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TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 30, 1886.

WE cheerfully publish in this issue the letter of Mr. W. J. Robertson animadverting on the review of "The Public School History of England and Canada" which appeared in the EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY of the 23rd ult.

The chief point upon which the reviewers (for the work was criticised by two persons) based their criticism was that the narrow limits of the work precluded the possibility of writing such a history of England and a history of Canada as would meet the demands and the requirements of the pupils or the teachers of public schools, and that the method of treatment dealt too largely in abstract terms to allow of the histories being sufficiently interesting to captivate the attention of youthful readers.

Upon these two points we adhere to the opinion expressed in the review.

The position advanced by Mr. Robertson is that the authors purposely left to the teacher the duty of making interesting to the pupil the skeleton sketched for

them in the text book. Whether the average public school teacher is equal to this task is, we fear, an open question. The authors have certainly done their best to aid him, and have given long lists of authorities which they recommend him to read. The lists so given are admirable. They comprise names of splendid writers, historical, romantic, and other. But—and this is a most important question—will these lists be of practical value to these average public school teachers? For example, for the Victorian era of English history the teacher is referred to May's "Constitutional History," Mc Carthy's "History of Our Own Times," Mackenzie's "Ninth Century," Molesworth's "History of England," Sir Theodore Martin's "Life of the Prince Consort," Morley's "Life of Cobden," Ashley's "Life of Palmerston," Trevelyan's "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," Kinglake's "Crimean War," Mrs. Oliphant's, Taine's, and Morley's "English Literature." A good list everybody will grant. But will the average teacher, to whom twenty-five per cent. of these works probably will be known only by name and reputation, be able to peruse all these before commencing the study of the Victorian era? To have placed this list before him is something. Could nothing more be done? In the limited space allowed to the authors it could not. Here again comes in the disadvantage of narrow limits.

THE following sentences from the *London Advertiser* show pretty plainly the trend of popular opinion on a subject that was much discussed at the last meeting of the Ontario Teachers' Association:—

There can be no question that whatever tends to raise the average of intelligence and culture of the great army of public school teachers will tend to improve the efficiency of the schools and enlarge their influence for good. In fact, we are inclined to believe that our future educational progress will be made mainly in this direction. At the recent convention of teachers in Toronto it was boldly asserted

by some that the Teachers of Ontario could hardly be said to have attained to the dignity of a profession; that they on one hand lacked the professional *esprit du corps*, and that on the other hand they did not, as a rule, receive either the remunerative or the social consideration accorded to the members of other professions. When one glances over the departmental reports and notes how large a proportion of the teachers actually engaged are working for mere pittance of \$300 or \$400 a year, and in many cases for even less, he is forced to the conclusion that the speakers alluded to were right, so far at least as the question of remuneration is concerned. This is not as it should be. To the teachers of the public schools we, as parents, entrust our most precious possessions, and as a public our country's dearest interests. Whether we reflect upon the delicacy of the plastic material upon which the teacher is daily operating by precept and example or upon the tremendous influence he exerts in moulding and preparing for active life our future citizens, we cannot fail to see that upon the members of no other profession, the ministry not excepted, rest weightier responsibilities. Such responsibilities should be entrusted to none but men and women of the highest character and the best education that can be procured.

THE St. Louis *American Journal of Education* is making a strong fight for longer terms of school and better wages to teachers. It demands of the state nine months of school each year and that the minimum salary paid teachers be \$50 per month. The former demand is based on the argument that a tax necessary for the support of the schools for that length of time would be less than that required for the support of paupers, criminals, inebriates, etc., due to ignorance. The increase in salary is asked in the belief that it would call to the schoolroom more competent and efficient instructors, elevate the standard of the profession, and enhance the results desired to be obtained by popular education.