

history, as it is of active life and work in the world—the teaching of fair-mindedness as the ground of all our thoughts and opinions.

“A Short History of the English People,” tried by this standard, ranks very high. It was written by a fair-minded and liberal man, who had suffered from injustice and intolerance himself and who “died learning.”

We have recently observed a good deal of the same narrow spirit in current American literature, especially in the magazines intended for children and youth. A good many of the writers of brief historical romances for young Americans think it well to depict their own young fellow-countrymen as bright, smart, civil, truthful, able to extricate themselves from great difficulties with but little exertion, and displaying altogether a nobler and higher type of character and a more suddenly-developed superiority to the generation immediately preceding theirs than one can quite fathom.

Then, of course, we must have some character in the story to act as a foil to all this. There is a skeleton in every household, a villain in every play, and a scoundrel in every story; and now that the Indian is a little overworked, this rôle falls, as a matter of necessity, to the English or Canadian. These subjects of an effete monarchy, these descendants of a tyrannical and unjust race, whose virtues were entirely absorbed and drained away, so to speak, in the year 1776, they are the villains, the scoundrels and the sneaks. They are dull, stupid, rude, untruthful—they are no use, they are invariably made fools of by their triumphant superiors above-described, and if they had any great ancestors the descendants do not at all resemble them. This is strange. We are not drawing upon our imagination. Look over a file of any American publication for children

and young people and see. Sometimes we observe the same thing in the American monthlies and quarterlies.

But for instance. On February 22nd, 1890, that good paper, the *Sunday School Times* of Philadelphia, published a pious tale by the Rev. Edward Rand, in which the two chief characters were a manly boy who told the truth and behaved himself, and a miserable sneak who tempted him to lie and sneered at him. The sneak was a Canadian, and the other boy was an American on a visit to Canada. Again, in the last *St. Nicholas*, see the account of Washington's grand-niece being captured by the English. Or in *Scribner's Monthly* read “In the Valley,” in which the English are carefully placed in a most unfavourable light. And dear, delightful Susan Coolidge, in the last *Wide Awake*, speaks of precaution necessary against “the English—or the Indians.”

Our friends across the line are making a mistake if they think to rear a nation on such thoughts as these. The nation which is unfair to others must expect such measure to be meted to it again. The nation which is wanting in respect for others has not true regard for itself. We claim no monopoly of virtue. It is still necessary to teach all the Ten Commandments in the British Empire. We shall not insult ourselves or our readers by thinking it necessary to assert our claim (never an *exclusive* claim) to that virtue which has always been regarded by our nation as the foundation of a true character. “Truth-teller” was our English Alfred named, “Truth-lover” was our English Duke.

But perhaps we could find better reading for our children than such tales as these. Perhaps our friends in the Northern States would see to it that the true American spirit, and not the anti-British spirit, should