

The Educational Weekly.

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MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD has somewhere spoken of what he calls a "note of provinciality." It is a difficult phrase of which to find a full and suitable definition; but its meaning is nevertheless fairly clear.

In Canada, we must grant, it exists to an alarming extent. Even those who have received a "liberal education," as it is termed, seem unable to free themselves from it. In their conversation, modes of expression, knowledge, and experience, they are not unfrequently apt to show that there is, if not a "one-sided development," at least not a many-sided development.

Particularly, we think, is this true of teachers, despite the fact that they belong to a profession supposedly the most advantageous for the attainment of true culture. The reasons for this are doubtless numerous and implicated; we may, perhaps, find some of them in their inability to mix much with men of a stamp other than their own; of their views being, in many instances, limited to the thoughts and events that occur on one continent only, and such like.

Is it possible wholly to eradicate this defect? Matthew Arnold is, we know, untainted by it; but what has been his life and what are his acquirements and mental habits? True, he has been an inspector of schools, but this has not deterred him from pursuing wide and numerous paths of thought. Inheriting probably the love of learning from his father, the great Arnold of Rugby, he has conscientiously given himself up to the attainment of knowledge of the widest area. His classical learning is deep, his acquaintance with French, Italian and German equally so, he has travelled much, and has during the course of these travels been keenly observant and actively employed in learning all that other countries than his own had to teach him, he has had educational and social advantages of a rare description, and above all, cultivated habits of thought and reflection. Perhaps all these are necessary for a perfect freedom from a "note of provinciality." If so we cannot of course expect that perfect freedom amongst those who have not been able to travel in such comprehensive paths of learning, and who also have not been gifted by nature with such talents.

Nevertheless, if this "note of provinciality" exists, and if we recognize its existence—a thing not always easy to do—then,

assuredly it is for us to do all in our power to eradicate it.

But how? Travel is out of the question to the majority of us; highly-educated and liberal-minded men it is not always easy to associate with; even a higher standard of education is forbidden to many of us. Where shall we find a remedy or remedies for this? This is not a question to be answered in a sentence or even in an article, but there is, we conceive, one remedy, not ineffectual, and open to all, it is reading—the careful, steady, and systematic reading of those authors who are themselves free from any taint of "provinciality." This must have an influence upon us for good. It cannot do otherwise if, that is, we read with this aim in view. With a little careful study we shall with no great difficulty be enabled to cull from such authors the best that is in them—the best that they have been able to produce from their wide experience and refined modes of thought and expression.

With this suggestion we may for the present leave this subject to the reflections of our readers.

WHAT a subtle thing influence, our influence, all personal influence, is? Invisible, weightless, wingless, it follows us everywhere—emanates from us in all our intercourse with our fellow-beings, whether we will or not, but chiefly and most powerfully in contact with those pliant and susceptible young natures committed to our care as teachers. If all the actions are but organic symbols for the thoughts and feelings of the heart, and if the teacher's inner life thus pictured is so potent in moulding the lives of others, then character in all who would shape the minds of children is of supreme importance. With what care every person engaged in the work of instruction should seek to foster lofty motives, to cultivate generous, manly sentiments, to pursue high and noble ideas in his own life! Every instance of petty meanness, of cowardice, of apparently trifling deceit, or even of thoughtless ill-temper, is a seed from which similar actions spring in the too fertile soil of childhood. Action repeated becomes habit; a bad habit is a deformity.

DIVISION of labor is a law of mental activities as it is of physical. In this age of specialism it cannot but be so. This law also is being carried to its furthest limits. Not only must individuals devote themselves to one, or, at most, two, subjects if they wish to become thoroughly acquainted with such subjects and be able to properly teach them, but it seems also that the part that individ-

uals must play in the general intellectual progress of the community is affected to a very large extent by this same law of the division of labor. Some are occupied merely with organization and ordering of schemes, the overseeing of practical details; others carry out these practical details; others again are occupied solely with abstract speculations—they originate ideals, as it were, for others to put into practice.

There is a lesson to be learned from this. Too many of us are not content to occupy the lower of these positions. We strive to attain to those which are really above and beyond us; to lead instead of to follow; to show the way instead of preparing the path; to lead the van instead of guarding the rear. We forget that the one is as honorable, if it is not as onerous, as the other—and the test of value is not the onus so much as it is the honor. Some must lead, are perhaps by nature called to do so; others must follow, carrying out the precepts of the leaders. No train could be made up of engines alone, what would become of the freight?

At the third day's meeting of the Anglican Synod in Toronto last week was brought up that interesting and, to so many of us, delicate, topic—the Bible in schools. The EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY has ere this expressed its views on this subject. We may be permitted to state here what the highly-experienced educator, Dr. Hodgins, remarked on the occasion: He spoke warmly in defence of the public school teachers. Very great care was taken to see that they were connected with some Christian church, and besides they had to present a certificate of good moral character from their minister. In Muskoka he had witnessed the religious exercises in the schools, and was profoundly impressed with the fact that it was of the highest importance that the schools were in charge of such teachers. He was delighted also to hear the instructions given, and to see the interest shown on behalf of the pupils. He thought if they would appeal to the teachers to carry out these regulations they would get a response that would delight them. Such views so expressed are valuable.

THERE are but a few weeks now before the commencement of the summer vacation. Doubtless teachers look forward to it as eagerly as their pupils. To the teacher, however, a vacation is not altogether, or should not be altogether, a holiday. A wonderful amount of really good work can be done during a so-called vacation; indeed, in order to make proper use of a vacation, really good work of no small quality or quantity is an absolute necessity.