

Our Contributors.

COBBLE STONES AS CONVERTERS.

BY KNOXIAN.

The daily press of Toronto tell the world quite frequently that Toronto is a *great* city. They also say that it is a centre. In fact it is said to be an educational centre, a commercial centre, a legal centre, a railway centre, the centre of almost everything in Ontario that can afford to have a centre. Some of the moral reformers of the city have recently named it "Toronto the good." This name has probably been given to distinguish the Ontario capital from such cities as Hamilton, Brantford, Guelph, London and Stratford. Who would ever think of saying Hamilton the good, or Brantford the good, or Guelph the good, or Stratford the good? One reason why nobody would call these cities "good" may be because they have never yet learned the secret of using cobble-stones as a converting agency. When they know how to convert men with rotten eggs and cobble-stones they too may be called "good."

It is not for a moment to be supposed that five hundred citizens of Toronto the good would chase a man with cobble-stones without having some good object in view. Their motives must have been good, and their methods wise. When they chased William O'Brien along King, Bay and Wellington Streets, pelted him with rotten eggs and cobble-stones, when they ran him through a bicycle shop, and into a tailor's shop, when they ran him along a lane, and over a brick wall, no doubt they were animated by the highest, purest and most benevolent motives. The Mayor says he does not "condone" their action, but moral reformers, patriots and philanthropists are rarely appreciated in their own time. Posterity will do them justice.

Perhaps the best way to find out the exact nature of the high, moral and patriotic services these citizens of Toronto the good wished to render is to ask what did they wish to do with and for William O'Brien. What did they wish to convert him from and to? O'Brien is an agitator, and they wished to soothe him down into a quiet, peaceable citizen like one of themselves. O'Brien is, they say, a rebel, and they wished to change him into a loyal subject. O'Brien is a Roman Catholic, and no doubt they ardently desired to make him a Protestant. Perhaps they even yearned to make him a Christian, so that he might, like them, be an honour and blessing to Toronto the good or some other city.

Now these three are most praiseworthy objects. The first of the three is the only one about which there can be the slightest doubt. Whether it is a good thing or not to turn an agitator into a quiet man depends entirely on what kind of an agitator he is. Elijah was an agitator. He disturbed the Ahab family and the priests of Baal considerably. In fact Ahab thought he troubled the whole kingdom. Paul was an agitator. So was John Knox. So was Martin Luther. Cobden and Bright were agitators. A good many people think John Bright did the world better service when he was an agitator than he is doing now. William Lyon Mackenzie was an agitator, and Ontario people owe no small share of their constitutional rights to William Lyon Mackenzie. George Brown did some rather lively agitating in his time. The people of Canada erected a finer monument to his memory than will ever stand over the grave of any of the bishops or canons that took part in the park meeting—unless the Government erects one for them.

But let it be assumed that O'Brien is an agitator of the bad kind. His mission here was foolish and foolhardy. Let it be assumed that he is an agitator of the worst kind. What puzzles us is to understand how chasing him with rotten eggs and stones could quiet him down into a peaceful citizen. How could it be reasonably expected that treatment of this kind would pacify him? One can easily understand how stoning him might kill him and then he would perhaps be quiet enough; but it would be an outrage on Toronto the good to suppose that these estimable citizens wished to quiet the agitator in that way. We utterly fail to see how the means used could have a soothing influence on the agitator.

The second object aimed at by these law-abiding citizens of Toronto the good was most praiseworthy. They laboured to turn O'Brien into a loyal subject.

That was a good thing to do. Happy is the country that has no discontented subjects. But we utterly fail to see how stoning O'Brien could make him loyal. It is quite true that the stoning was accompanied with the singing of the National Anthem. Her Majesty no doubt will be greatly pleased, and will feel highly honoured when she hears of the use made of the National Anthem by these loyal citizens of Toronto the good. But still it seems difficult to understand how loyalty can be pounded into a man with stones, even to the music of the National Anthem.

The conversion of O'Brien to Protestantism would perhaps be a good thing, though possibly not such a great thing as these champions of Protestantism thought. Parnell is a Protestant. So are a considerable number of the Irish Home Rulers. Still it might be a good thing on the whole to make William O'Brien a Protestant. Who can have any doubt about it when he looks at the men who were trying to convert the agitator? Were he a Protestant he might be like one of them! But what puzzles us is to understand how a man can be stoned into Protestantism, or have Protestantism stoned into him. The attempt to turn Father Chiniquy into a Catholic by stoning has proved a failure. Why should it be supposed that stoning will be more successful in the work of turning Catholics into Protestants than of turning Protestants into Catholics? We have not learned that O'Brien has embraced the Protestant faith since he was stoned. Perhaps the stones did not strike in the right place. One struck him on the rib, and another on the left shoulder. These may not have been the proper points at which to pound in the Protestantism. If a good-sized rock had struck him in the heart perhaps he might have been immediately transformed into a curate for Canon Dumoulin. A blow on the head with a boulder might have made him a good enough Protestant to become an assistant to Dr Wild.

But we give up the whole subject. We cannot for the life of us see how a Catholic agitator who is supposed to be a rebel can be made peaceable, loyal and Protestant by pelting him with rotten eggs and cobble stones. A considerable number of people seem to think that Protestantism can be pounded into Catholics, but we do not understand the process, and give the problem up in despair.

COLONIE AGRICOLE ET PENITENTIAIRE DE METTRAY. - II.

THE MODEL REFORMATORY INSTITUTION OF FRANCE.

The central establishment forms an immense elongated square, two of whose sides are occupied with a series of detached houses, each having a ground floor used as workshops, and above that a first and second story fitted up as dormitories, etc. A third side contains the director's house, a normal school, houses for the chief assistants, an infirmary, laundry, houses for sisters of charity, etc. Opposite to this, on the remaining side, is the church with school rooms on either side. Behind the church are the buildings used for farming purposes—stables, cattle-sheds and a large workshop for the construction of agricultural implements. Here too is the gymnasium, and farther back the cemetery, laid out with walks and rows of cypresses, where repose the remains of Baron de Courteilles, who died in 1852, and the heart of M. de Metz, who died in Paris in 1873. Over the tomb is an inscription appropriate for both. "I wished to live, die and rise again with them," referring to the boys, many of whom are buried here also.

THE FAMILY SYSTEM,

as already stated, was adopted from the Rauhe Haus at Horn; but the large numbers at Mettray required the greatest care in arranging those who were to form each family. The character of each boy had to be studied on his arrival, so as to ascertain the treatment most suitable for him. It is impressed upon each at once that he has been sent not merely for his present good, but for his future welfare—if the work he has to do is more laborious than that in the prison, it is intended thereby to develop his physical powers—that the moral training to which he is subjected is for the purpose of awakening those principles of religion and virtue without which no permanent reformation is possible. In France the inhabitants of each district differ in character, and this has to be taken into account, so as to balance the volatile

nature of one by the steadiness, not to say stolidity, of another. By such arrangement the danger of evil association is at least lessened. The habits and affections of the family circle, which supply the firmest bands by which society is held together, have to be cultivated. Amongst these neglected children—by dividing the colony into sections of forty boys, and placing over them superintendents called *chefs de famille* and "elder brothers," called *freres aînés*, who exercise their authority firmly but kindly, these objects are generally secured. The young criminals who have been trained in vice gradually rise in their own eyes and in the estimation of others, and with few exceptions are converted into useful members of society. I should say that the "elder brother" is chosen by ballot by the boys themselves, from the names on the "register of honour," and if they receive the sanction of the director they serve for a month.

THE DORMITORIES

are large and arranged so as to give perfect ventilation and secure health. The walls are adorned with engravings sent by London printsellers and the English Art Union. Two rows of posts extending from the floor to the ceiling divide the rooms into three sections. The centre is free and the sections between the posts and the walls are occupied at night by hammocks, in which the boys sleep. During the day the whole room is free and the windows open, so that every portion is thoroughly ventilated. When the bugle sounds "prepare for bed" the hammocks are unhooked from the wall, and dropped into grooved supports projecting from the upright posts. A small grass mattress, pillow, sheets and coverlet are taken from a shelf above, and all is made ready for the occupant. The hammocks are suspended parallel with each other, but of every two boys the head of one is toward the wall, and the head of the second toward the upright. In this way conversation, even in a whisper, is prevented and surveillance easy. It is effected in this way. A little room is partitioned off from one end of the sleeping apartment, having windows with venetian blinds which command a view of the whole. In it sleep on one side the *chef de famille*, and on the other side his assistant, so that the boys can never be sure they are not seen, a light being left in the room all night. They know that the *chef de famille* can put his veto upon a reward given by other masters if the conduct in the family has not been satisfactory.

In the morning the process of the evening is reversed—the supports of the hammocks are raised when the bugle sounds, and suspended on the wall, their contents meantime being neatly folded and placed on the shelf above. Then a comb and brush are taken from a cupboard and the boys retire to an adjoining room where they dress after a bath—all being done in perfect silence. Returning they form themselves in lines, say a brief prayer, and, at the call of the bugle, descend to a class, after which they breakfast. This being over, the bugle sounds again, and they all assemble in parade order on the great square. After a few formalities they march off at the word of command, with their masters at their head, to their occupations in the fields near by or in the respective workshops. In the same order they return at noon, and go back to work at a fixed hour. Such is the ordinary routine, varied a little on Sundays, when they rise at half-past six instead of five o'clock, and in addition to the Church service they have longer military exercises and gymnastics than on other days.

THE FARMS

are six in number, containing about 520 English acres. Four of the farms have each a separate establishment, to which is attached a *chef de famille* and a farm labourer, and his wife, who is housekeeper and cook. The boys work hard, and sleep, eat and study in large airy rooms, larger than those at the central establishment. In other respects the regulations and discipline of these detached families upon the farms are the same as the others. In case of sickness the boys are carried to the central infirmary, and treated there. Every Sunday these families pass the day at the central school and church and join their confrères in all the exercises, meetings and sports of the day. In this way a bond of union is maintained.

The farming is overlooked by an experienced agriculturist, who sees that everything is done in the most approved style, and who gives lessons on the cultivation of the ground, rotation of crops, etc. The farm buildings are simple, but the stock of horses, cows