

THE CRITICS CORNER VIII.

Prohibition.

The Editor of the DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN is not responsible for the opinions expressed in this article; this is "The Critics Corner" and knows no restraint, except that of reason and courtesy. The Editor is I believe an earnest, consistent prohibitionist, and it is probable that a majority of our readers hold the same view, but I take it that they concede to every sober citizen the right to exercise his own intellect and act according to his own conscience in this important matter. Many prohibitionists hold the view that the matter is so simple that there is no need to think, all you have to do is to vote, "Vote as you pray," vote as you are told by the Presbytery or the Conference. For example the "Final appeal" of the Dominion Alliance says "There are two sides in this contest; the side that is seeking to uphold and strengthen the liquor traffic, and the side that is seeking to uphold and strengthen the church, the law, the school, the home and all that helps to make men nobler, happier and better of." (There seems to be something wrong with the end of that sentence). I believe that if that was an absolute and final statement of the case the number of votes would be recorded and the act put into effect in a very short time. By the time these words can be printed the matter will be practically decided, and I do not think that it will be decided in favour of provincial prohibition. The "campaign" will be over but the eternal war against intemperance will have to go on for a long time. The reason of that will be that there are so many thoughtful sober citizens, who do not believe that in the present state of opinion and social life, you can at one stroke destroy the sale of liquor (that is every species of wine, beer and spirits) as a beverage. Personally I do not want liquor as a beverage. I never need it in the "arts," I can celebrate the sacrament without it, if I get along as well in the future as I have in the past it will not trouble me very much as a medicine. I claim to feel my responsibility as a Christian and a father and yet when it comes to compelling men to adopt the line of conduct which I have chosen freely, I have my doubts. It may be said that my conscience is morbidly fastidious. I do not think that such is the case but at any rate I refuse to be crushed by the majority of either a Presbytery or Conference. The vote is a solemn privilege of citizenship and I question the right of ministers to declare that if you do not construe "duty" as they do that you favour "the liquor interest."

The following points at least are matters upon which honest men may differ in their views.

(1) Is the law that a man shall not buy any wine, beer or spirits in this province as a beverage, an infringement of legitimate personal freedom?

(2) Can it be enforced or does it really carry out its purpose when the same liquor can be imported?

(3) Will not the sudden extinction of such widespread sale result in secret drinking and its assorted evils of perjury and corruption?

These are questions with which intelligent men must deal and neither the liquor

nor the Dominion alliance can answer them for us. From the political point of view I do not think that the prohibitionists have handled their case well. Mr. Ross may have made mistakes but his conduct will bear comparison with that of those extreme people who talk as if they had a monopoly of wisdom, temperance and religion. But all that is beside the mark, our plain duty remains to exercise our franchise as responsible citizens and to exert our influence on the side of temperance.

VERAX.

An exchange points out as one of the hindrances to marriage, the conventional heavy expenses to which the bridegroom is put in the way of expected presents, even to the bridesmaids, and so on. That sort of thing is all right for Carnegies and Rockefellers, but why people who have not their means, should feel called on to ape the airs of the rich, is something that passes understanding. Far better for those in moderate circumstances to be married in a private house, slip away quietly, and in lieu of the conventional expenditures referred to, make a start with a few good books towards a little library. At all events, do not let Mrs. Grundy drag you into attempting to ape the extravagant conventions of the foolishly rich.

Literary Notes.

A List of Books in Belles Lettres (T. B. Mosher, Portland, Maine.) This is not a mere catalogue it is itself a book, it is the kind of thing that makes the book lover wish that he had more money in his purse. The man who begrudges a dollar or two for his weekly journal need not send for this list. It is for the man of taste and generous literary sympathies. On the front page is a list of which the following are the last ten lines

"Poets, sages—all who wrought
In the crucible of thought
Day by day as seasons glide
On the great eternal tide,
Noiselessly they gather thus
In the twilight beauteous,
Hold communion each with each,
Closer than our earthly speech,
Till within the east are born
Premonitions of the morn!"

The book entitled "Prophetic Ideas and Ideals" by Dr. Jordan of Queen's University is now ready and can be ordered through any bookseller at the moderate price of \$1.00. We hope soon to give a review of it from a competent and independent writer (Fleming Revell Co.)

Electricity and its Similitudes by C. H. Tyndall (Fleming H. Revell Co., \$1.00) This book follows the lead of the late Prof. Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" but it draws its illustration from the sphere of electrical phenomena. The title describes correctly the aim of the book, it gives a large amount of information concerning electricity and shows that its action and laws find many analogies in the spiritual sphere. The writer has the two qualifications, he knows his science and he is in full sympathy with the Christian faith. The book is quite up to date, for example, it contains a discussion "Wireless Telegraphy," the special and important point is explained how Marconi learned to "tune" his instruments so that a "receiver" only takes the words which come

from a practical "transmitter." Then the application is made as follows:

"The relation which exists between the transmitter and receiver is a perfect analogy to the relation which must exist between God and the human spirit in order to spiritual communion."

"As the receiver must be electrically in tune with the transmitter before it can respond to the electric wires, so the heart must be brought spiritually into tune with God before it can recognize or receive His messages."

This is in accordance with the plain teaching of the New Testament. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned; but he that is spiritual, discerneth all things."

It will thus be seen that the book is both interesting and instructive, while only a man of special qualifications can go so far into one branch of science as is done in this volume, it is important that all ministers should have some knowledge of the methods of physical science, and be able to use short simple illustrations drawn from this sphere.

A short History of the Christian Church by Prof. J. W. Moncrief (same Publisher \$1.50.) "The immediate purpose of the 'Short History of the Christian Church' is twofold: First, to meet the wants of beginners in the study of Church History who want a general and connected view of the whole subject before taking up special lines of investigation, so that their work may not seem disconnected and fragmentary."

Second. "To meet the wants of the large and increasing number of intelligent people, Christian and non Christian, who would like to know something of the history of the Christian church, but who have not time for the larger works often extending through several volumes."

Judged from this standpoint the book is a success and gives the result of wide and careful study in simple language. A list of books is given at the head of each section so that those who wish to follow up the investigation of a particular period may do so. Of course one has to remember that it is impossible to give a perfect account of any great man's work in one paragraph, and those who would know for themselves the place occupied by the great thinkers and workers must go farther, but as an outline of the whole course of the history this book is very helpful, while some of its statements seem to call for qualification most of them are wise and suggestive.

Lutheran Observer: The wonderful care of the Lord for his Scriptures is one of the great testimonies to their truth and their divinity. Whatever the form of assault, the defense has been provided that would meet it, and each attack has left God's word stronger than before, and has given to his children a clearer, surer, broader basis for their faith. Interpretations may change, we may learn that we were mistaken in what we thought certain passages to mean, but the truth cannot be changed, and all new evidence but confirms the claim that "holy men of old wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and that the Scriptures are the very word of God.

Carlyle once said that unity is not possible except as men are sincere, and when men are sincere unity is as good as certain. To bring about friendship among Christians, then, we must all love the truth, and Him who is the Truth.