

glecting, 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 gravy! 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 gravy. 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 habitual exercise fostered everywhere.

If there be such a thing as a 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 natural 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 mention-