

goods, stolen from stores in the city. After all those who glance occasionally over the records of the Police Court in our own city have no reason for incredulity with regard to any revelations of juvenile precocity in the schools of crime which unhappily abound in all cities. The question for practical philanthropists and practical legislators, too, is, What is to be done in the way of cure, and of that prevention which, if we could but be convinced of it, is a thousand times better than cure? The *Star* hints that incorrigibles should be sent to the reformatories, and that their indifferent and neglectful parents, if such exist, should be made to pay the bills. This is a good suggestion so far as it goes. But is there not something radically, amazingly, stupidly amiss in the state of society and of civic administration which fails to find a preventive, and does nothing till the disease has reached a stage at which the cure is so hard and expensive, not to say hopeless? In plain words, ought it not to be somebody's business to do something with these boys long before they begin to qualify themselves for figuring in the police courts? We have no doubt that one source of difficulty arises from the tendency to take an extreme view of the sacredness of parental right. Recent legislation in England, passed at the instance of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, has gone far in the direction of recognizing the sound principle that the abuse of a right nullifies it, especially when that abuse militates against the rights of others and the social well-being. Is it not high time that the hand of justice should be laid sternly upon the man or the woman who, being a parent, fails to perform the first and highest of parental duties, while at the same time the hand of mercy is outstretched to rescue the child from the fatal influences which are dragging him downwards in consequence of the parental neglect?

#### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

THE war of race and religion, which seems to be passing from these parts to the northern Provinces will help to an understanding of questions which are continually being agitated among ourselves, and enable us to realize the difficulty of solving some of those questions. As regards the double language, there seems no reason whatever for establishing in Manitoba a system which may have been a necessary evil in Quebec, but which is acknowledged to be an evil. If this system can be put a stop to at once it will be a great benefit to the province. So much for the question of language.

The religious question is by no means so simple; nor is the question of education in general. If we are contented to have merely secular education, there, of course, is an end of the question. And there are many sober, earnest, religious men who think this to be the only satisfactory solution that can be reached. They maintain that it is the business of the Church to provide religious instruction, and the business of the State to give secular education. If this were clearly understood, frankly accepted and acted upon, there need be no more difficulty on the subject. The religious and the secular would each be relegated to its own province, and all clashing would cease. In theory, at least, this seems quite simple.

In practice, however, it is not quite so simple. In the first place, it may be asked whether any teacher, however skilful, can entirely avoid the religious questions. Can he teach history, for example, without explaining the nature and origin of the quarrels which have arisen on this very subject, sometimes leading to bloody wars? When he is asked by his class to explain the conversion of Constantine or the "thundering legion," how will he avoid the subject of miracles? And how will he satisfy the Christian parent on the one hand, and the Agnostic on the other? Even if he keeps clear of ancient and mediæval history and the period of the Reformation (!) and sticks to English and Canadian history, he will hardly be able to omit all reference to the religious quarrels of the Puritan Revolution; and then, how is he to give any explanation that shall be approved at once by the Episcopalian and the Independent? We are taking only the most obvious causes of embarrassment in the secular teaching; but without going further we may see clearly enough that isolation of the secular and the sacred is not so simple in practice as it appears in theory.

But this is not all. A great many religious people, who would seem fanatics only to those who do not believe in religion of any kind, declare that they regard an education without religion to be no true education at all. It is not merely that the small amount of religious instruction that is given in the Sunday School on one day in the

week is miserably inadequate. This, in their judgment, is not the whole nor the worst part of the evil. Regarding man as a religious being, they maintain that the very root of his development as man must be struck into religious soil, or the whole progress of his training must be wrong, defective, warped, distorted. In their view, then, a merely secular education is positively wrong; and they have precisely the same objection to their children being taught in this fashion that an unbeliever would have to his child being instructed in the Christian religion as true and binding upon his conscience. Considerations like these seem to have influenced the Anglican Synod in Manitoba, and the leading Presbyterians as well; and it would not be too much to say that they have weight with a good majority of the inhabitants of the Dominion, whether Roman Catholics or Protestants.

If, then, secular education is not to be universal, what is the substitute? Non-sectarian religious belief is the reply. But this again is ambiguous. Let not our readers suppose that we are here assailing or defending any particular system. We are trying to get at the merits of the subject and especially to show the real difficulties involved in it. We are not prepared with a complete solution, and we must doubt whether any such be possible at the present moment.

To return, non-sectarian education may mean different things. With some it means merely reading the Bible, without any comments being made or any questions asked. This plan was recommended by the late Earl Russell; upon which a writer in the *Spectator* suggested that the Bible should be read in the original languages. It would convey about as much instruction, he said, as the mere reading in the mother tongue, and it would promote reverence by deepening the sense of mystery.

But most people who are in favour of non-sectarian religious education mean more than this. They mean that the children should have the Bible explained, and that they should be questioned upon it. But here again there are difficulties. Of course no Roman Catholic would allow his child to be taught in this fashion. The omissions necessary in such religious teaching would, in his view, vitiate the whole method. We cannot for a moment blame the Roman clergy for forbidding their children to attend the religious instruction of the public schools. They could not consistently allow such a thing. What every just man must blame the conduct of the late Archbishop for is his presuming to meddle with the arrangement of Scripture lessons for the Public Schools, when he did not mean that his own children should be allowed to read them. It is clear, then, that we must either have secular education or Separate Schools. On this point there would seem no room for doubt.

What, then, are we to do if we agree to have Separate Schools as part of a system of religious education? What provision is to be made for Protestant children? Two courses are imaginable: Either each denomination might be allowed the same privileges in the way of Separate Schools as are conceded to the Roman Catholics, or the Protestant communions might agree upon a formula which should embrace all the doctrines which they hold in common. There are difficulties attending both of these courses. The first would in most places be unworkable, because the number of ratepayers belonging to one denomination within a certain radius would be unable to support a school. Besides which it must be confessed that few religionists have the strong, clear convictions of Roman Catholics, such as would lead them to take vigorous and decisive action for such an object. Roman Catholics are first churchmen and next citizens. Most Protestants are first citizens and next churchmen. Here are the difficulties with regard to the first suggestion.

May we then hope that the Reformed Churches will agree upon a *Formula Concordiæ*, a joint creed that will satisfy them all? If our talk about the reunion of Christendom has any meaning, surely such a thing might at least be attempted. At any rate, it is not at all satisfactory merely to put the Bible, in whole or in part, in the hands of the teacher, and tell him that he is to give non-sectarian education out of it; and we imagine that this is very much what is now done. Such a course is not fair to teachers, or children, or parents. Non-sectarian religion may mean the so-called Apostles' Creed, or it may mean more, or it may mean less. It may mean the common beliefs of the evangelical churches, or it may mean the belief common to these and to Unitarians. One of the latter would certainly consider the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ a portion of sectarian Christianity. In order, then, to work this system, some creed must be agreed upon.

It will be seen that we do not pretend to settle the very important question of religious education. It will probably settle itself by-and-by in ways that we cannot forecast. If, however, we can make the difficulties of the question more apparent, we may help towards a quiet, moderate, patient viewing of the subject, and so prepare for its ultimate settlement.

#### SUMMER'S LEGACY.

O SUMMER, can it be that thou art dead?  
I fain had held thee longer, cherished thee  
For many days to come; but from the dim  
Far North and chill thy Fate drew surely nigh,  
Striding with even steps o'er cornfields ripe  
For mower's scythe, through silent orchards brown,  
And full of luscious promise for the land  
That sleeps to-day beneath the redd'ning sun.  
Thy parting spirit spreads a wistful haze  
Through all the breathless air, while thine unseen  
And humble mourners raise the funeral dirge,  
The crickets' cadenced chorus, waxing loud  
And strident, waning tremulous and low.

It seems to me but yesterday thou wert  
A babe, clad in the tender hope of Spring:  
And at this self-same window whence I now  
Look forth on Autumn's omen of decay,  
I stood and drew into my very soul  
Deep thoughts of dewy air fraught with all vague  
Sweet promises of thee, foreshadowing  
The fragrance of all flowers that were to be.  
O Summer, did thy loveliness fulfil  
All that the Spring low whispered to my soul?  
Or art thou fled and naught hast left behind  
But crickets' moan, dead flowers, and leaves,  
Of sweetest hopes but saddest memories.

F. VALENTINE KEYS.

#### CONCERNING THE OLDEST ENGLISH LITERATURE.

IT will not seem strange, or need any preface or apology, if in a seat of learning in the English colony which has always cherished the deepest reverence for the home-land, the attempt be made, however unskilfully, to portray what has ever been that home-land's crowning glory—her matchless literature. Changes which the keenest eye cannot now foresee may push England from her proud position among the nations of the earth; her famous deeds in trade and colonization may be remembered only as we remember the enterprises of ancient Phœnicia and her long list of statesmen, warriors and heroes slip from the unretaining memory of coming ages: but her literature is imperishable. As long as human nature remains human nature, as long as beauty delights us and sad things move us to pity, so long must the names of England's greatest sons be held in loving remembrance. The world will not soon forget the men who told in English speech her Canterbury tales, and wove the glittering web of her romantic drama and sang of paradises lost and regained. And while the names of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton are treasured, the name of the land that bore them must be revered. These are her builded memorial, more enduring than brass. It is not, however, of three great periods of our literature, named from three great Queens, that I propose to-day to speak. My theme is not the Carlyles and Tennysons of our own Victorian day, nor the intellectual giants of the Queen Anne era, nor "the spacious times of the great Elizabeth." I wish to take you further back than the time of Chaucer even, back to the dawn of civilization in Western Europe. It is the custom to speak of a stream of literature. Whatever its beginnings, English literature is now no rill or streamlet, but a very Amazon of grandeur, depth and power. And while it might be not without interest to trace the wanderings of this mighty river, it is no part of my plan to do so, but I will go at once to the very source, the fountain, the well-head where it took its rise. To continue the figure, it has not all flowed from one source: there have been many affluents and tributary streams of tendency all along its majestic course. There is the Norman flood meeting and flowing alongside, but not mingled, like the Ottawa beside the St. Lawrence. The effect of the confluence was incalculable. The united rivers flowed on with an impetus neither possessed by itself; but the English stream had flowed for centuries in its own bed and between its own banks. In other words there was an English literature, native to the soil, with its own history and development long before Duke William of Normandy stumbled and fell on Hastings beach, and in his fall grasped a kingdom. It is to this indigenous English literature, and to the oldest part of it, that I wish to call your attention.

At the very beginning of our enquiry we are beset by a difficulty about names. If the subject of this lecture had been announced as Anglo-Saxon Literature, you might have felt that it was something which concerned only special students in that department. But I felt sure that your interest would be awakened in any portion of our literature, however removed from our age and sympathies, which could justly lay claim to the title "English." It is because I wanted every lover of English literature to feel his right to every part of his vast and rich inheritance