

ly prevalent among a large section of our youth—growing with our country's growth, and increasing with our population. And the public school is the only place where this rapidly spreading evil can be certainly met in its beginning, and nipped in the bud. Attendance at the Sunday-school is not, of course, compulsory, nor can the character of its teaching be submitted to any State supervision. And we have only to look around us to be aware how hopelessly unfit and unlikely many parents are to meet the evil by a careful and judicious home training.

In these circumstances it ought surely to be one of the very first aims of our school system: to correct the deficiencies of parents in the moral as well as intellectual training of their children, by bestowing its most careful attention on the training of good citizens. And to this end, definite teaching on the subject is needed. It is all very well to assemble mass meetings of children in some public place, and teach them to wave flags and cheer, and sing "The Maple Leaf Forever!" It will seldom occur to them to connect this sort of entertainment with the duty of respecting their neighbor's property, and doing their part towards preserving the public safety and order. Nor will it do to trust vaguely to the moral influence of the teacher. No doubt every good teacher's influence will be, to a certain extent, on the side of morality in general, but here again we need something much more definite to be required. Many of our teachers are too young and inexperienced to be really aware of the evils they have to cope with, or even of how they are to endeavor to meet these evils. Moreover, the number of lessons they have daily to hear and the number of subjects they have to teach so fills up both time and mind that it is little wonder if the training in good citizenship is,

in the great majority of cases, overlooked or forgotten.

Now, neither children nor adults can be expected to learn to obey laws of which they are in absolute ignorance, and it is not too much to say that the great majority of our school-children are utterly ignorant of the existence of statutes—and of penalties for breaking them—against which they are nevertheless perpetually transgressing, oftener from sheer thoughtlessness than from any other cause. Their parents themselves are too often so lax in their own morality that they think very little of the matter if their children help themselves to their neighbor's fruit and flowers whenever they feel a desire to do so, and are much aggrieved if the theft is called by its right name. Small boys go about aimlessly seeking amusement for themselves wherever they can find it, and in utter ignorance of the harm they are doing; ignorant, too, that they are law-breakers in so doing—will cut and bark trees, shake and break them when newly planted, and light fires in woods even in times of drought, without the least realization of the serious nature of the offence. They have found their mischievous pranks so often tolerated and treated lightly, that they go on light-heartedly to their destruction of property with no little damage both to private and public well being. Canada has recently had large tracts of country desolated by forest fires, a cause of untold loss throughout her whole past, and we have a statute forbidding the starting of such fires, under a heavy penalty. Yet our children, in general, know nothing of this law, nor do they realize the serious risks involved, and, notwithstanding all our bitter experience, boys go out to the woods and recklessly start fires, for their own amusement, without a thought of possible results. Were they taught the seriousness of such an offence against the law, and the heavy