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The Public Sentiment.

Few things are more difficult to estimate than the real attitude of the popular sentiment. The political orator, with an end to serve, will assert positively that the trend of popular opinion is certainly with him. He only influences the unthinking, and these but for the hour. The clever newspaper leader-writer, whose business it is to watch public opinion, writes with the prevailing currents in view, but the rush of newspaper life will not allow anything but the noting of surface indications, and these are often deceptive. From others we hear much concerning the general sentiment of the people upon great moral and religious questions, but as a rule the assertions made simply reflect the wish of the individual who makes them. He may believe them, often he only wishes to get others to believe them.

We do not believe that the real sentiment of the people of Canada has been touched as yet upon these great questions. The plebiscite woefully failed to discover the mind of the people respecting prohibition. No one knows what the people think upon the great question of the preservation of the Sabbath, or the equally great question of the union of the churches. It is nonsense to tell us that the trend is in this direction or in that. As well you might say that the Atlantic Ocean flows towards the north because the Gulf Stream flows northerly. We do not know the mind of the people on these great questions.

Only a great crisis, as we of the present generation in Canada have not yet seen, reveals the real attitude of the mind of the great public. Like an electric shock, a thrill passes through an entire people, suddenly stopping vagrant currents of thought, turning them in to one great centre, then setting the whole mass, with irresistible force, towards one point. Then men know what is the strength and the direction of true public opinion. It is not the reflection of the mind of one or two strong leaders, but it is the mind of the people, the product of centuries of thinking.

Which one of the great moral issues

now cropping up, courting an expression of the public mind, shall first touch and thrill the people of Canada? The rest of the world stood still in amazement when British public sentiment revealed itself more than a year ago, on the occasion of the Kaiser's insulting message. It may be that the man, who for private or party gain, provokes a manifestation of the public sentiment of the people of the province or of the Dominion on some one of these great moral issues will receive as salutary and effective a check as did the erratic German Emperor.

The Uneducated.

They are not those who have never attended the schools. More often we may find members of this class among those who have had every advantage to gain a liberal education. We have even found specimens of them among the medalists of our colleges and universities. They are the men who have made no use of the information gathered in the schools, or in the greater school of life. It remains as so much useless lumber cumbering mental activity and dwarfing mental character.

The uneducated are the unthinking, who, though much may be poured into the crucible, yet never have lit the fires beneath it. The mind is not only sluggish—it is positively inert. Many influences tend to make an unthinking and so an uneducated community to-day. The rush of daily toil leaves little time for thought outside the immediate line of the routine of the daily life. The pressure of studies rather than study tends to discourage thought. There is little time and less inclination to think out the problem for which some solution, perhaps the right one, must be found.

There will come, some day, a reaction against this over-pressure of the merely material, and it cannot come too soon. Even now our boast of being an educated people is scarcely valid. We may still claim that we are well-informed, but we are fast losing the right to be called an educated people.

"General" Booth appears to have come to terms with the Government of Western Australia regarding the establishment of a great over-sea industrial farm in Collie district of Westralia. At commencement, it is said, is to be made with a farm area of 15,000 acres.

Mr. Barrie (says The Bookman) made excellent progress with the sequel to "Sentimental Tommy," and hopes to have it finished by the beginning of May. The story describes a literary career. It is probable that the title first fixed on will be discarded for another, which will bring in the name of the heroine.

A New Commentary on the Books of Samuel.*

This is the third volume of the International Series which has seen the light, the other two being Dr. Driver on Deuteronomy, and Dr. Moore on Judges, and the aim of its author has been to make it a worthy companion of those books. The character of this commentary is avowedly "critical and exegetical." It was recognized that there was already in English an abundant supply of good commentaries of the expository, homiletical and practical kind, and it was determined to make the attempt to give to ministers and students the results of the latest scholarship as to text, sources and interpretation. The result is a book for students; not one that can be hastily read, or from which ready-made sermons can be extracted, but one to work with, to use as a constant companion in studying the various sections of the book in question.

Dr. Smith, in this volume, gives special attention to textual criticism, carefully comparing the readings of the ancient versions and making use of the important work of Wellhausen and Driver in this department. As is well known, the material for textual criticism of the Old Testament is scanty; and the criticism of Prof. Lohr's views, given in the appendix to this commentary on Samuel, shows serious divergence among the critics as to the purpose to be attained and the principles which should govern this part of the work.

It is now generally admitted that the book of Samuel is a compilation. A writer who is conservative as well as scholarly and reverent, the Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick, says: "It is generally agreed that the book is a compilation from different sources, but who was the compiler there is no evidence to show." Kantsch indicates some nine different sources, a number of later additions, and pieces of unknown origin. Dr. Smith accepts in general the results of criticism, but exercises an independent judgment on many points. As a matter of fact, the "results" are in many cases rightly classed as "conjectures," but the careful examination of the reasons for these conjectures is in numerous instances interesting and helpful. The book of Samuel—the two parts are really one book—is one of those which shows signs of compilation to the most superficial examination, as it contains several duplicate narratives. As Prof. Smith says:—

"The first thing that attracts our attention in reading the story of Samuel and David is the obvious duplication of certain incidents. Two denunciations of Eli's course are related,

*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel, by Henry Preserved Smith, Professor of Biblical History and Interpretation in Amherst College. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.