

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MORALITY OF AIDING TO COMMIT CRIME.

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—A few words by way of rejoinder may perhaps be allowed. In the first place, the wording of the above heading is inaccurate, if not misleading, as applied to the case in question. The morality of securing the detection of crime and preventing its repetition is the question really at issue. As to the means adopted that this "good" end might come; what "evil" was done? Without, of course, prejudging the case, but merely assuming the facts to be as shown by the published evidence, the crime had, to all intents and purposes, been committed and completed before any inciting or enticing to it took place. The very nature of the case afforded no opportunity for intercepting or deterring the offenders from the commission of the offence or preventing its commission. The offer to bribe is in itself a complete offence. The course taken by those to whom the offer was made was not an aiding or enticing to commit an offence. This had already been consummated. It was taken merely as a means of making the evidence indisputable. The crime having been completed *ipso facto* by the offer, the receiving of the money without any intention of keeping or appropriating it, but only as a piece of additional evidence, was not in itself either evil or immoral. Viewed as a means used in order to bring the offenders to punishment, offenders who, to borrow Mr. Armour's language, had consummated their guilty intentions, it was not only expedient, but morally justifiable. Punishment, as Mr. Armour truly observes, is not inflicted for the satisfaction of revenge, but in order to amend the offender, and to deter others from offending in the same way. For the purposes of the present argument, it is fair to assume that the actuating motive in regard to the punishment was in accordance with the object contemplated by the law, and not the mere desire of revenge, as has been somewhat gratuitously suggested. The condemnation of those who do evil that good may come is, therefore, not applicable to the present case, and the homily which has been read to us upon that text is quite irrelevant.

There was no intention, whatever, on the part of the writer in his former article to import politics into the question, still less to assert, or even suggest, that a Party Government should be maintained at all hazards. The argument intended was this: that the Ministry being justified in assuming, as from their point of view they undoubtedly were justified in assuming (the correctness of the assumption being entirely foreign to the question), that their maintenance in power is for the benefit of the community, they were amply warranted in adopting any proper measures for defeating their adversaries and strengthening their own position. In regard to the comparative value of honour, it seems obvious that one sort of honour is, or may be, according to circumstances, more or less precious than another; or rather that the honour of one person may be of greater value than that of another, having a just regard to their respective rank, position, age, profession, sex, relations in life and other surrounding circumstances. A moment's reflection manifests the truth of this position. Is not the honour of a judge of greater value to himself and to the public than that of a chimney-sweep? Is not the loss of honour consequent upon a daughter's yielding to the wiles of a seducer more grievous than that resulting from a loafer selling his vote at an election? Moreover, there is this manifest difference between the consummation of the act of seduction and the receiving of money (by way of a bribe, real or supposed), that in the one case, the act itself constitutes the harm done, and *ipso facto* occasions the loss of honour; in the other the intent is of the essence of the offence, and if no evil intent is entertained, *a fortiori*, if the purpose is a justifiable one, the act of receiving involves no crime, and not necessarily any loss of honour. This has been well pointed out in the able letter of "Outsider" in the Week of April 24th. The fact that in the eye of the law the ownership of the money is considered to be in Mr. McKim does not affect the moral question. Many a man involuntarily has a dry legal estate vested in him in regard to which his only duty is to let those who are beneficially entitled have the benefit of it.

"Outsider's" letter above referred to contains in advance a sufficient answer to the question lastly proposed in the article of the 8th inst. The writer says: "If Mr. McKim had taken those hundred dollar bills with the sole object and intent of receiving payment for a quantity of grain, sold in the ordinary course of commerce, that would have been right. Was it less right to receive the bills when his sole object and intent was to detect crime?"

It is, it is hoped, almost superfluous to say that this and a former communication were written solely in regard to the abstract question of morals which had previously been suggested for discussion as arising out of the "Bribery Case," and without the slightest intention of prejudging the case itself.

S. G. WOOD.

COMPENSATION AND PROHIBITION.

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—It is said that "the money which goes into the till of the liquor shop would go to buy other goods." What money is here referred to? There are just so many employees in this city now, and so much money paid weekly; less will be paid per capita when enforced competition comes in, and unless rents and the necessities of life are to become cheaper at once, the suffering will all come upon poor people as usual—the temporary suffering as it is facetiously called. How long does "temporary" mean in this case? Such retrogressive ideas tend to go back to absolute necessities, to eventually "become the ancient Briton" again, with yellow ochre and sheepskins. The expansive, progressive and modern idea is to separate all manufactures into distinct branches, so that each product may be made better and cheaper, keeping people employed all the time. The same individual dollar that buys bread, buys beef and beer, and clothing, and pays rent, and it is one of the laws of successful commerce that the oftener that dollar travels round so will trade, and comforts abound and work be plenty. It remains in no one till, barring the profit which goes to keep the family of the dealer, and which profit again goes out in investments, enabling others to carry on business. If half-a-dozen new trades could be invented for the comfort and luxury, even, of society there would be fewer dull times, as it is also one of the laws of labour that labour brings its own reward—account for the fact economically as one may. The more trade there is, the indefatigable little dollar travels round them all

a little faster—the free circulation of money as it is called; and if there were one dozen or one hundred people, each due the other one dollar, one dollar would do the whole business by rapidly passing round, relieving them of their debts and coming back to the original capitalist. More than this, it would enable them, being free of debt to renew their obligations for another dollar's worth. All this tends to a greater demand for labour, which, talking of necessities, has become one of the necessities in this our artificial life—a life imperative the moment we depart from primitiveness. And with more labour and more enjoyment of the comforts of life comes the sense to enjoy these in a rational manner, and not as now to snatch a passing joy in the midst of miserable houses with miserable food and cooking. A more comfortable home and better food and cooking would act as a temperance agent more effectively than any doctrines, however desirable, but impossible of accomplishment.

BREWER.

May 10th, 1884.

PULPIT ELOCUTION.

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—Last Sunday the lessons in one of our city churches were read in such a manner that, had I not known the chapters almost by heart, I could scarcely have gathered their meaning, although they contained the wonderful description of the bewildered Balaam's journey from Mesopotamia down to Moab. There were also the stories of Peter's disloyalty, and of the calm, dignified Saviour in the midst of the taunting rabble and before the angry Council. But the grandeur and beauty therein portrayed for our instruction were utterly lost to view. If such reading were the exception, it would have been let pass without remark; but bad reading is the rule. I have regularly attended churches in every diocese in Ontario and in many in England, yet rarely, indeed but twice, have I heard really good readers. In the meeting between Moses and Pharaoh, where Pharaoh says, "Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in the day thou seest my face thou shalt surely die." And Moses said, "Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face no more."—Dean Saunders, of Peterborough Cathedral, showed more plainly than a painting could have done the angry despot on his throne, holding in his hand the power of life and death, and in striking contrast, the unmoved Moses quietly replying to the excited autocrat. It was a picture; but always before and since, the wrathful tyrant and the meekest of men appear to speak in exactly the same tone. Irving, Terry and Modjeska would declaim to empty houses were they half as neglectful of training and as careless in delivery. The fact that there is such an art as voice culture, by which a bad voice may be made good and a good one be made vastly better, seems wholly ignored. The other day a man told a teacher of elocution, to whom he applied for lessons, that he "didn't want no more than one quarter," for his former teacher had brought him as far as "Emphas." It would appear that the clergy are not brought as far as "Emphas," or we should not hear "Pour upon us the healthful spirit of Thy grace."

In a church possessing such a rich treasury of Holy Scripture in her services, and such wealth of beauty in the uninspired portions as well, it is a shame that lack of power to bring out their grand lessons should be the almost invariable rule.

Toronto, May 6th, 1884.

E. G. J.

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—In my article of last week on "The morality of aiding to commit crime," your proofreader makes me say in parenthesis, "we question if the right to coerce the speaker, &c." It should read, "The question of the right, &c."

Yours,

E. DOUGLAS ARMOUR.

THE LOSS OF THE S. S. "STATE OF FLORIDA."

ALAS! 'tis true; the dismal tidings ring
Within our ears, the gurgling throes of souls
O'erwhelmed by ocean, smiling treacherous:
The heart-wrung shriek of hope o'ercome ascends
To smite the star-lit heavens that seem to laugh
Ironical at fate, whose callous sweep
Enforces life to join the life beyond.
At sunset, when the golden rays shot forth
From twilight's diadem, all then was peace:
No rage was in Atlantic's breath; the sea
Itself was mirror to the traveller's hope
Of haven-rest assured; and round such hope
Perchance in one fond heart* there warmly gleamed
Anticipations ever of friendships won
And oft renewed in Scotia's dear-loved realm.
No cloud of ill presaged the midnight woe:
With heedless, tensioned pride, the great ship throbbed
To kiss the coy horizon's crowning line,
Disdainful of the jealous swell which deemed
The embrace its own; and men and women slept
Confiding in the wanton strength which dares
The crested storm and flouts the staying calm.
Fate holds, howe'er, no counsel with the skill
Which man can boast; its unrelenting grasp
Reveals no law which he can tame his own;
The pride of all his toil is but the sphere
Whose soapy film breaks at a moment's breath,
To pass within the yeast of chaos, God-controlled.

J. M. H.

A LOVE-STORY by H. C. Bunner, entitled "The Red Silk Handkerchief," will appear in the June Century.

*The writer's friend, Mr Walter King, of Toronto, was among those who were lost in this catastrophe.