CROWN ATTORNEY T. H. DYRE DISCUSSES MORAL CONDITIONS

(Owen Sound Sun-Times.)

Much has been said and written during the past few months and weeks with respect to the moral situation in and around Owen Sound, and the question has been discussed both publicly and privately, and just now a lot of people are greatly interested and many are anxious to do what they can toward making conditions better and safer for the young people. At the annual congregational meeting held on Tuesday evening of last week at the First Methodist Church County Crown Attorney T. H. Dyre delivered a very plain spoken and interesting address in which reference was made to many causes responsible for such conditions which have been so forcibly brought to his attention. The address was listened to by those present with profound attention, and was freely commented upon afterwards. The attention of the Sun-Times was drawn to the address by one who was present, and Mr. Dyre was asked for a copy for publication, and although he is not seeking undue publicity readily consented to have his remarks published, which were as follows:—

I have been Crown Attorney of this county for the past ten years and could I but tell the secrets of my prison house I could a tale unfold whose lightest words would harrow up your souls. I don't wish to do that, but there is one matter, among the sad and sordid cases which almost daily comes under my notice, on which I would desire to say a word.

There is to my mind nothing in life more beautiful and joyous than a young and innocent girl (without in any way disparaging the older ones) who has her life all before her, with all its rosy dreams, hopes and aspirations and for whom, as was said in the case of Mary Queen of Scots, 10,000 swords should leap from their scabbards to avenge even a look which threatened her with insult. But the day of chivalry seems to have gone and we find, alas., too many of the brightest of these damsels are made the prey of ravening wolves who walk upright like men and who wear men's clothing but who are in many cases a menace to society.

During the past twelve months I have prosecuted and had sent to prison quite a number of men for offences against young girls under sixteen years of age—one this morning—but I fear that only a mere tithe of the offences which should have been prosecuted have ever been brought to my attention and many other girls have been wrecked on the rugged rocks of immorality, and those responsible for their downfall have gone free.

In many cases I have had to send distracted mothers away with heart break in their eyes and voices because I could not, under the present law, which requires the girl's story to be corroborated, advise them to take proceedings against their daughters. The Police Magistrate, the County Judge and I have had many conversations as to what we shall do to stem the flood of crime of this sort which seems so full, but we can only administer the law as we find it, and on the strictest rules of legal evidence.

Sending these men who are convicted to penitentiary or the reformatory does not seem to help much and certainly does not restore these children, for such I call them, to their former happiness and innocence, and many children born out of wedlock without there being any legal determination as to by whom the flame of their lives have been kindled.

There must be a cause for all these sad and sordid cases and it seems to me that the parents and the teachers in our schools should take this question up more seriously and teach the boys and girls who are under their care the enormity of the offence which seems so prevalent and the gravity of consequences following a break of the seventh commandment.

Do mothers of today impress upon their boys the respect they should pay to those of the opposite sex, or has the good camaraderie which is all right if properly governed and balanced, between boys and girls, been carried too far and allowed to develop into familiarity anl license?

On the other hand are our daughters sufficiently well taught the sacredness of their persons? However this may be the sight so often seen on our streets, sometimes at unseemly hours, of young girls clinging to the arms of young men with a loose cigarette dangling from their lips is one which our parents and grand-parents would not have permitted. It may be that fashions of dress today are not conducive to the modesty which characterized our forbears. The flaring bill boards advertising voluptuous plays, all, I fear, have the tendency to lower the standards of morals rather than to uplift.

The French may be a godless people, but French mothers have one redeeming virtue, at least, they watch their daughters carefully and do not allow them to go about unchaperoned.

Boys and girls brought up in a sane, carefully guarded household are not naturally bad and if they receive proper supervision are not likely to go astray. Of course, the unfortunate waifs and strays, and the naturally depraved we will have with us always, but is there nothing that can be done to save the ranks of such from being swollen in any degree by the children of respectable homes?

Perhaps in a mixed audience like this, many will think that this subject should be taboo, but in my opinion there is too much mock modesty and false delicacy entertained by those who have charge of these young people, both boys and girls.

Kindly and wise advice to children long before they reach the age of fourteen years would, I think, save many a girl from going down under the black bitter waters of despair and disgrace.

Meetings of societies which result only in resolutions deplorng the present condition of affairs, unless followed up by active means to abate the evil are entirely useless, and we may well ask ourselves the age-old question, "Am I my brother's or sister's keeper?" and what am I doing practically, not theoretically, to abate this evil?

Not long prayers, but earnest zeal
That is what is wanted more.
Put your shoulder to the wheel
Knowledge to the children deal
From thy store.

We punish the men when we can, but nothing we can do in the courts can remove the blight, the sorrow and the lifelong misery which falls upon the victim and her friends. I must express my appreciation of the services of the police, both local and provincial, in assisting in bringing these criminals before the courts.

The Children's Shelter, the Y.W.C.A., the Salvation Army, the National Council of Women, the Reformatories for erring girls, are all doing a good and noble work and trying to re-establish, so far as can be, these girls, but this is all after the fact. What I am trying to emphasize is that the community at large, and this church in particular, should do some constructive work to prevent the necessity of these organizations taking upon themselves the burden of, in a measure, for it can only be done in a small measure, restoring these girls to respectability, for we cannot blink the fact that present society will not forgive, and a bird with a broken pinion can never soar so high again.

We cannot revolutionize society, but surely we can do something to save the slaughter of the innocents.

You may say that MY boy or MY girl is safe, no harm will come to him or her, but can you be sure? Not alone from the slums and among the outcasts are these sad cases drawn.

I would ask you as active Christian people to formulate and put in force some scheme whereby this evil may be lessened. You probably know better than I what form such scheme should take, but I ask you in the name of humanity, and in the name of that which is precious, for, of all things, the most precious to my mind is the soul, and body, of a child, to do something to put a ban upon this evil.

My remarks may perhaps anger and annoy some of you ladies who draw your silken skirts aside and shut your eyes to ugly facts, but if any word of mine shall have the effect of causing one school teacher, one father or mother, to so act as to save one child from that which is worse than death, it will not trouble me one whit if I am criticized and am an anathema maranatha.

If I were going to preach a sermon to young people, which I trust I shall not have been considered to have done, I would choose as my text the words of Jeremiah, when he says: "If thou hast run with the foolman, and they have wearied thee then how can'st thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace wherein thou trustest, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" For to those who yield and fall will ultimately and surely come the sad and bitter realization that they have made a terrible mistake and they will have but regret and remorse in their minds throughout all their future years, and will learn that such so-called joys bring but dead sea fruit.

Aberdeen.

(Our own correspondent.)

Miss Maidie Lamb entertained the Rocky "Live Wires" at a progressive crokinole party at her home here on Friday night. Clifford Young of Durham was the lucky one to win all games. All report having a good time.

Mr. Alvin Caswell and Mrs. J. S. Davey attended the funeral of their uncle, the late Mr. Keyes of Walkerton on Monday.

Miss Wilson of Owen Sound is visiting her sister, Mrs. George Wilson.

Mr. Alex. Fletcher, Miss Margraet and Miss Lottie, spent a day last week with their aunt in Priceville.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert MacGillivray of Kitchener spent a week-end recently at Mr. Dan. McLean's.

Mrs. Walter Clark, Jean and Brucie, of the Garafraxa Road, spent the first of the week with the Lamb family.

Miss Barbara Smith is spending a few days with Mrs. Neil McLean, at "Glen Mac."

Mr. and Mrs. John Morrison, Mr. Neil McLean and Miss Julia, of Durham, called on a few friends on the line the first of the week.

Rocky Saugeen

(Our own correspondent.)

We are having warmer weather now and the blossoms are beginning to show up.

Mr. Jack Caswell attended the funeral of his uncle, Mr. William Keyes, of Walkerton, last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Livingstone of Glascott spent a day recently with the former's aunt, Mrs. L. McLean.

Mrs. Walter Clark and two children spent a day recently with Mr. D. Lamb at Aberdeen.

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Vessie and children spent a day recently wit h Mr. and Mrs. John McKechnie of Glenroadin.

Mr. Joe Davidson arrived home after a few holidays with his sister and brother.

Mr. and Mrs. George Turnbull and son, of below Durham, spent a day recently with her mother, Mrs. William Hill.

A number off this line attended the celebration in Chesley on Tuesday.

The monthly meeting of the U.F.W.O. will be held at the home of Mrs. James Ewen next Friday; also the U.F.O. will meet in the schoolhouse on Friday night.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Caswell spent Sunday with friends in Williamsford.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Splan spent the 24th with the latter's brother, Mr. John Caswell.

Knox Corners.

(Our own correspondent.)

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Caldwell and little son visited with Mr. and Mrs. S. Langrill of Hanover one day last week.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Aiken and family of Holstein, visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. Watson on Sunday, and attended the service at Knox church.

Mr. Jas. Marshall, Sr. and Mr. John Marshall, Sr. made a business trip to Hanover one day last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Elgin Wilton and little daughter visited with Proton friends recently.

Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Allan, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Derby, Mr. Peter Paterson of town, and Mr. and Mrs. Adam Kellar, Miss Annie Stewart and Mrs. James McIlvride of Orchard attended the service at Knox Sunday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Rob. J. Webber and family spent Sunday with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Webber.

Messrs. Donald MacIlvride, R. R. Watson, Henry Damm, and Wm. Caldwell have delivered their fat cattle.

Mr. Jim Marshall, Jr. who has been working with the bridge gang on the Toronto-Chatsworth Highway, spent Sunday at his home here. This week he goes to work near Brampton.

Miss Christena Marshall of town visited with Mr. and Mrs. David Marshall.

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