

Signs of Culture

One of the signs that a city has passed through the stage of crudeness is a movement of the people looking towards aesthetic improvement. The city of Winnipeg is just beginning to show her desire to stand for something more than material prosperity. In a way she has been an educational centre from the very earliest days, but that was rather the result of accident than conscious effort on the part of the city. Now, however, there is a real awakening. In the first place, an Art Gallery has been established in connection with the Industrial Bureau. The citizens of Winnipeg and the Province are to be educated to know and love and perchance create the beautiful. They are to be lifted out of the low level of the actual—and nothing but the actual, into the higher region of the imagination. They are to become people with ideals. No one can foresee what this Art study will mean to architecture, manufacture, home decoration and civic beauty—but it is safe to say that the Winnipeg of to-morrow will not only be more beautiful than the Winnipeg of to-day, but the people because of their nobler outlook will be of a much superior type. Western Canada needs workmen, homemakers with taste; it also needs people with souls tuned to noble strains. So we are glad to know the Art Institute is opened.

There has also been a movement looking towards a permanent Symphony Orchestra. This is a costly venture, but the people of Winnipeg are musical, and they may be depended upon to throw their heart into this movement. The only thing that can stand in the way of success is the jealousy of professional musicians of mediocre ability. The solution is a man with outstanding power. The effect of good music upon the life of a city can hardly be measured. To appreciate and to employ the universal language is a worthy ambition for any people. Good music means culture, good thought and supreme delight; bad music means coarseness, vulgarity and uncontrolled desire. If Winnipeg realizes her ideal in this matter she will have done much to ensure her permanent happiness, and will place herself among the cities of culture, which on this continent are none too many.

The third evidence of Winnipeg's desire to escape from primitive ugliness is the well-intended scheme of the Town-planning Commission to straighten out some of the tangles occasioned by the ignorance or lack of foresight of early surveyors. So far this scheme has not realized anything, and it may be the first effort was too ambitious. Yet, it is a hopeful sign to find the people of a city looking in this direction. Broad thoroughfares, suitable lines of travel, secluded and carefully protected residential areas are what every city should strive to possess. The time to get things right is in the early days. Every subdivision that is added to a city should give a free park and a free school site. Most Western cities have exercised commendable foresight. Now that town-planning has become a science they will do even better.

The All-sufficient Remedy.

Here is a statement which is not wide of the truth. "In Canada, forty-two men control about four billions of capital. These men are primarily railway magnates, but they are also bank-managers and presidents of manufacturing concerns. Nine of them are in the Senate, and three or four are ordinary members of Parliament." Now any one can see how great is the power of these forty-two men, and it is probable they have used their power to their own advantage. As railway owners they work for high freight rates, as bankers for high rate on loans, as manufacturers for excessive tariff, and as legislators for laws which will guarantee them a perpetuation of their privileges. Yet

let no one be misled. As a body of men they are probably as honest, as just and as honorable as any other forty-two Canadians taken at random. This is quite evident from the fact that the highest ambition of the average Canadian is to be in the same position as one of the forty-two. If this is a libel on the average Canadian, we shall stand correction. Selfishness and cupidity are just as common in the ranks of the poor and the fairly well-to-do as in the councils of the wealthy. Organized capital and organized labor are shot through with self-interest; worldly ambition has crept into our churches and is the outstanding motive in polite society. The elementary public school is about the only institution which does not worship Mammon.

So, while it is right enough to lament the fact that in a democracy any forty-two men should have such power, since it makes for general hardship, disloyalty and dissatisfaction, the real thing to worry over is that the money ideal and the spirit of selfishness are so common. It is not forty-two men we have to fight, but the system which permits these to have such power; and yet in a way we are all upholders of the system, since we are using practically the same methods as the forty-two, but with very much less success.

The only remedy under the circumstances is Christian socialism,—a manner of living that has never got more than a half-chance in this world. Yet it is the one influence which to-day is keeping the old world from utter confusion. If we really wish to attain to permanent happiness and prosperity as a people, we must preach and practice a little unselfishness and love for the other fellow. Then shall we demand that love become the common law of life, so that into our legislatures will enter a new class of men, and into our legislation a new spirit and content. Then and then only will it be impossible for forty-two men to hold their love-feasts while the suffering millions look on with anger in their hearts—an anger born of hunger and indignation.

How to Settle a Dispute

Two Winnipeg papers fail to agree as to loss to the Western farmers because they cannot sell their grain at Minneapolis prices. Sometimes it seems the Winnipeg prices are in advance of those in Minneapolis and sometimes below. There is an easy way to find out whether there is a net loss or gain. Just now there are over a million and a half bushels a day passing through Winnipeg. For all of this the farmer could obtain at Minneapolis about four cents more than at Winnipeg. The loss is then about \$60,000 a day to Western farmers. Next summer the figures will be the other way, in all probability, but the sales will not be over a few thousand bushels of the higher grades. This is not altogether a fair way to reckon—but it is pretty nearly fair as far as the farmer is concerned. Reciprocity may be good or bad as a general policy, but certainly an open market in wheat would mean many millions to the farmers of the Canadian prairie. The gain in the case of barley and flax would be enormous. The gain on the price of stock can already be felt, since the passing of the Underwood Bill is assured. But what about the consumer in Canada? We shall pay more for our meat. If we had reciprocity the price of flour would advance a little. No one would care much about the advance in price of flax and barley products.

The Temperance Question

One of the most cheering symptoms of progress in Canada is the awakened interest in the temperance question. Whisky drinking does not pay—financially or morally. It does not pay socially. No country can afford to waste untold millions every year in intoxicants

There is absolutely no compensating income. No country can afford to suffer the misery and degradation wrought by rum. There is no compensating happiness. Nor can the people of any country afford the loss of manhood that follows from the social custom of treating. There is nothing that can take the place of the virility and independence which are destroyed. What do the people of Canada pay for liquor every year? Seventy-five million dollars. What percentage of criminals owe their lapse from virtue to liquor? Eighty per cent. What per cent. of insanity is due to the same cause? Sixty per cent. No one has ever been able to compute the heart anguish, the physical discomfort, the intellectual inability that follows the use of intoxicants. It is time the bar was banished. It is not worthy of a respectable community. It is disgusting. Its toleration is due to two things—the intense zeal of those who profit by its existence and the apathy of the general public. That the public is awaking is a hopeful sign. Let no man think the legislators will act of their own volition in this matter. They are right in acting only in response to public pressure. It is for you and me to become active.

Where to Place the Blame

When things go wrong, especially in civic matters, it is the custom of many men to lay the blame upon the men in office. The late Mayor Gaynor, of New York, had something very interesting to say about this, and the substance of his remarks will bear repeating. In every form of organized society each member is responsible for the conduct of affairs. It is getting altogether too common for men to use "They" instead of "We"—in discussing the management of affairs. Here is Mayor Gaynor's letter to a man who asked him to institute reforms:

"I am in receipt of your letter saying that all clubs should be closed at ten o'clock at night, also all saloons, and also that piano-playing and singing should not be allowed at any hour of the night, especially in summer, when people cannot close their windows so as to shut the noise out.

"I hereby authorize you to carry out all of these reforms. It may be that you will first have to get elected to the Legislature, and pass laws therefor, for you know this is a government of laws, and not of men; that is to say, those put in office may not do as they like, but may only carry out the laws as they are passed by the Legislature. Did you never hear of this before?"

Political Conditions

Consider our political affairs. It has not been altogether well with us. Men whom we have respected and honored have shown themselves unworthy of confidence, yet there seems to be a real awakening of the people. There is a growing feeling that our political life cannot be rooted in dishonor and intrigue. For the awakening of the people let us give our thanks, and let us determine afresh to concentrate ourselves to the task of purifying public morals. Let us not be content until the direction of public affairs is committed only to those who are "true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report."

Looking Forward

For the blessings of the year in other ways it is not necessary to speak. The tendency is towards a lessening of the liquor traffic, towards the suppression of vice, towards organization for the lessening of the evils of poverty, towards more humane treatment of criminals, towards improved methods of education. The hands of the clock have been moving forward—sometimes not so fast as we might wish—but yet they have been moving.