

Social Reforms

Of the Day---With the Thinkers and Workers.

Voices from the Mail Bag.

Did you ever stand at the telephone when the wires were crossed and listen to the scraps of conversation that braided themselves in an out, making a medley at once amusing and distracting? "Please send up those oranges at once," commands a feminine voice. "Has that invoice arrived?" shouts a masculine tenor. "What's the wholesale price per barrel," inquires an anxious bass; a girlish treble promises to be ready to go to the rink at a certain hour--no doubt in response to the unheard invitation of some gallant youth, whilst a tender womanly contralto is busy arranging for the meeting of a relief committee, and telling some sympathetic friend a pitiful tale of an overcoats man, and shoeless children; and all this is punctuated, in every shade of tone, by impatient, indignant, and outraged hallos that become almost ear-splitting, as the hurly-burly proceeds, and the shouters, like yourself, wait attention. It is strange to thus, unseen, take a glimpse into the lives of half a dozen unknown people. One would weave a romance out of the odd fancies that cluster, uncalled, around these "wire voices."

But a mail bag contains by long odds the most curious collection of voiceless expressions of human character. What a pictured world in miniature it is! The sighs and the songs of joy jostle each other; the wedding cards lie atop of the funeral announcements; the vile circular of some moral murderer, who seeks to prostitute innocence, nestles up against the burning appeals of a white-souled teacher or preacher of righteousness.

Even an individual letter table, if of sufficient range, is an interesting study. In scanning some earnest-hearted worker's appeal for help, or account of the triumphs or trials met with in the quiet round of local duties that occupy the time and thought of our 6,000 Ontario White Ribboners, I often wish you might all share with me in the joys, and help me bear the anxieties, that come out of my small budget of letters.

Let me give you a glimpse into a few of them:

One dear old Scotch lady writes: "We have just discovered a school section near here where, all through this bitter weather, the boys are attending school in their stocking feet, and the girls are staying at home for want of coats and shoes. Our union is busy packing a box to send them."

Let me remark that very few letters come lately that do not take occasion to comment on the unusually large amount of poverty this winter.

Another from an eastern union says: "Another cut in the wages of our mill hands! For some time back they have only had four days' work in the week, and that at a reduction of 10 per cent on the usual prices. Yesterday all the room bosses and overseers were notified of a further drop of 25 cents per day. The hands are about disheartened. And this is protection! [Editor.—Our friend is a believer in a tariff-for-revenue-only policy.] A little less protection would have had fewer factories in Canada, and more men and women on farms, where they would at least grow enough to eat. And yet our saloons are in full blast; and the Music Hall was crowded for Dan McCarthy's show, and the "Tornadoes" (last night); the audience for such things is largely made up of mill folk. It's all a perplexity. I'd like to see elected a town council that would refuse to allow such shows to come to town, and thus protect people who don't know enough to protect themselves." We can assure our friend that no such council will be in existence till the franchise includes a much bigger slice of the now silent half of Ontario's citizenship than at present; and until sex is no bar in a candidate's qualifications.

"It is 30 below zero; nobody doing anything but the plumbers, and they have to be at it before breakfast," writes a shivering correspondent. She has found a cozy nook by a big coal stove and is pouring out her soul in a red-hot tide of indignation against certain old time professors who will do little for temperance themselves, and have settled themselves as a bulwark against the incursions of those who might make a stir amongst the dry bones. What a surprise the hereafter will be for some folks! Let us see to

it that it is a blessed one for us, dear comrades.

Says a narcotic superintendent—a live one as you shall see—"I put a little ad in a local paper asking any victim of opium to communicate with me and I would do what I could to help. A woman addicted to the use of morphine responded. She writes: 'God knows I want to stop, but I cannot.' Then our friend tells of a benevolent physician who is willing to undertake the medical side of the case and adds: 'She will have to be fed every two hours, and if no other way opens I will have to accept the care. If I were sure it would be safe and wise and of value, I would not hesitate to go through with it, with higher aid.' This dear worker never dreamt she was telling her little story to anyone but me. So you and I, friend reader, will keep it to ourselves.

Here is the description of a union that I hope has few counterparts. A bustling country worker writes: "Our local society is in bad shape. We hold one business meeting a month, but do no work! The ruling spirits are unwilling to pay for a room in which to meet, so we travel about from house to house. It is scarcely necessary to say that we accomplish little. Let me give you a sample of our programmes: Mrs. —, opens the meeting with singing, followed by Bible reading and prayer; we sing again and Mrs. — and Mrs. — pray; then the president looks over at me and asks: 'Have you anything for us today?' If I have not provided anything for the occasion the programme is run out and must perforce adjourn."

The story in our columns two weeks ago might prove a pointer for this much-tried worker. Surely a resurrection is needed if this society or any other like it is to be an active principle in the settlement of the moral and social evils about it.

We'll close with a couple of joyful notes from two of our most faithful laborers. "Everything is trim for a license reduction. We have eight licenses, the outside limit the law allows; we have visited every councilor and secured the promise of a majority of the board to vote to cut off two. It is not all we want, of course, but we are thankful that at least some move is to be made." The second says: "An old retired minister has been our reeve and has determinedly blocked every effort at reform. We have been laboring for the removal of two very objectionable billiard rooms. As long as our reverend opponent held the reins there was little hope of success, so we left him at home this year and he has suddenly awakened to the fact that there is a woman's vote to be reckoned with. We are hopeful of better things."

MAY R. THORNLEY.

In Brant County.

The third annual convention of the Brant County W. C. T. U. was held in the Methodist Church, St. George, on Thursday, Feb. 7, the president, Mrs. (Judge) Jones, in the chair. Delegates were present from Brantford, Paris, Scotland and Cainsville, though the attendance was smaller, on account of the very low state of the temperature, than it would otherwise have been. The presence and assistance of Mrs. Thornley, of London, the president of the Provincial W. C. T. U., added greatly to the interest of the proceedings. After the usual routine of business was transacted the president, Mrs. Jones, delivered her annual address, which was short but to the point. She assured her hearers that she had enjoyed her work in the past, but would much rather not be a candidate for re-election, as she wished to retire on the superannuated list. New officers were elected throughout and superintendents for the following departments of work were appointed: Press, scientific temperance, fair work, Band of Hope, unfermented wine, purity in literature, art and fashion, flower mission, work among lumbermen, narcotics, evangelistic, Woman's Journal and parlor meetings.

It was decided in the future to change the month of meeting from February to September, and an invitation to hold the next meeting in Scotland was accepted. During the afternoon session Mrs. Thornley conducted a school of methods. She took as her subject "The Duties of County Superintendents," and gave a very instructive and comprehensive address. Mrs. Hick, of Paris, spoke on "Work Among Lumbermen," and with her scrap-book and comfort bag made her address very interesting. Mrs. (Rev.) C. E. Bolton, of Paris, read an excellent paper on "Scientific Temperance Instruction in the Public Schools."

The question box was conducted by Mrs. Thornley, who ably answered several grave and important questions. After the collection was taken up, which amounted to \$5, and some miscellaneous business was transacted, the hymn "God be with you till we meet again," was sung, and prayer was offered by Mrs. Thornley, and thus closed a very successful convention.

EMILY E. NIXON,
Recording Secretary County W.C.T.U.

More of the Gothenburg Plan.

There appears to be in England just now a spirit of great restlessness regarding the existence and results of the liquor traffic. Both of the great political parties are admitting that some change should be brought about, though of course they differ, as parties generally do, regarding the nature of the changes. The Liberals are pretty generally committed to the local option, or local veto, measure, and also of placing the whole license administration more under the popular control than it now is. Both the Gladstone and Rosebery Governments have introduced such bills, and the latter now stand pledged to carry such a measure through the House. The Premier has lately been hinting that some more sweeping measure ought to be carried than has yet been proposed.

There is a very considerable section of the Conservatives, on the other hand, who advocate some sweeping reduction in the present number of licenses and the adoption of the Gothenburg system, in some improved form, by which the element of personal profits on the sales of liquors shall be changed to some municipal or company system. Among the advocates of these measures are the Bishop of Chester and a number of other bishops and leading church dignitaries, besides many of the leading spirits of the great Conservative party, including Lord Salisbury, Joseph Chamberlain and many others.

The agitation has drawn so much attention to the Gothenburg system that several well-known Englishmen have visited Sweden with a view to personal inquiries. Mr. Whyte, secretary of the United Kingdom Alliance, has made extensive inquiries and has published an elaborate pamphlet in which he strongly condemns the system. Mr. Joseph Malins, the well-known head of the English Good Templar Order, has also made a trip to that country for personal investigation, and has also condemned it. More recently the London Times sent out a special commissioner of its own, who is now publishing his reports in the columns of that noted journal. These reports appear, so far, to be anything but favorable, too, and they have roused the Bishop of Chester a good deal, who sent a circular in criticism and condemnation and also sent a letter for publication in the Times, which the editor refused to insert. The Times also severely censured the bishop for the hasty course he pursued in the matter.

The Times' report gives considerable information regarding the Gothenburg system, which may be considered correct and impartial, and in view of the fact that many, both in Canada and the United States, are now considering the changes it has made, the following facts may be of interest to readers of the HOME GUARD.

Gothenburg is reported to be a large seaport town in Scandinavia, with a population of about 170,000; it is also a leading market town for a large surrounding section of country. It is some years since it adopted the system of taking the licensed sale of spirits out of the hands of private persons and handing such men over to a joint stock company. The company is not allowed to make more than 6 per cent on all paid up capital on such sales, the balance over that being handed over to the municipalities. Each such place must also provide refreshments, on which all profits are allowed to the company. The monopoly, however, does not extend to wine and beer, for which licenses may be issued as heretofore. Most of the restrictions regarding sales to minors, to intoxicated persons, to confirmed inebriates and as to prohibited hours, are very similar to those in our Ontario license law.

There are, in all, between 800 and 900 establishments where liquors are sold in the city, which is several times as large in proportion to the population as the number of such places allowed in a city under our license law. Of these, however, but 69 are spirit licenses, under the direct control of the company. About 200 of all are houses of entertainment and refreshment, the others are places where wine and beer may be purchased to be consumed "off the premises." Another writer has stated that much of that is consumed just outside of the door, corkscrews being hung up there for the convenience of such. The number of arrests for drunkenness is also larger in proportion to population than in any part of Ontario.

The advantages enumerated in connection with the system are such as would not apply to this Province to much extent, except in the matter that the individual seller has not the same temptations of profits to induce him to sell all he possibly can. They are mentioned as follows: 1. "Reduced number of public houses"; but this reduction, as we have shown, is not as great as under our license law. 2. "Improved their condition and conduct." In this respect the standard

seems lower than in Ontario. 3. "Shortened hours of sale." The hours are much the same as we now have. 4. "Stopped public house drinking by persons under 18 years of age." That has been stopped here for years past by our license law. 5. "Raised the price and lowered the strength of cheap spirits." The strength is said to be 44 per cent of alcohol, which is, we believe, a good deal stronger than most bars here dispense. 6. "Insured a standard quality and measure." 7. "Stopped drinking on credit." Our laws do that, by refusing to collect any retail liquor bills. 8. "Provided good food in public houses." Our system of public house inspection and competition leaves very little cause of complaint on that score. 9. "Eliminated the element of personal gain behind the bar and abolished competition." That may have considerable effect in restricting sales, and consequently the evils of them, in many places.

Previous to the inauguration of the Gothenburg system Sweden had more distilleries, more liquor shops and more drunkenness than any other country in Europe. The changes thus made were important reforms for there and then, but such changes would amount to little here now. The results clearly demonstrate that while there are facilities for drinking there will be drinking, and while there is drinking there will be drunkenness. All experience in all countries demonstrates that important truth. The great desire now is to stop drunkenness. To do that men must stop drinking. To do that men must be stopped selling, and to that end men must be stopped manufacturing and importing. The prohibitionists in Canada now desire a law stopping the manufacture, the importation and the sale, to the end that drunkenness and its attendant evils shall be stopped.

T. W. CASEY.

Dr. Paton's Vindication.

A portion of the Buffalo, N. Y., daily press recently published a statement affecting the good name of the eminent missionary, the apostle of the New Hebrides, the Rev. Dr. John G. Paton. The statement was headed "Dr. Paton's Phantom Ship." Dr. Paton condemned by his own church missionaries, to be looked after, etc. It was presumably inspired by a man who had represented himself as an agent of Dr. Paton, and who was exposed by the Buffalo clergy and incarcerated for collecting money under false pretenses. The statement found its way into other papers outside of Buffalo, but Dr. Paton took no means of vindicating himself until he had laid the matter before the committee of foreign missions of his own Victorian Church. Their response was prompt and expressed deep regret that Dr. Paton had been made the subject of grievous misrepresentations, and, of course, denied the scandalous statement. The doctor, in a letter to a friend in Buffalo, says: "You will be glad to hear that from my recent tour in America, Canada and Great Britain I was used of God so to draw forth the liberality of his people that he enabled me to hand over to our church and mission nearly £25,000 on my return, including £2,000 to keep the new mission ship, and £1,000 subscribed yearly by Christian friends to help to keep her. And instead of getting a commission on all I raised, as stated in your Buffalo papers, I never expected, would not have taken, and never got a cent for it or by it. But I had the joy of so working for Jesus, my church and mission, and of getting the sympathy and prayers and help of very many of his dear servants in all branches of the church, to whom I feel forever grateful and wish they may all ever enjoy every blessing."

The Temperance Prospect Across the Line.

The Outlook states: Except from South Carolina the temperance news continues gloomy in the extreme. In South Carolina the recent revision of the dispensary law seems to be giving general satisfaction—the city authorities even in Charleston and Columbia assisting in the suppression of the private bar-room, in order to forfeit the right of the local treasuries to a share in the profits of the dispensary system. But in Iowa, in South Dakota, in North Dakota, in California and in New York the liquor dealers are on the aggressive. In Iowa, according to the State Register, the Republicans have reconsidered their proposal to re-submit the question of prohibition to the voters. In both the Dakotas, on the other hand, where the saloon-keepers, instead of the temperance people, demand resubmission; the Legislatures seem likely to grant it. In South Dakota the resubmission bill has already passed the House. In California the liquor-dealers seem confident of passing a uniform license law which shall do away with the local option under which the saloons are prohibited in many parts of the State. Finally, in New York State, the liquor-dealers have come to an agreement on the Sunday excise law they desire. The bill they have introduced into the Legislature proposes that their saloons may be legally opened between 6 and 8 o'clock in the morning, and from 2 o'clock in the afternoon until midnight. Mr. Tekulsky, the Democratic president of the New York Liquor-Dealers' Association, speaks warmly in praise of the present Republican Legislature, and is hopeful of the passage of the bill. Fortunately for tem-

perance, Senator Mullin has introduced exactly the bill demanded to show the invalidity of the claim that Sunday-closing laws cannot be made effective. The Mullin Bill requires the absolute closing of all licensed places on Sunday, and the removal of all blinds and screens that would obstruct a view of the interior from the outside. Such a law as this was proposed in New York several years ago, but was defeated by the liquor-dealers. With the revocation of license for Sunday selling, and the removal of blinds and screens, so that passers-by could see whether sales were going on, the Sunday-closing laws could be as easily enforced as any on the statute books.

Here and There.

—The Ottawa City Council by twelve to eleven has refused to reduce the city licenses.

—Bishop John H. Vincent and Rev. John Hall, D.D., have become counselors of the department of purity in literature and art of the National W. C. T. U.

—Ottawa Presbytery adopted a recommendation calling upon Christian and temperance workers to organize and support pledged temperance men for Parliament.

—Lady Henry Somerset will address a mass meeting in London, Ont., on the evening of Feb. 27. Miss Willard will not come to Canada at present. Her secretary, Miss Anna Gordon, is seriously ill.

—Mrs. M. B. Brown, of Washington, N. C., has given to the State Council of King's Daughters her beautiful home, to be used as a home for imbecile children. There are said to be 4,000 in the State, and the Legislature will be asked to make an appropriation for its support.

—The New York Church Temperance Society, the healthy offspring of the Protestant Episcopal Church, has a three-year-old woman's auxiliary. The auxiliary reports a clear profit of \$1,100 for the past year as the gains won by the "Night Owl"—a sort of coffee house on wheels—which has been operated in Herald Square. Such a vision of wheels is a delightful one.

—Governor Busiel, of New Hampshire, in his inaugural address, testifies that "The prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors, after many years of trial, has become the settled policy of the State. The existing law and the means provided for its enforcement have stood the test of time and experience and are receiving each year a firmer public support. The law is found sufficient to suppress the unlawful sale of liquors wherever public sentiment lends adequate support to its enforcement."

—Since the days of William Tell, and before, the Swiss have been distinguished in archery. Prof. Hein, of Zurich, says with reference to the archery competitions: "I had occasion a short time ago to speak with one of these far-famed huntsmen. This clever marksman assures me that all who attain skill in shooting are strictly temperate men or abstainers. Even temperate men have to become abstainers about a week before entering into a schutzenfest (competition.) The best marksmen not only abstain from alcohol, but live exclusively on milk, butter, cheese and eggs. They must also go to bed betimes at night, and many of them do not smoke tobacco. Heavy smokers are never first-class marksmen."

—The Toronto hotel-keepers, meeting in convention last week, adopted resolutions censuring the custom of selling during prohibited hours and also to intoxicated men. If the license-holders lived up to the reasonable requirements of the law in these respects there would be less bitter opposition to them, in some quarters at least, than there is now. Adopting such resolutions are not confined to Toronto, or not even very new there. Several times before there have been resolutions adopted favoring an observance of the law, and even of pledging assistance in the prosecution of those who violate it. One of the secretaries, some years ago, informed the writer that the members agreed to hand in names and evidence of such cases to him, that they might, in turn, be handed over to the inspector, but none ever came. It was not that a considerable number of such cases were not well enough known, however. The Provincial license department, at one time, expected a good deal more co-operation from license holders, in the matter of law enforcement, than it has ever received.

A Temperance Archbishop.

Archbishop Kain, of the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Louis, has placed himself on record as firmly approving the co-operation of Roman Catholics and Protestants in the temperance work. The annual conference of the Y. W. C. T. U. is to be held here next Thursday and Saturday. The ladies invited the presence and co-operation of members of the Queen's Daughters, the local Roman Catholic charitable organization. The officers of the latter consulted the archbishop. His Grace informed them that it was his earnest request that they should accept the invitation and co-operate with the Y. W. C. T. U.

Minister—Don't you know that strong drink is man's worst enemy? Fast Young Man—Yes; but we are commanded to love our enemies.

What is Wealth?

Does wealth consist in money, houses, lands, bank stocks, railway bonds, etc., alone?

We think not. The young man starting life with no money, but with good digestion, good sleep, good health and ability to work in some profitable employment, has what the aged capitalist would be glad to exchange all his millions for.

What compensation is money for sleepless nights and painful days, or the misconduct of dissipated children?

Which brings the greater happiness—the glitter, show, jealousies and falsity of fashionable life, or the heart-felt friendships which prevail so largely in the homes of the industrious poor?

In how many of the palaces of our millionaires will you find greater happiness in the parlor than in the kitchen?

How many millionaires will tell you they are happier now than when starting in life without a dollar?

On the tops of mountains we find rock, and ice, and snow. It is down in the valleys that we find the vineyards.

Let no man envy those richer than himself until taking all things into account—age, health, wife, children, friends—he is sure he would be willing to exchange.—[George T. Angell.]

Mrs. B.—What, Kate, you have a soldier in the kitchen?

Kate.—Yes, mum. I felt so very lonely whilst you were out for your walk.

THE BEST PILLS.—Mr. Wm. Vandervoot, Sydney Crossing, Ont., writes: "We have been using Parmelee's Pills, and find them by far the best pills we ever used." For delicate and debilitated constitutions these pills act like a charm. Taken in small doses the effect is both a tonic and a stimulant, mildly exciting the secretions of the body, giving tone and vigor.

CUPID'S WARDROBE.—If Cupid goes bare it's from choice. He has in his wardrobe plenty of breeches of promise.

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