

The Morning Star.

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The Foundation of Character.

It was an educator of long experience in dealing with young men and women who said that he had come to the conclusion that so long as he could depend on the word of any given young man, no matter how bad the man might be, there was hope, because he had the foundation of all character to build on—truth and sincerity—without these character is impossible.

It is altogether too common to regard freedom from the petty lying that greets one on every hand as quite sufficient to establish a character for truthfulness; to think that because a man is not detected so often in falsehood that *no one* has any confidence in him, that therefore he is a truthful, sincere man. The real fact is far removed from this. The petty, stupid lying that is easily detected is only the purulent excrecence of an inward disease, that is eating like a cancer into the soul. The man who would think twice before he would tell what he would call a deliberate lie will unhesitatingly praise to his face some particular man whom he believes it his interest to flatter and then perhaps ten minutes later denounce the same individual in scathing terms to some one else whom he thinks will be glad to listen. Another who would scorn to tell a "lie" will spend hours composing a song in praise of some person when he knows that nine-tenths of what he is writing cannot be truthfully applied to the one he is praising. Still another who would deeply resent the suggestion that he could be better than he is, will promise positively to fulfil a certain obligation on a specified day; the day and hour comes and goes without the promised fulfilment or even an explanation; and perhaps long after you are without the least apology or expression of regret, smilingly promised another day of fulfilment.

We wish we could say that these things and many like them do not happen frequently, but we cannot—they happen every day, right here in Jaffna among professing Christians. What is the result? Lack of mutual confidence and trust.

Sometime ago 75 or 80 teachers were gathered together and were told that it was proposed to turn over some of the schools to the management of their fellow countrymen. Instant and energetic disapproval followed this proposal and prolonged inquiry developed the fact that there was only one Christian in Jaffna whom those teachers felt they could trust to be their Manager, and not all were agreed even on that one man. What does this mean? It means that Christian CHARACTER is lacking, that the *habit of doing right* under all circumstances has not been cultivated—that when it is convenient, a man does right and when it is inconvenient he does something else.

Empty words whether uttered or written, which not only mean nothing, but do not flush the cheek with the shame of convicted falsehood, leave their indelible stamp on the man who utters them, and that stamp is not for good. Insincerity of language is proof of the insincerity of the man, and no character can be built on insincerity.

Say what you mean; mean what you say; let it always be possible to know just where you will be found when a question of right or wrong arises and found there too at any cost to yourself. Let your word be as good as your bond. Do what you promise or explain why you don't, and never promise what you cannot perform. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" for you are laying the foundations of character, strong and deep and entering into a precious possession which no man can take from you.

The Paumben Canal.

For sometime past the proposal to cut a canal through Rameswaram Island and bring the railway to the temple by building a viaduct across the present channel used by the steamers has been blocked. The following from the *Madras Mail* of Oct. 6th tells why.

This great scheme has by no means been shelved. There is a good chance of the Secretary of State sanctioning it if certain difficulties can be overcome connected with a concession from the Secretary of State many years ago to the "South India Ship Canal, Port and Coaling Station (Limited)." It is maintained that the concession is still valid, and that any constructive work in the scheme must be done either by or with the consent of the concessionaire Company. We have not been able to procure a copy of the terms of the concession, but we cannot believe that the India Office authorities were such bad men of business as not to provide for its lapse if no steps were taken within a reasonable time to give practical effect to it. It was as long ago as 1884 that the South India Ship Canal, Port and Coal-

ing Station (Limited) first saw light. Its scheme was to construct a ship canal across the island of Rameswaram in order to shorten the distance between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, and to establish at one end of the canal a safe port and coaling station providing direct loading facilities for the export of a Report and estimate. Sir John Coode prepared a Report and estimate. Sir John Coode adopted a line of canal very near the alignment of the railway. Projecting piers between the bottom breadth was to be 100 feet. Projecting piers were provided at each entrance, and the total cost was estimated at Rs. 2,974,000. The S. I. R. Company's estimate for the canal is 2,776,000. This Report having been presented to the India Office, the Secretary of State granted a "perpetual" concession, reserving the right to purchase the canal under certain conditions. What took place subsequently is thus summarised in the S. I. R. Company's Report on the project.—"The Madras Government on the 15th October 1890, advised the Government of India to reject the scheme. There was no difficulty in getting the Madras Branch made by the S. I. R. Company, but the shoals between Points Calimere and Polro would prevent the projected canal being made. The Government did not study the Ceylon Government Chart of the channel referred to, which shows ample waterway, recently proved by three cargo vessels coming to Madras under a permanent water, on the 30th March, 1894, to the Government of India with reference to scheme of Messrs. Wallace Brothers in regard to the through India-Ceylon scheme, stating their approval provided it did not unduly interfere with Sir E. J. Reed's proposals. Owing to financial difficulties no further action was taken until the present project was initiated. From the broad standpoint of public policy and convenience there can be no objection to the preferableness of State ownership and management over private ownership and management in a concern like that of a ship canal and coal station and perhaps a dock, for the Navy. Possibly a compromise might be effected by granting the construction of the canal and support to Sir E. J. Reed and his Company, on the basis of a lease for 99 years, and the Government enters into ownership on completion. At the same time it would probably be better and cheaper in many ways if the Company were given the agency for construction, seeing that the Government is engaged in the same spot in extending its line across the Paumben Straits and onwards through the Island of Rameswaram. The present scheme has been conceived and worked out by the Government, and it is therefore construction by a single agency would seem best. However, the essential thing is that the scheme shall not be delayed and hampered owing to disputes about mere rights and concessions."

Northern Railway Progress.

The report of Mr. H. Oliver, Chief Engineer, for the half year ending June 30th has a number of points of interest.

The total expenditure at the end of last June was Rs. 9,979,976; of this Rs. 4,649,142 was local expenditure and Rs. 5,330,834 was expended in England, stores, &c. The total expenditure to date, is 87 1/2 per cent. of the estimate. During the last half year the expenditure has been Rs. 638,853; Rs. 521,591 in Ceylon and Rs. 117,262 in England.

All cuttings and embankments are now done, trimming of slopes only remaining to be done. The masonry of all the large bridges is finished and girders are in position. The bridges up to West-Mankulam from Kurugeswala (68 miles) and down to Mankulam from Kankesanur (70 miles).

At the end of June last the rails were linked in at the southern end to the line from Kurugeswala, at a distance of 84 miles from Kankesanur. In addition to these lengths there are 6 miles of sidings laid in. The total length is 163 miles, being 17 miles for the half year. The southern end linking in was stopped for several months in order that the work on bridges and ballasting might be carried on quicker, and at the northern end the work was delayed owing to four accidents. At the end of the writing (Sept. 22nd) there are twenty-six miles to link in to join the rails from north and south.

The length of line lifted and partly ballasted is 137 miles, the length done during the half-year being 33 miles.

At the northern end of the railway a fair supply of suitable ballast has been found, but at the southern end good ballast is not plentiful. The ballast used is principally sand, most of which is obtained from the Mi-oya at 37 1/2 miles, and from this place it has to be carried by train to Annapurapur, 30 miles to the north. This long conveyance makes the ballast very expensive, and besides this, another cause of expense is that until the sand is boxed in with gravel or stone a considerable quantity of it is lost by being washed away during heavy rains.

Work on station buildings is now nearly complete. The telegraph is complete from Kurugeswala to Annapurapur and from Mankulam to Kankesanur. Much delay to the permanent way work has again been caused by the breaking down of the engines at northern end this time. These breakdowns were generally due to the want of water, which is not yet ready to be used, had upon the boilers of engines. The watering arrangements are now improved, and the arrangements for washing out the engines are also improved at both ends of the railway.

Labour has been fairly plentiful in the North-Western and North-Central Provinces and in the southern part of the Northern Provinces. On the latter part of these it is still found difficult to keep labour. Jaffna Tamils and Indian coolies have been engaged on the work, but as a rule they stay for a short time only.

Anglo-German Arbitration.

One of the most conspicuous events which King Edward has rendered since his accession has been his persistent advocacy of arbitration and his endeavor to conclude treaties which should make this idea effective. A treaty of arbitration has been signed between France and England and another is pending with Austria. That with Germany was signed in London July 12th and has just been published. It is worthy as a step in the right direction surely to be followed by results more far reaching. It contains three Articles as follows:—
"I.—Differences which may arise of a legal nature or relating to the interpretation of Treaties existing between the two Contracting Parties, and which it may not have been possible to settle by direct negotiations, shall referred to the Permanent Court of Arbitration established by the Convention of Geneva, ratified on the 24th July, 1899, provided, nevertheless, that they do not affect the vital interests, the independence, or the honour of the two Contracting States, and do not concern the interests of third Parties."
Article II.—In each individual case the High Contracting Parties, before appealing to the Permanent Court of Arbitration, shall conclude a special Agreement, the terms of which shall be fixed by the Arbitrators, and the procedure to be followed for the formation of the Arbitral Tribunal and the several stages of the procedure."
Article III.—The present agreement shall be in force for a period of five years, dating from the day of signature."

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Note and Comment.

—Much annoyance is said to be daily caused at the St. Louis Exhibition by robberies effected from the displays. Ceylon has lost many valuable articles, and the exhibitors are simply disgusted.

—The General Secretary of the Christian Endeavour Society, reports an increase of 17,000 in the number of societies during the year, making a net aggregate of 44,785.

The World's Congress of Baptists will be held in London next July. The proposal emanated from churches in America, and thousands of opinion leaders of the British metropolises were moved to convenient rendezvous for the majority of the delegates.

A case of gross religious superstition is reported from Coimbatore where a man and his wife went to a neighbouring temple to sacrifice their lives to the god. The woman was killed by her husband, but the latter survived the attempt at his own throat and was subsequently tried and sentenced to transportation for life.

Lhasa the capital of Tibet, which the British entered four weeks ago had been up to that time a closed city. It has a parallel in Mecca, Arabia, which is the high place of Mahomedan pilgrims and Mecca. It like Lhasa has a wonderful temple and a number of indescribable squares, fairs, and bazaars. Buckhardt, and later Sir Richard Burton, carrying their lives in their hands, explored the city, and taking part in its most abstruse religious rites with its pilgrims. Lhasa now stands revealed—when will Mecca turn come?

The new clergyman was invited to dine with the family the other Sunday and 8-year-old Willie, of course, made himself conspicuous during his stay. He seemed to be deeply impressed with the minister, and never let his eyes stray from him. He manifested so much interest as his father in what he said, but regarded the minister with a somewhat sorrowful expression, which was altogether unalloyed, as he was of a jovial disposition and greatly amused his hearers. As the minister rose to leave, Willie quietly approached him and said:—

"Why—why—how does it feel to be poor?"

"What do you mean, Willie?" laughingly asked the minister, turning to the parents with an amused smile.

"Why I heard papa say to mamma that you was a mighty poor preacher?" was Willie's startling declaration.

Well-to-do doctors, by hammering, can reduce gold leaves so thin that 284,000 must be laid on each other to produce the thickness of an inch, yet each leaf is so perfect and free from holes that one of them laid on any surface, as in gilding, gives the appearance of solid gold. They are so thin that if laid on a book 1,500 would only occupy the space of a single leaf of common paper; and an octavo volume of an inch thick would have as many pages as the books of a well-stocked library of 1,500 volumes, with 400 pages in each. Platinum and silver can be drawn into wire much finer than human hair. A grain of blue vitriol of carmine will tinge a gallon of water so that in every drop of the colour may be perceived. A grain of musk will keep a room fragrant for years, and at the end of that period will have lost little of its weight. The carton crow smells its food many miles off. A burning taper uncovered for a single instant, during which it does not lose more than a single grain, would fill a sphere four miles in diameter with light, so as to be visible in every part of it. The thread of the silk worm is so small that many of them twisted together to form one will be twice as strong as that of the spider, and small still, for two-thirds of its weight would reach from London to Edinburgh, or 400 miles.

Wireless Telegraphy.

The Cunard steamer *Compania* was voyaging from London to New York a few weeks ago when a lady on board discovered that she had lost a number of valuable articles, and she was greatly distressed. She remembered that she had them while staying at a hotel in London and could not remember having seen them afterwards. They had been put, for the convenience of carrying, in a small leather bag. The owner was greatly distressed by the loss and told the captain of the vessel about it. A wireless telegram was at once despatched to the hotel. On the following day the captain was able to tell the lady that her jewels were not lost. The clearing agent reported that the bag had been found among a pile of empty boxes, into which it had apparently fallen after the Americans were packing. The inquiry and the reply which followed drew the attention of the lady had been cast into space, and had found the persons who alone were concerned in the matter. Such an incident would have been incredible a few years ago, but now it is understood and believed. C.H.

Progress of the War.

Oct. 2nd Japanese reconstructing the Russian railway to Liao Yang, which they are using. Russian battleship "Orel" grounds near Constantinople.
Oct. 3rd a Russian vessel used for clearing mines off Pt. Arthur strikes a mine and sinks.
Oct. 4th Japanese issue a war loan of Rs. 120,000,000 which is at once taken up by a Japanese themselves.
Oct. 5th Japanese are gradually drawing closer to Pt. Arthur, bombarding it heavily. 700 Japanese expelled from Siberia.
Oct. 6th Cholera breaks out in Russia. Typhoid fever among the Pt. Arthur garrison. Japanese attacks repulsed.
Oct. 7th Japanese sending forward immense supplies for a winter campaign. Japanese guns at Pt. Arthur destroy a Russian warship and severely damaged three others. It is estimated that the cost of a war two years long at Rs. 3,000,000,000.