

when the practical experience of teachers should be brought to bear more directly upon the formation of public opinion, at least so far as the great question of national education is concerned. Is it not true that our work as educators has been restricted so rigidly to the schoolroom and the child, that we appear almost to have lost sight of our duties and privileges as citizens? The Act of 1870 most wisely developed a latent but powerful educational force. The establishment of School Boards gave to every ratepayer a direct personal interest and influence in national education, and Mr. Forster may well feel proud of the satisfactory results already achieved by means of the machinery which his statesmanship set in motion. The future usefulness of School Boards will, however, be greatly impaired and their progress retarded, if the test of fitness for membership is in the future to be a political rather than an educational qualification; a promise to "keep down the rates," rather than a determination to give to the working classes a wisely liberal education. Much mischief has been wrought by the plausible and too often uncontradicted platform nonsense uttered by ill-informed candidates, and in all such cases the intervention of the experienced teacher is both a necessity and a duty. We regard the education of the country as of supreme importance; we rejoice that it is no party monopoly, and gladly recognise the fact that it numbers amongst its best friends eminent men of all shades of political opinion. The progress made since 1870 has been steady and continuous, and we sincerely hope that no unwise changes will be permitted to arrest it. It is quite true that the education estimates have largely increased; but when we remember that the additional money is paid only for full value previously received, and that, according to Mr. Forster, the increase is due to "the teaching of the lowest elements—reading, writing and ciphering—to those children who have been swept by the Education Act into the schools," the extra cost really affords good ground for national satisfaction rather than complaint. But, further, the money thus expended is immediately reproductive, and that in a far higher degree than the millions so readily voted for other and more questionable purposes. The country is certainly passing through a period of great commercial depression, and retrenchment in the national expenditure is both desirable and necessary. But an appeal to the constituencies on this question would show, I am sure, that in their opinion the education grant is the last to which the pruning knife should be applied. Is it not somewhat strange that the first reactionary note should be sounded by the Vice-President of the Council, and re-echoed by Mr. Matthew Arnold in his last report? "Popular education," says the Inspector, "has had its moment of high favour in this country, and nobody has asked questions about its cost, so long as the prosperity of the country was increasing by leaps and bounds. I confess I am afraid of the cold fit following the hot one, in a season of less prosperity. I am afraid of a storm of discontent and obloquy raised against our very expensive system of elementary schools, and of the outlay upon them being as much overshrunk as it is now, I think, overswollen." Teachers who are brought more or less into daily contact with the working classes in our large towns do not share Mr. Arnold's fears. The cold fit, which the Inspector so greatly dreads, has not yet afflicted the overburdened ratepayer, and the reason may easily be divined—he gets full value for his money. There are those, doubtless, who consider that the so-called working classes are being over-educated, and thus rendered unfit for the duties of their station. Such objectors forget that in this country class overlaps class, and that no sharp dividing line can in any case be drawn between them. They lose sight of the fact that the poorest children attending our elementary schools "have been born with the full faculties of moral, intellectual, and religious beings; that they are as capable, when instructed, of studying the works of God, of obeying His laws, of loving Him, and admiring His institutions, as any class in the community; in short, that they are rational beings, capable of all the duties, and susceptible of all the enjoyments which belong to the rational character"; and that, consequently, "no education is sufficient for them, which leaves any portion of their highest powers waste and unproductive" (Combe). "I have no sympathy whatever," says Dr. Chalmers, "with those who would grudge our workmen and our common people the very highest acquisitions which their taste, or their time, or their inclinations, would lead them to realise; for, next to the salvation of their souls, I certainly say that the object of my fondest aspirations is the moral and intellectual, and, as a sure consequence of this, the economical advancement of the working classes,—the one object which, of all others in the wide range of political speculation, is the one which should be the dearest to the heart of every philanthropist and

every true patriot." We are, I fear, approaching another educational crisis, but, thanks to this organisation, we are fully prepared to meet it. The views of the N. U. E. T. on various subjects have already been brought prominently before candidates for Parliamentary honours, irrespective of party colour; and although pledges have very properly not been required, we may fairly assume that many members of the new House of Commons will be disposed to consider favorably any educational measure which has the support of this Union. It is somewhat amusing, though not very surprising, to find objections raised to legitimate action of this kind. A newly developed political force, intelligently directed, is doubtless an important factor in determining the result of an election, and might even upset all the previous calculations of aspiring candidates and their friends. But I doubt whether even this pathetic consideration will induce teachers, who pay their quota to the local and general taxation of the country, practically to disfranchise themselves by remaining passive spectators of a contest which they have the power materially to influence, and in which their best interests are involved. And why is such an act of self-sacrifice expected from us? There no doubt remains a considerable amount of misconception as to the nature of the relationship which exists between ourselves and the Education Department. Not a few well-meaning, and, in their sphere, influential individuals, still regard us as the charity children of the Department, the flower, it may be, of the "lower classes," taken in hand in a spirit of the purest unselfishness, by a paternal Government to whose service we should consider ourselves ever bound by ties of the deepest gratitude. Now this poetical fancy may be very touching, but it is "an airy nothing" nevertheless. A retrospective glance will show that free College training, certificates bearing a money value, pensions, etc., were inducements which the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education were compelled to offer, because they could not otherwise secure a sufficient supply of candidates. Anything like patronage was conspicuous by its absence, and the teacher was welcomed as the friendly ally of the Government in its crusade against ignorance and vice. But in 1862 this pleasant relationship was rudely interrupted, and, if the severance had been absolute instead of partial, it would not have been an unmixt evil. But, unfortunately, freedom from Civil Service privileges did not carry with it immunity from Civil Service disabilities, and this is the anomaly that we wish to see removed. And how may this be done? By transferring to a Representative Educational Council, incorporated by Act of Parliament, the sole power to grant diplomas to teachers. The advantages of such a change are manifest. The certificate, which has been unnecessarily degraded to a mere license to teach, would be restored to its original and proper position as a permanent stamp both of scholarship and practical skill in the art of teaching. Its value would be a fixed quantity, measurable by managers of schools and by the public, and not liable to variation in the interests of "supply and demand." Annual endorsements, distasteful alike to inspectors and teachers, would cease; and, further, a diploma thus granted might easily be graded to meet the requirements of higher as well as of elementary schools, thus opening up a much-needed career for teachers within their profession.

—A case of considerable importance to teachers was decided in Listowel at the April session of the County Court. One of the teachers of that town resigned a few days before the midsummer holidays in 1879, and continued to teach until the close of the session. The Board refused to pay her for the vacation, and the Education Department on being appealed to declined to interfere with the action of the local authorities. The lady, however, believing that she had law and justice on her side, entered an action against the School Board and won her case. We congratulate her, and Ontario teachers generally, on her success.

—An exchange makes the following sensible suggestion:

As a substitute for "Friday Afternoon Rhetoricals," over which the teacher presides, we would suggest properly conducted literary