

## Our Contributors.

NOW LET US WEIGH OURSELVES.

BY KNOXIAN.

A few months ago we found out how many people there are in this Dominion. There are not five millions of us. The totals were disappointing in many places, and many people talked as if nations are great or small in proportion to their numbers. This is a huge delusion. Men have to be weighed as well as counted. Scotland has not as many people as Canada by about a million, yet Scotland is one of the most influential nations on the face of the earth. The population of Africa is supposed to be about two hundred millions, but the millions of Africa do not seem to have influence in proportion to their numbers. The population of Great Britain would scarcely be missed out of China, but China does not weigh as much in the international scales as John Bull. There is no one fact more clearly illustrated than that numbers do not mean weight, and yet that is just the last fact you can pound into a typical Canadian or American. Any number of people seem to think that even the efficacy of prayer depends on the number of people who pray. Given a crowd and it was a great prayer-meeting, though perhaps not one petition was offered on scriptural conditions; given two or three devout men praying under the guidance of the Spirit and the meeting was a failure.

In a country that has so many preachers and teachers it ought not to be necessary to insist on the fundamental truth that character is more important than numbers, but it is highly necessary. For one man in any community that you hear speaking of the intellectual, moral and religious life of the place, you hear twenty speak of its population and business facilities. Is your town growing? means always, is it growing in numbers and wealth? Ought it not to mean sometimes, is it growing intellectually, morally or spiritually? Smith says to Brown. Is Slabtown growing? Who would ever think that Smith meant to ask if the people of Slabtown were becoming more intelligent or more moral or more religious? Growing, when applied to a place in this country, simply means growing in numbers and wealth. Yet it is a fact that a community may grow rapidly in numbers and wealth, and remain contemptibly small at the same time. Too many communities in Canada have grown in just that way.

Judged by the only standards that obtain among too many people, Sodom and Gomorrah were prosperous cities. Had the census been taken an hour before the fire came down the politicians would have declared that the plain was in a prosperous condition. No doubt the booblers were well satisfied. Possibly some of the local politicians were doing a thriving business by selling lighthouses and bridges on the Jordan. When the fire came down the aspect of things changed somewhat suddenly. Before morning it was reasonably clear that when judged by the right standard men have to be weighed—not numbered. The only citizen of Sodom who could stand weighing got out, though even he had a close call.

The difference between a community admirable in every respect and one that—well, that makes you feel sick is mainly in the people. You drive along through a township and everything seems just right. The roads are good, the bridges are safe, comfortable houses and large barns stand on every farm, good schoolhouses and churches meet you every few miles, the farmers drive good conveyances, their sons are bright, clever fellows and their daughters charming. Go into their houses and you are sure to have a good time. When you leave you have neither wrinkles nor vacuum in your stomach.

Go on a few miles and you enter a township in which everything seems reversed. The roads are bad, the bridges unsafe, the fences down, the buildings poor, the cattle lean, everything is shabby and everybody shiftless. Here and there you see a reaper or a plough lying just where the man left it when he used it last. The houses look like frames for building houses on. The people look as though they had put on their clothes with a pitchfork.

Now what makes the difference between these two townships. Mainly the difference is in the people. The soil is the same, the climate is the same, the municipal government is the same, but the people who live in one township are intelligent, thrifty, industrious and brainy, while the people of the other are idle, shiftless, brainless and often gabby. Quite frequently it will be found that the thrifty people of the aforementioned township know the Shorter Catechism, while the shiftless fellows of the decaying municipality belong to the—well, let that pass.

Now we come to a neat, trim, pretty little village. Everything is in good order. The side-walks are good, the streets are clean, the houses look as if they have just had a fresh coat of paint, the school-house is handsome and the grounds around it beautiful, the churches are elegant, the private houses are surrounded with trees and flowers; everything is "just lovely."

Drive on a few miles and you come to another village. You have not tried the side-walk long until you begin to think of an accident ticket. The hogs wallow in the streets. The cows pasture unpleasantly near the front doors. The old school-house is dingy without and dirty within. The churches are dismal enough to make anyone sad without thinking of his sins. If you put up at the village tavern you are profoundly thankful every hour you stay there that you

have only one nose. Go into a store and you find a number of loafers sitting around the stove, beels up talking about the next election or the last fight.

Now what makes the difference between these villages? Mainly the difference in the people.

There is a vast difference in towns. Some towns have an intelligent, respectable, progressive air about them. They are well governed, have good public buildings, good schools, good churches, good streets, good side walks. The men who manage public affairs are among the best men in the community. The intellectual and moral tone of the place is high. The people are bright and brainy. They believe in their town and never make apologies for not living some where else. It is easy to find towns of a very different character. From the moment you take your seat at the station in the rickety thing called a "bus" until the moment you get safely back again, the idea never leaves your mind that the town is a "one horse" kind of place. The difference between this and towns that it is a pleasure to visit is mainly the difference in the people. Of course business facilities have something to do with making towns and villages progressive or the reverse, but it is equally true that the people have usually a great deal to do in making the business facilities.

Cities, towns, villages, townships, communities of all kinds have a character just as certainly as men have. The character of the boys and girls is largely influenced by the tone of the place in which they grow up.

Now that we know how many people there are in every municipality, supposing we all hold a "diet of catechising," as the old ministers used to say, and find out the character of the community in which we dwell. Is the place bright or stupid? Is the moral tone high or low? Are the school houses clean and comfortable? Are the schools managed by decent men as trustees? What kind of a Council have we? Are there many fellows around on the look out for boodle? Do many of the people look upon an election as a kind of second harvest? Are the local papers badly printed little sheets mainly filled with vile stories and personal abuse. Do the editors give a certain amount of space every week to citizens to be used in vigorously blackguarding each other. Do the people attend church on Sabbath for purposes of worship or do they run around every Sunday in search of a show of some kind? What kind of community is OURS?

### A NATURE SYMPHONY.

With an eye made quiet by the power of harmony, and the deep power of joy, we see the things of life—Wordsworth

Life is much too brief to be spent in moralizing as to how we should live, in order to fully realize the possible "best" of life, but if, day by day, the ordinary resources of nature were brought to bear upon our hearts—with a due recognition of the Supreme Power that guides the planets in their course and gives maturity to the tiniest seed—we should develop keener perceptions and larger capabilities, to so take in the harmonies that surround the most common-place and prosaic lives, as to conduce immeasurably to our happiness.

The fair, fragile blossoms, illumining with soft brilliancy earth's neutral tints, are but lighter touches of the infinite grace that unfolds gleams of starry splendour in the purple gloom of heaven; the breeze sighing gently 'mid leafy foliage, swelling to deep-toned anthems as it sweeps over pathless oceans; the first sweet, wild violets, half-hidden 'neath thickly clustering leaves; the sheen and shade of golden fields, faintly stirred by light summer winds; the shimmer of sunlit waves dancing merrily to metre of mermaid's song; the changeful glory of sunset skies, all awaken strains that should vibrate in every heart, in perfect accord with nature's sweetest music.

Do we not feel the influences of early spring, steal upon our senses with restful calm or quickening interest, as we watch the willows yellowing for the greening; furry catkins tasselling naked boughs; swelling buds unfolding; tiny blades of grass thickening to velvety carpet, dotted with stars of living gold as shining dandelions appear; pale green leaves trembling as fitful zephyrs pass, snowy blossoms shedding their petals on the perfumed air; or, listen to the streams released from icy fetters mingle a monotone of joyance with songs of happy birds.

And are not these but the footprints for the glad, beautiful summer with her wealth of fragrant bloom; her floods of radiant sunshine, her depths of forest shade; her fields of gleaming barley, waving corn and fast bronzing grain; her soft showers; her cool fresh mornings, when earth seems new again; her slumbrous noons inviting dreamy languor; her twilight evenings hushed and peaceful!

Summer glory tends but to autumnal splendour, to a deeper beauty, to a richer guerdon. Afar on wooded hills, pale amber lights shine amid crimson and gold; reddening sumachs and flaming maples quiver in dusk of olive green and russet brown; trailing glories of vivid scarlet creep through tangled brake or glow in gay mosaic on rugged wayside; golden grain and luscious fruits await the garnering. Life gathers depth and strength in the hush of the waning year. Busy toilers pause as its mellowed loveliness rests on grateful hearts. Lessons that the changing seasons teach, fall on soil more and more cultured as we learn the real meaning of spring's patient struggles through untimely frosts and against dismaying winds.

Then when the bright tints have faded and rustling leaves dispoiled, drift hither and thither, splashed by chilling rains,

come the "treasures of the snow, and hoary frost of winter heaven," nature's kindly auxiliaries, nourishing the sleeping flowers, covering lonely graves with warm, soft mantle, hiding the dark in light. Days too, of entrancing beauty when the sleet of the silent hours catches the morning sunlight, and fence and field, tree and shrub scintillate in the splendour of a myriad gems.

Our lives have, perchance, fallen on an existence where the monotonous daily routine crushes the heart, weakens the nerve force and dulls the brain, the present offering no incentive for action, the future no reward. But whether in the world's broad arena sometimes heavily handicapped, or engaged in the lowliest of life's loving "homelinesses," we are surely better, wiser, truer to self and to God for the fuller appreciation of the poetry that the "quiet eye" may always find about us.

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### CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR CONVENTION

We need not give a detailed account of this important meeting as that has been done through the daily press of the country, some dozen or more reporting regularly for the newspapers, the reports given in the town of Peterboro' papers being specially full and accurate. The meeting was representative of the material, the spirit, the methods of the Christian Endeavourers. There were about five hundred delegates present, all bedecked with badges of their own home societies and those of the Convention, so that they were readily distinguished on the street from all others, and as readily accosted and saluted each other with the most fraternal spirit. All this was beautiful to behold.

Many flags were hoisted on buildings on the streets, and even on the tower of the Methodist church. Inside the Presbyterian church (Rev. E. F. Torrance, M.A., pastor), where most of the meetings were held, banners and flags and mottoes lined the walls and covered the organ—aloft on front of it was spread out "For Christ and the Church," the loved motto of Christian Endeavourers. The pulpit too was beautifully arranged in a garland of flowers. Everything betokened the spirit of gladness and the heartiness of the welcome tendered to the Convention. At the first meeting, which was held on the evening of the 21st, the president, R. J. Colville, Peterboro', was in the chair. Addresses of welcome were delivered by the Mayor of the town, James Stevenson, M.P., and the Rev. E. F. Torrance, M.A., which were exceedingly cordial and appreciative. The response was given by the Rev. Dr. Dickson, of Galt. At this first meeting the church was packed to the doors, and an excellent spirit prevailed. On the second day the main features in the morning were the president's address and the secretary's report, both of which were laden with the work done during the past year and the high hope inspired by the experiences of the past for the future.

The statistics are as follows:—

Societies	Active Members	Associate Members	Church Members
Presbyterian	225	6,242	2,997
Methodist (41 E.L. of C.E.)	141	4,058	1,731
Baptist	67	1,966	529
Congregational	32	827	299
Union	10	904	487
Anglican	7	165	204
Christian	4	71	14
Disciples	4	88	30
Others	4	74	29
Unknown	32	660	165
	546	15,055	6,485
			13,169

Very cordial greetings were sent by telegraph from Quebec, Manitoba and North-West Territories, British Columbia, and by the Rev. J. McP. Scott, B.A., of Toronto, from the Maritime Provinces.

The Pastors' Conference was a specially interesting and inspiring time. It was conducted by the Rev. W. G. Hanna, B.A., of Uxbridge, who himself gave a thrilling address on the assistance the Christian Endeavour Society gave to him as a minister, and also the change it made in the temperance of the Church. He spoke of the pledge, and found in its analysis faith, obedience, obligation to covenant in direct relation to Christ. C. E. meant for him these three things, Consecration Exemplified, Christ Exalted, and Canada Evangelized. The Rev. Mr. Boville, of Hamilton, was in good form, and bore a grand testimony to the value of Christian Endeavour. He said the Society was a fine training school for the active service of the Church; they decorated his pulpit with flowers and also rented two pews in the church, which they kept filled with young men. The Rev. G. Robertson, B.A., of Toronto, insisted specially on the fact that the Christian Endeavour brings the pulpit into sympathy with the young people, and the young people into sympathy with the pulpit. The Rev. W. S. Cowles, Eddystone; Rev. E. B. Barnes, of Bowmanville; Rev. Mr. Vandyke, of Hamilton, and Rev. G. B. Sage, of London, gave excellent addresses, full of encouragement and help. There is no dark line in the testimony of any minister who has a live Christian Endeavour Society in his Church and who is in sympathy with the young people; all find their best assistance there and inspiration to the largest hope.

The Sunrise Prayer Meeting is one of the distinctive features of a Christian Endeavour convention. It is held at half-past six a.m., and is for one hour. It is a sight indeed to see the people trooping along the streets in happy-hearted companies, and filling the building in which it is held to overflowing. There were two such meetings, and both of them