

Our Contributors.

THE ART OF OWNING UP.

BY KNOXONIAN

A short time ago Dr. Field, of the New York Evangelist, published a series of letters on Spain. In one of the letters he said some rather kindly things about the Spanish priesthood. A neighbour took him to task for dealing so tenderly with a class of clerics who have never been specially noted for dealing tenderly with their neighbours. Dr. Field replied in substance: "Yes, I confess I did see something good in the Spanish priesthood. I try to see something good in everybody. It is a way I have." He owned up handsomely, and when a man owns up in that way his critic generally feels that the sting has been taken out of the criticism.

Dr. Field's mantle of charity must be fairly wide. Just how wide a mantle of that kind ought to be, it is not easy to say. Certainly it ought not to be wide enough to cover the devil. Whether it should be wide enough to cover the Spanish priesthood is a question on which good men will differ. Historically considered, they don't awaken feelings of love in the average Protestant heart.

A man who understands the art of owning up has a powerful weapon which he can use at times with great effect. By simply saying "yes" to an opponent you sometimes knock the ground from under him in a way he never expected. He expected you to say "no." He expected a big fight. He comes down on you with great bluster. Quietly say "yes," if you say "yes" truthfully, and see how quickly the breath leaves him.

Sir John Macdonald is a master of the art of owning up. Somewhere in almost any of his platform and after-dinner speeches you find a paragraph of this kind: "Gentlemen, I know I have my faults and failings. I have made many mistakes in my long public career. I never pretended to be infallible. I never professed to be perfect like these Grits." What more can you say? The man owns up, and by doing so disarms his opponents.

Mr. Mowat can own up quite as skilfully as Sir John. When he brought on the elections rather suddenly in December, 1886, his opponents charged him with trying to embarrass Sir John, who was also getting ready for an appeal to the free and independent. In his opening campaign speech Mr. Mowat said, in effect: "Gentlemen, they say I have brought on the elections to embarrass Sir John. It is my duty to embarrass him. It is your duty to embarrass him. It is the duty of all Liberals to embarrass him." That was a fine rhetorical shot. A less skilful manager would have given a long argument to show that the Government had a constitutional right to appeal to the people at any time, provided they took the risk of so doing. He would then have quoted a string of English precedents to prove that there ought to be an election after every enlargement of the Franchise. Mr. Mowat did all that too, but he did it in another part of his speech. He knocked the breath out of his opponents, first by pluckily owning up, and then he argued the constitutional question.

About the same time some of his opponents accused him of receiving the support of Archbishop Lynch. Of course no other political leader ever receives support of that kind. Of course not. No other political leader allows a Catholic to vote for him. Mr. Mowat replied with rare skill. In substance he said "Gentlemen, I am happy to hear that his Grace leans toward the Liberal party. I wish all bishops and priests and clergymen were Liberals. It would be much better for themselves if they belonged to the Liberal party." From the standpoint of a Statesman who believes his own political creed and wishes others to adopt it, the Premier's position was simply impregnable.

All successful men understand and practise the art of owning up. Some young men and all weak men think the right way is to fight everything and everybody. One of the principal points of difference between a strong man and a weakling is that the strong man knows when and how and how much to own up, while the weakling thinks he ought to fight on every trifling issue. Men who don't understand the art of owning up never become Premiers.

An impertinent fellow told Henry Ward Beecher that he intended to count the number of grammatical slips that the great Brooklyn orator made in a sermon

an hour long. "Do," said Beecher, "and let me know the number at the end of the service." Next Sabbath evening the fellow counted. At the closing of the service he came up smiling with an air of triumph, to tell Beecher the number. "How many did I make?" asked Beecher. "You made thirty," said the impertinent fellow. "Thirty, thirty," said Beecher, "was that all? I thought I must have made about three hundred." Taking down a man like Beecher is a rather heavy contract. That impertinent fellow will perhaps be careful about taking another contract of the kind.

A pastor is met at the door by a good lady parishioner, who thinks she has been neglected. She has been nursing her wrath to keep it warm. She has succeeded. She always does. Lovingly she says, "Dear me, Mr. A, is this you? Have you really found your way here? I thought you had forgotten us. You have not called for six months." "My dear madam," says the pastor, "is that all? I thought it must have been four or five years."

"Your steak is tough," growls the good man as he begins his dinner. "Yes, dear," mildly answers the good wife, "it is very tough. I thought of sending some of it down to the shoemaker's to be used in half-soling the children's boots." Better own up even in that exaggerated way than have a quarrel over the dinner table.

"This account is larger than I expected," says the customer, forgetting that accounts nearly always are larger than one expects. "These bills do run up rather fast," mildly answers the merchant. Better say that than have a wrangle over the bill, ending in a lawsuit.

The art of owning up ought to be cultivated. There are thousands of cases every day in which people might own up without the slightest sacrifice of principle or self-respect. As a rule only strong men own up, and that is one reason why there is so little of it.

A PLEA FOR MISSIONS.*

BY MRS. GORDON, HARRINGTON.

When God's Israel had to journey from Egypt, through an unknown wilderness, to the land of promise, they were not left in doubt as to their line of march or their camping-places. God Himself went before them, by daytime in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Their sole and simple duty was to follow where He led, and in this one respect they have left us a faultless example (Num. ix. 17-23). And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then, after that, the children of Israel journeyed, and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. We all know that this "fiery, cloudy pillar" is the symbol of the Angel of the Covenant, through His Word, Spirit and providence, guiding His people in all ages. This is signally true of the mission work of God's Church. That Church is marching on, under His leadership, to take possession of the promised land for Him—"the heathen His inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth His possession." His presence is abiding as He promised—Lo, I am with you alway. He guides her with His eye. The sole and simple duty of His Church, and of each of us as a member thereof, is to follow where He leads. Dear sisters, you have sent for me to speak to you, and I have come with this one purpose—to point you to the pillar of cloud and fire; or in plain words, without a figure, to point out some of the indications of God's will as to the duty and privilege of His people to enter on immediately and follow up with all earnestness the work of universal missions.

The expression of God's will in this matter in Old Testament prophecies and promises we are not now to consider. The parting command and promise of the risen and ascending Lord, "Go ye into all nations" and "Lo, I am with you alway," etc. This is not what we are to think and speak about this afternoon, though indeed this one utterance, so clear, so solemn, so authoritative, might be enough to make a missionary of every disciple from that day to this, to inspire his heart with more than a seraph's zeal, and make his "tongue as the pen of a ready writer." It did

*An Address delivered at the annual meeting of the Paris Presbyterian W. F. M. Society.

all this for the first generation of disciples. They did go to all the world then known, and preached the Gospel—not missionaries only, but martyrs, gladly sealing their testimony with their blood, but alas for the following generations of disciples, "the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choked" that heavenly word and made it unfruitful. All this we pass over, and simply hold up before you the indication of God's will in some of those grand facts of modern missions, which are indeed but the making visible, in Shekinah fires, of the hand of the invisible God as it points out the line of march His Israel is to follow, and the strongholds which are to be taken for Him. At the outset let us remember that all the marvels at which we are to look have been wrought within less than a century. And, first, He has opened a door of access for the Bible and the missionary to almost every nation on the face of the earth. It still lacks five years of the hundred since the first English foreign missionary, William Carey, left Britain to carry the Gospel to the heathen. At that time nearly every heathen nation on the face of the earth was shut and barred against the Gospel and those who preached it. If the thousands of European and American missionaries now in the field had stood there, ready, equipped for service, saying, "Here we are, send us," there was scarcely a shore where they would have been allowed to land, or a people that would have bid them welcome. Death threatened alike the missionary who proclaimed and the convert who embraced the new religion. "Now, the whole aspect of the world is changed, and there is scarce one closed door or a community where the missionary may not go with the open Bible or where the convert may not, in publicly confessing allegiance to Jesus, claim the protection of law."

So silent and far-reaching are God's methods of working that we fail to apprehend how radical and how rapid the changes are which have been taking place before our very eyes. Is not the hand of God manifest here, pointing out His way? Is not the voice out of the cloud clear and urgent bidding His people enter in at the open doors—to proclaim liberty to the captives, etc. Not more audibly from the flaming bush of the desert did Jehovah speak to His servant, "I have seen, I have heard, I am come down to deliver. Come, I will send thee."

Nor is that hand less visible, or that voice less audible in the revolution wrought in this century by our railways and steamships, our telegraph wires, whether crossing oceans or continents. In our day no part of the world seems very far from us. We feel like saying by telegraph or telephone—Good-morning, neighbours, how do you do? to people living on the other side of the world. Instead of the twelve weary months spent in a crowded merchant ship by the first missionaries from Boston to the Sandwich Islands in 1820, a rapid run of a few weeks brings our missionaries to the most distant fields.

In our day God's messages can be flashed round all the world with the swiftness of the winged lightning.

These providential movements are in themselves highly significant. They are God's external working, preparing the way of the Gospel; but His working at the same time in His Church, causing her to awaken from the slumber of centuries, and to feel and welcome the pressure of her missionary obligations, this it is which gives to those external preparations their profound significance.

While we find the whole world thrown open to the Bible, we find that Bible made ready to be soon broadcast over all its wide, waste continents, no less than 150,000,000 copies being printed and circulated in all the principal languages of the earth. We find also the number of missionary societies increased ten-fold within the century, there being now twenty-five Woman's Boards in England and America actively engaged in Foreign Mission work, and year by year the increased knowledge of the work and of the need for it stirs to deeper searchings of heart and a profounder sense of obligation. In this divine coincidence of God's external and internal working we recognize the outcome of that power wielded by Christ as Mediator, and announced by Him in the opening declaration of the great commission, "All power, etc., Go ye therefore."

Lest we encroach unduly on your time, we refrain from recounting the marvels of God's preparatory working in the various parts of the great mission field. We will instance one only—India—that being