

Small as is the population of the Colony, especially when the extent of territory is taken into consideration, it notwithstanding comprehends within its narrow limits very wide diversities of nationality. Whole consisting principally of persons from the British Islands, from the Dominion of Canada and from the United States, nearly every country of Europe is there more or less fully represented. Chinamen are numerous, and many of Israel's scattered race, in their world-wide wanderings, have found a place of sojourning here. Singularly enough, the Irish element is inconsiderable, and, such as it is, may be referred to emigration from Canada, or from the States, or from any quarter rather than directly from Ireland itself.

The diversities of nationality among the population of the Colony are matched by the diversities of religious persuasion. It comprises persons of the most various creeds, and still more, it is to be feared, of no creed, or of none deserving the name. Those by whom the ordinances of public worship are at all regularly attended are few indeed as compared with those by whom the house of God is rarely or never entered. The sanctity of the Sabbath is little regarded even by many who make some profession of religion. The worship of God in the family, and home religious training of the young, are grossly neglected. Profane swearing in its most offensive forms is fearfully common, and is made more revolting still by the frequency with which it finds utterance from the lips of the young. And in travelling by any of the public conveyances, or mixing otherwise in general society, it is not to be noted as a thing strange and unusual if one shall hear the worst sentiments of infidelity openly and unreservedly avowed, coupled, it may be, with the reckless denunciation of all which he has been accustomed to regard as most sacred. A thoroughly worldly spirit prevades all classes of the community, and meetings and engagements of almost any other description will take precedence of those which have respect to religion.

In the constitution of the society of the Colony there is one peculiarity which cannot but strike even the most careless observer, and that is, the small number of *families* proportionately to the population at large. The great bulk of the adult population consists of young men, or men of more advanced years, alike unmarried; or of men who, though married, have left their wives and children behind them on coming to the Colony, with the intention of by-and-by sending for them, or rather returning to them. It is not an unusual thing, accordingly, in meetings for public worship, to see considerable congregations composed almost entirely of persons of the male sex.*

The practice of concubinage with the native women prevails to a lamentable extent. The illicit connections thus formed occasionally terminate in marriage, but this is of rare occurrence. In the great majority of cases it is otherwise, and the results, as might be expected, are most deplorable. Those who are so misled as to enter into these connections—persons, perhaps, accustomed before to manifest some regard for religion and its obligations—soon lay aside their better habits; they are thrown, more or less, out of their former social relations, and instead of elevating the object of their lawless passion above her original level, it almost invariably happens

* In the thriving settlement of Langley, on the Fraser, there are only three married white women, nor is this without a parallel in other settlements. The Wesleyan missionary in Barkerville, Cariboo, in giving an account of his experiences in that mountain region, describes the surprise and satisfaction with which, on some special occasion, he observed no fewer than three of the gentler sex present among his audience.