

has no sort of relation, and throws no light upon, the practical problems which present themselves for solution by us now. The question is not how to nurse a child; it is how to feed an army. Pupils come to us as battalions, not as units. They must be treated in the mass. The bright mind and the dull mind are equally out of their element. The average must be found and all things suited to that. There is little study, it is all instruction. Perpetual uniphonic recitation swells and echoes like the sound of many waters. From the old times, the real work of the scholar is divided by five, the work of the teacher multiplied by five. All this is a peremptory necessity. It has its evils, it has also its compensation. There is virtue in the competition of great numbers. The first vice of youth is conceit. A boy in a New York school early learns his own value. The laggards and the feeble are left, to be sure, but the quick mind has opportunities of hearing and learning to-day of useful things that his father in a country school-house never dreamed of.—*Stephen A. Walker, President of N. Y. Board of Education.*

JUVENILE CRIME.

We hear complaints from all sides of the great and most disheartening increase of juvenile crime. Especially is this the case over in the States, though it is very noticeable in Canada. The dime novels and the wretchedly indecent and immoral weekly publications which are circulated all over the States in hundreds of thousands are generally blamed as the chief causes of such a state of things.

This may account for some of the evil, but not nearly for all. Take our own towns and cities. The most miserable and depraved of the juveniles to be met with in our streets will be found to read *nothing at all*. In too many cases they *cannot* read the simplest sentences in the First Book, and know nothing of JESSE JAMES, or DICK TURPIN, or any other of the kind. But they are perfectly soaked in every kind of iniquity all the same. And how are they so thoroughly and so soon indoctrinated into all the ways of evil? To a very large extent because their parents are drunken, degraded, selfish, and brutalized almost beyond thought. From their earliest years these children hear nothing but blasphemy, see nothing but the vilest possible conduct, and receive nothing but the harshest and most unfeeling treatment. How should they know anything of decency? They have been at school ever since they could walk, and that school is one which makes them adepts in swearing, lying, tobacco chewing, whiskey drinking, and every kind of abomination. In many cases they are turned out when almost babies to sell papers, to beg or steal, so as to supply their wretched fathers and mothers with drink, and *they dare not come back empty-handed*. In other cases they are turned into the streets in order not to bother their parents by their presence in the miserable hovels that are called homes. What can be learned in these street classes can easily be ascertained by anyone who will spend an hour or two in the investigation. Every one either knows or may easily be assured of the fact that we have only too many such in Toronto. In one of the evening schools at which philanthropic individuals of both sexes are trying to do some of these boys good almost every one chews, drinks, and swears. Their idea of enjoyment, as they avow it, is to go out of the city, get dead drunk, and lie on the grass.

Almost without exception their parents are drunken, brutalized, and degraded beyond anything to be found among mere savages. In too many instances they are the cast-off illegitimate children of some who are accounted of the "better classes," and many of them will in due time graduate at the Police Court, through the Central Prison, to the Penitentiary and the gallows. Who or what are mostly to blame for most of that festering mass of moral depravity? Not literature even of the dime novel description, but the drinking

habits of society, the fallen and the falling character of the parents, the license of the "better classes," the "seduction" which so many would fain call no crime, but only at worst a pardonable indiscretion, and the dram shop at every corner, dealing out its "liquid fire and distilled damnation." The dime literature is no doubt inexpressibly base, the theatrical exhibitions of the low realistic order which are specially patronized by the hoodlums are frightfully corrupting, and many similar things are surely doing their work of death in multitudes of cases. But the relaxation or destruction of family order, the mean housings, and the dissipated habits of multitudes of fathers and mothers are doing more than all to make and increase among us a class of juvenile and precociously depraved practisers of every kind of iniquity, from whom our dangerous classes are continually being recruited, and by whose doings the time and attention of our police and our magistrates are more and more fully taken up.

We in Canada have not yet, as in the States, gangs of juvenile highwaymen, but we have sneak thieves in abundance, and we have precocious and premature depravity, such as it would be difficult to surpass even on the other side. What is to be done to stay this ever rising tide of iniquity? A good deal is already being done, otherwise matters would be much worse than they are. But a great deal more is necessary, and whoever sufficiently helps, be he of the Salvation or any other Army, ought to be welcomed as a coöperator in the war against iniquity in any and every form—iniquity which threatens in the form of drunkenness and other kindred vices to sap the very foundations of society, and to make our boasted civilization appear after all something like, very like, a failure and a sham.—*Toronto Globe.*

OLD ENGLISH SPELLING.

BY WILLIAM HOUSTON, M.A.

There is a very general impression that old English spelling is exceptionally capricious and irregular, and this feeling has a deterrent effect on many who would otherwise be tempted to pay more attention to the English language and its literature in the earlier stages of their history. The best corrective of the erroneous impression referred to is the study of old English, which will amply repay those who take it up intelligently, earnestly, and systematically, but something may be done to remove it by a reference to well-known and established facts. I do not deny that old spelling is very irregular; but I do deny that it is either more irregular or more capricious than the present day spelling, and I hope to show that the latter would be greatly improved by a return to some of the old methods.

By "Old English" I mean the language prior to, and including, the period of Spenser, whose text is generally printed as he wrote it, while those of Shakespeare, the authorized Bible, and Milton are modernized before being put into the hands of the modern reader. When one hears the spelling reform movement denounced, therefore, as an interference with "our fine old English spelling," he may take it for granted that the critic never saw the language of Shakespeare, Milton, or the Bible as it appeared when first printed, and that he is so ignorant of the whole subject as not to be aware that the spelling now in vogue is substantially that substituted for the older and better spelling by the finical and often mistaken scholarship of the eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson was the literary dictator of his time. In compiling his dictionary he made an honest attempt to depict the spelling of the language according to the best usage then in vogue, but the usage had changed considerably from that of Milton, and very much from