

The School

“Recti cultus pectora roborant”

Editorial Notes

The Teacher and the War.—An incident at Harbord Street Collegiate Institute, Toronto, early in September last, turned the public's attention to the relation of the school to the war. The public then made it very clear, so clear that no school dare misunderstand, that the school has special rights and duties in the matter of the war. The Department of Education of Ontario, as was pointed out in *THE SCHOOL* of January, has now put those rights and duties into the school law.

Many difficulties, no doubt, will attend the performance of its duties by the school. Public feeling is tense. A harmless word or act may provoke an outburst. A Toronto lecturer thought that the defeat of Germany must come through failure of men, not of money or material. He was bluntly told to keep such opinions to himself. Another lecturer expressed the belief that the Kaiser played a bigger part on the European stage than Czar Nicholas or even King George. “Unpatriotic”, exclaimed some of the audience. A distinguished citizen now questions the loyalty of a great Canadian University because, forsooth, it once paid homage to Goldwin Smith as the first English publicist of his day! The connecting link between this tense public feeling and the school is the child. The child, it must be remembered, cannot understand this war. He sees only a few things and he sees them dimly. For the rest he trusts to his imagination. This imagination, excited by the natural anxiety of the teacher to weigh and condition his statements, and by the natural desire of the child to interest and startle his hearers, may at any time cause a violent outburst of unfriendly public feeling. Here lies the first great difficulty that attends upon school instruction in the war and its causes. No teacher can afford to approach the subject unconscious of the danger about him.

And there is a second difficulty. Children cannot understand the war. Nor do all adults. Even publicists and statesmen disagree as to its causes. How may schoolmasters hope to teach those causes? And as to the events of the war—they are so near us as to be wholly out of