

### "POOR OLD ROBINSON CRUSOE."

A discussion recently took place at the Montreal Sunday School Teachers' Institute, on the topic of "Sunday-School Literature." The addresses delivered during the course of the debate were full of discrimination and sound sense. The remarks of Mr. Bolton, an American clergyman, were especially worthy of notice. But the Cynic was pained to read in his speech, a sentence (that he would fain deem unpremeditated,) condemnatory, to a certain extent, of one of the best books ever published. Mr. Bolton is reported to have said:

A great deal of carelessness was shown on the part of publishers of Sunday School libraries, with regard to the character of the books. The utmost caution ought to be observed as to the character of the books, which we put into the hands of children. They were in a high degree imitative, and often attempted to perform the feats they read about. *He was cognizant of alarming consequences resulting from the reading of such books as the "City Arab," and "Robinson Crusoe,"* which had somehow found their way into Sabbath School libraries.

DIOGENES, at present, has no knowledge whatever, of the book entitled the "City Arab." He does not believe that it enjoys an extraordinary circulation, or that the sayings and doings of a City Arab are likely to be closely imitated by even a small number of decently-trained children. But he does know and love "Robinson Crusoe;" and he is convinced that Mr. Bolton has been singularly deceived, and that no "alarming consequences" have ever resulted from the perusal of the story of the shipwrecked Solitary. Desert islands are not met with in everyday life or under ordinary circumstances; and boys and girls, as Mr. Bolton must know, have not the means, even if they had the will, to sail away from their comfortable homes in the vague hope of being wrecked, and performing the exploits of their picturesque hero. Such a charge as Mr. Bolton's has never before been brought against the fiction of Defoe. His language might have been excused, if he had been speaking of "Jack Sheppard," whom Ainsworth has represented as a model of gallantry and courage. But, in truth, it is almost profanity to mention the two works in the same breath. With the exception of the Bible and perhaps Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," "Robinson Crusoe" has been printed more frequently than any other volume in the English language. It has won universal admiration, and has been translated into nearly every known language. Childhood and youth, manhood and old age are alike captivated by its truthfulness to nature, and in consequence of its reality and simplicity it has become the book of all countries, of the illiterate as well of the learned; in short, of all classes of mankind. As a biographer of Defoe has said: "It contains, if not a treatise, at least a practical exemplification of a system of natural education, detailed with matchless truth." Mr. Bolton may not attach much value to the testimony of Rousseau; but a quotation from his *Emile* is, nevertheless, too remarkable to be omitted on the present occasion. DIOGENES commends it to the attention of all persons who entertain nervous apprehensions about the "alarming consequences" that may result from giving "Robinson Crusoe" to a child. "Puisqu'il nous faut absolument des livres, il en existe un qui fournit, à mon gré, le plus heureux traité d'éducation naturelle. Ce livre sera le premier que lira mon Emile; seul il composera long-temps toute sa bibliothèque, et il y tiendra toujours une place distinguée. Il sera le texte auquel tous nos entretiens sur les sciences naturelles ne servira que des commentaires. Il servira d'épreuve durant nos progrès à l'état de notre jugement; et tant que notre goût ne sera pas gâté, sa lecture nous plaira toujours. Quel est donc ce merveilleux livre? Est-ce Aristote? Est-ce Platon? Non; c'est *Robinson Crusoe*."

### DIOGENES WEEPS.

For once, we turn from mirth and jest aside,  
For quips and cranks assume a solemn strain,  
All the gay emblems of our calling hide  
Before dread Nemesis with direful train!

Cursed be he who sheddeth blood of man!  
Cursed be he who woman's honor stains!  
Neither, swift vengeance ever yet outran—  
Man may forget, but Nemesis remains.

What shall we say of that infernal guile,  
Which more than life—which *honor* stole away?  
A villain's theft, with all a coward's wile!  
Horror benumbs—we know not what to say.

What shall we say of that young daring hand  
Who took both God's and man's decrees and doom  
In its unhallowed palm?—murder's red brand,  
Burns on his brow,—will follow to the tomb!

The spoiler's gone! life's madd'ning race is o'er,  
His sins are sleeping in a bloody grave!  
His spirit rests upon the unknown shore—  
May mercy o'er him yet her pinions wave.

The daring boy, for man to judge, is here:  
And what his doom? he may not scatheless go:  
*We* can't absolve—yet many, many a tear  
At judgment harsh, would freely, pitying, flow.

Close the dread scene—but may its lesson last;  
That grave be eloquent for evermore;  
Then, not for nought that life away has past  
Great Lord, Supreme, o'er all thy mercy shower!

### "THE COUNTRY'S SAFE."

The Kingston petition has been taken from under consideration, and the petitioners have been favored with a reply. The Hon. the Postmaster-General appeals to them as fathers and relations; and, in very touching terms, reminds them of the duty they owe to their sons and their cousins, their brothers, nephews and uncles, their step-sons and brothers-in-law, their sons-in-law, and their grandfathers and grandmothers. He also appeals to them as citizens of this illimitable Dominion, and tells them plainly that but for their aid and that of their surroundings, the machinery of government must come to a stand-still. He says there are none beside them who can properly oil its wheels and springs. The result is most gratifying. An address is now being prepared in old Frontenac, in which the worthy burghers inform the Hon. Minister that they wish to withdraw their ill-judged petition, and are rejoiced to be able to tell him that they have still fifty *dear* ones left out of the original seven hundred—all the rest provided for—whom they will consent to sacrifice on the altars of their country's offices. *On dit*: The forthcoming *Gazette* will contain a proclamation appointing a day of general thanksgiving.

### DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Without the one the other could not be;  
Without the other who on earth could see?  
Without the two old Chaos gain arrives  
Yet *sans* the two we pass one half our lives.  
One with the other join, and you'll have then  
A gift divine to weary, toiling men.

1. How little we think, when in youth's happy hour  
We dash the bright dew from its crest,  
That when life with its joys fades and dies like a flower,  
Beneath its soft bosom we'll rest.

2. In Spencer's "Fairie Queen" you'll find  
A lady, modest, timid, kind;  
Whose word the savage beast obeys,  
As at her feet itself it lays.

3. Who on earth do we love more than a father or mother,  
More than husband or wife,—more than sister or brother,  
Or than self?

Whose interest is dearer, more sought than our own,  
And who, without sorrow, to manhood has grown,  
Who's that elf?