

A RAILWAY SNAPSHOT.

The following sketch, by a western writer in *The Presbyterian*, is very like what our own Thaddeus might do. It is touching and very instructive:

In the shabby car of a joggly Western railway the other day two fellow-passengers interested me unusually. One was a fresh-faced young theological student, the other an aged Roman Catholic priest. Now I know that to compare and contrast people is often misleading and wrong. Even great excellencies often contrast strikingly with one another. So I would never have compared those two, but simply accepted each as he was with his excellencies and his defects, had not the younger man driven me to it. I overheard him speak sneeringly of the old priest as "a fossil stranded by some prehistoric wave," and deride the priestly dress, the crucifix and the breviary. The old man, well out of earshot, beaming with good fellowship toward his fellow-travelers, or helping to straighten out their little difficulties, or reading in his well-worn breviary, or trying to amuse tired little children, reminded me of a bright ray of sunshine falling athwart a gray, dull day. So I sat watching the two and marking the contrast.

The clerical dress, so obnoxious to the youth, was to me pathetic. It was plain to shabbiness and worn to shinness. It had been on many a rough journey in many a good cause. It had for all its rustiness been a right welcome sight to many a perplexed and troubled parishioner. It was at least, thought I, a not less appropriate garment for a follower of Him who had not where to lay His head than was the flashy outfit of the theologian, which I knew to be beyond his means.

The old man, it is true, read an antiquated book, and spelled out as well as his failing eyes could a well-worn breviary. The enlightened young man read "Tom Sawyer"—a good book enough in its way, but not in just the same class as the breviary.

When we reached a dining station one of the men I was observing led the race for the six-bit dinner table and elbowed to a good seat, while the other shared with shabbiest passengers he could find a lunch some grateful parishioner had prepared for him.

When I next observed my young friend he was putting up a great argument against celibacy. It was easy to see his heart was in this matter, and I remembered hearing of several of his mission field flirtations.

The good father's crucifix seemed to the younger man "an unseemly parade of religion" and "nothing but a piece of ostentation." The chief badge the young man wore was a football medal, which he managed to make very prominent and noticeable. Not a bad sort of badge, of course, but quite different from that the priest wore.

Then I knew that one of the men had pulled all the wires within his reach to get an "attractive" field of labor, and I knew that the other had given up the largest congregation in the diocese so as to be free to wander unmarked in out of the way corners of the country, seeing to the wants of poor, uninteresting people.

The youngster had scarcely served in the West long enough to wear the Toronto crease out of his trousers. The old man but two years short of half a century ago, had crossed the Red River of the north, and all these years had followed the frontier westward and northward. Among blood-maddened, whiskey-maddened, hunger-maddened Indians he had gone with the Gospel. Many a day of fasting had he known when no fast day was on his calendar—fasting from sheer necessity. He had forded swift rivers in spring time and had lost his way in untracked wildernesses of snow. He had sought no manner of reward, but all these years in patience and love had done his best in the service of God and of men.

In that shabby railway car I contrasted the two. I do not subscribe to the creed of the good father, but I am a believer in his works.

CREDIT AND CHARACTER.

In the New York correspondence of a prominent city paper the following significant paragraph lately appeared:

"Character has become more than ever before the basis of credit. There was a time when a man might gamble, drink to excess, and indulge in riotous living without suffering much, if any, loss of prestige in the business world. This is no longer the case. The modern credit man, besides ascertaining the strength of a merchant's business, the amount of his assets and liabilities, also takes note of his personal character. Many men who are living double lives, and who suppose that no one is the wiser, would be surprised to learn that the truth is known to more than one credit man. Locked up in the latter's safes is information that would cause a dozen divorce cases and widespread scandal if made public. More than one person who has been refused a loan by the bank, and has wondered at it, would not be surprised if he knew how much of his manner of life was written down in the records of the credit man. A lady recently called at her dressmaker's and found her in tears. She asked what was the matter, and was told that a customer, whom she named, had refused to pay her bill because her husband would not give her the money. The husband was a prominent merchant. The lady told her husband, who informed his credit man. The latter made inquiries. The banks were buying the man's paper eagerly, and his credit seemed of the best. But the credit man soon learned the facts of the merchant's manner of life, and the facts were communicated to others. The doors of credit were closed, and in a few months bankruptcy was the result."

There is very little sentiment in such transactions. They are calculated with the exactness with which insurance companies calculate their risks. Character has come to have a commercial value, but still more has its value in the treasure laid up in heaven, and in the peace of mind and soul which it gives on this earth. The highest character that man can have, the character that includes everything which means integrity and honor, is that of the earnest, faithful follower of Christ. Christianity will not

necessarily make a man a good business man, but it will make him a better one than he would be without it. It will not give him keenness of intellect and judgment, but it will keep what intellect and judgment he has from being clouded and distorted through evil habits and indulgences. Even those who are not Christians recognize the fact.

A man may lose all else, but if he has a Christian character he has a foundation on which to build, a capital which cannot be taken from him, and which is an asset of no mean value.

What Others Say.

THE KIND NEEDED.

A righteous vote is a living prayer.—*Free Baptist*.

MOST DISGRACEFUL.

Some of the most infamous dives in Chicago belong to men who occupy high positions and to whom the people look as examples of law abiding and honorable citizens.—*The New Voice*.

NO CHANGE IN CHARACTER.

The French title, "La Grippe," has been anglicised, and it is now proper to write it "the grip." It is not likely, however, that this change in the spelling of the name will mitigate to any perceptible degree the malignity and meanness of the disease.—*The Telescope*.

WELL SAID.

There is a cheap sort of criticism of church membership, which finds voice in the words: "We do not want to work for membership in our church, but for Christian lives." Very young ministers, in the teething age, always say this with an air of superiority over the old fogies. All ministers pass through that age; we did. We are glad we got through it instead of staying in it! Of course what men need is shoes, not shoe factories! What we want is education, not schools! We should have an abundance of fruit and not be bothering with slow-growing trees. We want to make men Christian, but how is it to be done if there is not some organization which is working loyally to support the man who is doing it.—*Journal and Messenger*.

THE BEST FORM.

There are extremes in church government. The one is absolute domination by the officials of the church. This is Romanism. The other is, no organization and no church officials. That is inefficiency and anarchy. Between these two extremes lie all the different forms of church organization that exist. That is the best which to the greatest possible extent secures equality of rights and privileges to the greatest possible number, most successfully encourages liberty of conscience and personal study of the Scriptures, and at the same time, through organic union, brings the united strength of the whole body to bear effectively for the carrying forward of the work of world-wide evangelization.—*The Telescope*.

LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE.—The Canadian Lord's Day Alliance is making most encouraging progress. Three years ago there were 210 branches, now there are 510, as follows: Ontario 300, Quebec 31, Nova Scotia 42, New Brunswick 17, Prince Edward Island 7, Manitoba 47, North West Territories 35, British Columbia 21. The membership then was about 8,000, now it is about 25,000. And the influence of the organization is being felt.

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