

THE "DOMINION CHURCHMAN"
ABROAD.

SEVERAL instances have recently occurred to show that the DOMINION CHURCHMAN is regarded by the press, both in the States and England, as the Church paper of Canada. Any incident occurring here that our brethren across the line, or across the Atlantic, for in distant dioceses, regard as of general interest to Churchmen, is usually reported as taken from this paper. We have recently noted that not only the Church papers published in London, but secular papers issued in the provincial cities and towns in the old land look to our columns for clippings. A singular proof of this is of interest to correspondents. We some time ago entirely re-wrote a tediously long paragraph of news found in an American Church paper. Our version was quoted in every Church paper in England and Scotland, by several in the States, even by the journal in which the news originally appeared, and by the leading magazines, entirely owing to the paragraph having been denuded of extraneous matter, and presented in a more readable form. Correspondents and contributors should remember that a multiplicity of words seriously detracts from the interest and force of their communications. Advertisers should note that not only is our circle of readers incomparably wider than that of any other Church paper in the Dominion, but that the DOMINION CHURCHMAN is recognized at home and in other colonies as the exponent of the Church of England in Canada.

SAMPLE BAGS.

IN a previous Comment it was said that the 'fast girl' stops short at oaths; but it would seem, from later intelligence received, that this statement was an over-stretch of charity. 'Confound it!' and sometimes yet stronger words, are, it would seem, the toads and adders that do (rarely, let us hope, very rarely) drop from lips whence sapphires and diamonds should rightly fall. At any rate, 'Bother it!' and the like execrations are not so very uncommon, even on the lips of girls who are not to be classed among the Fashionable Immodest.

Such words 'mean nothing' we shall be told. But this excuse is met in a path which has a sheer wall on each side, by our Lord's declaration that 'every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.' The prohibition, standing in the way, cannot be passed, either on the right hand or on the left.

It is much to be desired that quietness in conversation were more cultivated in our day. Violence, and excitability, and exaggeration in words, come of evil. The 'yea' and 'nay' of our Lord's command are continually transgressed, to the loss of the beauty and smoothness of conversation, and of its 'gentle' tone. And the vast importance attached in God's Scriptures to words may well be understood

from the consideration that 'out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.' Words are sample bags of the stores of the heart. If corruption appear in the words, we know that they are but the incarnation (so to speak) of the thoughts within. If the conversation consists of 'chaff,' does not this betray the heart's lack of solid grain? Words 'always with grace, and seasoned with salt,' will certify to the wholesomeness and soundness of that which is stored in a 'pure heart.' The 'yes' and 'no' of a man approved to be truthful suffice. The possibility of sometimes untruthfulness lurking within is indicated by the necessity (?) of asseverations:—'I declare it is so!' 'Upon my word it is so!' 'I am ready to swear it!' Why these phrases if the heart's stores be of but one kind? Can we not see how it is that that which is more than 'yes' or 'no' 'cometh of evil'?

Then the English language is so spoilt by exaggerated adverbial talk. We have lost one useful word for grave prose and poetry by its insane and universal misuse in common talk, in place of the quite sufficient word, 'very.' Why should—in lips of girls and children even—this or that be 'awfully' nice, 'awfully' pretty, 'awfully' jolly? Can a 'jolly' thing really strike the mind with awe? We want the word for such subjects as Death and the Last Judgment. 'Frightfully,' 'appallingly,'—these words come in sometimes to cayenne-pepper the brandy of 'awfully.' We lose the force of the words in our English: and what do we gain? Where 'very' is too mild, 'remarkably' and 'exceedingly' are to hand.

It is very curious to note this tendency to exaggerated language even among the agricultural poor. 'Terrible terrifying' takes the place of 'very surprising.' 'A terrible pretty psalm' is a matter-of-course expression. Prettiness, niceness, &c., would appear to strike the son of the soil with terror, even as by the same things the youth and maiden are smitten with awe. It is really very silly—such words must be called 'idle words.'

In our towns we well know, merely by walking for one minute behind two citizens in conversation, what is the word that so elegantly and aptly does duty for 'very' in their common parlance. Everything is, in the 'working-man's' mind, suffused with blood, as though the aim were to transfigure God's fair and verdant earth, 'making the green—one red!' 'Bloody' is just the usual adjective or adverb. It means nothing; it is not cursing or swearing; it is very silly; it is just an 'idle word.' Swearing it really is, however, in its original condition, and, moreover, a very Papistical expression to be found so rife among our boasted 'Protestantism.' It is an oath by the Blessed Virgin, who is called by Rome, 'Our Lady;' and just as 'Good-by,' resolved into its parts, is 'God be with you!' so 'Bloody' is but the ancient, common 'By our Lady' translated—as Shakespeare's weaver was of old. It is common—we might say awfully common—and senseless, and not pretty; but it only stands for 'very.' As thus:—Two men passing by St. Paul's Cathedral are heard to dis-

course: 'That's bloody high, Tom!' Tom replying, 'Oh, not so bloody!' Yes, awfully common. The story is now somewhat musty, of how some youths, becoming suddenly alive to the fact of the presence in the same compartment with them of a clerical dignitary, hastened to apologize for their 'free talk,' and to explain the habit.

'You see, sir, we're plain-spoken young fellows, and are accustomed to call a spade a spade.'

'Are you, indeed? You surprise me,' replied the dignitary. 'From the style of your conversation hitherto, I should have thought you would have called it a bloody shovel!'

As to oaths and curses, these are commonly confounded. 'By Jove, &c.,—these are oaths and swearing; and all such expressions, being oaths, are not merely idle words. They are as entirely contrary to the prohibition of our Lord and His Apostle James, as can be any sin forbidden by God's Word.

Curses are imprecations, such as 'Damn—Blast—Confound—Bother;' *et hoc genus omne*. They take God's Name in vain, because each verb must imply a nominative. Oaths often substitute something for God's Name—just that which our Lord forbids. But an imprecation is a prayer. How can we expect a blessing on children, cattle, basket, field, eyes, legs, &c., when there goes up to God, in a ceaseless smoke from our island, one incessant prayer for—DAMNATION?—I. R. V., in *Church Bells*.

GODLESS STATE SCHOOLS IN THE
UNITED STATES.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Times* throws much light on the nature of the teaching given in the 'common schools' in the United States, which correspond to the Board Schools of England.

Originally these common schools were parochial schools, 'under the government of the parish minister and his elders or deacons.' Eventually, however, the schools, having first been parochial and denominational, and next become municipal, came in the third place under party political influences, as represented in an elective public Board. This last change has been asserting itself with increasing distinctness for thirty years past, and the general effect has been to reduce the schools to a condition of secularism. Unbelievers, on the one side, have objected to the schools being religious; on the other side, the Roman Catholics have objected to the Bible being taught in them. Between these two influences most of the schools have become, not merely unsectarian, but secular or utterly non-religious.

But 'the pendulum seems now to be beginning to swing back again; a strong reaction is setting in against the secular character of the day schools, on the part of a large proportion of earnest Christian men,' while the Romanists are clamouring for the State maintenance of distinct common schools for themselves exclusively. Dr. Hodge, an eminent son of the eminent Presbyterian Professor of