

themselves much to blame. They are to blame when they allow themselves to be treated as "organists," or other than equals. They are to blame when they submit to being "patronized" by anybody. They are to blame when they personally attack journalists who may happen to hold opinions differing from their own. If politicians wish rivals bespattered, let them do their own bespattering. Journalists make a mistake when they decry each other's circulation or business. Whatever they feel, manifestations of jealousy never look otherwise than petty. Lawyers, as a profession, stand up for each other through thick and thin. Why should journalists alone devour each other for the amusement of Tom, Dick or Harry?

The journalist has to bear the sins of many. He has to take the brunt of political battle. He has often to confront the wealthy and the powerful. Frequently undeserved odium and obloquy that belong to others make up his portion.

In England, journalism has become a power recognized personally as well as politically alike by "persons and personages." The road to that proper recognition alone to be coveted by any true journalist will be found in Canada, as in England, in an attitude of dignified self-respect, and of respect towards others in the same profession, even though politically the gulf between be as wide as that which divides Lord Salisbury from Joseph Chamberlain.

CAXTON.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

To the Editor of the Week:

SIR,—When such a railway accident as the one at Pinkerton, which it is stated will cost the Company not less than one hundred thousand dollars, startles the placid intelligence of the public, the mind of some thoughtful citizen will naturally turn to the question of remedy. The average journalist, as his habit is, will think first of apology, and how delightfully safe railway travelling is in the abstract; or, as he would perhaps prefer to phrase it, on the average. The money question will come first in the consideration of a trading community, accustomed to protecting its flesh and blood by insurance premiums, thus justifying the prior mention of it in this letter. The punitive or judicial question will come next in order. We shall all be most anxious to know who is to pay in purse or in person. What but this are the judges upon the bench for? But some dissatisfied mortal who rates the sentiment of humanity somewhat higher even than the gregarious instinct will begin to plume such faculties as he possesses for a short flight, earnestly seeking to know if this class of accidents cannot be prevented. The public feeling amounts to very little, being too inexpert, enlisted on the side of the companies, or deeply fascinated with the Turkish or "Kismet" view of human and travelling existence. The journals, as hinted already, are mostly unavailable, finding it their business to make things pleasant generally, and very skilfully carrying that out—not a line of "leader" in the presence of such a catastrophe as the one we are considering! The railway engineers, being paid officials, or hoping to become so, do their duty according to their positions. And so it appears there is no space, unless THE WEEK takes the case into its kind consideration, even to propound the question: "Why should a hundred thousand dollars' worth of train and a quite incalculable value in life be allowed to roll, not four times, but any less number, down an embankment?" To view the question in this way would be to prepare to entertain it on its merits, and as far as the experience of the writer avails anything, we are a long way yet from that practical method in railway contingencies in Canada.

Yours,

QUESTOR.

THE UNDERTAKERS' CONVENTION.

To the Editor of the Week:

SIR,—A recent issue contained a letter from "Prudence," under the caption of "Celebrations and Conventions," wherein he affects great astonishment at the recent "Undertakers' Convention" held in the City of Toronto, and submits the following queries for our consideration: "Can it be possible that they met together for the purpose of discussing how to improve their business, and to keep up those exorbitant prices which they charge for the burying of the dead?"

Yes, "Prudence"; we seriously met for the direct purpose of improving and elevating our calling, in the direction of acquiring, through the medium of lectures given by practical men who thoroughly understand our wants, the requisite knowledge that will enable us to successfully cope with decomposition during the brief interval that elapses between death and interment; and, paradoxical as it may appear to you, the prevention of contagion from diseases that are well known to be propagated by some of our funeral customs. As to your reflection that we charge "exorbitant prices," permit me to remind you that no tradesman subject to equal risks and exposure realizes less profit on his capital than the regular undertaker. His customer can select without pressure or intimidation such articles as he desires to procure at prices that will meet the requirements of his taste and pocket. A "radical" change may be necessary in our funeral obsequies, as in other departments of trade, but the undertaker does not occupy a singular position when he meets the requirements of the public by furnishing the goods they desire to purchase. Stop the demand and the supply will cease.

Yours, etc.,

W. H. HOYLE.

Cannington.

CANADIAN WRITERS.

To the Editor of the Week:

SIR,—I have read the survey of "Canadian Literature" by Mr. J. E. Collins, which appeared a few weeks ago in your journal. It will not be arguing myself unknown to admit that several names cited as those of our principal literary men are entirely new to me; for I venture to say that sixty per cent. of your readers can be placed in the same category with me. But it is at Mr. Collins' sins of omission I am most amazed. The omission that strikes one as most glaring is that of Joseph Howe's name from the list. How Mr. Collins could consider the enumeration complete without reference to the greatest orator and probably the finest poetical mind Canada ever produced, does not seem clear.

Yours truly,

BLUENOSE.

New Glasgow, N. S.

DRIFTING AMONG THE THOUSAND ISLANDS.*

NEVER a ripple upon the river,
As it lies like a mirror, beneath the moon,
—Only the shadows tremble and quiver,
'Neath the balmy breath of a night in June.

ALL dark and silent, each shadowy island
Like a silhouette lies on the silver ground,
While, just above us, a rocky highland
Towers, grim and dusk, with its pine trees crowned.

Never a sound but the wave's soft plashing
As the boat drifts idly the shore along—
And the darting fire-flies, silently flashing,
Gleam, living diamonds—the woods among.

And the night-hawk flits o'er the bay's deep bosom,
And the loon's laugh breaks through the midnight calm,
And the luscious breath of the wild vine's blossom
Wafts from the rocks like a tide of balm.

Drifting! Why may we not drift forever?
Let all the world and its worries go!
Let us float and float with the flowing river,
Whither—we neither care nor know!

Dreaming a dream, might we ne'er awaken;
There is joy enough in this passive bliss;
The wrestling crowd and its cares forsaken;
Was ere Nirvana more blest than this?

Nay! but our hearts are ever lifting
The screen of the present, however fair;
Not long, not long, may we go on drifting,
Not long enjoy surcease from care!

Ours is a nobler task and guerdon
Than aimless drifting, however blest;
Only the heart that can bear the burden
Shall share the joy of the victor's rest.

FIDELIS.

SONNET TO A MULE.

ILLUSTRIous pledge of lawless amorousness!
Celestial kicker!—Pray assuage the ire
That threatens from those shifting orbs of fire:
Sweet foretastes of a saintly heel's caress.
Yet, Muley, each who views thee must confess
Thou hast the peaceful virtues of thy sire;
Those intellectual hoofs would ne'er desire
To spifflicate the spirit of the press.
In peace I titillate thine hide, and, lo!
I grasp thy tail, and—thud! ouch!—all things melt,
And stars and meteoric showers glow
Above a blighted liverpad! and oh!
Good Christians, go and feel what I have felt,
Cycloned by hybrid heels "below the belt"!

H. K. COCKIN.

A CONVERSION.

[From the French of Thomas Bentzon.]

VIII.

He had baptized her with her full approval. The truth, thought he, had for once made its way into that tribe of heretics, rebellious and hardened for centuries; it would be a grand example, an edifying theme for the whole parish. Vicar Fulgentius was giving glory to Heaven for the triumph of which he had been the instrument, when a man, whom no one had ever seen at the church, violently pushed open the door of the vestry, where he was alone. It was a sturdy, thickset old man, with rough, tanned features. A beard of several days' growth bristling round his face gave him a peculiarly savage look. His small, sunken eyes gleamed fiercely from beneath a pair of bushy eyebrows; his fist trembled as it clutched a stick, while standing in front of the Vicar, he looked him full in the face.

"She belongs to you," he began, without a preamble. "I leave her to you. Come and take her. . . . Yes; take her body, since you have already stolen her soul. The crime will be no greater. Robber! seducer! that is all you are; do you hear? . . . She told us in leaving us that she would die a Catholic—she, my daughter! . . . Her mother confessed it all to me; her mother, who behaved like a go-between, out of pity for what she told her; out of pity! I, out of pity for her honour, for the honour of her kindred, out of pity for her eternity, would have fastened

* The first four verses were published in the *Century*, and copied into the eclectic department of THE WEEK. At the author's request we now give the complete poem.