

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE

BY KNOXIAN.

The *Globe* gave two illustrations of modern journalistic enterprise the other week. One of them was an undoubtedly good thing to do; the usefulness of the other is at least questionable.

It was a right good thing to send a reporter 160 miles to Loon Lake to write up the fearful calamity that befel a family there. The result of that night's journalistic enterprise may be a new home for what remains of that stricken family. The young man who made that midnight journey spent his strength in the highest interests of humanity and the journal that sent him deserves the thanks of all humane people. About that stroke of newspaper enterprise there can be but one opinion among men who have hearts, and the great majority of Canadians, whatever be their faults, have hearts that always beat responsive to a story of real suffering.

The enterprise that sent the *Globe* scribe in an easterly direction on a mission of mercy was praiseworthy and useful; the enterprise that sent him west in search of the horrible may have been brilliant, but we utterly fail to see that it served any permanently useful purpose. What good did it do the people of Canada to know that a hired man in London Township tried to elope with his employer's daughter, failed, slashed her face with a razor and then hurled himself, unbidden, into the presence of his Judge. Is there not a possibility that reading these horrible facts not only did no good, but did a very considerable amount of evil.

Viewed as a mere matter of journalism the work was brilliant and it shows in a most interesting light what can be accomplished in a few hours by an expert. Leaving Toronto in the afternoon, the reporter finds himself in London at 7 p.m. Then he starts on an eighteen mile drive out into London Township, his driver making it twenty by going off the direct road. Then he has to find out the exact facts from a number of people who, if they are like ordinary mortals, must have been too much excited to get down to facts as bare as an honest reporter always wants them. The facts being entered in his notebook, he starts back on his eighteen-mile drive to London. Now the most difficult part of the enterprise begins. It is 2 o'clock in the morning and the two columns must be written out in full and telegraphed to Toronto in time to be put in type for the morning paper. We don't happen to know what hour the *Globe* goes to press, but it is on the earliest morning trains and some of these start long before the majority of the human family are out of bed. Writing two columns is formidable work at any time, but writing them at 2 o'clock in the morning, after a forty mile drive, is something so difficult that it cannot be understood by any but those who have tried their hand at such work. It goes unsaid that writing is the most difficult kind of brain work. The difficulty is many times increased if you know that what you write will be in cold type in a few hours. It is intensified if you know that the copy must be ready in a few minutes. We don't know any kind of work that tries a man more than making "copy" and watching the clock. How the hands do go around when you are striking off the pages of manuscript. The man who never made "copy" while a telegraph boy or a printer was waiting, or the mail closing, never found out what five minutes are worth. The nearest you ever come to the journalistic test of time is in writing examination papers.

Our young man sits down in London after his forty-mile ride and begins to write his report 2 o'clock. At half-past three it is in type in the *Globe* office in Toronto, and

soon afterwards thousands of people are reading about the tragedy in London Township. Splendid work no, doubt. As an illustration of what can be accomplished in a few hours by machinery and trained men, it is superb. But, after all, was the game worth the candle? Did the average reader of the *Globe* receive any real benefit from the enterprise. What earthly good did it do the most of us to know in detail that a hired man in London Township slashed a young woman's face with a razor and then committed suicide. What side of human nature is bettered by news of that kind written up in detail.

Nobody outside of the *Globe* office knows whether that midnight enterprise paid in dollars and cents. Were we allowed to guess we would guess that it did not. We venture to say that a sufficient number of extra *Globes* were not sold the following morning to pay the reporter's expenses and the telegraph bill. Why, then, publish matter of that kind? Partly, we suppose, because publishing it pays indirectly, and partly because a certain number of readers like that sort of newspaper diet. They like to read the horrible.

One day, long years ago, this contributor was receiving instructions from Mr. Gordon Brown about some work that he wished done in the General Assembly for the *Globe*. We mildly protested against writing the kind of "notes" that he wanted, and urged as a reason that nobody reads notes of that kind except Dr. Reid and a few other official people. "These are just the people," said Mr. Brown, "that we want to read them." Of course, that reply flattened us out as badly as a silk hat is flattened out when a man of two hundred weight sits suddenly on it. Were one to say nobody cares to read about such tragedies as that enacted in London Township except diseased lovers of the horrible, would the *Globe* reply, "These are just the people we want to read them."

Might it not be urged that publishing a report of such crimes in graphic detail has an injurious effect on public morals. Is it possible for the public mind to come into contact with crime on the printed page without receiving more or less injury?

Supposing that general question disposed of in some way, is not the publication of crimes of the kind committed in London Township specially dangerous. On the other side of the line a threat to commit suicide is one of the recognized ways of trying to convince a young woman to marry a man she does not want—probably hates. Instances of unbalanced youths killing the girl they cannot get and then killing themselves are not by any means uncommon in these modern days. We do not want that style of courtship popularized in this country. The Gerry-mander and the P. P. A. and the American style of trying accused people by detectives are quite enough to do us for some time in the way of importing American customs and institutions.

The real question, however, is a large one. How much of the worst side of human nature should a clean family journal lay before its readers. The *Globe* is a good journal to wrestle with that problem. It is a difficult one. The one thing clear is that if a good many people did not want to read the horrible, good journals would not lay out so much money in dishing up the horrible.

ONTARIO W.C.T.U.

BY MRS. M. WILEY.

The Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Ontario Woman's Christian Temperance Union will be held in Hamilton (D.V.) October 29th to November 1st, inclusive. Now is the time for a grand rally of the forces. We need to gather fresh courage and knowledge, and add to both "the baptism of power from on high." Could there be a better opportunity than that afforded by our approaching convention?

The W.C.T.U. ladies of Hamilton, who have promised a cordial welcome to all

comers, will provide entertainment for the regularly appointed delegates, and will be pleased to give to visitors full information, concerning suitable boarding places. The local corresponding secretaries will kindly send the names of their delegates as early as possible to Mrs. Watters, 57 West Ave., North Hamilton, stating whether they will require a billet or intend to stay with friends.

According to the constitution, the convention will be composed of the Executive Board, one delegate for each affiliated Union, and one additional delegate for every twenty paying members of such Union. Let this eighteenth convention be a really representative one. The full affiliation fees should now be in the hands of the Provincial Treasurer, Miss Jennie MacArthur, of Cornwall. But if any Union has neglected to do its duty in this respect, will the local treasurer see that the money is sent, without delay, to the County Treasurer, if in an organized county, or direct to Miss MacArthur if in an unorganized county. The provincial books will be closed, positively, by October 16th. Local corresponding secretaries are requested to send to Mrs. Mary Wiley, Prov. Cor. Sec., Richmond Hill, for credential forms; and to see that each delegate is furnished with one, properly filled out, to be handed to credential committee at convention. If every county would kindly have its shield prepared with correct statistics, much labor would be avoided in awarding the prize banner. Bring your county and local banners to help decorate convention hall. The usual rates will be arranged with the railroad companies, whereby visitors and delegates to convention may travel at one and one third fare, if they secure certificates from the station agent at starting point, and have these signed by the Corresponding Secretary at convention. Certificates are not kept at all the small stations, but if delegates give early notice of their intentions, the agent will procure them in time for the trip. Tickets must not be purchased earlier than three days before, nor later than three days after close of convention.

Our convention speaker will, we think, be introduced, for the first time, to a Canadian audience. Mrs. Ella Boole, of Staten Island, New York, one of the rising stars on the W.C.T.U. horizon, has been secured for Thursday evening October, 31st. Of one of her lectures Miss Willard says, "The address from Mrs. Ella A. Boole was remarkable by reason of its bristling points, its happy humor, its well timed pathos, and inexorable logic. The speech was a revelation." Mrs. Boole will also give a morning address and a parliamentary drill at the school of methods. The school of methods will take place on Thursday afternoon, special attractions for county workers; but local interests not forgotten.

Those addressed in this communication include every member of every Union from Prescott to Essex, and from Algoma to Lincoln counties. It is our earnest hope that not a white ribboner who reads it but may feel that this Hamilton convention is *her* convention; demands if possible *her* presence; and has a right to her continuous and faith-filled prayers, from the opening gavel tap to the closing benediction. Do not say I cannot go, and our Union is too poor to send a delegate, and because the bottom of the county treasury is always in sight *they* can do nothing. Where there is a will there is a way. Local success, in any large measure, is impossible without provincial success. You owe it to yourselves, and to the work in general, to do something towards rendering our eighteenth provincial gathering better than any one of the seventeen that have preceded it. Readers, stir up your local society to send a delegate, and do not rest till the county has a representative, and may God grant us such a combination of human effort and Divine blessing, as never before marked this yearly halting ground between past achievements and future struggles.

Richmond Hill, Ont.

FOREIGN AND HOME MISSIONS.

REV. C. W. GORDON'S LETTER.

MR. EDITOR,—Will you allow a reply to Mr. Gordon's letter which appears in your last issue, and I shall be as brief as I can. Very cordially do I reciprocate Mr. Gordon's personal references. I detest newspaper war for many reasons, and amongst them, for this, that it places one in seeming antagonism to such men as Mr. Gordon. However, if he will have war, a Highlander cannot retreat.

First, as to the bona fide character of the circular. Mr. Gordon says: "This proposal comes to the Young People's Societies with authority neither of Assembly nor of Home Mission Committee, nor indeed, if I mistake not, of the Foreign Mission Committee as a whole." "The Secretary of Foreign Missions sends forth his circular and the Home Mission Convener takes him to task for it, and, as it seems, with some reason and success. "An unfortunate mistake, it was easy for the Foreign Mission Secretary to make, anxious for this authority," i.e., to say he had the authority of the Home Mission Committee when he had not this authority. This is of course a charge of insincerity, no doubt unintentional, which Mr. Gordon will excuse me if I say that he ought to be sure of his facts before making. At the meeting of the Foreign Mission Committee in May last, the circular was read and unanimously approved, again at the meeting of the Foreign Mission Committee on the 25th Sept., the first *Leaflet* was submitted, and in the light of the correspondence that had taken place, they reaffirmed their approval by formal resolution. It was not possible to consult the Home Mission Committee, but Dr. Cochrane was consulted and the circular was withheld until his answer came to hand. As I am writing this on the train I cannot reproduce Dr. Cochrane's exact words, but they have been given to the public by Mr. Conning. As it was a matter of some public importance we accepted Dr. Cochrane's letter as official. He, however, states that he wished his letter to be regarded as private, and accordingly the circular was at once modified by the removal of all reference to the Home Mission Committee. I do not expect to advance the Lord's work either by exaggeration of facts or suppression of truth and neither offence has been committed in this case.

2. What then, is this new scheme that has so horrified Mr. Gordon and will be, he thinks, so mischievous in results? Let me explain its origin. I felt when in the pastorate that the Christian Endeavor Societies were in danger of effervescing for want of solid, systematic study, and I tried then at home to supply the need. It occurred to me that so far as Foreign Missions are concerned it might be possible to lead all societies through a course of systematic study, by taking up one field and concentrating attention upon that for a time. Accordingly, after consultation with brethren known to be specially interested in Y.P. Societies, the circular was issued proposing that the young people should for the first year study China, and make their contributions, so far as they contribute to Foreign Missions, towards the support of Honan. The intention at first was to make no reference to the Home Mission Committee, but it was urged that the same scheme could be profitably applied in Home Mission interests, and hence the correspondence with Dr. Cochrane. What was in our simplicity intended to be helpful to Home work and thought would be acceptable to the Committee, is regarded as surreptitious and hostile. I have not changed my mind upon that point, and think Dr. Cochrane's mistake was not in giving his assent, but in withdrawing it after it was given.

3. I cannot follow Mr. Gordon in the discussion of his imaginary dangers. The young people are giving money now as societies, apart from the congregational givings; they have been doing so from the beginning, and Mr. Gordon does not seem to object to this so far as Y.P. Societies organ-