

Public Schools, but a great advance in remuneration and other marks of appreciation of the teachers' high calling will have to be made before that happy day can arrive.

The provision that a degree in Arts with honours in one department may be accepted in lieu of a first certificate of the highest grade is reasonable and wise, as is also the awarding of a diploma by the Education Department to all who pass the examinations in any of the courses prescribed. We do not attach so much value to the introduction of a commercial course, as to the provision for the study of Agricultural Chemistry. If either were to be left optional it should have been the former, rather than the latter. Education by the State at public expense can be justified only as it can be shown to be essential to the welfare of the State, *i. e.*, of the whole people. One of the greatest hindrances to prosperity in this Western world is the forsaking of the country for the town, or city. On every hand the young men are abandoning the grand independence and sure competence of the farm, for the abounding hazards and scanty rewards of the office or counter. Nowhere can this mischievous tendency be counteracted so effectively as in the Public Schools. Special prominence should be given in these to those subjects which tend to foster a taste for rural life and agricultural and horticultural pursuits. The scientific inventor is doing much to lessen the severity of the farmer's toil, and increase its productiveness. The scientific teacher should do much to enhance the attractiveness of agricultural pursuits, by enlarging the intelligence of the coming farmers and elevating the general conception of the dignity of their calling. Agricultural Science should be taught, in the most practical manner possible, at least in every country school in the Province.

Special Articles.

EDUCATION IN REFERENCE TO CHARACTER.

Mr. President and Members of the Ontario Teachers' Association:

I must confess to some amount of hesitation in accepting the invitation of your secretary to read a paper before this association. Whilst profoundly grateful for the honor you have thus done me, I felt strongly that one comparatively unacquainted with the detail of the Ontario system of education, had little right to read a paper before an assemblage such as this, composed of gentlemen whose whole lives are devoted to the working out and the improvement of that system. I was led, therefore, to select a subject bearing upon education in general, *viz.*: its influence upon the formation of character, and I must crave your kind indulgence if, in treating of a somewhat well-worn, yet, I venture to think, most important subject, I, of necessity, suggest thoughts familiar to you in your own educational experience, as also for the somewhat fragmentary way in which, from the pressure of varied engagements, I have been compelled to discuss the subject.

According to one numerous and influential school, the office of education is not so much to develop character as to procure for it in the future an environment at least relatively favorable to that development. It has been urged that the chief dangers to the social order arise from the hard pressure of poverty and want. By the diffusion of knowledge, especially of a technical or scientific character, it should be the aim of education to increase the power of the

individual, and thus to raise him above the stratum of temptation in which the lot of poorly remunerative labor is inevitably cast. Now, whatever partial truth there undoubtedly is in the contention, it cannot be denied that the optimistic views founded upon it, and largely current a generation ago, as to the solvent effect of education upon crime, have not been confirmed by experience. Instead of melting away under the gentle influence of knowledge, crime has largely increased. If we flatter ourselves that it has at least become more refined, we are startled from time to time by the revelation of the grossest crime, rampant amongst educated men. Fraud and dishonesty threaten to invade with overwhelming force every class and every occupation; and there seems to me no small peril that, in disgust at the utter failure of unreasonable expectations, education may, in the not distant future, be unduly discredited for an issue which might from the first have been clearly foreseen.

The primal fallacy underlying this whole position is the assumption that any condition of life is comparatively free from temptation, so that by increasing the power of an individual we enable him to rise to any great extent above its influence. On the contrary, the truth seems to be that with the increased power which education brings, as well as with that which multiplied invention, rapid communication and locomotion has supplied, temptations dangerous to society have become far more intense as the chances of success, as well as the prizes to be obtained, have been proportionately greater. To quote a recent writer in the *Century*:—"The greater temptations of the present day demand greater conscientiousness to resist them, and this greater conscientiousness is not always forthcoming."

Experience is every day demonstrating with increasing force, that if education has no other ameliorating influences at her command than the mere negative one of improved material surroundings, when the outlook for society is undoubtedly dark, and the results of the teacher's work hopelessly unsatisfying. It is the deep conviction of the present writer that only by recognizing and fostering the direct influence of education upon character can an adequate remedy be found—whilst from this influence rightly exercised the best results may under the Divine blessing be expected. The subject is at least a practical one, and it may be that the present time is not unsuitable for its discussion. A moment's reflection seems sufficient to prove that the direct influence of school life upon after character must be unquestionably great. Whether we consider the receptive nature of the young life, or the fact that school forms a boy's first introduction to that wider social life which lies outside the family circle, and that therefore at school the foundation of those social virtues which regulate the intercourse of man with man will be laid, or necessarily the seeds of the opposite vices will be sown; if we consider further that school introduces a boy into the conscious work of life, and that the spirit with which he addresses himself to his school work will, in the majority of cases, stick to him through life, and though little stress be laid upon the direct bearing of mental conceptions and bias upon the moral and spiritual character, it is clear that as he passes through the microcosm of school life, the boy becomes for the most part the father of the man.

Regarding education, then, not as the mere mechanical receiving of knowledge with a view to increasing individual power for the purpose of acquiring wealth, but rather as the living development and training of the manifold faculties and powers which each man possesses latent within him, the studies which are most fruitful for this purpose are undoubtedly those which are directed towards the past, such as literary, historical, classical studies, and the like, rather than those directed immediately to the needs of the present, such as technical, professional, and, to a large extent also, scientific studies, although in this last case such studies as actually bring the pupil face to face with Nature, and not with mere dogmatic state-