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EDITORIAL.

THE PRESENT STATE OF A GREAT QUESTION.

We see that in almost every country, especially in Britain and the United States, the question of the Religious Instruction of the young, is becoming one of their vexed questions.

Thoughtful men believe that it is the first question of the day, as lying, indeed, at the bottom of various problems civil and social, as well as religious and spiritual. The reasons for this are obvious:—

1. *Government by the people and for the people* is coming to the front everywhere, even in Turkey now at length, as the principle that is in future to underlie political institutions. Whether the form of government be republican or monarchical, as long as the will of the people, and the welfare of the people are the chief means and chief end, —the issue is the same under the two sister types of civil rule, as Britain and the United States to-day very clearly show. Whether in this form or in that, the time has come for the people everywhere to reign; "Jehovah has triumphed: his people are free."

2. *The people are not fitted to exercise this power, nor to retain it long in their hands, unless they are educated.*—Again

and again has power slipped out of the hands of the people into the hands of cunning and designing men; because, the people were ignorant, and therefore, easily duped. It was the knowledge of this fact that stirred up England and Scotland to hurry on the enactment of their Education Bills, close on the heels of the recent Reform Bill. Free institutions demand an intelligent people.

3. *Education is incomplete*; and, as the course of French History shows, worthless for civil order, without religion, that is, without making provision for the development and training of the moral faculty. The capability of a citizen to rule, his fitness to discharge with credit and honesty the duties of civil office and responsible trust hang as closely on his stern allegiance to moral law, as on his acquaintance with the rules of arithmetic. Is the United States not suffering at present, from the lack of conscience in its public officers, more than from the lack of cleverness? "A sense of duty" as the Rev. Patrick Fairbairn, says, "or the felt obligation to keep God's commandments, has with good reason, been called the very backbone of religious character." Mr. Maurice has said (Preface to sermons on the Ten