

## Our Contributors.

### CONCERNING PEOPLE THAT CAN'T BE PUT DOWN.

BY KNOXONIAN.

There are some people who cannot be put down. If put down a rung or two for a short time they soon climb up again, and smile serenely upon you from a higher rung. They won't stay down. There are other people who can be put down quite easily. Knock them off the ladder, and they lie at the bottom for all time as helpless as an upset turtle. They have no rebound in them. They climb no more. Just what it is in a man that makes it impossible to put or keep him down may not always be easily explained. We shall try to explain further on, and though we may be absurdly wrong we don't propose to go down to any great extent.

Deacon Torger, of immortal memory, said to his young pastor, "There's nothing as takes like a coorse." There is nothing that illustrates like an illustration from actual life; so let us glance at a few men that cannot be put down.

Spurgeon was a man that could not be put down. We say *was* because nobody tries to put him down now. Carlyle, or some other cynic, said London had a population of four millions, MOSTLY FOOLS; but there is not a fool among them foolish enough to try to put Spurgeon down now. The contract is too heavy. The critics are too light for the work. There was a time, however, when many willing hands undertook the work. When the rough-looking boy from the country began to make a stir in London, he was first ignored, then caricatured and sneered at, then most mercilessly criticised by nominal Christians, hypocrites, Oscar Wilde apostles of aestheticism, literary critics, and all the numerous class who hate anything like earnestness in religion. The youthful preacher went on with his work and developed into Spurgeon. No power of man or devil could put him down.

Talmage is a man that cannot be put down. Like most of us he is a long way from being faultless, but with all his peculiarities he can't be put down. He has been mercilessly criticised. He has been caricatured and lampooned in the newspapers from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Some of his brethren have been very severe on him. But there he is, one of the most popular preachers in the world. His sermons are translated into many languages, and it is doubtful if even Spurgeon has as many readers. The Brooklyn Tabernacle is crowded at every service, and the membership is over three thousand. His fee for lecturing is away up among the hundreds, and he has probably six invitations for one that he can accept. The first time he lectured in Toronto the papers were full of letters condemning his style. What difference did their publication make? They never touched Talmage. The Brooklyn man can't be written down nor put down in any other way.

Somebody may say these men can't be put down because they are preachers. They are kept up by supernatural power. Perhaps so, but there are men *not* preachers who cannot be put down. Let us look at one or two of them.

The first man that meets us is William Ewart Gladstone. There are several millions of people trying hard enough to put him down at the present time, but they meet with rather indifferent success. The Grand Old Man is pretty well up in years, but he can floor the best of them. If he is beaten in the House, provided his vocal cords hold out, he can go to the country and trounce any combination of Whigs, Tories, Radicals and soreheads that can be formed. Even if beaten at the polls, he is not put down. He is still Gladstone. He would be greater in defeat than the best of his opponents would be in victory. Home Rule or no Home Rule, the Grand Old Man cannot be put down.

George Brown was a man that could not be put down. No other public man in Canada was so fiercely assailed except, perhaps, William Lyon Mackenzie. If the ink used in assailing George Brown could be gathered up there would perhaps be enough for a man to swim in. Possibly there would be enough to float a good sized vessel. The newspaper articles in which he was assailed, if put end to end, would perhaps be miles in length, perhaps a good many miles. If all the speeches made against him were added together and delivered by one man, that man would need to be Methuselah. But what did it all amount to? What

harm did it ever do Mr. Brown? It didn't even make him sour. He was a cheery, sunny, hopeful man to the last. A little talk with him in private was a tonic. He had as many friends as any man in Canada, perhaps more. Thousands watched at his bedside and wept at his bier. More mourners followed his body to the grave than ever followed the remains of any other Canadian. His name is mentioned with respect by everybody; with affection by many; his portrait hangs in thousands of Canadian homes. Politics apart, George Brown was a man that could not be put down.

Writing about living men near home is always a risky kind of business; but we must say that Sir John Macdonald looks very like a man that cannot be put down. Several people, some of them very clever and some not particularly so, have been trying to put him down for a long time; but he has the largest majority in this Parliament that he ever had with one exception. He was put down—some people would say he put himself down—in 1872; but he came up again at the end of five years with a parliamentary majority that was so large as to be cumbersome. Whether he is up to stay for his natural life the future alone can reveal; but all will admit that he is a hard man to put down.

Now what is there in some men that makes it impossible to put or keep them down? Somebody says, "Their talents keep them up." Too general, this explanation. As the lawyers say about some pleas—it is void by generality. Besides thousands of talented men in every department of life never get above the first rung. Consistency, does somebody say? Consistency forsooth! Gladstone began life as a Tory, and many think he is ending it as a Revolutionist. His first work was a plea in favour of Church Establishments and he lived to disestablish the Irish Church. He may yet do the same thing for the Scotch Establishment. Does anybody hint that the avoidance of mistakes is a reason why some men cannot be put down? George Brown, many think, made a mistake as a leader thirty years ago when he helped to defeat Reform candidates because they were not sufficiently advanced to meet his views, and another grievous one in 1864 when he went into the coalition, and a third when he went so suddenly out of it in 1866. He made mistakes all his life by bravely running for close constituencies instead of sticking to sure ones. The only man who never makes a mistake is the man who never does anything.

What, then, is it in some men that makes it impossible to put them down? It is mainly the ability to do something. Spurgeon can point to his Tabernacle, his Orphanage, his work of a dozen kinds and say to his critics: "Pound away, gentlemen, there's the work." Talmage can point to his immense congregation, to his sermons read by hundreds of thousands, to his hundreds of invitations asking him to preach and lecture, and say: "Fire away, brethren, there is the work." Gladstone looks down serenely on his opponents and deserting friends, and says: "Gentlemen, there is my plan for the government of Ireland—produce yours." They haven't any. The Old Man knows that is their weak point. George Brown could say: "Hammer away, gentlemen, there are most of the reforms on the statute book that I contended for; some of them have been put there by my opponents, but they are there. There is the *Globe*, the leading journal of the country. There is my work. Now pound away."

The man who can show first-class work is rarely put down. The man who cannot do anything is easily toppled over. In fact, he is down already. Sensible people have no sort of use for a man that stands to one side, and does nothing but find fault and criticise and scold and curse.

Moral. If you want to be among the class that cannot be put down do something and do it well.

### IS IT THE DUTY OF ALL TO SING?

MR. EDITOR,—Singing as part of the public worship of God is invariably inculcated in Scripture as a universal duty. I will not quote passages, as this would occupy too much space. But the Bible assumes that all can sing if they will. It may be urged that singing with the heart is commanded in some places; but a critical examination of these portions of Scripture will show that this is prescribed as a necessary accompaniment of singing with the voice, and not as a substitute for the vocal part of the duty. In fact,

singing is enjoined very much as prayer is. There are no exceptions recognized. The assumption is made in the Word of God, "that every worshipper *could* sing if he *would*." This may seem a startling assertion, but I appeal to the Scriptures in support of it.

Secondly, the physiology of the human voice may be confidently cited in proof of my position. Manuals of vocal culture and experienced teachers of music take the ground that any one who can *speak* can *sing*. This is evidenced by the fact that singing is really a form of speaking. The prolongation of a vowel sound such as "ah!" "oh!" converts speaking into singing. "Knoxonian," in his admirable article on "Monotony," furnishes proof of what I am now saying. He instances the case of speakers who "speak continually on Do," and also says, "The sing-song variety of monotony is very common." We complain of monotony reading or public speaking that it is "sing-song." The distinct articulation of words is a prime excellence in a good public singer, and it is often and justly pointed out as a fault in such performers, that they jumble up the words in such fashion that you cannot distinguish or intelligently follow them.

The trouble is that people neglect vocal culture. This is why so many cannot read or read so badly, and the same is true in regard to singing. Many good, unthinking souls are apt to say, if the heart be only right, it matters little about the voice. But this is surely a pious error. The heart is of first, but not of sole, importance. To refer again to "Knoxonian's" article, shall a minister of the Gospel only concern himself to have his heart right, regardless of bad reasoning, poor composition, faulty pronunciation, wrong tones of voice, and defects of manner in his discourses? The same plea that would excuse neglect of study and culture in regard to singing would excuse similar neglect in regard to preaching.

More attention ought to be paid by Christian congregations to the cultivation of vocal music. Musical taste and proficiency are not unfriendly to piety. There is no need to have the ear and soul pained by discords and blunders. As a branch of general education, vocal music should be more diligently cultivated. It ought to be part of the regular exercises in all schools; common schools, high schools, select schools, Sunday schools, and the higher seminaries of learning. It is prescribed in our public schools, but greatly neglected because of the deficiencies of teachers in this respect. Families ought to nurse and develop the singing faculty. Let fireside songs be learned, let singing be one of the exercises of family worship, and home will have more charms for the dwellers there. Members of the same Christian congregation ought to have a weekly practice meeting, to learn to sing in concert, and to become acquainted with new tunes. Then will this part of sanctuary worship be performed not only with the spirit, but with the understanding also.

I have read somewhere that her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria cannot sing, though many eminent musical professors tried to teach her in her young days. The reasons assigned for this failure are: 1. Want of voice. 2. Want of ear. 3. Want of application. I cannot vouch for the truth of the story, but if it be authentic, the third is the only valid explanation of the matter. Her Majesty has a voice, for she can speak. She has an ear, for she is susceptible to the influence of tones. Want of application is the only reason why those who can speak, and have the faculty of hearing, cannot and do not sing. In some cases where there is not a natural aptitude for singing, it requires considerable application to acquire the art. Such too readily take it for granted that they cannot sing. They do not feel the importance of the accomplishment sufficiently to take the requisite pains to master it. Singing as a part of public worship is not generally viewed in the light of a religious duty, but rather in that of a source of interest and means of entertainment. Not a few go to the sanctuary simply to be pleased. Edification and spiritual profit are too much left out of view. Even the preacher's manner and sermon are often brought to the test of the question: "Do they interest and please?" As many come with this feeling, still more stay away under its influence. They can divert themselves more satisfactorily somewhere else.

The writer knows whereof he affirms in regard to the ground taken in this article. He remembers when, in early boyhood, he could not distinguish one tune