

DIFFERENCE OF CHARACTER SHOULD NOT ESTRANGE.

CERTAINLY difference in principle must needs divide men more or less from one another. If truth unites, opposition to truth, and even neglect of it, must separate. We allow, however, this disuniting tendency to have its own way a great deal too much, when Churchmen who hold the same creeds, and use the same divine offices form opposite and hostile camps, and make war on each other as they now do. This is a fault, and worse than a fault, greatly to be lamented, and to be amended also, if the Church is to do her work. But not this evil is meant to be the subject of these remarks, but rather that strange and sad phenomenon which we observe which men who hold the same principles and have the same object in view hold aloof from each other, if they think that their neighbour works in a department or in a manner which does not command itself to themselves. In a word, not only differences in principle separate Churchmen, but difference of character.

Was not this the failing of the Corinthians who proffered each his own gift, and were rebuked by St. Paul? His heavenly chapter on Charity would cure the disease, if applied, but then it is not. We behold some men endowed with a political sagacity, who possess a knowledge of human nature, who makes use for high ends of the virtues of others and their vices, of their folly and their wisdom. They are able to do what men with a seemingly higher ideal fail to accomplish. Certainly they run a great risk of deteriorating, and of sacrificing principle to expediency at conjunctures. But we should be charitable to them, and discern their merits rather than their faults; and they, on their parts, should be on the watch against what is not their least temptations, impatience of those who, on principle, do not co-operate with them. They must not call others impractical, idealists, dreamers, transcendental, visionary, and wish them out of the way, because they are not like themselves. Those others do their proper work, work equally necessary. They are certainly not less singleminded. They work for God and use their special gifts for His Honour.

Who are these others? No names will be given on either side. The reader may supply instances from his own knowledge of ancient or contemporary history as he will. Let him be careful, however, and charitable if he tries to do so.

These others are theologians, devout; men whose minds dwell on absolute truth. They dread anything which will obscure the truth, or seems a deflection from the straight. They hate compromises and distrust policy. They live in a higher region than that of the political and practical man. They are tempted to distrust him and dislike him, and to refuse co-operation with him. Perhaps they read him better in some respects than he can read himself, and they discern real faults; but, do they always discern real merits? Are they sensible that he is doing for the good cause what they are not doing and cannot do; and that what appears to them complicity with imperfection is often the result of a knowledge of human nature which they themselves have not, which knowledge comes of a great grace, no less a grace than sympathy?

Perhaps the former class of persons are more in fault than the latter. Practical people are apt to be very impatient with what stands in their way, and does not accommodate itself to their plans.

Martha found fault with Mary, not Mary with Martha:

Wisely Thou givest—all around
Thine equal rays are resting found,
Yet varying so on various ground
They pierce and strike,
That not two reseate cups are crowned
With dew alike.

But all are beautiful, and all receive their proper beauty and their place in creation from the Father of lights.—W. E. Heygate, in *Literary Churchman*.

MORALITY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY THE REV. JOHN MAY, M.A.

It is easy to understand how the imparting of direct religious instruction in the Public Schools, has been knocked in the head by that modern Christian monster, Denominationalism; but that *Morals*, as a specific and indispensable branch of the curriculum, should be cast overboard at the same time, passes comprehension. It seems to be generally assumed that the great questions of right and wrong are so interwoven with questions of religious dogma, that any formal attempt to deal with them in the school-room, must result in collision with the opinions which divide the sects from one another, and all of them from the Church Catholic. A more baseless assumption never existed. The principles of right and wrong are eternal; and are the exclusive property of no Christian denomination. They are not even confined to Christianity itself. Heathen systems, though false as a whole, are full of sound maxims of a moral nature. Not only are Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans, Romanists, Unitarians agreed in the main, as to what constitutes high moral character and sound principles of action, but also the world's great teachers in every age. I say this is true in general, thought not universally. At all events it is near enough to the truth for practical purposes. If Moses said: "Thou shalt not bear false witness;" and St. Paul, "Speak every man truth with his neighbour; not the less taught Zoroaster, "Be very scrupulous to observe the truth in all things;" and Buddha, "Thou shalt speak no word which is false." In like manner might Pythagoras be cited; and Confucius, Thales, Cicero, Mohammed, Socrates, Seneca, and even Voltaire,—whose writings are full of rules of right conduct. Suppose a Public School netirely made up of pupils representing not only the various sects of Christians, but also every nationality and religion in the world, will any one assert that moral science could not be made a prominent part of the curriculum of such a school without producing a theological explosion? The idea is ridiculous. How much more absurd then is it to assume [that the systematic teaching of morality in our schools as they are, would result in a collision with the beliefs which divide the great Christian Brotherhood? The fact is that there are certain principles respecting right and wrong universally accepted: that the inculcation of these principles is essential to the welfare of society, few will question: *how*, then, are they to be inculcated?

That the practical absence of such training forms a deadly *hiatus* in our system, I am positive. That the awful gap may be filled up, and that with ease, I am certain. I do not, however, pretend to formulate in detail the precise scheme by which this is to be accomplished. All I hope to do here is, to call the attention of abler pens, and, through them, that of the public, to the subject.

Nor do I pretend to say that a species of morality, good enough so far as it goes, is not already

taught in an indirect, haphazard fashion. But, no thanks to the system. Order and discipline, without which a school cannot live, involve of necessity a certain modicum of training in correct behaviour. More than this, however—much more than this,—is wanted. If high character in the individual citizen is as essential to the good of the community as high intellectual attainments are to himself, is it not ominous that public opinion should be so apathetic on the subject as to leave a matter of such vital importance to take care of itself as a mere incident of the school life? The fact, and fact it is, says little for public appreciation of the intense importance of the question.

Education is a prism. Its three sides are absolutely of equal importance. Now, look at the school programme. Leaving out gymnastics, and the recesses provided for in the time table, what is there left but a vast provision for the endless torture of the intellectual faculties—supposed to be their healthy development?

The Minister of Education might make his name immortal—another and a greater St. George—by slaying this dragon. Let him commit the present programme to the flames. Let him cause a new one to be framed, in which moral sciences shall have its due place. Let a text book on the subject be compiled, clear of all and every kind of religious dogma, at least of a sectarian character; and let that book be as well-thumbed and as well-worn both by pupil and teacher, as is the present tortured Grammar or Arithmetic. Let lessons in morals be assiduously taught every where, on a systematic plan, from the initial hour of school life, up through every class and form, and stage; exemplified in the teacher, and wrought into the very tissue of each child's inner being, in such a way that the strong masonry of character shall rise to its cope-stone like an impregnable fortress; then shall society as a body be regenerated and self-vivified, so far at least as the power of habitual right-doing can regenerate and defend it; and one of the reproaches of the times be removed.

I use the word "regenerated" advisedly. I have no reference to individual spiritual regeneration. If we cannot have the highest, by all means let us have the next. And the mere power of habit, framed on pure principles, and growing daily from infancy to manhood, will prove a mighty safeguard to the community, (which is the real question here) even should it fail to eradicate the roots of evil in the natural heart. But even to these it will prove an engine of a mighty repressive power so far as their open manifestation is concerned. And this is what society calls for: not the individual's preparation for heaven, but his social fitness for earth. The Church, not the State, is concerned with the former. But, without higher character in the *Teacher*, success cannot be expected. The ordeal through which he passes for a certificate must be made as fiery in Moral Science as it now is in Arithmetic. This is one half: the other is the actual possession [of high moral character. Every candidate failing in either, or both these qualifications, should be mercilessly rejected.

I am aware that many would advocate the teaching of morality *without a Text Book*. They seem to prefer what they call a more natural and less mechanical method. These people belong to that class who would teach religion without the Catechism. I am aware how much *might* be done without a book: As an old schoolmaster I am also aware how it would *not* be done, or done to no purpose. Of course, the teacher who had the mat-