

JOURNAL OF



EDUCATION,

Upper

Canada.

VOL. XVIII.

TORONTO: FEBRUARY, 1865.

No. 2.

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RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF CANADIAN CHILDREN.

THE following statistics (collected with much labour and care) of the religious instruction of children in the city of Toronto in connexion with the various religious persuasions, is a conclusive proof and striking illustration of the connexion between the religious and common school instruction of children—that the one is co-extensive with the other—that the several denominations are as assiduous in the religious instruction of their respective youth as are their members in the capacity of citizens to the secular instruction of their youth generally. What is done in Toronto can, and we believe is, done in all the Municipalities of Upper Canada. Indeed, more exotic poverty, ignorance and vice collect in Toronto than in any other municipality of Upper Canada; and the example and case of Toronto are perhaps as little favourable for purposes of comparison as any that could be selected. Nothing, therefore, can be more unfounded than the objection and statement that because the common schools are not denominational, the religious instruction of children is neglected—that because a part of the thirty hours of the five days each week that children are under the teaching of the common school master is not devoted to special religious instruction, therefore no religious instruction is given to children during the 138 hours each week that children are under the care of their parents and pastors—the appropriate and divinely appointed guardians and teachers of the religion and morals of children, and who, as reason and all experience proves, are so much better qualified and have so much greater facilities and stronger motives and inducements to do it, than a hired teacher who has the special care and instruction of children in the sub-

jects of his profession during six hours a day for five days of the week.

But it would be great injustice to parents, pastors, and churches, to suppose that no religious instruction is given to children except in the Sunday Schools, as it would be great injustice to the common schools that no instruction in Christian principles, duties and morals, is given to pupils because denominational instruction is not taught. The system itself is based on Christianity, and, among a Christian people, a Christian influence pervades its books, its management, its teachings. But it would be a great error and a great moral calamity to the country, if the State were to undertake to do what God himself has enjoined upon the parent and the pastor and the church, or to undertake more than leave to the latter the full sense of their responsibility, and afford them all requisite facilities to fulfil it. Of the working and result of this system, the city of Toronto affords a fair illustration as exhibited in the following statistics in connexion with the additional facts stated in the Report of the Chief of Police for the year 1864, that in the city of Toronto during the year there have been 558 *less* commitments for offences by the police than during the preceding year, and only one burglary and one robbery—in both of which cases, the property was recovered and the criminals punished.

Even when it is thought desirable to afford special religious instruction to children in the Common Schools by the clergy, the official regulations on the subject, and the practice of the school authorities in the cities of Toronto and Hamilton in this respect, abundantly prove that every facility is afforded for imparting this special instruction.

The following are the official regulations on the subject:—

WEEKLY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION BY THE CLERGY OF EACH PERSUASION.
 —Minute adopted by the Council of Public Instruction, 22nd April, 1857.
 —That in order to correct misapprehensions and define more clearly the rights and duties of trustees and other parties in regard to religious instruction in connection with the common schools, it is decided by the Council of Public Instruction that the clergy of any persuasion, or their authorized representatives, shall have the right to give religious instruction to the pupils of their own church, in each common school house, at least once a week, after the hour of four o'clock in the afternoon;* and if the clergy of more than one persuasion apply to give religious instruction in the same school house, the trustees shall decide on what day of the week the school house shall be at the disposal of the clergyman of each persuasion, at the time above stated. But it shall be lawful for the trustees and clergyman of any denomination to agree upon any hour of

* In Toronto and Hamilton this religious instruction is given, by permission of the school trustees, before four o'clock in the afternoon.