

has been claimed for them, it would seem necessary that they should have these our characteristics :—

(1). They should, to a great extent, be Catholic.

(2). They should give expression to Canadian sentiment.

(3). They should be composed of selections from the best authors.

(4). The grading of the lessons and the general plan should be the best possible.

I mention these four characteristics because it must be painfully evident to all who take an interest in our schools that any one of the series at present in use is sadly deficient in some of these marks, and that none of them combine the whole four. Of the Catholic readers now in the hands of our pupils none, perhaps, are lacking in Catholic sentiment, but most of them are devoid of that all-necessary national feeling, while in all of them the choice of subjects is bad, the arrangement still worse.

In some series, subjects relating to Canada are conspicuously absent, and in their place the reader is confronted with selections of a tendency decidedly foreign. Thus the young Catholic Canadian, forgetting his own fair land, learns to look up with something like reverential awe at everything foreign. Hearing little and reading nothing of Canada, he begins to think there is nothing worthy of note in his country, that it is a fit home for those who know no better; in a word, he becomes a foreign citizen in everything but name. He forgets that Canada has a history of its own wherein he may learn of the patriotism displayed by early settlers of all nationalities. He does not know that it is his duty to consider his own country first and others afterwards. In fact, he often regards the question of patriotism with indifference. And how could it be otherwise, since his interest in this direction has never been aroused?

But the Separate School is the child of the Church, and since religion and patriotism go hand in hand, it is the duty of Catholics to see that a healthy Canadian spirit is fostered in our schools—a spirit not anti-American, not anti-British, but Canadian—and as it cannot be denied that from the readers the pupil receives some of his strongest impressions with regard to patriotism, if our Catholic read-

ers are lacking in Canadian sentiment, they must be condemned on this head alone.

And this is not their only fault; as has been said, the matter is badly chosen and poorly arranged. Many of the selections are translations, some are from authors of little or no note, others are written in a style beyond the capacity of the young pupil. The compilers of these books seem to have entirely disregarded the grading of the lessons, for, while the teacher must prepare one lesson by the aid of Worcester's unabridged, and the next by the aid of a treatise on elocution, he may find the following lesson comparatively easy.

Many of our Catholic educators have, no doubt, recognized this two-fold defect in our Catholic readers, and some forgetting the object of our Separate Schools, have cast them aside, and, in their place, have introduced those of the Ontario Public Schools. But this is rushing to extremes; it is destroying the chief end of our schools; it is as the German saying goes, "throwing out the baby with the bath-water." Almost as well might they turn their Catholic schools into common schools and place therein their Catholic teacher. His influence for good would be scarcely less curtailed.

But some may say, and truly so, that there is no religion in the Ontario readers, or that they, at least, contain nothing antagonistic to Catholic doctrine, and are, therefore, harmless. With equal truth might it be claimed that since there is no religion in our Public Schools, we should, therefore, support them and do away with Separate Schools. But he who advocates the adoption of the Ontario readers in our Catholic schools must be short-sighted indeed, otherwise he would see that the very absence of Catholic sentiment is the surest way of creating disregard for the Church.

Besides, we Catholics are not satisfied that nothing be said against our Church; we want the truth to be openly and fearlessly spoken concerning our grand old religion, otherwise it must suffer. And where can the glories of our Church and the benefits rendered to society by her children be set forth to greater advantage than in the school readers? But, if in these readers, subjects relating to religion be ignored, is it not evident to all that the