery here is beautiful, the farms productive and the people prosperous. Two young men of promise were last year students of Horton Academy. One of these is expected to enter College this fall. One of our old Sunday School scholars is now President of Cornell University. Spheres of usefulness await others who are coming on.

CAVENDISH

is about twenty miles away on the North Shore, and facing the Gulf of St. Lawrence. This is a fine farming settlement. The writer's first visit to this place was in company with the late Jno. Shaw, in 1862, and was the occasion of a movement that resulted in the organization of a church and the building of a comfortable place of worship. At that time there were only two baptized persons to represent the Baptist cause. The number as last reported was 56. The brethren here have been distinguished for kindness to their pastors and for generous giving to denominational enterprises. Benjamin Simpson, of precious memory, late Professor of Chicago University, was a son of Deacon Jeremiah Simpson, of Cavendish, as is also the present pastor of the Berwick church. Another has been honored with the [not legible.] Four grandchildren are students of Acadia, and one is on the foreign field. The Baptist community here have contributed a number of their sons and daughters to enrich other places both at home and abroad. Bro. Charles Jackson, their present pastor, is held in high esteem by young and old. His field also embraces Rustico Road and St. Peter's Road, in the vicinity of Charlottetown, some twenty miles distant.

CHARLOTTETOWN.

Rev. C. W. Corey is the efficient pastor of the church in this town of 12,000 inhabitants. He has rejoiced in the addition of over a score of members during the year, a good proportion of these being promising young men. I had the privilege of attending two of the meetings of the B. Y. P. U. and was pleased with their expressions of interest in their pastor and church. They were represented at the recent convention in Buffalo by two of their number. This church has suffered, with many others,

from the loss of members by removal and death. Some of the old standard bearers are missed, among them are George Davies, the successful and generous hearted merchant, and Dea. James Desbrisay, the faithful and beloved. These "seemed to be pillars." Thank God there is life in the structure, and the Lord has his chosen to take the place of the dying. We were sorry to hear of the serious illness of Miss Mary Davies, one of the foremost workers in the Woman's Aid, and in other Christian enterprises.

ALEXANDRA AND HAZEL BROOK

are situated 6 or 8 miles East of Charlottetown. These two churches have each a membership of 49. Each has a comfortable place of worship. We had the privilege of attending a prayer meeting at Hazel Brook. This place was the home of the late Dea. Robert Jones. They have here a beautiful meeting house, built in modern style, with circular seats. I had the privilege of visiting the old home of Professor R. V. Jones, at Alexandra. Three brothers live in a row of beautiful farms, that bear the marks of skillful and productive husbandry. I was thankful for once to find a family wise enough to remain at home to cultivate the paternal acres.

UIGG AND BELFAST

are some nine miles further on. These two churches are a few miles apart, with an aggregate membership of 120. From the first named have gone forth a goodly number to adorn the various professions. It would be difficult to find a community of its size that has sent forth so many to distinguish themselves as pastors, physicians and lawyers—one has become an honored Judge. Of this place we have precious memories. Here we have experienced the showers of blessing that have watered the earth. Here we have rejoiced with that godly, now sainted Samuel McLeod, over precious souls born into the kingdom of grace.

Pastor J. C. Spurr has the oversight of this important field. Since the Association he has had the privilege of baptizing several happy converts, and hopes to receive others soon. He brings ripe experience and a consecrated spirit into the work and we may hope for good results in the upbuilding of the churches.

All the 27 island churches are supplied with the preaching of the word, but a few of them only for the summer. The pastors are men of ability and worth. Under their wise leadership we may have the assurance that the cause will go steadily onward. The names of the most have been omitted as the writer did not have the privilege of meeting them in their homes. But he heard expressions of opinion respecting some, and they were golden.

M. F. P.

## Isaac's Harbor.

Rounding a headland on the east, after leaving Country Harbor, another harbor is entered about three miles long and less than a half a mile wide. Bold, high lands look down on Country Harbor; lands gently sloping east and west border the other harbor, bearing the name—Isaac. On this name hangs a tale. Isaac Webb, an ex-slave, one of a number of this class who followed their masters to Nova Scotia after the revolutionary war, made for himself a home on the east side of this harbor's mouth. There he lived and trained his family. He was monarch of all he surveyed. Coasters and fishermen, taking shelter in this hospitable arm of the sea, never failed to visit Isaac Webb. Soon, Isaac and his family were known to a large number of coasting mariners.

Where did you go for shelter from the storm? one skipper would ask another when meeting after a gale. Went in to Isaac's, would be the reply.

In 1833, Simon Giffin, in whom was the enterprise of the typical Puritan, having coasted in this region, saw his chance. He and John McMillan put into a schooner the material for building small houses and paid Isaac Webb a visit. Isaac, being of a social turn, as was his wife and children, was glad to see the white-faced brethren come as neighbors. The houses, not pretentious by any means, were erected, and the pioneers returned for their families. Now Simon Giffin was from Lewis Head, Ragged Island,—a Baptist, and a Baptist deacon withal. About the 20th of November, 1834, Deacon Simon and his wife, Henrietta,—maiden name Chadsey—and John McMillan and bride, 18 years old, maiden name Fitzgerald, sailed up through the mouth of Isaac's Harbor. The Webbs were delighted to see them. Land, such as it was, was plenty; the harbor and adjoining sea were full of fish and swarmed with fowl. Depend upon it, the Giffins and McMillans received a right royal welcome from the sable-skinned Webb and every member of his household. A warm grasp of black hands, a fine exhibition of white teeth framed in ebony, told the newcomers that a thousand welcomes bubbled up out of the hearts of their dark-skinned neighbors, who looked to the pioneers, in their great joy of being so welcomed, as white and fair as blue eyed Saxons.

But the name of Simon's wife—Chadsey—is suggestive. Early in the seventeenth century, Roger Williams fled from Massachusetts to the wilderness, among the Indians. Rhode Island Baptists came of that winter's journey by this learned, heroic Englishman. The Chadseys were from Rhode Island. The faith and zeal of Roger Williams were in the veins of Henrietta Chadsey when, with her husband on that bleak November day, they made themselves neighbors of Isaac Webb. The Chadsey blood flows now in the veins of more than a hundred people around Isaac's Harbor. Let those who feel justly proud of being the inheritors of the Rhode Island Baptist sentiment, see to it that in faith, love and fidelity to principles they do honor to their ancestry. Now for

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