

man Catholics is perfectly true; and had this ground been frankly taken when the book was withdrawn, there would have been no more to be said. Unluckily, the false ground of immorality was taken, in order to hide the wires, when the wirepuller, not content to possess the substance without the form of power, suddenly thrust from behind the curtain his Most Reverend head. To insinuate that Scott was driven by his straightened circumstances to pander to Protestant prejudices, is the most preposterous injustice: he was not in straightened circumstances when *Marmion* was written. Nor had he any prejudices of his own: not being at all ascetic or ritualistic, he felt no special sympathy with the religion of the Middle Ages, which he treated simply as a part of the antiquities, and in a conventional, sometimes in a jocular, style. But by bringing the Middle Ages generally into fashion, he practically gave an impulse to the Neo-Catholic movement, and in Catholics to traduce him is ingratitude.

PUBLIC EDUCATION.

In the course of the Scott controversy reference was made to Collier's *History of England*, which had been revised by the Council of Public Instruction to clear it of language offensive to the feelings of Catholics. That revision was effected quite quietly and without a bitter word. Such is the difference between a political and a non-political Department of Education. The thoughts of the community are being directed to this subject. People begin to see that we can no more afford to have education turned into a political cockpit than we could afford to have commerce treated in the same way. The Council of Public Instruction had defects, but they were not irremediable, nor were they the cause of its fall. It was overturned by the wrath of the Chief Superintendent, because, in the performance of its duty to its constituents, it limited his autocracy, revised his text-books—some of which were in dire need of revision—and inquired into the management of his wasteful, or worse than wasteful, Book Depository. As he was supposed to wield the Methodist vote, the Government bowed to his displeasure, and in its haste to gratify him forgot even the usual courtesies of public life. At the pass to which things had then come, a change of some kind was inevitable, and a Ministry of Education was an experiment which there seemed to be good reasons for trying. It has been fairly tried. The Minister appointed was the member of the Government best qualified by his intellectual acquirements for the post,

and there can be no doubt that he has devoted himself conscientiously to its duties. But the result is decisive: Education is rapidly becoming the football of party, and the state of the Department is such as to excite grave misgivings in the minds of men well qualified to judge. Many voices are heard in favour of a reorganization of the Council, for the purpose of general regulation, such as determining the subjects of instruction and examination, selecting text-books, and fixing the qualifications for certificates. For administrative purposes a Chief Superintendent would, of course, be required as before. The mode of his appointment might be so arranged as to secure to him the confidence both of the Legislature and the Council of Public Instruction; and if the Chairman of the Council were named by the Government he might form a useful channel of communication between the two bodies. Let the Opposition take up this matter in earnest and they will not be without support. Nor is the question confined to the Public Schools. The friends of the University also are beginning to desire its emancipation from political influence, which has already bred trouble, and which, if exercised in a narrow spirit, might estrange half the community from an institution which ought to be the common pride of all.

THE BIBLE IN THE SCHOOLS.

Interest in the question of education is being shown in many ways. Here, as elsewhere, contending parties feel that they will have society greatly under their influence if they can clasp a padlock on the minds of the young. An important deputation of the Churches urges the Attorney-General of Ontario to make religious instruction obligatory in all the schools. It is not difficult to sympathize with those who wish the child to be trained up not only in knowledge and intelligence, but in the love of good, the hatred of evil, and the fear of God. But the difficulties which stand in the way of a universal and compulsory system hardly need re-statement. In the divided state of Christendom, and with a growing body of citizens who object to religious teaching altogether, perpetual conflicts, perpetual agitation, would ensue; the power of the State would be constantly called into action against what would present itself as freedom of opinion, and the practical consequence to religion is not doubtful. After all, too great a value may easily be set on religious teaching in the form of a task; as every one who has been compelled to attend divinity lectures at College will say. Let us be content, then, with