

Our Contributors.

CONTACT WITH THE WORST SIDE OF HUMAN NATURE.

BY KNOXONTIAN.

One evening some years ago we happened to meet an eminent Toronto Q.C. as he was coming out of court after a hard days fight in an election trial. "You ought to be thankful you are a clergyman," said he. "Why so," we replied, "you make more money in a month than I get in a twelvemonth." "That may be," said he, "but you haven't to hold your nose over the worst side of human nature all day."

That is true. Clergymen should be thankful that as a general thing they have to deal with the best side of human nature. For that reason if for no other they ought to be pretty good men themselves.

But there are many ways of holding one's nose over the worst side of human nature besides acting as counsel in election trials. A gossip that rakes up all the scandal in the community holds his nose over the garbage and gets no fifty dollars a day for doing it. He holds his nose in position for love of the odour.

The specific question, however, that we want to discuss in this paper is how much of the bad side of human nature should we read about in the newspapers. We mean of course good clean newspapers. There are so-called newspapers that should never be opened by any human being that values a pure mind. The worst feature about the typical Sunday newspaper published on the other side of the line is that it is utterly unfit to be read on any day of the week. But even the best and cleanest journals give long reports, sometimes descriptive reports of the sayings and doings of the worst kind of men. Should a reader who wishes to keep his mind clean and sweet, read these reports; should he pass them over or should he skim them? For example a great trial for murder fills up four or five columns of your favorite journal for a week or ten days or perhaps longer. Once begin to read it and you are sure to read it to the end. The reading of it takes perhaps an hour or more each day, and two hours a day are worth much to a busy man. You may easily spend another hour in discussing it with other people who are interested and who may wish to know your opinion on the merits of the case. But the loss of time is not the most serious feature. As your interest in the trial grows you find the case following you until you think about it a good part of the day, and perhaps dream about it at night. Is this a wholesome kind of exercise for a clean mind. Most decidedly it is not. Contact with vice or crime on the printed page cannot fail to be injurious. Perhaps a man sitting quietly in his own room pouring over the report of a trial for murder, or over unsavory reports of another kind we need not mention, receives more real injury than is done to the men engaged in the trial. The repulsive features do not stand out so disgustingly on the printed page as they sometimes do in court. The actual appearance of the characters in the drama often shows in a way the report can never do that the way of transgressors is hard. Be that as it may, familiarity with vice or crime on the written page as well as anywhere else is highly injurious, and must always be so while evil is evil and human nature is what it is.

But there is another side to the question. In a self-governed country the people rule and if they are to rule intelligently they must know what is going on in the country. You pay your part of the bill for the administration of justice, and is it not your duty to know how justice is administered? It will not do to say "it is none of my business." We are all in the ship of state together, and if anybody scuttles the ship we must all go down together. There is no more certain way of scuttling the ship than by administering justice that is not justice.

Practically the Crown in criminal procedure means the people. At all events the people pay the bill and a fine large one it sometimes is. The entire army of prosecutors from the Attorney General down to the detective are the servants of the people—though perhaps some of them would deny the democratic impeachment. Such being the case the people should know how their servants do business and they cannot know if they do not read. If prosecution should seem at times to savor of persecution the people should say, "Stop that at once. This is a British colony, we must have British fair play here." If criminal trials are so arranged that an accused man without money or friends is completely over-matched the people should interfere and see that the accused gets a fair trial. If a man is in danger of being hanged because he is suspected, in their own interests the people should protect the man because anyone may be placed in circumstances that suggest suspicion.

On the whole, then, it seems better in a free country to watch everything of a public nature. Doing so is part of the price we pay for the approach to British fair play we have. To keep a vigilant eye on all public matters without holding one's nose too long over the worst side of human nature is the problem all good citizens should try to solve.

THE NEW "DAYSPRING"—A VINDICATION.

BY REV. J. W. MITCHELL, M.A.

It was with much pain that I read Mr. E. Scott's letter in your issue of 9th ult., renewing his attack on Dr. Paton and the steamer *Dayspring* project. Dr. Paton is now among the Aniwans for whose evangelization he has so devotedly and successfully laboured for thirty-seven years, and it will be months before he learns of this renewal of hostilities. He is where he cannot defend himself or this project. In the absence of any one better informed, allow me space to reply in his behalf.

Mr. Scott's course throughout this controversy has been marked by strong bias against, and unfair treatment of Dr. Paton. He began the attack in the columns of the *Record*, the official organ of our Church. He refused to admit Dr. Paton's reply when sent to him for insertion; and later when the Foreign Mission Committee of the Victorian Church completely vindicated the Doctor, and that vindication was sent for insertion in the *Record*, months ago, he ignored it.

The present attack is in keeping with those that have gone before. Certain facts are arranged with all the skill of a practised hand—other important facts are held back. The impression made is entirely misleading. Drawing from the same official documents, let me supplement the information that he has seen fit to give your readers, and, in addition, point out a number of grossly erroneous statements which his letter contains. The attack is much more formidable in appearance than reality.

MISLEADING AND ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS.

1. Mr. Scott asserts that when Dr. Paton appeared before his own Assembly on his return "he presented them with sufficient to increase the amount previously collected to \$50,000 to build a steamer."

Dr. Paton during his recent tour made no appeal for means to build the steamer. That work he completed ten years ago. Since that time £6,000 have been in the hands of the Church in Victoria, which with accumulated interest he regarded sufficient for this purpose. One gift of £1,000 was volunteered for the building fund by a gentleman in Liverpool, which Dr. Paton would gladly have received for maintenance, and so expressed himself to the generous donor.

2. He (Dr. Paton) "presented them in addition for their ordinary Foreign Mission Fund the enormous sum of £25,000 (one

hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars) which he had collected in Britain, Canada and the United States."

Mr. Scott has doubled the sum (£12,527) actually handed over by Dr. Paton to "the ordinary Foreign Mission Fund" of his church. The object of these exaggerations is apparent.

3. Mr. Scott asserts that the Foreign Mission Committee of the Victorian Church went "forward and ordered the steamer on their own responsibility." The statement is entirely unwarranted. The Victoria Assembly, which has now ten missionaries under appointment to the Islands, adopted the steam *Dayspring* scheme as submitted by its Foreign Mission Committee, and authorized it "to communicate with the sister churches, *Dayspring* Board and the missionaries of the New Hebrides to ask their approbation, and 'on obtaining a reasonable amount of concurrence to go on to order the vessel.'"

So long ago as last January Dr. Paton wrote: "Virtually a majority both of the missionaries and churches have expressed approval of the scheme." A number had not at that date replied. The Foreign Mission Committee did not order the steamer till March. No doubt in the interval the answers received gave them additional "concurrence," and amply warranted them to order the vessel. The steamer has been ordered on the authority of the Victorian Assembly and with the concurrence of the majority of the missionaries and Churches concerned.

4. Mr. Scott asserts that the Victorian Church "has at length, for the first time, sanctioned the scheme" of a steam *Dayspring*.

Dr. Paton, on the contrary, states that he brought the scheme before the Assembly of Victoria in 1883, and was then empowered and authorized to lay the proposal before the Churches of Great Britain and Ireland, and to ask and receive from God's people what ever contributions they felt disposed to give toward the needed sum of £6,000.

The Foreign Mission Committee of the Victorian Church in their recent vindication of Dr. Paton from the aspersions cast on him by Mr. Scott and others, state that the Assembly, in its final act of approval of the project last November, "had simply proceeded on lines laid down some ten years ago when you (Dr. Paton) were commissioned to visit Great Britain and Ireland for the purpose of raising funds to build a vessel."

Their retention of the £6,000 is conclusive proof of their intention to order the steamship as soon as the way was clear. Had they abandoned the project they would no doubt have felt bound as honest men to return the money to those who gave it.

In the face of these facts published, and in your correspondents hands, he has the courage to assert that the scheme is now for the first time approved by the Victorian Assembly.

THE OPPOSITION.

There is and has been for ten years past decided opposition to the project. Mr. Scott has told your readers that two churches out of eight concerned have expressed themselves adversely. On his own showing that is not such a formidable opposition as should lead to the abandonment of the steamer. But the opposition requires to be weighed as well as counted. Whence does it emanate? By whom is it offered? Practically by the city of Sydney. The *Dayspring* Board, with its six or seven gentlemen who have long directed its affairs, has its seat in Sydney. That same city is the influential centre of the Church of New South Wales. Sydney is also the headquarters of the Australasian New Hebrides Company and other trading and manufacturing concerns that have large pecuniary interests in the New Hebrides and in the steamship service to the islands. The annual subsidy of \$7,500 given by the *Dayspring* Board to the A. N. H. Co., is a very important part of the Company's revenue

and it is natural that strong opposition should be offered by it to any project that involves its withdrawal. As Mr. Scott put it in the *Record*, "There is not sufficient traffic to make a steamer pay for commercial purposes only, and if a mission steamer were on the route there would not likely be a commercial one. With the work of the mission and the payment received for it, the mercantile steamer may be made to pay." And so forsooth the eight churches who have missionaries in the New Hebrides, must make the work of Christ under their hands there subordinate to the pecuniary profit of a Steamship Company, which, on the way to its dividend, exercises, as Mr. Scott assures us, a valuable, civilizing and Christianizing influence.

I ask your readers which is the safer course where the interests of the cause of Christ in the New Hebrides are concerned, to trust the judgment of gentlemen in Victoria, unbiassed by local or personal interests, or that of gentlemen in and around Sydney surrounded by those who have large monetary interests at stake?

But that is not all. The opposition which emanates from Sydney may be weighed in another way,—by the interest which the Church in N. S. Wales manifests in the mission work in the New Hebrides. Mr. Scott tells your readers that it is "one of the leading Churches in Australia." It is nearer to the New Hebrides than any other Church engaged in work there. It shows a keen interest in the expenditure of the *Dayspring* Fund, but when it comes to sending and maintaining missionaries it is another matter. This "leading" Church maintains just one missionary in the New Hebrides while the Church of Victoria has now ten under appointment to the same field.

THE NEED OF A STEAMER.

The need of a missionary steamer to do the work of the eight Churches in this large group of islands might be considered proved from the experience of the other Churches and missionary societies engaged in similar work in the Pacific. They have each one or more missionary steamers. The London Missionary Society has the *John Williams*; the Wesleyan Methodist Society the *John Wesley*; the American Board of Foreign Missions, the *Morning Star*; the Melanesian Mission (Church of England) has the *Southern Cross*; and our neighbors, the Methodists of this Dominion, have their *Glad Tidings* to do their work on the islands and inlets of our Pacific Coast. In some of these cases there are commercial steamship lines plying to the groups, as now to the New Hebrides, and yet the societies have found it expedient to have steamships of their own.

Notwithstanding all that Mr. Scott says in its favour, the present service is in important respects very unsatisfactory. It has once completely broken down and thrown the affairs of the mission into confusion. There have been serious complaints against the Company for complicity in kidnapping islanders, outrageous profanity, disregard of the Lord's Day and traffic in strong drink. To give your readers an insight into the treatment that the missionaries have sometimes received, I give one illustrative example from among a number given in an official document lying before me. "When Mr. and Mrs. Watt, of Tanna, returned after a long absence in Britain, carrying their translation of the complete New Testament through the press with them, they were anxious to get back to their station and board work as soon as possible, and went on board the Company's inter-island vessel, expecting to be there in a few hours; but the Captain passed it without landing them, and they had to remain on board nearly a month in the hope of being landed on their return voyage. Their pleading was again in vain; he passed it and took them on to Aneityum. They went on board again next month, imploring him to land them, but he passed their station the third time, and after being nearly six weeks on board, they landed."