

Current Topics

The Chlorodyne Habit

In his quaint book, 'Of the Danger of Liberty,' Felltham states a truth in happy phrase where he says that 'vice is a peripatetic, always in progression.' It is, so to speak, the camp-follower of progress—even of scientific progress—and works its foul and noisome way at the tail of the marching hosts. The devil contrives to get his finger into pretty nearly every pie. He has even managed to turn into instruments of vice and physical and moral degradation drugs which were intended to allay pain and to restore to over-wakeful suffering the blessed sleep which God gave to man as his daily healer and consoler. Thus, for instance, have grown up sundry 'drug habits' that have long been swelling the ranks of those who have

'Eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner.'

One of the most deadly of the perversions that we speak of is the chlorodyne habit. 'I have had,' said Mr. T. H. Wilford last week, 'communications from places as far distant from one another as Auckland, Hastings, and Christchurch in regard to the subject of the sale of chlorodyne. All of them want to help in the crusade against the drug. One woman was prepared to make a contribution. She herself was 75 years of age, and her husband was 78, and they were both unable to travel, but they were fully prepared to help in any other way. They were enthusiastic in the crusade, because they had had instances—painful instances—of the baneful influence of the drug. Cases have come under the notice of the authorities lately,' added Mr. Wilford, 'which reveal most remarkable instances of the awful effects of chlorodyne. In one case, where a woman was sent to an asylum as the result of excess in the taking of chlorodyne, no fewer than 249 bottles which had contained the drug were found in her room. In another case a family were for a long time puzzled about the conduct of their female servant. The outcome of investigations was a cab to a mental hospital, and the finding of about half a hundred chlorodyne bottles in her bedroom. It is obvious that if the Premier does that which he has promised, and brings in a Bill to restrict the sale of the drug, the House will pass it without much trouble.'

So may it be!

Mean Men

Oliver Wendell Holmes advised his portly readers, when the music-grinders came along, to put on their fiercest frown

'And talk about a constable
To turn them out of town;
Then close your sentence with an oath,
And shut the window down.'

To the 'slender man, not big enough for that,' and to him who cannot make a speech, because he is a flat, the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table tenders this counsel:

'Go very quietly and drop
A button in the hat!'

All this is, however, deemed by the Autocrat to be a fitting poetic retribution upon sturdy vagrants whose

'Discords sting through Burns and Moore,
Like hedgehogs dressed in lace,'

and who appear like 'crusaders sent from some infernal clime'

'To pluck the eyes of Sentiment,
And dock the tail of Rhyme,
To crack the voice of Melody,
And break the legs of Time.'

We wonder how Oliver Wendell Holmes would wreak poetic justice upon the 'powerful mean men' (as our American friends would call them) who furnished the material for a framed exhibit that is at view at the Waihi Hospital. The exhibit consists of a collection of worthless coins. And beneath it runs the following type-written legend: 'The above coins, which have been refused at the bank, are a portion of Hospital Sunday's collection, and are placed in a frame to show the liberality of some people towards such a worthy cause. It is to be hoped that

the donors of the above coins will never have cause to enter the institution for treatment.'

Only a miserly soul or a callous heart could thus mock the wants of the sick and suffering poor. While such contributors are about, Waihi should, we think, look to its hen-roosts o' nights. We know of only one meaner act in this line. It was that of the notorious forger and coiner, Roper, who placed a bogus five-pound note upon a hospital-collection plate, and drew £4 10s in change. But Roper met with his deserts, and so may the 'pals' of his kidney in Waihi.

Grape-shot Men

'I must,' said the First (and greatest) Napoleon, 'make scholars that will be men. And nobody is a man without God. The man without God I have seen at work in 1793, and that man you do not govern—you put grape-shot into him.' We heard the elder Coquelin voice the same idea in *cléver* verse at one of his brilliant monologue entertainments in Paris some twenty golden years ago—concluding one of his stanzas with these lines:

Ca contrarierait les gendarmes
Si le bon Dieu n'existait pas.'

Which, being freely interpreted, meaneth that the policeman's office would be a perilous one among people who had lost their faith in the great Creator and Ruler and Judge of all mankind.

For a long period the spiritual guides of our separated brethren in these countries lost, to a considerable extent, their practical sense of the terrible truth that is enshrined in the Napoleonic dictum quoted at the head of the last paragraph. Emptying churches and a lessening hold upon the rising generation have, however, led to a searching of hearts and to much sobering knowledge. This will, we hope, in good time bear fruit in the shape of an organised and far-reaching system of religious education after the model of that which has been in such beneficent operation among Catholics for the past thirty years. Thus, at last week's Anglican Synod in Wellington, the Rev. J. Walker expressed his conviction that 'a system of education which leaves God out of count is not only inadequate, but based on an altogether wrong foundation. We believe,' added he, 'that Christian character can only be built up on Christian belief.' And so say all of us! 'A whole generation,' said the Rev. T. H. Sprott, on the same occasion, 'deprived to a very large extent of religious teaching, is largely ignorant of the religious view of life, and attributes no importance to that view. Such a generation has grown up in this country; its mind has been vacant with regard to the religious view of life, and open to the admission of any other view of life which may come along. Another view of life has come along, in the shape of materialistic Socialism. . . . That is the view of life, which is invading New Zealand, and which this country has been prepared to receive by its thirty years of secular education, during which the religious view was excluded.'

With the which we also are in agreement. From across the Atlantic came, by the last mail, a similar plaint. Said Father Shealy, S.J., at the laying of a corner-stone of a new Catholic College in Brooklyn: 'It isn't the fear of men bringing in communism and anarchy from abroad that we must dread. It is the anarchy of your own nurseries and schools. You send out boys without religion, without stability, ready for the demagogue, fuel for the flames.' Well, the remedy for this evil is not weekly homœopathic doses of nebulous pantheism or a vague (so-called) 'undogmatic' and 'unsectarian' teaching of the Bible treated as a mere text-book. Religious education means vastly more than this. Like all education, it is not a mere routine weekly drill; it is a growth, a discipline, a drawing-out and expansion of God-given faculties. A sound course of religious instruction is part, but only a part, of it—a means to the great end of religious and moral training and character-formation in the religious atmosphere where alone it can be efficiently carried out.

Some Volcanic Oratory

Von Humboldt described volcanoes as the safety-valves of the earth. The safety-valve (said he) may get choked up. The choking-up of the safety-valve of the boiler of (say) the North express would result in a pretty energetic explosion; the