

Our Contributors.

THE PART THAT HUMAN NATURE PLAYS.

BY KNOXIAN

In his interview with the *Globe* on law reform Mr. Dalton McCarthy made a suggestive and very useful remark. Said the learned gentleman: "There is a strong tendency in our time to abolish all wrongs by legislation, but we should never forget the part that human nature plays in such matters." These may not be the exact words used, but they express the learned gentleman's idea. He thinks that pass what laws you may for the regulation of the courts, human nature would be there still. Judges, however learned and upright, are still human. Lawyers are human, very human some of them. The court officials are human, and, being human, some of them may have no special objection to any little scheme that may increase their fees. When the *Globe's* measures for reform are carried out, and the rich man's advantages over the poor in the courts are reduced to minimum; when corporations are no longer allowed to trample on the rights of individuals by continual appeals; when all lawyers are compelled to keep within the bounds of decency in cross examination and all judges are enjoined to keep their tempers and to treat junior counsel with a reasonable degree of civility; when these and all other reforms are crystallized into legislation, human nature will still have a good deal to do with court proceedings. That certainly is no reason why reforms should not be made, but it is quite a sufficient reason why we may always be pretty sure that the quality of justice administered will be more or less affected by the quality of the human nature that administers it. It is hard to make a stream rise higher than its fountain.

It would be well for most of us if courts of law were the only places in which human nature plays its part. One evening, some years ago, we happened to be leaving a Presbyterian meeting at the same moment as a lady who had dropped in to see the court at work. The brethren had not been dwelling together in unity that afternoon to any great extent. The temper of some of them had shown that it was not much like Job's. Their style had not been dignified nor had their method of doing business been supremely judicial. Going out of the meeting the lady said in a tone of mingled sadness and disappointment, "There is as much human nature there as any where else."

That lady was one of the best Christian women we ever knew. She has a lovely Christian spirit, she works as hard for her church as her time and strength allow, and pays liberally for the support of every good cause. The Presbyterian meeting made her feel sore. More's the pity that men who ought to be leaders in the right directions and models of Christian courtesy, should display so much human nature in their proceedings.

Sometimes one sees very mean displays of human nature among the speakers at public meetings. The Rev. Egotistical Bombastic Lightweight, M.A., is always anxious about his place on the programme. He is fussy and self-conscious, thin skinned, and cheeky, and he wants to speak at the time he thinks he can get the best hearing. Of course it never dawned upon the thing he calls his mind that he has no more right to the best place than any other speaker has. There is one best way to snub Mr. Lightweight's selfish impertinence. Give him the place he wants and then make a speech so much better than his that nobody will notice him or his speech. Generally speaking, it is not hard to make a better than that delivered by the thin-skinned fellow who is always making a fuss about his place on the programme.

There is only one meaner thing than to fight for the best place on the programme, and that is to fight for the evening service, in the hope that there will be a crowd. We never yet saw a man who suks if he does not get the best chance to speak, or does not get the evening service, score a distinct success. Providence seems to work against creatures of that kind.

The besetting sin of clerical human nature is vanity. The older the nature the more odious the vanity. Egotism and self-consciousness often deform the human nature of the cleric. The people see these blemishes quite plainly and never more plainly than when those who exhibit them think their weaknesses are unseen.

There is only one remedy. Human nature will always act its part. Let human nature be sanctified and kept under.

EARLY DAYS OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN AND AROUND KINGSTON.—NO. II.

BY REV. SAMUEL HOUSTON, M.A.

Before leaving that year (1817), the following extract from the Rev. W. Bell's letters is very pertinent to our subject. The picture he draws is vivid in the highest degree. Apparently it is of the month of October that he writes:

"After this I resolved to visit Kingston, where I was told there were many Presbyterians destitute of a minister. The distance by the nearest road is about 70 miles (that is from Perth, where Mr. Bell lived), but by Brockville and the St. Lawrence is near a hundred. As my object was usefulness, I resolved to take the latter, that being better inhabited than the other. On my way I preached in Brookville, Yonge, Gananoque, and other places, where I found kind friends and encouraging congregations. On leaving Gananoque, as I was tired of walking, and being still 25 miles from Kingston, I engaged a passage in a country boat, which was proceeding to market with a cargo of apples. The wind was contrary, but being light the men expected to reach Kingston before evening by the assistance of their oars. But before we had proceeded far the wind increased and it began to rain so fast that we were forced to land on Howe's Island, and take shelter at the house of the forester. This part of the St. Lawrence, on account of its numerous islands and still water is called the Lake of a Thousand Islands. Wolfe's Island, which is the largest, is about 15 miles long and contains much good land. The rain having abated we proceeded on our voyage, but as the wind blew hard we made very little progress. As I was anxious to reach Kingston that night, and being told that I might find a road through the woods I went ashore, though the night was very stormy and the woods drenched with rain. The sun sunk below the horizon soon after I landed, and I had still nine miles to travel over a road which turned out to be a much worse one than I expected. Indeed it scarcely deserved the name of a road, differing but little from the rest of the forest, except that the mud was deeper in consequence of the passage of cattle. The rain continued all the time and the mud in swampy places was so deep that I got through with difficulty. There was moonlight, but the sky being charged with clouds it was very faint. At one place I came to an opening, in which I observed at a short distance two huts, but on going to them in the hope of finding shelter for the night I was mortified to find that they were not inhabited. Finding that there was no alternative but either to grope my way through mud and bushes, or to remain in the wood all night I persevered, when on a sudden I heard a drum beat, and never before did the sound of that instrument afford me so much pleasure. From the sound, which I had no doubt proceeded from the garrison, I concluded that I must be within two miles from Kingston. In little more than half an hour I reached that place, and though I was a stranger I soon met with kind friends, as I have uniformly done in every place where Providence sent me. A good fire to warm me and dry my clothes, a comfortable supper and agreeable company, soon made me forget my toils. In such circumstances the comforts of life and the blessings of society are doubly sweet. On the following day, which was Saturday, I waited on a few of the friends of religion, but was sorry to find that they were very far from being united in their sentiments. In such a country as this one would expect to find nothing like party spirit in religious matters; but the case is quite otherwise. The inhabitants are emigrants of all the religious denominations, and all zealous for their own sect or party. On the Sabbath I preached twice in the Lancasterian school house to a numerous and attentive congregation. On Monday, at the request of some of the friends of religion, I visited them at their own houses, and found some very agreeable company. At that time there were in Kingston an Episcopal church, a Roman Catholic chapel, and a Methodist meeting house. The Presbyterian churches were not then built, though one of them had been proposed."

So far the narrative as given by Mr. Bell. As we think of the audience that assembled that Fall day in 1817 to hear Mr. Bell preach and conduct service after the model followed in Scotland, are we able to call up in imagination any that were there? I think that we can, and we need not hesitate to make the attempt. May we not assume that Col. McPherson was there? He had come here in 1810 with his regiment and when he retired from service he spent the rest of his life here. His daughter-in-law, one of the oldest residents of the city and his granddaughters live on Princess Street now. From the very first and on while he lived he was a leading supporter of St. Andrew's Church; not only that, he was one of the first elders. We may picture to ourselves the fine looking Highlander as, with erect frame and martial bearing, he entered the building and took his place with grave mien among the worshippers. John McLean, who, at a later date became sheriff and also one of the first elders, was in all likelihood there. John Mowat, whose sons we all know, had come to Kingston the previous year, and we may safely assume that he was not absent. He too had a martial air as he walked in and took a seat, for he had seen service in the Peninsular War before he came to Canada. There were in all probability representatives of the Loyalist stock present, such as Smith Bartlett and others. We may picture to ourselves the emotion of the hearers as they joined in singing the songs of Zion, and they followed the prayers that were offered and listened to the preaching of the Word. That such services were infrequent made them to be prized all the more.

I have mentioned an elderly lady that resides on the upper part of Princess Street. I have had several conversations with her since I began to prepare this paper. She came here about 1821 and she tells me that at the time of her coming the Presbyterians had a monthly service in a somewhat indifferent building on Ontario Street, that the service was conducted by a Rev. Mr. Leith, who lived in Cornwall. It is on record that a Mr. Leith taught school in Cornwall early in the twenties, no doubt the same person. Notwithstanding the advanced age of my informant she is bright and hearty, in the possession of all her mental faculties and as deeply interested in church affairs as ever. It is a matter of rare interest to meet with one who from the first organization of St. Andrew's Church, over 70 years ago, has been in it all that time. While I was talking to her on these matters her hands were hard at work on materials that are to be sold for the benefit of that congregation.

We now approach the time when a new and much advanced phase in the history of Presbyterianism here assumes an actuality. A building for worship is commenced, the first stone edifice for sacred purposes in the place. It becomes known in Edinburgh that the erection of it is in progress, and so the Patrons are encouraged to begin the exercise of the powers that were conferred on them some years back. Towards the close of 1821 Mr. John Barclay was chosen to be the first pastor of the charge in Kingston, and as he was only a probationer at the time of appointment, the Presbytery ordains him in due form and commissions him to the work expected by those that sent for a man to break the bread of life here. His father was the minister of the parish of Kettle. When we mention the name of that parish we are to remember that this is not the first time that Kettle and Kingston come into relation. John Strachan had been a teacher in that parish and when he came here he brought with him among other testimonials of competency one from Mr. Barclay's father. There is every reason to believe that the young minister was well qualified by piety, prudence, zeal, natural talent and culture for the position he came here to fill. His ministry was a short one, but it was long enough to leave a permanent impression here. His premature removal was a great grief to the congregation. When the people asked for a successor to be sent they paid a fine tribute to his memory when they stipulated that the man to be sent should be like the one they had lost by death.

When Mr. Barclay came here early in the

summer of 1822, as might be expected there was no organization, there were no elders to help in the spiritual oversight, very likely there had been no communion roll made out until now. He did not allow any unnecessary time to pass until he perfected the organization in appointing elders and in setting them apart to office, after due notice being given from the pulpit. We may pause for a moment and look at some of the men who were appointed to that office which, in the Presbyterian Church, is regarded as a sacred and responsible one. The elders, more than any others, after the minister, give character to the work that is done. They are the preservers of the purity and honor of the members. Early in November of that first year of Mr. Barclay's pastorate, the following gentlemen were after due notice set apart to be with the minister himself the rulers in spiritual things, over the flock:—John MacLean, Esq., Col. McPherson, Anthony Marshall, Esq., Mr. Hugh McDonald, Mr. Samuel Shaw and Mr. John Mowat.

A majority of these we have met with already, some as grantees in the Crown Land Grant, and some in other capacities. We meet now with Anthony Marshall for the first time. He was a physician here at that time and was much trusted, as I am told that he was secretary-treasurer of the Building Committee, when the place of worship was being erected. It is said that he moved to Belleville at a later date, and that he died there. The next name on the list is that of Hugh McDonald, who will not soon be forgotten because of his distinguished son who rose to be the first man in the Dominion. The future Premier was then a lad of six or seven, about to begin, if he had not already begun, his school career. Mr. Hugh McDonald did not live continuously in Kingston; in a few years he moved up the Bay to a farm for a time. On the other hand Mr. Mowat gave lengthened and uninterrupted service to the congregation. For well nigh 40 years he was constantly in office, having in charge more than one department of duty. He was on the Temporal Committee as well as on the Session.

Before passing from this period I may be allowed to make another short extract from Mr. Bell's letters. The volume containing these letters bears the imprint of 1824, and what I am about to quote may be taken to apply to the state of things immediately preceding that date, when Mr. Barclay had been at work for at least a year, perhaps two. It is as follows:—

"In Kingston there are two Presbyterian congregations, neither of them of long standing. The first was formed in 1817, and they went to Scotland for a minister soon after. They had in the meantime occasional supplies of preaching, but none permanent till the Rev. Mr. Barclay, their present minister, arrived in 1822. They had in the preceding year commenced building a handsome church which is now finished in an elegant manner. The congregation, which consists chiefly of Scotch immigrants, is numerous and respectable, and seems to be in a prosperous condition. The second congregation of Presbyterians in Kingston consists chiefly of persons from the United States. In no part of Canada this spirit discovered more than in this place. Although there was only one society at the commencement of the church building, it soon became evident that they were united neither in sentiment nor affection. A division took place soon after Mr. Barclay's arrival, and the party separating have erected another church, but have not yet obtained a minister."

It is now in order to tell as much as I have been able to discover respecting the American Presbyterian Church, referred to in the extract just made from Mr. Bell's letters. Their place of worship stood where the First Congregational Church now stands, and I am told that their burying-ground was where the Bethel Church is now. In the City Record Office I find that the lot on the corner of Wellington and Johnston streets, was in 1822 deeded to the following trustees:—William Dalton, Thomas Whittaker, Smith Bartlett and E. W. Armstrong. Smith Bartlett's name, it will be remembered, was the first in the list of the grantees of the St. Andrew's Church property, some five years earlier, now he is one of the founders of the American cause whose place of worship was designated the Union Presbyterian Church, or, as it was more familiarly known, at a later date, the