

men, of whatever grade of ability, the Head of the Church may not be pleased to call into the sacred office. The Church would doubtless be happy to turn over a goodly number of such brilliant young men, who have somehow found their way into the ministry, and are making use of the office for a display of their brilliancy, to almost any respectable and honest secular calling that could be named. The class of candidates who enter upon a theological course without a college training is, then, the questionable element. The rapidly increasing demands of the work at home and abroad have increased the number of this class. The Church in her straits does often accept "mediocrity and an humble average of ability." Some good men come forward in this way, but too often the increase is made up of youth who are incapable of mastering the classical course in the academy even, and so jump from the spelling-book and reader in the primary school to systematic theology in the seminary, or who have not the perseverance needed to secure a liberal education, or who become engaged early and are in haste to marry, or who think the ministry a way to respectability, and so take a short cut into it. These are nuisances, all and altogether, and ought to be abated as such. But these may fairly be set down as exceptional cases, while the majority is made up of earnest and devoted young men. On the whole, it is doubtful if the average quality of the raw material offering itself to be trained for the work of the ministry was ever higher than it is at the present time. The right kind of sifting process, applied by education societies and church authorities, would make that average still higher.

2. The remedy of the evils complained of calls then particularly for a better handling of the material selected, in shaping it into the completed product. While observation will show that the raw material has never been better in intellectual quality, it also seems to show that the completed product has deteriorated in practical evangelical effi-

ciency. This is what we take to be the real fact. The Church is tending more and more to produce a generation of ministers of the invertebrate order, both in their theology and their spiritual activities; a generation "indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to" all great themes and life and death efforts; and she is getting this result out of what is the best of intellectual material to begin with. How is she to remedy the evil? There has never been an age in the history of the world that demanded such tremendous breadth and sweep of power in the ministry as the present. What can be done to infuse new vigor? If it be true that the Church starts out with good material and ends with a completed product of an inferior order, something must be out of the way in her method of procedure. What is wrong?

A first thing to which we shall do well to attend, is that the Church fits her candidates for college mainly in preparatory schools that have been thoroughly secularized. The point here made is not that the increase of supply, which naturally comes from conversions and the general influence in Christian academies, is cut off. This is a lamentable fact that needs to be emphasized; but the point here touched upon is, that the most is not made of the material—in fact, that the young men are poorly trained to profit as candidates should by their collegiate and theological courses. This charge embraces various counts. When the classical fitting is done in the High Schools it must almost invariably take a secondary and subordinate place, and be carried forward in an atmosphere unfriendly to classical culture, so that it is wretchedly done. Moreover, these schools, as well as many undenominational academies, are so thoroughly secularized that the candidate gains none of that acquaintance with the Christian facts, ideas, and methods; forms none of those habits of Christian duty and activity, and gets none of that powerful impulse of Christian principle in the life, which have vastly more to