

a *Minister of Education*. Thus far have we gone already, and the end is not yet; free books will come next in order; then free dinners, and then free clothing, and, finally, free pocket money, and free tickets for public lectures and entertainments. Before this takes place, let us ask ourselves how have our hopes been realized, our expectations met? Have our people become more honest and enlightened in their views of public affairs; in brief, has political morality risen to a higher plane during the last twenty-five years? Has crime lessened in our community, are there relatively fewer frauds, embezzlements, bankruptcies, (fraudulent), thefts and murders, than there were in the old days when education was with more difficulty acquired, and men valued it more highly? I do not intend to enter into a lengthy examination of this question. I will content myself with appealing to the experience of those who remember our moral and political condition twenty and thirty years ago. For myself I do not hesitate to say, that the moral condition of our political atmosphere to-day is more corrupt than at any time in our political history. The bribery, personations, frauds, and indescribable rascalities that mark every general election, and are approved of by so-called statesmen, stamp us as the most lenient to crime in political life of any British community of the day. Nor are we lacking in other evidences of a corrupt morality in our social and business relations. The old-fashioned honesty of our fathers and grandfathers has almost wholly disappeared in some parts of our land; a man's word is no longer as good as his bond—unless it be that his bond is as good as his word—a by no means uncommon case. Trickery, a low shrewdness, which aims perpetually at over-reaching one's neighbour; a desire to make an easy living without work

at the expense of the community, are features of to-day, so common as scarcely to call for observation. One misses the hearty and genuine indignation which our fathers were wont to pour on the head of the cheat and swindler. But these things are patent enough and may be taken for granted.

How then are we to account for this state of affairs? Some one, perhaps, is thinking that I am going to place the blame on the spread of education, and to conclude that the cause of all our woe is to be found in our endeavouring to educate all classes and conditions of people. But, I have no intention of taking such a line of argument. Did I think so, my work as a teacher would speedily come to an end, as a labour, at once thankless and fruitless. On the contrary, I hold that education properly carried on is a partial corrective of evil habits and customs. On the other hand, it is doubtful if an exaggerated idea has not prevailed of the inherent power of education to elevate and ennoble human nature. It is possible to educate and educate and yet leave the moral nature untouched by good and true motives and purposes. What in connection with this subject I wish to make prominent is that our educational system, our educational methods, while not the cause of crime, have not been preventatives. In brief, our education so far as it has had a moral effect has been merely a neutral force. It has not increased crime and dishonesty; nor has it perceptibly diminished it. The grave charge, then, is laid at its door that it has failed in what we should reasonably expect from it; the inquiry then arises why has it failed, in what way could our educational forces be applied to ensure better results? This brings me at once to the consideration of one of the leading defects in our educational system as law and