



TRUTH FOR THE PEOPLE

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WHAT TRUTH SAYS.

In next issue of TRUTH a very interesting paper will appear from Rev. E. A. Stafford, M. A., of Winnipeg, President of the Manitoba Methodist Conference, entitled, "From Winnipeg to the Rockies," describing a trip the writer has recently made over "the great lone land." As Mr. Stafford has been invited to become the pastor of the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, next year, many of his prospective hearers will be glad to hear from him now through the columns of TRUTH.

A statement, by a doctor who ought to know, to the effect that the habit of using smelling-salts is sure to result in red noses for those who indulge in it, should be a comfort for many of our brethren whose rubicund noses would seem to hint at a habit of using bottles other than smelling-bottles. When a man's nasal organ begins to display that rosy tint which looks very well in the eastern sky at early morning, but seems somewhat out of place on the human face, its owner can invest in a vinaigrette or bottle of smelling salts, and, by an ostentatious display thereof, induce others to believe that it is to the use of those stimulants alone that the rubicundity of his "head-scenter" is due.

The Hamilton Times remarks: "Surely we will have enough of doctors in Canada soon. Of the 500 students now in McGill University, Montreal, 233 are being educated for the medical profession." There are doctors and doctors. If every man who obtains a diploma were as skillful as a doctor ought to be, then we certainly should have enough of them to look after our bodily welfare. Ideally clever physicians are rare enough. Many members of the medical profession justify Dr. Samuel Johnson's remark about the whole brotherhood, namely, "A doctor is a man who puts drugs, of which he understands little, into a human body, of which he understands less."

Louis Riel is reported to be cutting up his capers in the Northwest again and inciting another rebellion. Little as he is to be feared, the fact that he is aided and abetted by the Fenians is much in favor of those against whom he "declares war." If he had any chance of success by creating a rebellion "on his own hook," his alliance with the Fenians would put all those chances to flight—and Louis Riel, too.

Stockton, California, has revived a very old English custom in the ringing of the carfew bell (erroneously so called, however, as its ringing is not the signal for putting out lights) at 9 p.m., at which time all children and young people must go home or be arrested. If we are to believe some people, immorality lurks wherever a number of young folks of both sexes congregate together after nightfall; and if such be the case, it would be an excellent idea to toll a bell at nine p.m. in Toronto and other large

cities, and so clear the streets of the large crowds of young people who assemble thereon, especially on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

Rumors concerning the Afghan difficulty are so contradictory that it is very hard to make out what really is transpiring or to foretell what is yet to come to pass. One thing is very certain, and that is that the Russians are gradually encroaching more and more on territory where the British don't want to see them, and the Czar is all the time protesting that he feels very amicably disposed towards England and is not thinking of war. Herat is the spot that both Russia and England covet, and the ill-feeling which doubtless exists between the two countries, in spite of the Czar's protestations, arises out of a dread on the part of each lest the other should possess this place, which is important on account of its extraordinary natural advantages as a stronghold; moreover, it is the meeting place of the great high roads from Teheran, Cabul, Bokhara, Balkh, Meshed, Khiva, and Kandahar. It is the capital of the most westerly of the three divisions of Afghanistan, standing on the river Heri, at a height of 2,500 feet above sea-level, latitude 34° 50' N., longitude 63° 30' E., and, being situated near the boundaries of Afghanistan, Persia, and Independent Tartary, it is one of the principal marts of Central Asia. Herat has acquired a kind of European importance, being, towards Persia, the key of Afghanistan, which again, in turn, affords the only approach by land to Western India.

Should the Russians once get into Herat it would be an extremely difficult matter for the British to turn them out, as the place is strongly fortified, surrounded by a wall eighteen feet in height and nine feet thick at its base, this in turn being surrounded by a ditch fifteen feet in depth and fifty in width. It is not to be wondered at, then, that both England and Russia should look askance at each other when either makes a move in the direction of this coveted spot, which has been the subject of various treaties and the occasion of wars between Great Britain, as mistress of Hindoostan, and Persia, as virtually a vassal of Russia.

New diseases seem to be making their appearance at a great rate, though a perusal of the names which are applied to them rather leads one to the belief that they are only old complaints with new names. It is very fashionable, nowadays, to suffer from nerve disorders, and fashionable physicians are bound to keep pace with the demand, and supply names for the various diseases that crop up. Some of the comparatively recent terms for neurological conditions are: "anthrophobia," being afraid to meet anyone about the house, "polyphobia," afraid of everything, sometimes: "phobophobia," being afraid something is going to happen to frighten him. Anthrophobia seems to be as old as the hills, or, at any

rate, as old as the practice of running in debt, for all of us must be acquainted with debtors who seem afraid to meet anyone about the house or anywhere else: at any rate they act very much as if they were, for they manage to disappear very rapidly whenever anyone looking at all like a creditor looms in sight. Polyphobia and phobophobia are only new fangled names for old complaints which are fairly common, as everybody knows.

It is a vulgar superstition that we owe our personal liberties in this country to free institutions, *habeas corpus*, respect for the liberty of the subject and what not, but we are apparently grievously mistaken: each one owes his freedom simply and solely to the forbearance of his neighbors, and the inability of his enemies to deprive him of it. There is not one of us who may not be shut up in a lunatic asylum any day if two or three are gathered together to ordain that it should be so. An hearing out the truth of these remarks, take the case of a certain Mr. Hillman (this occurred in England, but similar affairs are not infrequent in Canada), the facts in which are as follows: A policeman conceived the idea that Mr. Hillman was insane; a doctor went and had a look at him through a glass door; the policeman drove him off in custody to the pauper lunatic asylum, the vehicle being stopped on the way to allow two magistrates to certify the victim as insane, on the ground, (gracious heavens, that any of us escapes!) that his talk was not quite consequential. The judges, it is true, are now going to quash the order for Mr. Hillman's incarceration; but there was no suggestion of anything improper or unusual in the magistrates' way of conducting "a personal examination with the assistance of a medical man sitting with them." On the contrary, the clerk to the magistrates said that this was "the usual course which had been followed for seventeen years." If the fact that a man's talk is not consequential is to consign him to an asylum, one need not to look very far to find victims for incarceration.

The Revd. Dr. De Costa's sermon from a New York pulpit a Sunday or two ago would bear repeating from some of our own, or rather the sentiments contained in it would. Amongst other things the doctor said, in urging his hearers,—many of whom are wealthy men and large labor employers—to do what they could to shorten the hours of labor, especially of Sunday labor: "You rigorously exact of labor all you can. Men are forced to labor as if they had no souls. If the horse-car companies owned their men, they would not venture to make them work fifteen hours on a cold winter day. The men are worse off than the horses, and the stockholders don't care a sixpence for their souls or bodies." The people who really need talking to are those who employ poor girls for twelve, fifteen and eighteen hours at a stretch, in doing sewing work for which the rate of wages is scandalously small. There are many such.

A large number of Canadians and Americans, the latter especially, seem to take great delight in poking fun at London Punch and its lack of wit (according to their way of thinking). Now, considering that the English are by no means a witty people and their ideas of fun are of a sober kind,—the national gloominess causing such lights as Sydney Smith, Douglas Jerrold, and a few more, to shine all the more brightly by contrast,—the wonder is not that Punch is so dull as it is but that it is so lively. As a nation the English are slow to see a joke; second in this respect, probably, only to the Scotch, though the Germans are not far behind them; but the humor of Punch suits them exactly, though of late the effervescent kind of wit that emanates from the American brain is finding considerable favor on the other side of the Atlantic. A man who persistently fails to see the point of a joke is a most aggravating character to have any dealings with, but such men are to be freely encountered in England. If a competition were to come off between the nations of the world to discover which of them was entitled to the doubtful honor of being considered the most sluggish-witted and tardy at seeing the point of a joke, there would be a hard tussle for the supremacy between the Scotch, Germans and English. George Eliot declares that during the whole seven months of her stay in Germany she never heard one witticism or even one felicitous idea or expression from a German.

Mahomedans are most particular about excluding Christians from their mosques even at the present day, and at the beginning of this century it was well-nigh impossible for one to gain admittance to these places of worship. Christians are now, however, permitted to enter, but are compelled to observe certain rules and regulations, the removal of the "infidel" boots being one of them. A story is related of a Christian workman who was sent to repair the clock of the mosque at Tunis. A difficulty arose concerning the advisability of admitting him, which was finally settled by the Sheikh who thus spake to his co-religionists:—"In case of repairs, is it not true, O true believers, that a donkey enters this holy place carrying stones on his back? and is it not true that one who does not believe in the true religion is an ass and the son of an ass? Therefore, O brothers, let this man go in as a donkey." Accordingly the clock-mender was permitted to pass in as an ass. Cynical people might feel disposed to say that a few church-goers in our own country enter their places of worship in the same guise, judging from their actions when they are there.

The Dublin corporation rejected the proposal to present an address of welcome to the Prince of Wales by a vote of 41 to 17. Though His Royal Highness may think it a little strange, he will doubtless be devoutly thankful for escaping one infliction at least of the civic address order.