

forms of words. They may be known to the well-instructed theologian to have no rational basis in Scripture. They may be known to the candid student of Church history to have owed their rigid form, and their prominence to mere historical accident. They may relate to matters of which no ordinary Christian ever thinks in the daily course of his religious life. Still, when you propose for the sake of union that they shall be treated as indifferent, they at once assume the importance of vital principles without which the Church must fall, without which there can be no salvation. The dogma has become stereotyped by controversy and rooted in vested interests. The only chance of present peace and ultimate reunion seems to be common participation in good works. In this way, insensibly, and without awakening the sleeping watch dogs of polemical theology, we may possibly steal back to the state of things which existed when the disciples of Christ had no other name than Christians. Not all the churches are represented here. And we must own of course that there are such things as vital questions, and that it would not be easy for a Sacerdotalist, however great his personal charity, to combine with an Evangelical in promoting Sunday Schools, because the difference touches the very source and nature of spiritual life. But as to the Protestant Churches, we may fairly hope that their partial union on such an occasion as this is an omen and an earnest of a more complete union to come.

"The social influence of the Sunday School, again, is a feature which, though secondary, is not unworthy of notice. In the old world, society is divided very sharply and harshly into classes; and that it should be so is to be deplored, apart from any radical theories of society, if the account of our relations to each other given us in the Gospel is true. Here the divisions are less sharp, and so far we approximate, I think, to the Christian, as well as the Democratic ideal. Still even here we have classes, and as wealth increases, the lines between them may be more sharply drawn. To this evil, the Sunday School, in its social aspect, is in some measure an antidote. Mere sitting together in the same church, I fear, is not so, in any considerable degree; but the Sunday School is. I heard it said the other evening by one well qualified to judge, that the social comprehensiveness of the Sunday School was decreasing. If it does, an element of usefulness will be lost.

"But when we talk of Common Schools and Sunday Schools, let us never forget that the most important part of all education is that part which affects character, and that the great school of character is Home. I recollect that when I was employed on the subject of popular education, and when it was proposed to compel the attendance at school of peasant boys, whose labour was adding, perhaps, a shilling or two shillings a week to the scanty pittance of the family, I could not agree to the proposal, because it seemed to me that if the child became a mere burden to the poor family it would probably have an unkind home, and that the unkind home would more than undo all the good that could be done at school. There will be an evil in the very perfection of our school system, if it leaves parents to believe that they can throw off the responsibility of forming the characters of their children. They cannot throw off this responsibility. For good or evil their influence will still be the strongest. No words of any teacher, however skilful, of any preacher, however eloquent, sink so deep into the young heart, as the example even of the humblest and most unlettered home."

Dr. J. M. Gregory, in a valuable paper on the "Scope and Mission of the Sunday-school," in *Illustrated Bible Studies*, denies emphatically, that the parental or pastoral instruction of children has suffered in kind or degree through the institution of the Sunday-school. He says:—"A sort of dry learning of the Catechism, and an equally dry and forced Sunday reading of the Bible may have yielded its place, not to the Sunday-school, but to the influence which has driven Catechism preaching from the pulpits as well. The Sunday-school has both stimulated and systematized family religious instruction, introducing it into many families where it did not exist, and only changing its form and direction in the families where it already was." He adds this thrust at pastors and parents who insist that in their sphere of observation things have grown worse:—"And if it be true that Christian parents give less attention than formerly to the religious training of their children, the fault is with their piety and with the preaching of which it is the product."—*N. Y. Independent*.

I. Papers on General Education.

1. INTRODUCTION OF NEW SCHOOL BOOKS.

A Cleveland (Ohio) journal gives some curious information under the heading of "The Cost of School Books." It says a large portion of the price is made up of the "cost of intro-

duction," or, in other words, the cost to the publishers of pushing one book into the schools and pushing another out. It would be interesting to be informed in what manner this money is distributed, and where it is supposed to do most good. The same journal states that until within two or three years the expenses of introduction were so great, and the competition between rival school-book publishers, or their agents, so fierce and unscrupulous, that it took a moderate fortune to get a new book fairly into the schools. The cost of introducing some series of books into the schools of two or three leading cities was far in excess of the actual cost of production, and in some cases the books were not in a year before they were thrown out again at the instigation of a rival. So great and oppressive had this evil become, that the publishers at last were compelled to come to an understanding with each other, and to agree to modify in some degree the ruinous systems of introduction. But the "school-book war" still goes on, and though prosecuted in a less costly manner, it still involves considerable outlay in excess of the legitimate expenses of book manufacture and regular profits and discounts to dealers.

2. DUTY OF PARENTS IN REGARD TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

The duty of the parent to visit the school where his children spend five or six hours every day has often been urged in this column. The responsibility which rests upon the parent with respect to the education of his child cannot be wholly delegated to another. The teacher is but the parent's assistant in the great work of educating—calling forth the powers of the child—and to insure the highest results, coöperation between the two agents concerned is absolutely indispensable. If the father cannot spare time from his business, the mother should see to it that she knows from her own observation what air her children breathe in school, what companions surround them, what influences, secret and open, are acting upon them. Any woman who can organize and carry on her household industries in a normal and systematic manner can form a very good idea as to the abilities and power of the teacher under whose tuition her child is placed. She can tell whether order, cleanliness, quiet, and system pervade the school-room, though she may have forgotten every rule of grammar, all the complexities of fractions, and be unable to bound correctly any State in the Union. The mere knowing enough to take scholars through the ordinary English branches is a very small part of the qualifications of any teacher. As to his power to organize, to marshal, and to exercise leadership over his pupils, any woman who is mistress of her household in reality as well as in name, is a pretty good judge. So long as the schools in our rural districts are given over to trustees

of a large part of the good they might accomplish if parents would but take a constant and active interest in promoting their usefulness. When a teacher feels that he has the hearty coöperation of intelligent parents, he enjoys at the same time both stimulus and reward. The scholars, too, take pride in showing to visitors the progress they are making, and the excellence with which they can deport themselves and recite their lessons. This showing is best when made two or three times every week instead of in one grand exhibition at the close of the term.

Cheap school-teachers like cheap clothes, cheap flour, cheap medicine, are very expensive. Better far a good teacher for three months at \$50 a month than a poor one for six months at \$25 a month. You may put the most expensive broadcloths into the hands of an inexperienced tailor, and he will make a far less attractive garment of it than cloth of half the price made up with the art of a master tailor. We want no bunglers to work at the minds of our children. The country is full of normal schools and he or she who aspires to the high office of teacher should first learn how to teach.

Not long ago, passing a day in a quiet rural neighborhood we visited for an hour or two the public school. There were about 30 scholars in the room, 25 of whom could read only in words of from two to five letters. The grammar class was called up, and the questions were asked and answered in the most uninteresting and mechanical way. Meantime the rest of the pupils were studying out loud or gazing round listlessly, whispering, moving about, and tossing up their books. When that class was through the teacher called up, one at a time, the little "primaries," and heard each read and spell separately in a tone we could not catch, the hubbub of the children continuing unabated. About every three minutes some one pupil asked permission to leave the room, and it was granted. Thus passed an hour and a half, when school was dismissed, and we had a little talk with the teacher. Of the three trustees, he told us, only one ever visits the school, no parent deigns to come in; all the scholars hadn't come in, so he had not been able to organize it. When cold weather comes there will be about 30 more, and an assistant. Meantime the school routine will move on