

Our Contributors.

ADMIRATION FOR MERE BIGNESS.

BY KNOXIAN.

We have already discussed such national dangers as "The Worship of Wealth" and "The Love of Notoriety." We turn now to an undoubted weak point in the character of many Canadian and American people—Admiration for the Big.

Before passing, however, from that miserable weakness, "The Love of Notoriety," it may be well to say that no small number of the quarrels that disgrace the Church of Christ arise from an itching for notoriety—a morbid desire to be considered a leader of men.

Mr. Diotrephe wants to have the pre-eminence. From the days of John downwards he has always felt that way. But Mr. Diotrephe has not the natural and acquired qualities that fit him for leadership. No doubt he sees in himself qualities that entitle him to pre-eminence, but his neighbours never could see them even with a microscope. Nature never constructed him for a leader. Grace, if he has any which is often more than doubtful, merely sanctified what it found. There is one avenue to notoriety, however, which, unfortunately, is always open to the Mr. Diotrephe, and which, we fear, will always be open until human nature is a much better thing than it is at present. Mr. Diotrephe can always raise a row of some kind, gather a little party around him, and pose as a leader of his party. So long as the row lasts Diotrephe has the pre-eminence. He is a great man in a small way. Locally he is a lion. The people speak about him, the newspapers print his name and his dupes say he is a great fighter. By-and-by the people become ashamed of themselves, and look around for somebody to punish for raising the row. They pounce upon Diotrephe, blame him for disturbing the church, vote him a nuisance and promptly put him out in the cold. He has had some notoriety, but it was mainly the notoriety that comes from doing mischief. It did not last long, but the punishment that it brought may last during the man's lifetime, and possibly a good deal longer.

Moral: If you want to wear spurs win them. Honest work, perseverance, self-denial, courage and good temper, guided by discretion, and driven by a reasonable share of brains, will bring all the pre-eminence a reasonable man wants. If Mr. Diotrephe had worked for a place, John would never have passed his name down through the ages in such an unsavoury connection.

ADMIRATION FOR MERE BIGNESS

is not a lovely national characteristic. In fact one might say it is vulgar without being accused of any special disregard for George Washington and the hatchet story. Our good neighbours over the way have always been considered ardent admirers of the Big. They have big cities, big hotels, big lakes, big prairies, big rivers, big newspapers, big everything. The villages over there are all cities, the schools colleges, the girls young ladies, and the boys mostly men. Everything is big but the babies. No doubt the enormous size of the country and its unparalleled progress during the last hundred years has led our neighbours unconsciously into admiration of the Big.

Can Canadians afford to throw stones at their neighbours for admiring mere bigness? Not by any means. We boast just as much about the size of Canada as they do about the size of the United States. There has, perhaps, been as much written during the last ten years about the marvellous growth of Toronto as about the growth of any city in the Union. One feature in American life Old Country people always wonder at is the crowded mammoth hotels. There will, perhaps, be a hotel built in Toronto one of these days that will equal in size anything in Chicago or San Francisco. Then we shall read every day for a twelvemonth that Toronto has one of the biggest hotels on the continent, rivalling the great hotels of Chicago, etc. We are so accustomed to reading about big things that we could write a paragraph about that hotel before the foundation is dug.

Any close observer can easily see that Canadians as well as Americans attach a vast amount of importance to bigness. Watch the first man that you are introduced to and the chances are a thousand to one that the first or second question he asks you will be about the size of the town you live in and the rate at which it is growing. If you happen to be a minister he is almost sure to ask about the size of your congregation. The intellectual and social character of your town, its natural beauties and moral standing are secondary matters compared with its size. Bigness is the main thing. The spiritual character of your congregation, their intelligence and Christian enterprise are not worth enquiring after. If the numbers are there all is well. Quality is nothing, quantity is everything.

The same unpleasant feature of our national character constantly crops out in our educational work. Colleges, institutes, schools, in fact every kind of educational institution, is judged, at least by certain classes of people, by the number who attend rather than by the kind of work done.

The church suffers more, perhaps, from the admiration of mere bigness than any other institution in the country. So thoroughly has this vulgar feeling worked itself into the minds of many people that they actually think a religious meeting is nothing without a crowd. If the crowd is there, all is right, even though every man in it is a Judas and every wo-

man a Jezebel. But there is a mine here that we must work at some other time. The effect which the admiration of mere bigness—of numbers without regard to character—is having upon the religious life of Canada is a subject that will stand a good deal of discussion.

Perhaps one of the worst results that flows from the worship of bigness is the warp that it always gives to the judgment of persons of moderate intellect and slender intelligence. People of that kind always judge men by the size of the place they live in. A preacher may be the prosiest of prosers, the most dawdling of dawdlers, the weakest of pulpit weaklings, the most intolerable of pulpit bores, but if he comes from a great city a certain class of hearers will always gaze upon him with open-mouthed wonder, and when they come out of church say:

DID YOU EVER HEAR THE LIKES OF THON?

A lawyer may be the most brazen ignoramus that ever disfigured a court of justice—his reputation around home may be so unsavoury that no business man trusts him—his income may be so small that he never passes a meat stall without feeling a watery sensation in his mouth, but if he goes from a big city to a small community to attend court, the local admirers of the Big will at once class him with Edward Blake or Christopher Robinson or Sir John Thompson.

There is no power in the English language to describe the gullibility of the admirers of the Big when they gaze upon a doctor who says he comes from a big city. In the early history of this country quacks who hailed from big American cities made many a dirty dollar and ruined many a Canadian constitution.

We have always admired the tact of the evangelists who advertise themselves as coming "from England," or "from Scotland," or some other great country, from every part of which they come. By advertising in that way they cater to the gullibility of the admirers of the Big.

POINTE-AUX-TREMBLES; SCHOOL AGAIN.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN'S NEIGHBOUR.

But tell me, who is my neighbour? Jesus says I am to "go" and "do" to my neighbour as the good Samaritan did to his. But who is my neighbour? Do you mean to tell me that the French-Canadian, with his foreign blood and his unknown tongue, and his corrupt religion—do you mean to say that he is my neighbour, and that the Master's "Go and do thou likewise" is meant to lay upon my heart and conscience the French-Canadian's need? It is so much more convenient just to "pass by on the other side." Or, if I do get a vivid glimpse of his condition, as he lies tied and robbed and wounded by my way, you do not think I need to do more than "come and look on him" (you know there can be much pity in a look) and "pass by" still "on the other side." For you know I really have not time to make his troubles my own, and go to work effectively to meet them. I cannot think that Jesus Christ means me actually to count the French-Canadian my neighbour, or that I am really to "go" and "do" to him as the Good Samaritan did to the wounded Jew. Just look at how he acted, and see if you think that the Master could mean me to "do likewise." He stopped in the middle of a dangerous journey to take up the cares of a wounded man. Now, I would find it very troublesome to stop in the middle of my day's occupation and take any of my precious time for the French. Then he took some oil and wine he was carrying for his own dinner, and poured it out for the benefit of the sufferer, and really it would be rather much to expect me to "do likewise" for any French-Canadian that ever breathed. Don't touch my table, please. He got down off his ass and actually walked, where he had meant to ride, and burdened himself besides with the care of a sick man who could not hold up his own head. It must have been an awful bother, not to say anything of the hurry I should have been in to get out of that road, where my own neck was no more safe than any one else's. I'm not sure but his duty to his own family should have made it clear to him that his first care was for his own safety. You don't mean to tell me that I have a neighbour whose cares demand such sacrifices from me? Then he got him to the inn. But he was not done yet. He seems to have spent the night, when a traveller ought to be resting, "taking care" of the poor man. I really cannot do without my ordinary rest unless the demands of society actually require it. And then look at him when he went away, after his sleepless night. He opened his purse and "took out two pence." I suppose a penny then stood for a day's work, as a dollar does now, so two pence would mean two dollars. I would think that was as much as could have been expected of him. But he seemed determined that the poor man should have everything his case might need, and he just assumed the whole liability, whatever it might amount to. Really that Samaritan treated the poor Jew just as if he were his own son. You do not think that Jesus can mean that I should lay the needs of the French-Canadian to heart just like this?

How many, how very many, if they talked out their thoughts frankly, would run on just in this line? But the French-Canadian is our neighbour, and Christ's "go and do thou likewise" must apply with emphasis to his case. He is our neighbour. He is bound and robbed and wounded. He cannot stretch out his own hand to help himself, but, blindly he lifts his eyes to us. We have adequate help in our midst, if we would only bestir ourselves to apply it efficiently.

Dear Christian women, can't we wake up? If we wake up, the men will wake up too. Let us look at the Good Samaritan as Jesus draws his picture, and points it out to us, and let us learn from Him who our neighbour is, and how the Lord wants us to help Him.

If any woman reading this feels a stirring desire to put her own hand to this precious work for our French-Canadian neighbours, we would be glad to give her the opportunity to join with us in our present effort to put up the enlargement to the girls' school at Pointe-aux-Trembles. Please send me your address, and I shall gladly send you a dozen or more leaflets and small envelopes, which you can scatter among your friends, and see what the result will be. We are hoping that very many will yet join us through this month. In writing please address

MRS. ANNA ROSS,

Brucefield, Ont.

All money is to be sent at once to Rev. Dr. Warden, 198 St. James' Street, Montreal.

THE SEPTUAGINT.

FROM THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE LATE MR. THOMAS HENNING—(Continued).

Why have the evangelists and apostles quoted the words of the LXX even when these are different from the Hebrew? It is generally allowed that the New Testament writers have quoted in most instances from the LXX, even where the translation from the Hebrew is inaccurate, but where the errors are of such a nature as not to weaken the proofs for which they are alleged. This has been used as an argument against divine inspiration, but the argument is without foundation. To account for this has exercised the ingenuity of the ablest writers. The following is an abstract of what we have found written on the subject. It is to be recollected that the apostles wrote for the use of those who were ignorant of Hebrew and for whom, therefore, it was necessary to refer to the Greek version. Had they given a new and more accurate translation from the Hebrew, the reader would not have known the passage they had intended to quote.

Again, the quotation neither was nor could be, according to chapter and verse, the words themselves, therefore, being the only direction for finding the passage, from which they were taken, a deviation from the common reading would have left the reader in ignorance. Frequently when the apostles follow the LXX, the latter affords a support to their argument which the Hebrew does not, and in this case we may rest satisfied that the Greek is right and the Hebrew wrong. Further, as the apostles departed from the LXX in some places where it would have answered their purpose as well as the translation which they gave, it is probable, therefore, that they quoted from memory. (See Matt. i. 23; iv. 14, 16; xi. 10; xv. 9; xiii. 35; I Cor. ii. 9; Rom. xi. 9.) Relative to the quotations from the Septuagint the following hypotheses have been made: 1. Professor Schulz (quoted by Michaelis) says: "In some cases, where they have given their own translation, they have done so because the point to be demonstrated was more clearly evinced in their own words than in those of the LXX. But in other cases I can assign no other reason that could induce the apostles to give their own translation than that the Greek version was at that time not complete and those books of the Old Testament from which such quotations are taken were translated into Greek after the time of the apostles." 2. Ernesti contended that the apostles have never quoted from the Septuagint; but as the examples in which their words agree with those of the LXX are too manifest to be denied, he supposes that such passages in the Septuagint have been purposely corrected, according to the New Testament, by the Christian transcribers.

Michaelis thinks that the difference between the quotations in the New Testament and the words of the LXX may be explained on the principle of various readings which, in the copies of the Greek Bible, that were used by the writers of the New Testament, might differ from the manuscripts of the LXX which we have at present.

Lightfoot, who takes every opportunity of lowering the value of the Septuagint, gives the following, among other reasons, why it was so closely followed in the New Testament. "It pleased God (he says) to allot the censers of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, to sacred use, because they were so ordained and designed by the first owners; so doth it please the Holy Ghost to determine that version to His own use, being so primarily ordained by the first authors."

The explanation which seems most satisfactory in reconciling the apparent discrepancies between apostles and Hebrew originals is that the seventy do not translate literally, but give the scope of the passage; and thus generally the Hebrew and the Greek agree in the main thought in any particular passage.

We shall close this part of the subject with a quotation from Lightfoot: "The greatest authority of the LXX appeareth in that the holy Greek of the New Testament doth so much follow it. For as God used this translation for a harbinger to the fetching in of the Gentiles, so when it was grown into authority, by the time of Christ's coming, it seemed good to His infinite wisdom to add to its authority Himself, the better to forward the building of the Church. And admirable it is to see, with what sweetness and harmony the New Testament doth follow this translation, sometimes even beside the