

SPECIAL  
ARTICLES

## Our Contributors

BOOK  
REVIEWS

## THE BAROMETER ON THE WALL.

(By J. Marvin Nichols.)

We do not often dwell near to Nature's heart. To many of us she appears as a dead mass; the vast world is voiceless—she brings us no message. These days of frenzied rush and crucifical haste we've got no time to listen. No burning bush arrests our eyes. We see no pillar of cloud by day. No blazing shekinah moves before us in the night-time. The mountains are not glory-crowned and lightning-guarded. No foot of earth in this commercial age trembles beneath the tread of the Almighty. We do not hear his voice as he speaks to us amidst the tempest's wildest roar. The unspeakable holy hush brings to us no word from lands invisible. God of the Ages forgive! Our sandals are not removed—we walk on no holy ground. Our eyes are holden—we do not see the far-flung battle front. Our ears are dull—we do not hear the drum beat nor catch the martial music of the skies. Have we forgotten that

these are counsellors

That feelingly persuade me what I am.  
And this our life, exempt from public  
haunt,

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running  
brooks,

Sermons in stones, and good in every-  
thing.

There was a period in the history of Texas when the great prairies were trackless and almost uninhabited. Nothing broke the stillness of those vast plains save the howl of the wolf and the thunderous tramp of the buffalo. Long before the advent of the great trunk-routes to the Pacific, no path crossed these far-outstretching leagues except the trail of the drifting cattle, or the great highways along which these restless herds were driven from the Esatacdoes to the far-off Dakotas. In those primitive days men travelled as they were guided by the hills and the stars. Long trains of desert-chooners, drawn by dull and stupid oxen, bore the human cargo that sought its El Dorado in the land toward the setting sun.

These caravans would make their few miles in the daylight hours. At night the pioneers slept uneasily amidst a stillness too often broken only by the war-whoop of marauding Indians. In November days, the alert eyes of the westerner sometimes caught glimpses of a dark belt lying low in the horizon of the northwest. He knew what it meant. There was no other recourse but to seek shelter from the approaching blizzard. The old Texan used to say he 'melt' a norther.' I do not know the philosophy of their presentment. This I do know; such would be their sense of a rapidly advancing norther, that long before its arrival they had made every possible protection against its awful severity.

That reminds me! One day I chanced to stop at a ranch-house far out on the western frontier. It was the closing of December days. The day had been one of unusual warmth. I had not noticed the long, dark bank that girted the northwest. The old ranchman happened to look at the barometer. The fluid showed a disturbed condition of the atmosphere. He stepped at once to the corner of the house. The view instantly changed all his plans. A roaring fire, everything sheltered, for—believe me—in less than an hour a terrific blizzard was raging over all those mighty plains! He read his warning in

the barometer on the wall. He saw unerring signs in that dark belt that lay along the distant horizon. He was wise enough to obey the signs.

Ah! my friend. Had it ever occurred to you that your conscience is like a barometer? God speaks of the very appearance -- the shadow, the fore-broth of sin. The conscience is so affected by divine grace as to become extremely sensitive to the approach of sin. If you are able to read its shifting signs you'll know the changing atmosphere. It is sensitive—intensely so—to its environment. God does not intend that I shall feel the power of actual sin. Thank God for the lesson! Watching the conscience, I discover the signs of an approaching storm. So very far are these indications in advance of its fury, that when it bursts upon me it finds me proof against its blasts and already sheltered from its awful strength. Will Christ be to you a shelter in the time of storm? Have you read conscience's prophetic signs? The guarantee is in the precaution. God will not keep him, who being thus forewarned, bares his head to the howling winds and uncovers his bosom to the fury of the raging storm. He warns us that we may flee its awful wrath. Thank God for this unerring spiritual barometer—the illumine conscience!

## YOUTHFUL DELINQUENTS.

(By J. J. Kelso, Toronto.)

The Act respecting Juvenile Delinquents recently passed by the Dominion Parliament will be of great assistance to those who are engaged in the work of trying to improve the lot of children in the large towns and cities of Canada. This Act was not fully debated by the members of the House, but it was from lack of time rather than from lack of interest that this apparent neglect arose. A similar Act was introduced at last session of Parliament and was fairly well debated on that occasion, and, both last session and this, the question was debated in the Senate. In this connection Hon. Mr. Coffey, Senator from London, delivered a sympathetic and statesman-like address.

"Speaking of the provision of the Act to establish Juvenile Courts and to appoint special judges, whenever found necessary for the trial of delinquent children, he said, "There is one feature connected with the Children's Court movement which strikes me as of paramount importance, that is, the connection that may exist between the ordinary police court and the tribunal before which cases of youthful delinquency or criminality may be adjudicated upon. It would be of importance, it seems to me, to render the work of each as remote as possible one from the other. It is generally conceded that the police court is not a suitable place for the trying of juvenile offences and it would be a mistake to establish the children's court even as an adjunct of the police court.

"There is that about the very atmosphere of the police court which grates upon the boy nature, and his reclamation will be rendered all the more difficult if he be forced into the by-way of the hardened criminal from whom hope of correct living has fled and whose only ambition is to prey upon society. Call it by what name you will, the Children's Court, to the wayward boy, remains the police court so long as the same roof covers both."

Hon. Mr. Coffey referred to some criticisms which had been made of the proposed Children's Court in which the fear was expressed that a special judge for this court would manifest too much familiarity in his dealing with the children with the result that they would lose the respect they should have for the administration of the law. He pointed out that the tendency now is to get away from the "awful" method of administering justice, especially to children, which was once in vogue. Now the desire is to get at an understanding of the child's comprehension of its own acts of delinquency, and when the comprehension is deficient, to patiently explain the significance of those acts and to devise methods of reform. Senator Coffey quoted with approval the general line of procedure laid down by Judge Tutbill for his guidance in dealing with delinquent children, "I have always felt and endeavoured to act in each case as I would were it my own son that was before me in my library at home charged with misconduct."

He also referred to a very serious cause of youthful degeneracy which, in his opinion, had not received the consideration its importance deserved. This was the sensational and immoral literature imported into Canada and eagerly read by the small boy whose ideals were on the downgrade. In an eloquent oration the honourable gentleman asked for a more rigid enforcement of the laws for the suppression of immoral literature.

He said, in part, as follows, "I ask enforcement of this Act so that the splendid work awaiting our juvenile courts may not be rendered fruitless. I ask that punishment swift and sure and severe may be the portion of those whose wares would foster immorality among our youth. I ask for the punishment of those who would glorify crime by depicting criminals as heroes, thus sowing the seeds of lawlessness amongst our Canadian boys; and as there is nothing so sweet in the city as the patient lives of the poor, should we not throw about the children, especially of the unfortunate poor, a guardianship that will enable them to march in line with those who are seeking the noblest ideals? Then they will become Canada's pride, and Canada's glory in a time not far away when our young Dominion will proudly take its place amongst the great civilized nations of the world."

Section 31 of the Act as passed is a compendium of the entire Act in its scope and intention, and reads as follows: "This Act shall be liberally construed to the end that its purpose may be carried out, to wit: That the care and custody and discipline of a juvenile delinquent shall approximate as nearly as may be to that which should be given by its parents, and that as far as practicable every juvenile delinquent shall be treated, not as a criminal, but as a misdirected and misguided child, and one needing aid, encouragement, help and assistance."

As this law does not go into effect except on demand, it is important that all who are interested in Child Protection Work should be familiar with its provisions. A copy can be obtained by addressing Mr. W. L. Scott, Ottawa.

He that does good to another man also does it to himself, not only in the consequence, but in the very act of doing it, for the consciousness of well doing as an ample reward.