

The Brain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, December 25th, 1912

A Merry Christmas

To our readers one and all the members of The Guide staff send their warmest personal wishes for a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

WHERE ARE THE PEACE ADVOCATES?

For several years past a number of prominent public men and leading newspapers in Canada have vigorously advocated international peace and disarmament. They have carried on a splendid campaign towards this most desirable end and have received able assistance from the pulpit. Since the two naval policies have come before the people, however, most of these peace advocates have disappeared into the ranks of the advocates of one or other of the naval policies. They are now in favor of armament and preparation for the war which they had taught us to believe was impossible. It calls to mind the attitude of two other peace advocates in Great Britain, Richard Cobden and John Bright. These two men gave to Great Britain free trade, which proved the greatest blessing of the nineteenth century. They then tried to educate the people towards international peace and disarmament, even going to the length of condemning the British Government for its part in the Crimean war. Despite the splendid service these two patriots had done for their fellow citizens, their labors for peace were rewarded by being driven out of Parliament and suffering untold indignities at the hand of a war crazed populace. But the two heroes stood bravely by their principles and happily lived to be restored to public favor. Their names still stand at the front in the roll of Britain's greatest sons and the grateful people now admit that the Crimean war was a blunder and that Cobden and Bright were true patriots. There is a lesson in the history of the lives of these two men for the peace advocates of every land, Canada included.

MARK YOUR BALLOT

There are yet some thousands of our readers who have not marked the ballot in the issue of December 11. We had hoped that every reader was sufficiently interested in the eight questions to mark the ballot at once. This is the only opportunity ever offered to the western farmers to give a free and independent expression of opinion upon these eight vital questions. Every man's mind is certainly made up in regard to at least some of the questions and the others may be left blank. Please take The Guide of two weeks ago and look up the ballot on page 19. Vote either "yes" or "no" on those questions upon which you have decided. Let us make this first real referendum as good as possible. The polls will not be closed for another two weeks which will allow even those farthest from the railways plenty of time to get their ballots to us.

Earl Russell, grandson of Lord John Russell, and one of the leading members of the British nobility, has joined the Fabian Society, an organization of socialistic leanings. The earl is particularly in favor of the nationalization of the land. Can one imagine our Canadian knights and millionaires actively engaged in destroying their special class privileges?

UNIVERSITIES AND THE PEOPLE

It has been the unhappy fate of the common people time out of mind to find those agencies which should be strongest in their defence actually ranged along with their bitterest foes. Where should we look for the carrying out of the principles of real brotherhood if not to the Christian Church, and yet the Church has more than once been the champion of injustice, the defender of privilege, and the advocate of such iniquities as the slave trade and the liquor traffic. Where should one be surer of finding a friend of genuine democracy than in the press since it has gained complete freedom from governmental control, and yet if the press has been freed from official regulations, it has largely been brought under a still worse bondage, in becoming too often the mouthpiece of big business, willing to deceive the people to serve the interests of their unscrupulous masters. Of like complexion is the influence of many of the great universities of today. Just when the people were hoping that the principles of true democracy were at least enveloping the land, various reports have disturbed this happy dream, by showing many centres of learning to be hot beds of snobbery where the money power rules supreme. Governor Wilson's stern but unsuccessful struggle to reform Princeton University when president of that institution is a case in point.

What of our Canadian universities? Among the students there is probably as democratic an equality as anywhere, but are the universities themselves standing for the fullest democracy? Grave problems, and many of them, are confronting the people of today. Have the universities no word of help to give? The land is flooded with the plausible fallacies and half-baked theories of Privilege and no end of advice is offered by well-paid spokesmen of the giant interests whose only concern is to defend and continue the existing order. In all this confusion of tongues, this Babel of ignorance and avarice, how comes it that so many trained college professors are as silent as the tomb? Have they no eyes to see what everyone else can see—the toiling masses being chained to the chariot wheels of Greed? And if they see the growing impoverishment and enslavement of the people who should be more free and unfettered in declaring the whole truth, the rights and the wrongs of society, than the experts in our college halls? Unfettered! "Ah, there's the rub." What means this oppressive silence, if not that many centres of light and leading have fallen under the influence of plutocracy, the rule of wealth? Notable exceptions, to be sure, are not wanting, yet the professors who fearlessly oppose the fundamental wrongs of the day are so few as to be marked men. An exposure of the iniquities of the Standard Oil octopus, for instance, can hardly be expected from the University of Chicago, which has received about \$25,000,000 from John D. Rockefeller. One wonders what would happen if the faculty of Political Science at Toronto University began showing up the cruel burden of land monopoly, when the head of the Provincial Government, Sir James Whitney, explodes with anger at the very mention of Henry George, and when Sir Edmund Walker presides at the Board of Governors? Every one knows how Andrew Carnegie has lavished his millions on colleges, \$400,000 to Queen's being one of his latest gifts. Ungracious as it seems to look a gift horse in the mouth, his wide-reaching pension scheme for all college professors has a sinister aspect, when one links this with all the other forces being brought to bear against democracy and radicalism in the halls of learning. It looks

as though the unholy forces of mammon, alarmed at the rising tide of popular rebellion against their rule, were making a concerted effort to capture the citadels of higher instruction throughout the land. From these halls come the leaders of the people in politics, pulpit and press. If the fountain is defiled the stream cannot be pure. Are our universities sound?

LET US DESERVE BETTER

It is frequently said by deep students of the world's history that the people of every country receive as good government as they deserve. Whether this statement can be accepted without some qualification is debatable, but there is enough truth in it to cause much reflection. No one believes that our Provincial and Federal Governments in Canada are all that they should be. Who is to blame for this condition? We feel that considerable blame is attachable to many politicians and public men, but undoubtedly a great deal of the blame lies with the people themselves. No people in Canada are as actively interested in public questions or as keen for legislative reform as those in the Prairie Provinces. The Guide has vigorously supported the cause of the western people for the past four years and will continue to do so in the future, but it would be folly to blind ourselves to the weaknesses in our own ranks. We have shown up the weaknesses of the politicians very fully and not without good results. Let us now examine ourselves with equal frankness, and see if the result will not be even more beneficial.

The source of our government is the people, and undoubtedly the moral standard of the government cannot rise much higher than the moral standard of the people it represents—though it may fall considerably below that standard. To-day large contributions are made to the political campaign funds by corporations in payment for legislative favors, past and future. In the three Prairie Provinces we elect twenty-seven members to the House of Commons. The expense of electing the majority of these members is from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each, and some undoubtedly spend more. If this money was contributed by the corporations it is quite natural for the corporations to expect returns in the way of favorable legislation. If, on the other hand, these expenses were largely from the pockets of the candidates, they naturally would feel that it should be repaid to them. Let us take the case of a western member who spends say \$6,000 from his own pocket. He will have four sessions at Ottawa, unless an election is called sooner. His sessional indemnity is \$2,500 per session, or \$10,000 for the four sessions, which average about six months each. His personal expenses at Ottawa will be at least \$1,200, as a member of Parliament has a certain position to maintain, and he has his family to look after in addition. If he leaves his family at home it will cost them less than to live in Ottawa, but it is too much to ask of a man that he isolate himself from his family for six months every year. His own expenses for the four sessions would thus be about \$4,800, leaving \$5,200 for the support of his family and to meet his election expenses. It is easy to see that such a member is going to be a loser. Unless he has considerable money and an exceedingly high sense of public duty it will be easy for him to fall into temptation and accept favor in return for favor. He cannot afford to be independent unless he has considerable independent resources at the back of him. Naturally, if such a man desires to remain in Parliament he will desire to keep on good terms with his party, as, otherwise, at the next election

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