

THE CANADA EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY.

MAY, 1898.

MORAL TRAINING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

PROFESSOR JAMES GIBSON HUME, M.A., PH.D.

MANY writers have dwelt upon the significance of the fact that the human child is at birth most helpless; that the period of growth, dependence and susceptibility to influence of parents is consequently very extended. The child was the earliest educator of the race, compelling the savage to cultivate home life and thus begin to acquire an insight into art, science and religion.

The home is the fundamental institution. The nursery is the centre of the home. The Public School is the national nursery. Here the nation recognizes its parental responsibilities and endeavors to fulfil its parental obligations. Amid many influences, tending to disintegrate civilization, it is matter for congratulation that the interest in the child is increasing.

The subject of this address is Moral Training, not Religious Instruction. Morality should be distinguished from religion, and training is not identical with instruction. The teacher is familiar with the contrast between instruction and education. After the reformation in the study of science, associated with the name of Bacon, the Reformation in the Church by Luther, and the counter-reformation by Loyola, we have an educational reformation—the inauguration of education in place of instruction, in

reality an adoption of the method of Socrates. Instruction tends to dogmatism. It gives carefully prepared information to the pupil. Education tends to enquiry. It endeavors to elicit from the pupil the expression of his own capabilities, and the consequent development of power through effort and exercise. The educational reformation has been more successful in the teaching of intellectual and scientific truths than it has been in the field of morality and religion. In religion the method of dogmatic instruction is still predominant.

Morality and religion are not identical—many, in fact, so separate them as to make them antagonistic. Morality is supposed to be either a sufficient or a false substitute for religion. Both views are erroneous. Morality and religion are different, but harmoniously co-operating. The two blades of a pair of scissors might illustrate apparently opposing forces working together for a common result. But these forces are on an equal footing, while morality and religion are unequal; morality being the simpler, less adequate, religion the more adequate, more inclusive.

When it is admitted that religion is more complete than morality many are inclined to say, "Why have anything to do with a second best?" But religion is not advanced by ignor-