

which they have not absolute control. The teachers, therefore, should be the mouthpiece of no ecclesiastical system, but the agent and leader of advancing knowledge, moulding society as much as he is moulded by it. The great hinderance, I fear, to the teacher's highest qualification is found in the fact that teaching is too often taken up merely as a stepping stone to something else, and this again arises from the fact that teachers are so poorly paid. The talent and enterprise of the land will naturally be drawn into the most lucrative employments.

WANT OF REMUNERATION IN THE PROFESSION.

It is said that candidates for the Christian ministry diminish in number in proportion to the prosperity of other professions. Ministers claim to be impelled by higher considerations than worldly advancement, yet human motives are seldom free from an earthly mixture, and if this holds in so sacred a calling as that of a clergyman, much more may it be expected to operate elsewhere. Clergymen and teachers are of all classes the most inadequately remunerated. As a rule they have scarcely enough for a decent living while engaged in active labor, and they have a still scantier prospect for the years of feebleness and decline. If my words here to-day will have any weight, I feel that I am pleading the cause of the children and society not less than of the teacher, in urging a more generous support for those whose mission it is to lead the intellectual and moral life of the people.

RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF OUR SCHOOLS.

I shall close these observations by touching upon a subject of the highest moment, but one which we are always in danger of neglecting, and which on this account, as well as from the so-called secular basis of our school system, it is the more necessary to bring again and again into view. I refer to religion. Distinctive theological teaching is of necessity excluded from our public schools as at present constituted. A Frenchman travelling in the United States, is said to have complained that he found two hundred religions and only one gravity! This complaint is eminently characteristic, for Frenchmen think much of the sublime art of cookery, and not so much, I fear, of religion. A new religion has since been added to the American catalogue, though possibly no new gravity. Although, there may be in Canada somewhat less than two hundred religions, there are far too many to introduce into our public schools, which we are therefore obliged to make non-sectarian. But the danger is lest the exclusion of theological dogmas, as such, from our schools, should have the effect of disparaging religion in general estimation, and lead the teacher to consider himself as excused, if not positively debarred, from the entire field of moral and religious truth. The teacher would thus come to deal with his work as something barely and dryly intellectual. This would be a serious mistake, and inflict upon education a moral sterility to which even mixed schools need not be doomed. There is much that the teacher can do for the higher life of his pupils without encroaching upon sectarian peculiarities. We all believe in the love of God and the love of our neighbour. We all believe in a future life where it shall be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked. We all believe in the sacredness of justice, of veracity, of kindness, of purity, in a word, the manifold integrities and charities of life. The relation of these to the Gospel may be more fully explained in the Sunday School, the family, and the pulpit, but their paramount importance should be inculcated, and their habit exercise fostered everywhere.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE OF THE CONSCIENCE.

If there be such a thing as public opinion, there must be a public opinion on moral questions, that is a public conscience. Now conscience, like other faculties, perhaps more than most faculties, admits of growth. It has a kind of national growth. Both its discriminating and its impulsive energy may be cultivated, as in the case of patriotism, the love of war, and other sentiments. This is forcibly shown in the history of public opinion on slavery, usury, persecution, and other important questions. "Usury," says Lecky, "according to the unanimous teaching of the old theologians, consisted of any interest that was exacted by the lender from the borrower, solely as the price of the loan. Those who lent money at three per cent. were committing usury, quite as really as those who lent it at forty per cent." It is even mentioned by Dugald Stewart, as an evidence of the liberality and farsightedness of Calvin, that he was among the first to break loose from erroneous notions on this subject, which had prevailed from the time of Aristotle. In Lower Canada, and other places, it is still thought wrong to allow interest beyond a certain figure, though the public conscience seems to oscillate as to the precise point where innocence ends and sin begins. From this and innumerable other examples, it is evident that there is a culture of the conscience on a large scale, and that the successive generations of men are fortunately not constrained merely to inherit and transmit the same moral

ideas uncorrected and unenlarged. In this, as in other fields, "the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns." A new moral conception, although the novelty may arise only from the improved statement or application of a principle as old as the creation, will oftentimes be to a community like "another morn risen on mid-noon," and disclose a world of injustice or unkindness where heretofore all seemed commendable and fair. Loyal obedience to the new and better view will perhaps set free some depressed class of society from disabilities and temptations which were dragging men to ruin as by a kind of necessity, and in a little time crown some long barren waste with an unexpected verdure. Alas, how many degraded classes are waiting in dumb sorrow for this emancipation! How many deserts waiting for this better moral tillage! It would be hard to say that our system of public schools has no part to play in this work. Paley is said to have complained (only in pleasantry, I trust) that "he could not afford to keep a conscience." Must the state too, and the state school, come down to this last stage of moral pauperism? Nay rather let our public teachers believe that non-sectarianism in its severest construction has no such meaning as this, but still leaves a wide vocation open to them in giving to the young the purest and best moral conceptions, and in so enthroning them in the heart that no subsequent years shall wholly obliterate the early lessons. I shall perhaps be told that such moral teaching is not religion, or that, at least, it must seriously fall short of what is wanted. Let those who so feel ply with all diligence the other means within their reach to supply the defect. But high-toned morality is as necessary as dogmatic theology; nay, rightly understood—so understood as to include what we owe to God as well as to man—it is the practical end at which theology aims. It will be well if the teacher enforces the practical side of the Gospel as diligently and earnestly as the divine has been wont to enforce the theoretical and ecclesiastical. Nor need the teacher wholly ignore, much less discountenance, the peculiar aids and sanctions of Christianity, though, as a man of sense and true catholicity (if these have not become incompatible), he will know where to draw the line between what fairly belongs to his province, and what must be left to other hands.

PERSONAL POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE TEACHER.

One thing is certain, that whatever a teacher may or may not inculcate, he can never divest himself of a certain character and spirit in things moral and religious. Here, after all, is the chief point. Children have an immense capacity of imitation. The logic that convinces them is concrete logic; the power that sways them is personal power. This is true of men; it is doubly true of children. Let the teacher then look well to his example, his manner, his general temper, in a word what we call the spirit of a man. And these must spring mainly from his moral and religious life. Consciously or unconsciously, every man must be what he is, by his higher sympathies and his eternal hopes. Even intellectual beauty is, in some mysterious way, watered from the Infinite Sea. "The doctrine of the human understanding and of the human will," says the father of modern philosophy, "are like twins; for the purity of illumination, and the freedom of the will, began and fell together; nor is there in the universe so intimate a sympathy as that betwixt truth and goodness. The more shame for men of learning, if in knowledge they are like the winged angels, but in affections like the crawling serpents, having their minds indeed like a mirror; but a mirror foully spotted." The teachers' spirit will not only affect the fidelity of his labours, but will be caught by his pupils. It is therefore of the highest moment that he should begin his influence over the young by becoming the right kind of man himself; not indolent, or cold, or selfish, or cruel, or grovelling, or irreverent, or prayerless.

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH A TEACHER SHOULD LABOUR.

A power from somewhere must so have stirred his better nature that the infinite worth and also the infinite perils of even a child's life may come vividly home to him, and all the energies of his soul, not of his intellect alone, but of his intellect quickened by his heart and guided by his conscience, may be consecrated to his work. He must be able to feel that while nothing pays so poorly as teaching, nothing, on a higher calculation, pays so well. He must be able to "find in loss a gain to match," and regard the drudgery and weariness of the school room as the hard and prosy conditions to results of inconceivable grandeur. He must overleap the passing hour, think of things that are not as though they were, and in the spirit of a great artist, as a sculptor or painter, toil for immortality, remembering, that when marble statues shall have crumbled into dust his workmanship shall still grow in living beauty, transfigured evermore in the light Elysian,

"An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purple gleams."