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STRONG.

HOME JOURNAL

Life, Literature and Education

It's a sad sad delusion to think that because this world is not agreeable to you the next will be.

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Let your criticism begin where charity is said to. If your neighbors did likewise there would be more charity and less criticism.

* * *

Willingness to be nothing receives sanction in the church but it takes more than this to make you amount to anything.

* * *

No man halves his own sins by magnifying those of others.

* * *

It's the man who is always wobbling who thinks the road is straight and narrow.

* * *

People listen to your expressions, if your religion doesn't make your expression pleasant don't give it a testimonial.

DIVORCE LEGISLATION

Of recent years the spread of divorce and the laxity of marriage and divorce laws has caused serious alarm among the more thoughtful of the citizens of the United States. The home and the family are threatened and thereby the safety of the nation is endangered. A decision of the Federal Supreme Court sustaining a decision of the New York State Supreme Court has made a sudden and radical change in the rules affecting divorce in the Union, a change which while a step towards reform will have disturbing and tragic effects upon many families. The test case which brought out the decision was of a couple married in New York State in 1868. In 1881 the husband secured a divorce in the state of Connecticut, where he then lived, and married again the next year. The first wife sued for an annuity which the highest court of New York awarded her and also named her the legal wife. The decree was appealed and carried by the husband to the Federal Supreme Court, which sustained the decision of the New York court and thereby rendered the second marriage null and void. The Court affirmed in rendering its decree that a state in which only one party to a divorce proceeding lives cannot dissolve a marriage tie in such a way as to compel other states to recognize its decree without question.

We in Canada are somewhat inclined to strike an "I-am-holier-than-thou" attitude when the divorce question is considered and to thank ourselves that we are not as our neighbors are in this respect. That may be all very true, but our own legislation in regard to divorce is not in a state of perfection by any means. If divorces are to be granted, and right-minded people can see that for certain causes divorce is a right proceeding, they should be as easily obtained by the poor as by the rich where the conditions are such as to render a divorce desirable from a moral standpoint. As matters stand now every divorce means a special act of legislation by the Dominion parliament and is not obtained without money and without price. Strict legislation applying to all the provinces, and a carefully chosen divorce court for each province whose duty it shall be to administer the federal laws would be a vast improvement on the present order.

A SENSIBLE BISHOP.

The *Spectator* calls attention to the following splendid utterances of the Bishop of Carlisle on the educational question in Great Britain. The bishop in effect says the barrier in the way of a national settlement of the question of education is the lion of denominationalism. He says:

"It is a strong and loud lion; it is also a lion not without nobleness of mien and courage; but even at its best, denominationalism is departmental and not universal religion. In its essence it is sectarian and not catholic Christianity." After pointing out none of the churches are free from distinctive denominationalisms, and mentioning one of the special points of doctrine which belongs to the Church of England, and asserting also his determination to teach this doctrine on all right-ful occasions, "through books, in sermons, at Bible classes, in lessons in Sunday schools," he goes on to say he will not ask permission to teach it in the day schools of the nation, because to do so would lead inevitably to secularism.

"I will not sacrifice," says the Bishop, "on the altar of my denominational doctrine, however sacred and sublime to me, the spiritual hope of the nation and the religious training of hosts of children whose only opportunity of learning of God and their own Divine origin and destiny is in the day school. To do otherwise is, in my judgment, not only a great national betrayal, but moral and spiritual infanticide on a stupendous scale."

THE ART OF LISTENING.

Listening is a fine art acquired by few; in America it is almost a lost art. - Speech is useless unless there is a listener, but that fact is disregarded when a group of men pursue an argument or a gathering of women give their respective versions of an incident. Everyone talks, no one listens. Speech is hurried and careless because haste is necessary if anything is to be said amidst the babel, and careful speech is wasted because no one is paying any attention.

If by any chance a man finds an opportunity to make his voice heard without interruption, his suddenly acquired sense of satisfaction in gaining an audience is punctured when in reply to his vastly entertaining story he receives an absent-minded smile; and before he can draw breath ready to begin again the other person, who, having ears heard not, is in the full tide of a narrative that he has been thinking out during that silent ten minutes. And so it goes on merrily, the talker afraid to stop, and the listener preparing to take advantage of the first breathing spell.

The individual in this respect sets the pace for the community. Theatre and concert goers are common offenders. Their plain and simple duty is to listen. But do they? Not many of them. They discuss the performance, the performers and the audience with equal volubility and audibility; if they have seen the play before, so much the worse, for all in their vicinity are given a synopsis of each act before it is presented, with the speaker's opinion of it thrown in. The canons of decent behavior decree that talking in church shall be considered bad form, but that does not insure a gathering of listeners for the preacher. He, if gifted with the power of observation in any degree, knows that many of those who are looking into his face, see him with the outward eye while their minds are far away from him, and he feels as if he were speaking to a collection of graven images. The very children are developing the evil. Fear of reproof keeps their little tongues still but the vacant stare fixed upon the teacher is often indicative of anything but mental attention. They are not listeners and little by little lose the power to become so.

To be a good listener is worth while striving after. It is not a difficult virtue to cultivate and brings many fine qualities in its train. Its possession implies not a lack of conversational power but a nice discretion as to when to use it. The ideal listener is intelligent, free from vanity and entirely unselfish. He is able to separate the wheat from the chaff in the conversational harvest which is brought to him, and to find something of value in even the lightest and most trivial topics poured into his ears. The man who could keep silence in seven languages must have been an ideal listener.

WHY GOVERNMENTS FALL.

Graft is no respecter of Governments. Neither the Laurier Government at Ottawa nor the Whitney Government at Toronto, nor any other Government at any other Capital, can afford to count itself immune from the unlawful greed of its professed friends. In vigilance alone is there safety for any Government. Foolish partisans and the Government's falsest friends may cry Peace! peace! but there can be no peace. The Government that is not forever on the alert, knowing that siege is laid against every department, that where all seems well is the likeliest spot for the looter to appear, and that in politics as elsewhere a man may smile and smile and be a villain—the Government that is not forever on the alert is doomed and its course has come to the beginning of the end.

Human depravity is said to be both total and general, but under our democratic system it has special opportunities, and it finds peculiar expression in some species of political plunder, some rake-off or loot or graft, by which a department of government is made the instrument of public robbery for private gain. The stake may be only some petty office with its salary of a few hundreds for which the politician's henchmen grasp, or it may be some great public work involving hundreds of thousands, or even millions, by which corporate ambition and greed are aroused. The financial margin varies with the size of the enterprise, but the moral quality is the same. And in every case the spirit of graft—the dishonest desire to profit at the expense of the public through the ignorance, the weakness, or the cupidity of public men or public officials—works for moral decay alike in public administration and in private life.

And it is this weakness and cupidity in its own departments and this greedy dishonesty on the part of its own friends that a Government has most to fear. As a rule—a rule almost without exceptions—no Government falls because of the attacks of its opponents either in Parliament or on the platform or in the press; it falls because of its own weakness or incapacity or corruption.—*Toronto Globe*.

THE GROWING USE OF SLANG.

Whitelaw Reid, the American ambassador to England while presiding at the annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund took the opportunity to refer in strong terms to the increase of slang in British journalism, much of it borrowed from America. The warning is timely and as applicable to Canada as to the Old Land. Once the newspaper led in the use of English undefiled, and the readers followed. Now the writers follow the readers—the blind following the blind until both fall into the gutter of corrupt English. The choice aggregation of college slang (and students are old offenders) is passed along through the papers to the country at large. Sports and slang are inseparably connected and the way-faring man whose education has been limited to the use of dictionary language can gather as much information from a newspaper account of the baseball game as if it were written in Sanskrit.

The readers are to blame to a great extent for the increasing use of slang. Every paper caters to the real or fancied needs of its subscriber, and when those subscribers buy two copies where formerly they bought one, the editor reasons that what they want is not pure English and artistic illustration, but bowery stories and full page humorous (save the mark!) pictorials from which the humor and the art are conspicuously absent.