

might be mentioned as contributing books that would do credit to the literature of older lands.

The shame is that so many of our best Canadian books have been allowed to pass out of print, such, for instance, as Ryerson's "Story of My Life," and his "United Empire Loyalists and Their Times"; Heavysege's "Saul," probably the strongest drama since Shakespeare; Sangster's poems; Mrs. Traill's "Studies in Plant Life"; Mrs. Moodie's "Roughing it in the Bush." McLachlan's poems, if yet in print, are seldom asked for, and few Canadians know that some of his verses were truly Shakespearian in their terse strength, and worthy of place among the most brilliant efforts of the English poets. Poetry must, indeed, find congenial soil amid the smiling fields, the towering forests, and the broad lakes of Canada. We have W. D. Howells declaring our Archibald Lampman as the foremost among the younger Anglo-Saxon poets; Chicago *Inter-Ocean* venturing the opinion that Campbell's "'The Mother' is the nearest approach to a great poem we have had for many a long day"; and within the last fortnight the London *Speaker* quoting Frederick George Scott's "Samson" at length and claiming it as "probably the best American poem in many years." The assertion may safely be ventured that no country of any continent can claim a brighter band of poets than our Canada possesses to-day.

And yet ask any prominent bookseller in Canada how many customers he has who make a specialty of procuring the best of the books of our native writers as they appear, and the chances are ten to one he can count them on the fingers of his hands, and possibly may require but the one hand to reach the sum. Is it that the public libraries supply our people with all the reading they want, that one so seldom sees in Canadian homes a well-filled library, or even a corner shelf that gives evidence of the wisest selection? However, this is a new country, and we doubt not with growing wealth will come increasing culture and refinement, which nowhere shows to better advantage than in the choice of books.

A Plea For Toleration.

IT is to be hoped that in the burning question of Manitoba and her school legislation, Canadian patriotism will rise above all party and local considerations, avoid all appeals to religious prejudices, and endeavour for that unity which alone will prevent disintegration, and lay the foundations secure for a social and political home worthy of the memories of those patriots whose blood mingled on a common field—Wolfe, Montcalm—and of the great heritage of lakes, rivers, hill, prairie and plain constituting the Canada of this closing nineteenth century. Removed from the sphere of active politics without claiming freedom from all political bias, the writer can claim exemption from the bitterness inseparable from participation in the strife, and from sectarian antagonism in so far as he has bowed his head with unfeigned reverence under the vaulted roof of Notre Dame, and in the little log school house where "Dundee's wild warbling measure" rose. He has lived in Canada long enough to appreciate the light-hearted simplicity of the *habitant*, the unbending integrity of the Puritan, the sterling worth of the Covenanter, and would fain behold all these varied elements blend with the courtliness of the squire and culture of the scholar in making the Canadian a character which in the coming century shall be second to none in moral worth and national enterprise. Is he presumptuous in thinking some few words of his on the matter before us may be at least one infinitesimal influence in the process of evolution? In a paper such as the columns of THE WEEK demand, brevity is a prime consideration; a dogmatic rather than an argumentative style becomes necessary, and that thrown into the paragraph form.

The peoples inhabiting our fair Dominion, with comparatively few exceptions, are, in the broad sense of the term, Christian; even agnostic altruism owns the ethical teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Among such a people to talk of a system of education purely secular is to talk of an impossibility. Religion is so interwoven with the very texture of all our nationalities, that neither our history nor our literature could be read with intelligence on purely secular lines. Think of Canadian history without its religious enthusiasm; or of Shakespeare with

"Earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice"

eliminated! Unless we are prepared to banish all history and literature from our curriculums and confine our education to mechanical writing and reading, geography and mathematics, our only choice is between religion and irreligion; who would choose the latter?

There is an ancient community representing the Samaritans of gospel history whose division of the "Ten Words" of the Mosaic law differs from either that followed by Augustine or by Origen, and whose tenth commandment as written upon the old parchment of the Pentateuch reads "Thou shalt build an altar on Mount Geriz and there only shalt thou worship." Unfortunately this is the prevailing spirit in all the sects into which our broader Christianity is divided, hence the difficulties in the way of teaching or of even recognizing the Christian religion in our public schools; which difficulties will be felt with greater or less intensity in proportion as men realize that religion does not consist in developing dogma from the Bible, but in obeying its precepts; for "whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother"; and that, whether under the shadow of the Vatican, or impelled thereto by the unpretentious quiet of a Quaker's meeting.

While, therefore, the representative government of a people all but wholly Christian in sentiment must in its educational system recognize Christianity; it should not be asked to recognize religious distinctions. The legal status given to Separate Schools not only recognizes but perpetuates and legalizes a religious cleavage, destroying to that extent the homogeneity which alone renders a nation strong. The public training of our children on practically antagonistic religious lines is an evil which no true lover of his country can view with equanimity, and only the sectary can take delight in. They who seek to perpetuate such an anomaly take upon themselves a fearful responsibility, sowing the wind, that their children should reap the whirlwind.

On the correctness of these two principles the writer has not the shadow of a doubt, nor shall we find political peace till they are recognized and acted upon. But, alas! the ideal is not the actual, nor the desirable always the possible. "Practical politics" is an expression not without suggestive import. Let us turn for a little to the consideration of its bearing upon the question before us. In this land the representatives of the discoverer and of the victor mingle; alas! not yet as one united stream. That distinction derives greater persistency from difference both in language and religion; our politicians have aggravated the evil by their appeals to prejudices as they would win votes for "the party," our ecclesiastics in their blind sectarian zeal. Accursed be the hand that sows the seeds of religious strife! No one who has watched the course of our political life for the past quarter of a century with unimpassioned eye can feel otherwise than that racial and religious lines appear more deeply drawn than they were. We must, nevertheless, take things as we find them and seek impartially to amend.

We live under representative Government, in which, though the majority rule, or are supposed to do, the minority have recognized rights. In the question of Separate Schools in Manitoba, as now before our Government, a minority, comprising over forty per centum of the population (41.21 the exact figure), ask for the action taken by our Privy Council. Is it possible to refuse? For be it remembered that it is asked with an unanimity at least as intense as any conceivable refusal would be given by the residue. We may deplore the demand. I do most deeply, but demand it is; and it is the demand of the pioneer as against that of the victorious after-settler. Moreover, for weal or for woe, we have a written constitution. Britain's constitution is to be found in meeting the progressive wants of a progressive people, that of our Dominion is "enrolled in the Capitol;" and our highest court of appeal has decided that the minority in question have a right to ask for remedial measures. We may think the decision wrong, view it as another instance of the glorious uncertainty of the law; but there it is, and the only further step in resistance is practically revolution. The issuing of the remedial order appears to have been a political necessity; so much so that neither of our present political parties would have dared to refuse the issue. True, the *Globe* came out plainly for non-interference, but as plainly stated that it spoke simply for itself. It dare not connect the party. As a direct party issue remedial legislation vs. non-interference has not appeared. Nor can it, unless we put the matter