

Rome is near. Her interference is felt everywhere. You hush your breath and whisper in your home, lest your Romanish servant should hear. On the street you speak softly on matters of great concern, for the man behind you may be a Romanist. Touch municipal politics, and instantly Rome jumps up like a jack-in-the-box. Touch national politics, and her jealous-green eyes are at once intently watching to see what you will do. Are you not conscious of the constraint under which you live and move and have your being?

There is a university in Toronto of which we are proud. It is a provincial school, and some Romanists are in its classes. This introduces trouble into the historical department. Ask men who know the inside of university affairs if history is taught there honestly, and you will hear an answer like this: "No: if the professor teaches mediæval history fairly, the Roman Catholic Church reaches out its thumb and finger and tweaks the ear of the Minister of Education, and he in turn tweaks the ear of the professor." You are prepared to believe this, for you have your own public school problem. You have been justly proud of your public schools. You have boasted that in them the children of all nationalities sat side by side in democratic simplicity and mutual self-respect. And when you have been asked how you could assimilate the millions of your immigrants, you have said that the public schools would solve the vexing problem. We partly believed you. We had hope that this great country, instead of being enfeebled by immigration, would grow greater thereby. But what has happened? The public schools are in danger. They are in danger in Minnesota. They are in danger in Massachusetts. They are boldly attacked or covertly undermined. This is a matter of awful concern. The public schools must be kept up or the country must go down. Train half of your population in parochial schools and you have a house divided against itself. Here is a civil discord, the gravity of which cannot be measured. The parochial school children are taught that public schools are godless, injurious and disreputable, and that in them atheism breeds and lust finds opportunity. The public school children will resent the foul charge.

In a generation these are pitted against each other, without sympathy or mutual respect. It is no fanatic's morbid vision