

pupil will not know, and, therefore, will not love and esteem that Church whose history is so grand, whose literature so rich? But it may be said that many of our best Catholics, and even clergy, have been educated in schools where religion was not only avoided in the readers, but was never mentioned on any occasion, and that they are none the less good Catholics. I answer that they are good Catholics because they had good fathers and mothers—they are good not on account of their education, but in spite of it. Those who go through the ordeal altogether unscathed, however, are the exception. Let any one who doubts this mingle with the young Catholic men of Ontario, and his opinion will be changed. No doubt, he will find the most of them professing to be Catholics. But he will find them very often either ignorant of, or despising the most pious customs of the Church, and, nearly always, knowing absolutely nothing of Catholic authors and their works. How could it be otherwise? If, as boys, they found these things ignored in their readers where they were supposed to get a glimpse of the world's great men and their works, is it any wonder that, as men, they despise them, since the great minds have apparently given them not even a passing notice?

And again, the boy making the acquaintance of none but Protestant or infidel authors, soon begins to think that Catholics have never produced anything worthy of note; and thus it is that just at a time when the pupil should be forming a taste for reading good Catholic authors, he is imbibing a most fatal prejudice against them, which neither time nor teacher can wholly efface. For, are we likely to admire authors whom we have never read? As well might it be asked, are we likely to love a man of whom we have never heard? Let Protestants and semi-Catholics say what they may, experience has shewn that indifferent reading makes indifferent boys, and indifference, not protestantism, is the great evil in America.

Of course, it is not claimed that good readers would banish all this evil, yet they would certainly be one of the most powerful means of doing so. But, even if there were no such results, is it not a shame that the Catholic Canadian youth should wade through every class of litera-

ture from the first to the fourth class, and hear nothing of that Church which has fostered learning since its foundation, and which satisfied the aspirations of the greatest minds, from St. Paul to St. Augustine, from St. Augustine to St. Thomas, and from St. Thomas to Cardinal Newman, the famous convert of modern times? Is it not a shame that he should be educated to believe that the Catholic Church and Catholic authors are beneath his notice, that they are a fit study only for priests and old women? This should not be so, and in order that it may not be so, Catholic educators of Ontario should lend a helping hand; they should take the most effective means of checking the growing tendency to undervalue everything Catholic, and this can be done only by presenting to the pupils, through the readers, a class of literature pervaded with Catholic sentiment, but, at the same time, not inferior in literary value to that read in the Public Schools.

Everything that could aid the progress of our schools has been granted; why, then, should we retard their advancement by laboring under disadvantages arising from our own apathy? The Ontario Catholic teachers have been long enough hampered by inferior text-books. Let the first reform be made by publishing a set of Ontario Separate School readers, that, at least in this respect, our Catholic teachers may be on an equal footing with those in the Public Schools. The task is not so prodigious. Enough literature might be obtained from Catholic authors in the three great English-speaking communities—the mother-country, our neighbors' and our own—to comprise at least one-third of each book, and the remainder might be completed by selections similar to those found in the Ontario readers.

But, the object of this paper is not to lay down a definite plan for new readers, neither does the writer consider himself competent to do so; it is only hoped that the interest of our Catholic educators may be awakened, and that at length a change in the right direction may be brought about. But, it should be remembered that this is a work for none but experienced teachers and competent literary men; for these books, besides breathing forth the spirit of Catholicity and patriotism, must, as has been said, be properly graded and arranged, while