

Talks With Young Men

... BY ...
J. S. ROBERTSON.

"There's a spirit above and a spirit below,
There's a spirit of love and a spirit of woe;
The spirit above is the spirit divine,
The spirit below is the spirit of wine."

THESE lines are said to have been written on a church door, where barrels of liquor were stored in the basement fifty years ago. I am moved, with the holiday season approaching to say a word to young men touching the social glass, that will obtrude itself in many ways before them at this season. Quite aside from the moral aspect of the question we may appeal to young men on the most common-sense basis to leave the wine cup alone at all times. Within a little more than a month it will be remembered that the Hon. John Sherman, a prominent statesman and financier, of the neighboring Republic, passed away at a good old age. It appears that ten years ago, when Mr. Sherman was Secretary of State, a young man, the son of one of Sherman's school mates, wrote to him for assistance. He said he had fallen so low in life that there was no place for him but the gutter; that existence had become a burden and that he wanted to die. Mr. Sherman wrote him a kindly and sensible letter, which only since the death of this statesman has been made public. It is full of good suggestions, but I was struck with the force and vigor of the following sentence touching the use of intoxicating liquors. Mr. Sherman said: "Abandon liquor as you would abandon a pestilence, for liquor is the curse that wrecks more lives than all the horrors of the world combined." I may just stop here, leaving this one sentence to leave its impress on the minds of my young readers, and fortify them to withstand the temptations that in redoubled force will show themselves at the festive holiday season. Close the old century right, young friends, so far as this liquor question is concerned. Open the new century equally right, determined never to touch, taste or handle the accursed thing.

A DEPARTMENT in some newspapers is one that is given over to somebody who is sometimes styled a free lance—or in a word, to the cynical writer of the staff. Perhaps almost everyone takes a degree of enjoyment out of the words, written or spoken, of the men who can throw into them a measure of cynicism or sarcasm. They are words that bite, and used against some known evil they may have their purpose. But my observation is that the part of the cynic is always a dangerous part to play. I think at this moment of a well-known Canadian citizen, large of heart, and brilliant of brain, but whose influence has ever been greatly marred because of this habit of bitter sarcastic writing and speaking, no matter what the subject. One can understand how the cynic would impress a man of the kindly and generous impulses of that writer of beautiful English, Mr. R. L. Stevenson, and will not consider his words in his book, "An Inland Voyage," one whit too strong: "I hate cynicism; a great deal worse than I do the devil; unless perhaps the two were the same thing." It is a practice that is almost sure to be abused, and is more frequently exercised to do injury to the right than to pull down the wrong. Under the cloak of the cynic or the sneer, untold injury has been done to many a good man and many a good cause. Henry Ward Beecher has described the cynic in these terms: "The cynic is one who never sees a good quality in a man and never fails to see a bad one. He is the human owl mousing

for vermin and never seeing noble game." To the young men who are aspiring to make their influence felt, either in the quiet contact with their fellow men, through the printed page, or on the public platform, for my part I would take sides with Stevenson and Beecher, and discourage the role of the cynic.

Wentworth Historical Society.

THIS Pioneer Society held its opening meeting (by kind permission of the Parks Commission) in historic Dundurn Castle. Some seventy members assembled in the magnificent old drawing room, with its heavy walnut furnishings, to listen to a most instructive paper by Miss Janet Carnochan, President Niagara Historical Society, on "The Early Gravestones of our Country." Notwithstanding the seeming gravity of the subject, there was much to interest, and at times amuse, in these early tributes to departed worth. Mr. Charlton voiced the thanks of the meeting to Miss Carnochan for her valuable paper.

Mrs. Fessenden read some extracts from the Hamilton Spectator of December 2nd, 1846. Among the items was "The Keeping of St. Andrew's Day." The sermon was preached in St. Andrew's church by Rev. Mr. McKidd. The dinner presided over by John Young, supported on the right by Dr. Dickenson of St. George's Society, Sir Allan McNabb and Mr. McKidd, on the left Mr. McCurdy, St. Patrick's Society, Hon. Adam Ferguson, Mr. Sheriff Thomas. It was remarked that both the weather and the roads were in splendid condition, and "the Sons of St. George and St. Patrick were not a whit behind those of St. Andrew in respectability, numbers, or enthusiasm." This old print also contained a welcome home to Sir Allan McNabb by "Harriett Annie," which sounded strangely sad at this time and occasion.

At the conclusion, the members strolled through the house and grounds, and all expressing the desire that the old place, fraught with so many memories of early days, should remain intact. The second regular meeting of the Society, by kind invitation of the President, was held at the residence of F. W. Fearman, Esq., who kindly placed his valuable collection of curios, books, valuable papers, and photographs on view. A pleasant evening was spent inspecting these and listening to a couple of five-minute papers, one by Mr. Justice Griffin on "The Rebellion of 1837," the other by Mrs. Fessenden, "A Lost Art in the Victorian Era." Light refreshments were then served, and a most delightful evening closed by singing the National Anthem.

A Womanly Woman.

It does not require a very great amount of money, nor a brain brimful of wisdom to make a woman attractive, far from it; but it does require care and energy, and also a little self-denial.

"A woman's hair is her glory," and it is every woman's duty to look well after this "glory." She should keep it always clean, first of all. A thorough bath with brisk rubbing of the scalp twice a month is not too often, and it will keep the hair soft and bright. Many advocate vigorous brushing, but in my own case, as in many others, brushing has made the hair fall out. Used in moderation the brush is not injurious. Vaseline is cleansing, and should be well rubbed into the roots of the hair the night before the intended bath. A good plain soap should be used, and the hair well rinsed.

Now that we have disposed of the hair, we will turn our attention next to the teeth, and here the brush cannot be used too vigorously. After every meal, before breakfast, and before retiring, the teeth

should be well washed, brushing them always up and down, and not across. Once a day a simple dentifrice may be used, although soap and water ought to keep the teeth pure. Dental floss is much more necessary than any powder. After each meal use the floss carefully between all the teeth. It does more towards keeping the teeth sound and the mouth wholesome than the brush. A call on the dentist at least four times a year is advisable. My young woman must next look to her finger-nails. These are indeed a great factor in a lady's make-up. A good stiff nail-brush, with plenty of soap and warm water, are the first necessities. Never use a sharp instrument of any kind under the nails, as it makes the inside of the nails rough and in a good condition to catch all the dust going. A narrow rim of white above the quick is much prettier and neater than an exaggerated length. Keep the cuticle well pushed down, having a crescent of white at the base of each nail. If the nails are inclined to be stubby, trim them with a slight point, and in all cases keep the corners well filed down. Rub briskly with vasoline occasionally, to keep them from becoming brittle.

Carriage and figure are two things which we ourselves control to a great extent. Hold the shoulders well back and down, with chest well expanded, and let the weight of the body fall on the balls of the feet. Now, please, do not begin to think you cannot do all these things. I said you must be energetic and self-denying, and you will have your reward, I assure you. You must guard against having the waist longer in the back than in the front; do not allow your skirts to sag at the back, and have them cut a shade longer in front than in the back. Practise a moderately long step in walking and keep head well up, but not too high, for my girl must not look bold. The arms should move freely, but do not swing them. I said above that money is not necessary to make an attractive woman. Very often a moderate income produces a much more lady-like looking person than a large one. But the woman with a slim purse must have a care; she must keep to the subdued shades of grey, black, navy blue and brown. She must never buy cheap things. Better wear a dress neatly mended and wait till you have saved up enough to buy a good one. It is the same with boots. Good boots, with proper care, should last almost two years. The woman I have been trying to present I hope stands clearly before your mind's eye—a well-kept, neat and sensible-looking woman, attracting no rude gaze or causing no unkind pleasantries from thoughtless street loafers. Is she not an improvement on the many cheaply gotten up women we meet every day, with frizzled hair and untidy, conspicuous clothing, and a general idea of carelessness pervading their personalities? If you think so, and like this woman of mine, you will hear more of her later on. I should like to tell you of her office and street manners, and various other things about her which I admire.

F. B. C.

HOLLY SUPERSTITIONS.

Old English Legends in Connection With the Tree.

Many are the legends and superstitions connected with the holly. Old authors write of the tree as the bulwer and the holm, while in our old ballads it is nearly always the hollin tree. It is as the holm that Spenser includes it among the trees that grew in the forest where Una and her gentle knight sought "covert." Coleridge, in his quaint "Hercynia," tells us that the smaller branches of the holly may be used in

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decorating houses and churches, and that those of a larger size are "very necessary for carter's to make whips and for riding rods," and "which may seem a little strange," to the reader who knows no better, "one of his friends had a holly tree growing in his orchard of that bigness that, being cut down, he caused it to be sawed out in boards, and made himself a coffin."

In some parts of Yorkshire, curiously enough, to this day it is believed that if more ivy than holly is used in the Christmas decorations the wife will "wear the breeches" for the ensuing year. An old farmer was once seen pulling down the ivy with which the kitchen was decorated. "I'll ha' uoan o' this," he whispered to his squire. In Yorkshire, too, they have the beautiful superstition that Christmas is the one feast of the year in which the fairies may rejoice; they may hear the holy name without having to flee and hide and they have been heard to join in the carols. Once a little elf child, we are told, was forgotten by some mischance, and was heard weeping and wailing up and down the house, though none saw him till Whitsuntide. Speaking of this to an old woman in Devonshire, she assured us that the fairies had left the child "of purpose." If any one had had wit to sprinkle (christen) him, he never would have gone back to his people, but would become a Christian child.

The holly used for decorations, both in church and house, should be taken down on Candlemas eve, or misfortune will come on parish or people. In taking down holly in some parts of England it is thought unlucky to prick the finger if blood comes, but if a leaf stick to dress or coat it is a good omen. In old days a branch of holly picked on Christmas eve was as efficacious as the rowan, or mountain ash, in protecting from witches and warlocks or evil spells. A twig, brought from church, might be kept, like the Eastern palm, for the same purpose. Your cattle, too, will thrive, and your sheep and goats bring forth twins if you fasten up a bit of holly in stall or manger or fold, that God's creatures may rejoice with man on the anniversary of his birth.—Monthly Packet.