

with religion, but in a country like ours, they are not severed or estranged from the religious community around them. The spirit of that community is present with them; they feel and transmit its influence; it pervades the character and tone of the teacher, the discipline, and all the moral agencies of the school. Mr. Forster said in his speech at Liverpool, that it would be very shocking if a teacher, in rebuking a child for telling a falsehood, could not appeal to the interest of the child's soul. Well, but I suppose a Christian teacher, like a Christian employer, can rebuke a lad for falsehood in a Christian way, without reciting the Athanasian Creed or the Westminster Confession. Thus apart from any direct religious teaching of a neutral kind which you may be able to introduce, and which perhaps is not of much value, there is a religious as well as a moral element in the schools of a Christian country. Such, I suppose, has been the general view of the question taken by the statesmen and the people of this country; and the result is a system of public education, or if you like to mark the absence of direct religious teaching by a difference of name, public instruction, in this young country, which having been ably administered, works with almost unbroken harmony and smoothness, while in England, with all her experience, and all her statesmanship, public instruction is an organized Pandemonium of political and sectarian contention. We are twitted with not having solved the problem as regards the Catholics. We have not solved the problem as regards the Catholics, because, as regards the Catholics, the problem here and everywhere is unsolvable. They, under the authority of their spiritual guides, have taken up, conscientiously as I do not dispute, a position of antagonism to modern civilization, and even to nationality and civil society, so far as they are embodiments of the modern spirit. There is nothing for it, therefore, in their case, but either to use force, of which nobody in this country dreams, however it may be under the iron rule of Bismarck, or to let them take their portion away in peace and use it, subject to State guarantees and proper secular instruction, in the way their consciences enjoin. I think it will very likely be found that by adherence to this mild and comprehensive policy, though we have not extinguished, we have minimized Catholic resistance to public education. In this respect, also, if the foreign Jesuits will only refrain from troubling us with their alien intrigues, I believe we shall all do well.

But at this happy result, we could never have arrived if we had not, in accordance with the growing opinion of the most enlightened portion of mankind, and with the decisive experience of history, adopted another great reform. Canada could never have had a harmonious system of public instruction, she would be now either without a system at all, or like England, full of dissension and embroilment, if like England she had retained her State Church. The State Church is the radical cause of their difficulty in England. If you have a privileged clergy, that clergy will try to rule; it will try to rule in public education as well as in public religion. And it can hardly be blamed for so doing. The only good ground, the only ground not morally detestable, which the State can have for selecting a particular church, clothing it with national authority and endowing it out of national revenue, is that the doctrines of that Church are certain truth; and if the doctrines of a Church are certain truth, and recognized as such by the State, why should they not be taught to all the children of the nation? On the other hand, the unprivileged and oppressed Churches will be always in an attitude of jealous self-defence; they will expect aggression everywhere; they will regard and rightly regard what the State does for public education, and what it gives to that object, as done and given in the interest of the privileged Church. The Public Education Act in England has in fact been a vast re-endowment of the Anglican Church. Harmony, therefore, will be impossible; every new regulation will be a fresh apple of discord; a 25th clause, or any other straw, may be the pretext, but the real source of contention, endless and incurable, will be ecclesiastical domination; the real struggle will be between religious privilege and religious justice. As a member of the Education Commission of 1858, I voted for the voluntary system, rather than for State aid with a State Church, and with a State Church I am not sure that I would not vote for the voluntary system still.

It is easy, of course, to see the reason of the alliance between political and ecclesiastical privilege. It is easy to see why the party of political reaction goes to the polls with the clergy of the State Church. Perhaps it is not difficult even to discover a thread of connection between our national beverage and our national religion. But it is difficult to understand how any one who has no interest at heart, but those of religion and of the community at large, can think it his duty to uphold a State Church. The words of the founder of Christianity, who said that His kingdom was not of this world, may be glossed over or distorted like other inconvenient texts of Scripture; but how can the evidence of history be ignored? Christianity, unestablished and free, in apostolic times, did it not

win the ancient world? Established and enslaved to the secular power in later times, has it not almost lost the modern world? Persecutions, religious wars, exterminations of the Albigenses, Spanish inquisitions, massacres of St. Bartholomew, penal laws, and oppression of Nonconformists, whence did they come but from the alliance of the Church with the State? Of these atrocities and infamies, which have done more to discredit religion than the attacks of ten thousand atheists, not Christianity, not even fanaticism was the cause, but fanaticism combined with self-interest, and armed by the Government with the sword which Christ had bidden Peter put up into the sheath. Depend upon it, mere excess of religious feeling, even when carried to the most irrational lengths, has not so much to answer for as is supposed; ambition and interest had more to do with the crimes of Innocent III. and Torquemada. They talk of a nation being godless, because it has no State religion. If God is the God of mercy and justice, what nation could be more godless than Spain under Philip II? or than England when it had Baxter and John Bunyan in prison? They talk of the support afforded by a State Church to the Government. What has been the support afforded by the State Church to the Government in England? The estrangement of the whole mass of Nonconformists, that is, of the most vigorous, energetic, and when they have been let alone, the most patriotic portion of the people, the division of the nation in the face of the Armada by the persecution of Nonconformists, a great civil war, Ireland in a state of chronic rebellion, and now, when a democratic franchise has been conceded by the profligate strategy of a party, an almost impossibility of getting the nation to unite in framing that indispensable corrective of democracy, an efficient system of public education. As to unity of belief, which it is the professed object of establishments to produce, where can be less of it than in that knot of ecclesiastical cobras which I saw the other day wreathing their angry folds, and raising their menacing heads against each other? There is far more of unity in our freedom. Our religion is far more truly national than that of an Established Church, which includes only half the nation, and wars upon the other half. Here no wall divides Christians, Protestant Christians at least, living or dead, from each other. Our clergy, the Protestant clergy at least, unite in all good works, in Christian philanthropy and alms-giving. In prayer for national objects, in national thanksgiving and penitence, whatever be our dogmatic differences, we can all kneel down together. I dare to affirm, too, that religion, though unencumbered by the fatal patronage of the State, affords to the Government here a more effective support than it does in England with all its lordships, and its mitres and its stalls. To support Government religion must be strong; to be strong it must be sincere; to be sincere it must be free.

Therefore, I think England will have to follow the example of Canada; and why should she not? These Colonies, though they are yet young and perhaps rough, though they have not as yet the refinements or the history, the hierarchies and the grandeurs, are they not the leading shoots of the race? Are not their tendencies to the less adventurous body of the race which has remained behind the natural index of its own future?

Education is a well-worn theme, and to lend any new interest to its generalities, especially before a professional audience, is beyond my skill. I thought I should weary you less by speaking of an episode of its history in the land most intimately connected with us, which has fallen immediately under my observation, but not so immediately under yours. Europe for the last century has been full of convulsions, the terrible harbingers of a new order of things, it has been full of political and social conflicts—of revolutions, that like a whirlwind have laid low temple and throne, of wide-raging and murderous wars. And revolution and war alike have too often left behind them nothing but moral and physical ruin, desolated fields, exhausted energies, shattered hopes, political despondency, and prostration and reaction, such as we see in France a hundred years after that hour of promise and of transport when she undertook with exulting confidence, not only her own regeneration but the regeneration of the world. Yet, through all these storms and amidst all this havoc, popular education, gradually and gently, but surely spreading, like the dawn amidst the cloud-rack of a tempestuous sky, is effecting a peaceful revolution, which will be followed by no prostration or reaction, and the fruits of which will never pass away.

Yes, you have a great mission. Exaggerated things, no doubt, have been said about the office of a teacher, as well as about every other office. The influence of the school has been unduly magnified in comparison with the influence of home. The importance of school education has been unduly magnified at the expense of that which we receive from society, from our calling, through all the various avenues of knowledge and natural improvement in our after life. The importance of knowledge altogether has been magnified at the expense of character, the formation of which must be the main