

This obsession, that knowledge is education, or that the acquisition of knowledge invariably leads to education,—whether it be a knowledge of patristic Latin, of a frog's lymph-sacs, of a steam-engine, or a kitchen-sink,—is, in reality, the motive of the outcry against religious education. It is charged against us that we do not read the Bible; yet we are aware of the dictum of that wisest of men: the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. In the classical colleges we learn to fear God, to reverence authority and to obey the law. The mark of modern education is mediocrity. Receptive minds look up and are not filled, whilst the incapable are being stuffed. In a system so completely organized as that which we are trying to understand every child of the three hundred thousand in Quebec is individually considered by the curé; because the Catholic Church has made the simple discovery that children differ in mental receptiveness and in capacity for moral development. The average child is best adapted for carrying on his father's business: whether it be farming, lumbering, or trading. He is provided with religious instruction in abundance, because he has a soul to be saved; and with such simple knowledge as his station in life seems to require. But the boy of unusual talent is set apart. The bishop hears of him, and there is a rivalry as to which college shall have the privilege of educating him. It is quite true that the prime object of the bishop is to enrich the priesthood, and boys are well aware that good behaviour must go with natural endowment. If the pupil does not develop those peculiar qualities of which he gave promise, he is quickly directed into one of the professions which in turn is enriched by this picked talent. It is said that Hon. Gédéon Ouimet was the last born of a family of twenty-six children. His father took him to church to be christened and presented him to the parish priest as a tithe. In the province of Quebec the 26th. part of the increase arising from the profits of the land is allotted to the clergy for their support. The curé accepted the offering and paid for the education of this novel tithe.