

THE CANADA
EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY

APRIL, 1901.

THE SPLENDID ISOLATION OF THE WOMEN IN
AUTHORITY.

BY ONE OF THEM.

THE title of this article may be a little misleading, but I merely wish to use it as a starting point on which to have a discussion of a few thoughts which are struggling for recognition in my mind. I refer to that august and dignified body of women who are filling the positions of "the Powers that Be," delegated or otherwise, in our various institutions of learning; the long-suffering and vilipended class known as lady principals, deans, preceptresses, etc., but not to any other body of women who may be in positions of authority in the business or professional world. It seems to be commonly recognized that the individuals in question are necessary—whether necessary evils or not does not call for an expression of opinion just here. But admitting, for the sake of argument, that such repositories of authority are necessary in schools and colleges where there are girls and young women, not to mention young men, it becomes a matter of interest to see how they are received and regarded by the young people under their care. Observation and reflection, both as a student and as a member of the class under discussion, have forced a few conclusions upon me that I should like to offer for what they are worth. I may mention, however, that I am still open to conviction, but I shall nevertheless present the thoughts that linger in my brain and refuse just now to be driven out. I may appear a little ministerial with my firstly and secondly up to the 'nthly, but I shall at once plead "not guilty" of ever having added the function of a priest to that of a preceptor. Now to my conclusions, and I shall use the term "principal" to denominate the people in question, thus obviating the necessity of repeating words, and at the same time eschewing the objectionable term "lady principal."

1st. The first impression of the student upon meeting the principal in her official capacity is one of tentative suspicion if not absolute fear or hostility. She may be a most amiable person but the student gives her the benefit of a doubt. If she is of pleasing appearance, it is in her favor, but if she is hampered with youth, her critics are hardly aware of it, for they are disposed to regard her as old anyway.

2nd. On the other hand, the first meeting may be very pleasant, and the young girl may have stored