

The Educational Weekly.

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WE notice in the columns of a valued contemporary a regret that, at the late meeting of the Teachers' Association, the subject of the "Bible in the Schools" attracted but little attention. The cause of this is not far to seek. The recent regulations respecting the compulsory reading of the Bible, that is, the selections therefrom authorized by the Education Department, although a "compromise," as deplored by our contemporary, were a common-sense and practical solution of the problem—if problem there really was. The necessity for a change was not a deep-seated conviction in the hearts of the people, nor was the agitation therefor wide-spread among them. It had its origin, and its main support in a somewhat narrow section of the clergy, though it was afterwards more widely participated in, but its principal "boom" was the result of a very obvious political motive. In fact the people, as a whole, were well satisfied with the regulations respecting the reading of the Bible as established by Dr. Ryerson and the late Council of Public Instruction. But as Canadians are Christian in faith, there was a reasonableness in the demand that the onus of *prohibiting* the reading of the Bible should be laid upon the local authorities. To go farther, and require the teacher to expound the doctrines, or to explain the historical statements, of the Bible, is to make the school a haven of popular unrest and dissension, till the end would be that the Bible would be ejected from the school altogether. The morality of the Bible on its practical side, is the one thing about which all earnest, thinking people agree. The teacher can exemplify this in his daily life, and can enforce it and illustrate it in the thousand ways the schoolroom affords. The school would then be, as it has for a long time been, a perpetual haven of good.

THE closing of Pickering College, while it is an event much to be regretted for educational reasons, affords a timely warning to the friends of our education system, of what disasters might befall it, if the folly of those who wish to import into our schools a distinctively religious (that is doctrinal) teaching were to be listened to. Pickering College was established some six or seven years ago under singularly happy auspices. It was primarily meant to supply a thoroughly good secondary education to the sons and daughters of members of the Society of Friends; while kindly home, and carefully supervised religious influences were to surround all students in attendance. With a liberality and fairness that were most praiseworthy the advantages of the college were offered to members of all other

religious societies upon terms so just that they were largely accepted:—viz., that the distinctively religious teaching of the Society of Friends was to be given only to members of that body, or to the sons and daughters of such members of other religious bodies as chose to have their children receive it; and that students belonging to other denominations should have full facilities for religious worship and instruction according to their own faith. The college was from the first an educational success, and continued to be so until its dissolution. But not long after its establishment, a dissension arose in the Society of Friends, which was caused by no greater differences of belief than exist between Methodists and Presbyterians, or Methodists and Baptists; suspicions were aroused in the minds of many of the supporters of the college regarding the orthodoxy of the doctrines taught to their children in attendance; and there was a lack of unanimity of feeling in the matter, even among the governing authorities of the institution. As the dissension grew greater throughout the Society, the college gradually became the possession of those professing one phase of doctrine, while this possession was disputed by those holding to another phase. The dissensions and the disputes became so inimical to the financial prosperity of the institution that at last it was decided to close its doors. Its secular teaching and moral influences in no way had lost the confidence of the general public, that is, of the Methodists, Episcopians, and Presbyterians, who had patronized it; but its distinctively religious teaching lay under a suspicion of heterodoxy in the minds of many members of the Society of Friends who were formerly its supporters and patrons. The inference is a very simple and logical one:—If, in a private institution, while its distinctively religious teaching satisfies one section of the denomination maintaining it, it fails to satisfy the demands of another section of the *same* denomination, how much more likely is it that the religious teaching of a State institution, whether school or college, will fail to satisfy the heterogeneous elements of our population if this teaching be in any way doctrinal or exegetical? If, for example, a difference of opinion on the true meaning of repentance, or on the essentiality of adult baptism, be sufficient to break up the founders and natural supporters of a school into two contending parties, to sever friendships of a lifetime's standing, to force members of the same household to rank themselves in opposing camps, how much more likely would it be, if teaching Bible doctrine were made compulsory, that indiscreet propagandists, in, one will not dare to say how many

of the schools of the Province, would set the people about them by the ears in unseemly squabbles about the truth or falsity of the biblical instruction given to their children.

THE dissolution of Pickering College affords, also, a theme for the advantageous reflection of those who think that a national system of education, upon which a *general* system of religious instruction is not superimposed, is a deplorable thing, and that, as, in Canada, such a general superimposition is impossible, the next best thing is the disintegrating of our national, non-denominational system into a series of sectarian systems, each receiving (as the Roman Catholic system does now) a portion of the entire legislative grant of the Province; or, failing this, the general voluntary establishment of schools, controlled and supported by the denominations establishing them. As a result of voluntaryism none but what may be called schools for secondary instruction have as yet been erected. These all have had most discouraging struggles with debt; few have prospered, and but two or three remain. Two things are evident: (1) Voluntaryism in education is not generally regarded by our people as necessary or desirable. (2) The confidence of the people in the present system of national education, in which the distinctively religious training of the pupil is left to his church, his Sunday-school, and the influences of his own fireside, is so sufficiently great, that the lamentations of alarmists for the irreligiousness of our system are not much heeded. The *raison d'être* of such schools as Pickering College, Woodstock College, and Trinity College School, is good enough, and we shall speak of it again; but the very fewness of these institutions is an evidence that the demand for them is not great, and that their existence must always be precarious.

WE have received the annual announcement of the Woman's Medical College of Toronto, an institution in affiliation with the University of Trinity College. Its establishment two years ago, and that of a similar institution in Kingston, marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the enfranchisement of women. Medicine is an art which, in many of its departments, is the peculiar and natural province of women. But for its acquirement and for its scientific study by women, suitable facilities must be afforded—"co-education" is inexpedient. We congratulate the young women of Canada on the facilities for medical instruction, which such an institution as the Toronto Woman's Medical College affords—ample, excellent, and of reasonable charge. Full information regarding the college may be obtained from the president, Dr. Barrett, or from the secretary, Dr. Nevitt.