A PLEA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

The rector of the Catholic university of Ottawa sends us a circular addressed to the Catholics of Ontario, stating the needs of the time in regard to higher education. He says:—

In number 307 of that famous publication, the Spectator, there is reproduced from the illustrious Athenian statesman Pericles, a very beautiful thought: "The loss which the commonwealth suffers by the destruction of its youth is like the loss which the year would suffer by the destruction of the spring." This striking sentiment is, we deem, very aptly applied by the writer to the subject of education "The prejudice which the public sustains from a wrong education of children," says he, "is an evil of the same nature, as it, in a manner, starves posterity and defrauds our country of those persons who, with due care, might make an eminent figure in their respectives posts of life." "The philosopher, the saint or the hero, the wise, the good, or the great man," says Addison, "very often lie hid and concealed in a plebeian, which a proper education might have disinterred and have brought to light..... It is therefore an unspeakable blessing to be born in those parts of the world where wisdom and knowledge flourish."

During the century which is now far in the evening of its course, perhaps more than ever in past ages, the momentous question of education has drawn to its scrutiny a remarkable quota of public attention. Statesmen as well as less prominent members of legislative bodies, have been called upon to give it their midnight meditations; distinguished clergymen of verious denominations have championed its cause from many a renowned pulpit; the common people, that class to whom it is especially of vital interest, have often been required to manifest their sentiments in its regard. Even millionaires, urged by some more than usually philanthropic bent, have repeatedly opened their much cherished money-bags to aid the advance of knowledge. New theories of instruction have been again and again proposed, new plans have been lavishly drawn out, discussed to exhaustion, and many of them finally abandoned; new methods of procedure in training young minds have been resorted to, and a host of them found impracticable if not absurd.

The question of education is, then, a topic which, at the present day,

DEMANDS THE CAREFUL ATTENTION OF EVERY ONE

who has at heart the most sacred interests of the human race. It must be said in truth, that the usefulness of a man's whole life, for himself and for the great family of which he is a member, depends upon his education. Aye, we must go further and assert that a man's eternity, those countless millions of ages which lie buried in the mystery of the future, will draw their felicity or their misery respectively from a true or a false education.

Canada is far from being behind in the onward march of mental culture. To become convinced of this one has only to visit our cities, our towns, our villages, and even our remote country districts. Almost everywhere can be found a school where children can receive such instruction as will fit them, at least in some measure, for the battle of life.

As has again and again been shown by able writers, the Catholic Church during all ages and in all nations proved herself the zealous custodian of education. With that heavenly instinct which is her great inheritance, she is fully aware how dear to the heart of God are the innocent souls of youth. She knows well how important it is to gather from her extensive fields the tender young plants and to place them beneath the shelter of her conservatories before the uncertain temperture of a feverish world has had time to spoil their fairness. Every unprejudiced student of history acknowledges that the Catholic Church

KEPT ALIVE THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE

when, but for her, the whole world would have slept in darkness; and just as she was eminent for her scholars in the past, so is she now in the foremost rank of modern advancement. Her education is the right article; not that sickly so-called education which consists merely in a parrot-like acquisition of names and dates, and figures, without those ennobling acquirements which spring from a proper development of the whole man. The Catholic Church imparts knowledge which is sanctified by the serene light of faith. In her system God is never lost sight of when studying the admirable works of His hands. As her children advance in science they are taught to advance also in love for the Lord of Science. Her system of higher education is especially excellent and is therefore destined to endure. Notwithstanding all the new-fortifying of the educational lines, in spite of the craze of nineteenth century innovations, and in defiance of a feverish hungering after modern inventions in the great work of imparting knowledge, we see that, the old curriculum, the curriculum of the Catholic Church, is still in vogue and still in honour. It can hardly be improved upon. The staid snowy heads that drew out its lines were wiser than those restart, unsteady minds that seek its abolition. "Whatever educational theories may be," says the London Times, "educational practice is evidently in favour of the old curriculum, Latin, Greek, mathematics, and the elements of science." This statement, coming from the most distinguished of English newspapers, is a strong argument in favour of our Catholic colleges. The curriculum mentioned by the Times is the one our Catholic colleges have always patronized. They have always stood by it, and, in its results, it has stood by them. It has formed for the world some of the greatest scholars that the human race can boast of.

But the system of advanced studies in many of our higher educational establishments is praiseworthy for another reason. By imparting to their students a good

COURSE OF PURE AND SOUND PHILOSOPHY,

our universities enable their graduates to meet the great questions of the day with well-balanced minds. In dealing with this advantage it may be well to quote a few words of the Hon. William Torrey Harris, United States Commissioner of Education. They are a crushing argument in favour of our Catholic colleges and universities. "The America of the future," says this distinguished authority, "must be fashioned by men of higher education, and the glory of higher education is that it makes Philosophy its leading discipline and gives an ethical bent to all its branches of study. Higher education must direct the student in history and psychology, in the understanding of deep national principles and the aspirations which mould and govern men in their individual and social actions. The really-educated man must be a philosopher and is by that fact the spiritual monitor of the community of which he is a part." These words, coming as they do from a gentleman holding so responsible a position in the world of education, must be regarded as of no ordinary weight. They are words well pondered before being spoken; they are words that show us what should be the "leading discipline" of higher education. They tell us that the noble faculties of man's soul must be properly developed and directed by a good course of correct philosophy. Now that philosophy which can thoroughly bring about those grand results the Hon. Mr. Harris has in view, is nowhere to be found save in our Catholic educational establishments.

There is, then, a great responsibility resting upon the conscience of every Catholic. Every one of us should do his utmost in the cause of true education. It is a work that is cherished by the noblest hopes of every good man; it is a work that is, as we well know, doubly dear to the generous heart of Rome's venerable Pontiff. In many ways Catholic colleges and universities are ahead of all others; still, from a material standpoint, they are often far behind In this respect we Catholics have not at our command those advantages that fall to the lot of our wealthier fellow-citizens professing other religious beliefs. No

BIG-HEARTED MILLIONAIRES ARE POURING THEIR THOUSANDS

into the coffers of our poor colleges and schools. Our work for education is carried on amid the unpleasantness of a hand-to-mouth existence; it is a hard pull against a rapid current; it is a veritable struggle for life and honour, but it is a struggle that, from its very courage and success, is drawing the attention and the approval of all careful thinkers.

In this state of affairs can it be wondered at that some defects are to be found in our institutions of higher learning, especially if examined from a material standpoint? It needs money to put up fine modern buildings, well-ventilated and properly fitted, to meet the exigencies of modern comfort. It needs money to furnish students with first-class food and the necessary means of proper physical culture. It needs money to give professors the proper training in order to fit them for the great work of education. But, alas, it is just money that is most lacking. Even with our slender means, however, we cope successfully with the very best institutions in the land. What, then, could we not accomplish, had we at our disposal only one-half the amount annually donated to non-Catholic Colleges.

The great problem, therefore, to be solved, is something of this nature:—How can our Catholic institutions of higher education be improved? How can they be placed on an equal footing with their non-Catholic competitors? Is it not by an inviolable union in our own ranks, a sincere effort, a strong pull together? Let not division exist among us. Let us join hands and

WORK AS ONE FOR A COMMON CAUSE,

a glorious cause, the cause of our young friends, the cause of those innocent souls so dear to our hearts, the lights of our firesides, the hope of our altars, and of our legislative halls.

This work for better education is a universal work. It is a work that Catholics in every clime should undertake, further, and perfect. But the Catholics of Ontario have an especial need to battle unanimously for the betterment of higher education in their province. They are in the minority. They are not equal to their non-Catholic citizens either in wealth or in influence. They cannot afford to let petty prejudices paralyze their efforts for so noble an end. They must manifest some of that good will, to the possessers of which, at the Nativity of Christ, the angelic choirs proclaimed the peace of God. It is by multiplying institutions of higher education that the glorious end in view can be attained. Is it number we require, or is it rather excellence? Here is where Catholics are sometimes at fault. Instead of bearing up steadily the load which, God knows, is heavy enough already, they seek to place new burdens upon their shoulders, and the result is a general sinking under the accumulated weight. One first-class Catholic University is certainly enough for each province of the Dominion. Catholics in this country cannot afford more, and if they do attempt to erect and sustain a greater number the result will be, necessarily, an all-round inferiority. The grand object of Canadian Catholics of clergy and laity alike, should be, therefore, to have one first class institution of higher learning in each division of the Dominion, one upon which they can, with assurance, depend for as good an education as can be had in any other similar establishment in the world, one to which they will not be afraid to confide the spiritual and temporal welfare of their boys, one which will be a credit to the Catholic name, and to the Catholic spirit throughout this land.

Such was the idea our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., had in mind, when, ten years ago, he raised the College of Ottawa to the dignity of a Catholic University. Indeed, as may be seen by reference to the Apostolic Brief of erection, the Holy Father especially designates Ottawa University as the centre of Catholic higher education, especially for the Province of Ontario. Notwithstanding this fact, Ottawa University has been regarded as merely a diocesan institution. It has been left

TO DEPEND, TO A GREAT EXTENT, UPON THE NEIGHBOURING REPUBLIC

for its quota of students, as if there were but a few boys in Ontario desirous and capable of high mental culture. Now we think this is unfair, first of all to the Catholic youth of Ontario, and secondly to the University itself. There are hundreds of Catholic young men in this province well capable of filling with honor the highest positions of trust in our country. The only thing to impede their promotion is the lack of a proper mental and moral training. On the other hand, Ottawa University is not merely a diocesan institution; in the far-seeing designs of Christ's Vicar it is, primarily, as we have said, an institution for the higher education of the Catholic young men of Ontario, irrespective of diocesan boundaries.—The circular reproduces the text of the apostolic letter with regard to the canonical erection of the University of Ottawa.

Further on the circular says:—In the past, Ottawa University has been very little favoured in a material way. No Government aid has ever been offered to it. No Canadian Rockefeller has, as yet, extended the jewelled hand of liberality in its behalf; while influential members of the Catholic body have, in certain cases, withheld that assistance which would have made them none the poorer, but which would have substantially proved their interest in the great work of Catholic education. Had Ottawa University received that unanimous uncalculating support, which is its due, that generous support called for, at least implicitly, in the Apostolic Brief of its erection, it would now, seen even from a material standpoint, hold on this great continent, a foremost place amongst institutions of advanced learning.

As has already been stated, the Rt. Rev. Archbishops and Bishops of Ontario have a right to oversee the work done in Ottawa University. Surely, since it has such a distinguished body of learned and holy men watching over its teaching and its methods, there is no danger for the future of Ottawa University. With the Rt. Rev. Archbishops and bishops, the reverend clergy of this province, taking an active part in its improvement, our institution is destined soon to become an educational centre that will be a real credit to the Catholics, not only of Ontario, but also of all Canada.

The Rev. Fathers (Oblates of Mary Immaculate), in charge of Ottawa University, are determined to do all in their power to place it in touch with modern progress. They are resolved to make it a first-class educational establishment. About forty-five members of the Oblate Order devote their daily, and often their nightly, toil to its moral, intellectual, and material welfare. Its professors are, as is well known, not working for any material remuneration. The only object they have at heart is the proper education of the young men committed to their charge. If that work succeed well, if these young men be well prepared, both morally and intellectually, to take a noble part in the great struggle of life, then the professors consider themselves sufficiently remunerated for their hours of patient toil.

That the course of studies at Ottawa University has been, and still is, a sound, solid one, few deny. In this respect it has not been surpassed by any similar institution in the country. Students that come here from other colleges, whether of Canada or of the States, freely acknowledge the supremacy of Ottawa University in this respect. The reverend fathers in charge are bent on making the future surpass the years gone by, as far as

A HIGH STANDARD OF STUDIES

is concerned. In order to meet the exigencies of this age, when science is a very great consideration amongst truly educated men, the faculty of Ottawa University has decided to erect immediately a large structure, to be called the "Scientific building." This edifice, which will be fitted out with all modern conveniences, is intended at least to equal anything of its kind in the Dominion. The first floor will be devoted to a valuable Museum of Natural History, which has been lately acquired by the University. This museum contains what is perhaps one of the most noteworthy collections of zoological, ornithological, and ethnological specimens to be found in Canada. The second floor will be allotted to the requirements of a physical laboratory, and the third floor will be exclusively set aside for chemical studies. Great sacrifices have been made in order to undertake this addition to the University buildings, still, if the work be directed with the staunch approval of the Ontario Catholics, and we are confident of such encouragement, then the faculty will consider themselves well repaid.

While, even from a material point of view, Ottawa University is on the way to success, it is also progressing as to the number and quality of its students. During the present year there are nearly five hundred boys and young men following its various courses.

But enough of this figuring and calculating and speculating; let us take a look at Ottawa University from another standpoint. Of what avail would be a strong course of studies, of what account would be material prosperity, of what use would be a large number of students, were a proper moral and religious training neglected? Certainly instruction carried on under such circumstances could not be honored with the sacred name of education. All true Catholics are well aware that the skilful forming of a young heart is the grandest duty of education; a whole life's happiness, a whole eternity's felicity is, as we have already signified, held wavering in its balance. "Schools," says Edward Everett Hale, "are not for the mere purpose of instruction, they are for education, and there is no real education that is not moral education." Those in charge of Ottawa University have always considered, and will always consider, a proper

MORAL TRAINING AS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE;

in their idea it is a work to which every other must yield. This fact is evidenced by a grand spirit of piety and a religious fidelity to man's noblest duties as found in their institution; a piety and fidelity that can be surpassed nowhere, and is in few places equalled. The heart of a good man would be filled with joy to see so earnest a gathering of young men, all vieing with one another in approaching so often and so fervently the life-giving sacraments of God's church. Yes! there is real piety; there is true fidelity among the students of Ottawa University; there is an unmistakable manifestation of the grand old faith; there is a heroism which should call a blush of shame to the cheek of the father or of the son who would, for a moment, think of patronizing a non-Catholic University. No parent need be afraid of entrusting his or her son to the charge of Ottawa University. No boy can pass through that institution without being beckoned onward to noble aspirations and to noble deeds by the example of those around him. No boy can live for a length of time within its walls without being in some degree sanctified by a continual contact with the holiest associations.

In addition to the advantages already mentioned, Ottawa University is particularly favoured by its location in the capital city of the Dominion. If Ottawa is the centre of Canada's political life, why should it not likewise be the centre of her educational efforts? Why should it not be specially an educational centre for the Province of Ontario? This suggestion was very happily made by the Sovereign-Pontiff himself in the Apostolic Brief quoted above. Owing to the advantage of residence in the capital, both students and professors of the University have access to the immense library and reading-rooms of the House of Commons, so that no question need be passed over in the class-room without their consulting the best authorities that have given it consideration. Professors and students may likewise enjoy the privilege of attendance at parliamentary debates, especially when some question of importance is under discussion.

In view of the considerations set forward in this pamphlet, we call upon the Catholic people of Ontario to make a united effort for the prosperity of Ottawa University. It is, as we have shown, the Pope's desire that this institution should be the centre of Catholic education in our province. Let us be all of the same mind about the matter, and, in the end, we shall be the gainers. Union is always strength, and union blessed by Apostolic approval is doubly strong.

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