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Ottawa, Wednesday, Nov. 20th, 1901.

Every man who makes no response to a generous action is ungrateful. Nor are those who make the most profuse acknowledgement always the most grateful. We listened to one of those sweet-tongued ladies murmuring words of gratitude, till the one who had bestowed the gift moved away in embarrassment. The moment her back was turned the gift was thrown into a corner with every expression of contempt and loathing. On the other hand a gift that was received in silence, and even with an expression of being bored, was tenderly laid away as if too precious for ordinary use. Do not classify your Christmas gifts according to the outward expression of gratitude, but learn who has cherished your gift of last year.

The evils resulting from the cigarette habit among boys have often been pointed out. They are only too plainly evident in the faces and forms of those who are addicted to the habit. A vigorous effort has been made to secure pledges from one million boys that they will not touch tobacco in any form till they are twenty-one. If this pledge be secured and kept there will be little danger of those who have kept it becoming addicted to tobacco. There are those whom a moderate use of tobacco will not hurt, but they are not among the boys. At best this is only negative evidence, for there are probably none whom the use of tobacco helps. And we need what will help in these strenuous days.

Shall the missionaries return to their posts in China? This is the great question with the Boards at present. The missionaries would soon settle the question, they would be off next week, if the decision were left to them. But the missionaries are not always the best judges. The thought of the thousands of hungry eyes looking into theirs, pleading dumbly for they know not what, unsettles judgment, and no one who has once seen that eager look can turn from its appeal. Yet the voice of the missionary should

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be heard in the present council, and judgment should be given very largely according to their description of the field and its condition. No one imagines that those in charge deserted their posts, and their eagerness to return owes nothing to the prickings of conscience. Many of those who came back would not have come had they not been peremptorily ordered to do so, and they hear the voice of the people crying for the light, that is the explanation of their desire to go back at once.

### GETTING AT THE BOTTOM OF IT.

Now and then rumors pass from lip to lip that touch and tarnish with their touch, the character of some one we know. How, or where they originated no one seems to know. They are given a certain amount of credence, the amount being graduated by the degree of friendship existing between the one who hears the rumor, and the person whose character is touched by it. If it concerns a stranger little notice is taken of it. With a smile of unconcern it is dismissed, but if that stranger is ever afterwards introduced, the name is at once associated with the unpleasant rumor, that may be but dimly recalled. You do not give the stranger the cordial reception that was expected because of that all but forgotten rumor.

How few take the trouble to get at the bottom of the rumor about another. It is none of our business, there must be some foundation for what we have heard. So we reason and act accordingly. Were we to take the trouble to investigate a little way, it may be that we should find as little ground for the rumor as there is for another statement about ourselves, which we know to be absolutely false. We traced that back to its source. It concerned us, and we made it our business to search it out. It was a curious compound when we analyzed it. A little jealousy, a little devilment, a little love of scandal, a little ill-will, a little vanity, and so on. A curious mixture, and strangely mingled. Like Macbeth's witches, each one that passed it along dropped in a potion, and the compound is the resultant.

If we love our neighbor as we love ourselves we shall be willing to do a little analyzing on his account as well as on our own. But the one who undertakes to trace a rumor back to its source, whether it concerns himself or another, must have a cool head, and the self-control of a party leader. It is a business where there are fuses laid at every step, and no man has right to wander round there with a lighted match. We have seen the biologist at work dissecting his subject. He worked quite dispassionately, cutting, removing, laying aside, and arranging. We wanted to exclaim every minute, but emotion was entirely repressed with the operator. And that was right. So it is right when we come to operate upon the moral deformity of a badly twisted lie, whose several strands we want to unravel.

We have changed our figure, and the old is better, so we get back to it again. In pursuing this work of getting at the bottom of the rumor by analyzing the compound of which it is made up, it will surprise you to find what has been contributed by the dif-

ferent parties. The last element was supplied by an intimate friend, perhaps the one who repeated the rumor to you. It was utterly unworthy of your friend, whom you did not think capable of bearing ill-will and venting it in this way. If you can keep your head it will pay you to let the original compound alone for a time, and give some time to the analysis of this last portion of it. Why does your friend bear this man ill will? The investigation of this is risky, especially if you value the friendship, but it is often worth the risk. Each new element in the whole, will in turn give you some useful information.

From how small a matter does a most damaging statement sometimes originate. A overheard B making a disparaging remark to C. At that moment A's mind was dwelling upon some incident in D's life, and unconsciously he associated B's disparaging remark with D. A repeated the remark, or what he supposed was the remark, to E, who promptly passed it on. It changed slightly when A repeated it, for it must fit into his conception of what B said. E also changed it a little, adding his portion to the whole. So the rumor went on.

The outline is too real, and too tragic to pass over with a smile, and a disparaging remark of "Far-fetched"! The scandal that sent your minister from his work with you had no more serious beginning than this. The rumor that blackened the character of your neighbor had no more to rest upon than this. The cloud that has come between you and your comrade or neighbor began in some such way. The coldness that froze into ice, and that effectually separates husband and wife, lover and beloved, began in some such foolish way as this. It is worth while tracing back one or two of the rumors that reach you. It will shake your faith in human nature while you are about it, but the final result will be reassuring. Your own life will be sweeter, and your outlook upon life will be saner.

The New Covenant, or Lost Secret, (Toronto; Wm. Briggs,) is the title of a book from the pen of Mrs. Anna Ross, Principal of the Ottawa Ladies' College. Readers of THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN are familiar with the author's style, as extracts from the work have already appeared in our columns. In the preface the argument is stated as follows: 1st. That we, as Christ's, have fallen heir to a covenant with God which gives us legal right before Him to all the privileges covered by the three terms of that covenant. 2nd. That the failure to utilize this tremendous fact is the cause of the feebleness and failure of the Church of Christ. 3rd. That the way to actual power and victory in Christian life and service is to apprehend and utilize this covenant." In the massive chapters of the book the points are clearly brought out, and the abiding character and great importance of the "New Covenant" clearly established. The writings of the Bonars and of Andrew Murray are read the world over. It is not too much to say that Mrs. Ross' work will not suffer in comparison with the best productions of these sainted men. "The New Covenant" makes a handsome volume of nearly two hundred pages, and it may be bought from any bookseller for a dollar. Its wide circulation will be productive of much good.