

This is only stating in another form the conclusion at which we arrived last month—that the law in its present form is practically sufficient for the accomplishment of all that the deputation asked for, and that this fact, coupled with the other important fact that the present regulation on the subject is the result of a sensible compromise adopted a generation ago, is a good reason for leaving the law unchanged.

We may, we hope, repeat our statement that more could be done than is done under the present regulation were the clergy to exert themselves a little more in their own localities. We do not think it is reasonable to expect them to take part in the actual work of religious instruction in the public schools, but it is not unreasonable to ask those who want the Bible introduced to try first what they can accomplish by educating public opinion in their own neighborhoods. They can, as visitors under the law, advise the teachers, address the ratepayers, and visit the schools. In their own pastoral capacity they can do even more. If they will unitedly do all they can, the coming year will see an increase in the number of schools in which the Bible is used and probably also a decided change in a direction pleasing to Mr. Laing in the manner of using it. To this we have no objection—but the reverse—provided only that the change is brought without endangering the harmony so characteristic at present of the working of the school system.

#### A MENTOR IN CULTURE.

We give the following editorial remarks in the November number of the *Educational Monthly* the benefit of the additional publicity afforded by our own columns—

“The recent craze for native editions of English classics, and the facilities given for their introduction and use in the schools of the Province, have much to answer for. Many of these Canadian texts (and we are not specially referring to Mr. Millar's work) do industry credit at the expense of honesty. In not a few instances, everything is put under tribute but their editor's brains. They are compilations, the sources of which are seldom acknowledged, and the piecing together is sometimes fearful and wonderful work. It would, of course, be unfair to expect much from men who have served no apprenticeship to letters, who have had limited education, or possess little originality of mind, and who have indifferent libraries to assist them in their labor. For these and other drawbacks we are most ready to make allowance. But when the literature of a country is shaping itself, and when education is unduly forcing the mental activities, it is well to be jealous of any attempt to foist poor or watered work upon the community, and to see to it that those who take to authorcraft have aptitude for their task and will not leave their conscience behind in undertaking it.”

This is one of the most refreshing examples of impertinence that have ever come under our notice. Who is it that presumes to speak in this style of the Canadian editors of English classics? A man who has himself failed at everything he undertook, whether of a business or a literary character; who failed as a bookseller, and failed even more signally as a book-maker; who edited one magazine to death, and is now engaged in performing the same kind office for another; who cannot make the slightest pretension to the possession of even a fair education; and who is as empty of culture as he is void of common sense and common prudence. Th the man

who sneers at some of our most prominent and successful high school masters as literary pirates, as compiling their books without any exercise of intelligence, as having “served no apprenticeship to letters, as having had a “limited education,” and as possessing “little originality of mind.” In view of these defects, which may be credited to the niggardliness of nature, and of this other, which may be credited to the parsimony of school-boards—that the Canadian editors “have indifferent libraries to assist them in their labour”—his critical mightiness is willing to overlook a great deal, “to make all allowance,” but hereafter the would-be editor must see to it that he is supplied not merely with a library, but with brains, and a conscience.

As if to leave his purpose to insult the teaching profession beyond the possibility of doubt, he carefully includes others besides Mr. Millar, the editor of the most popular edition of “Marmion.” His insolent aspersions cover men like Mr. Seath, the author of one of the very best and most useful school editions of part of the “Paradise Lost”; Mr. Williams, and Mr. Armstrong. They affect also by implication men like Mr. Tytler, Mr. Wetherell, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Dunn, and others who, though they are only Canadians, have presumed to bring out school editions of French and Latin classics. These men are all well educated—they could not otherwise have attained their present high positions—and they have little to boast of if their acquaintance with “letters” does not go beyond that acquired by a tradesman whose venter of culture has been acquired by perusing the books on his shelves when he ought to have been attending to business.

On the main question we have only to say, that of most of the English texts there are editions by English scholars available, and that the preference for Canadian editions is not without reason. Some of the English editors, whose reputation for scholarship stands highest, bring out books very unsuitable for school purposes, and there is no reason why a Canadian editor, with fair scholarship, good judgment, and good taste, should not produce a better edition than any previous one, seeing that he has an opportunity to avail himself of the labors of others. It is a petty slander to say that there is no originality displayed in the preparation of these texts. The man who uses such language has a very erroneous idea of the nature of an editor's duties. One English editor is a philologist, and in preparing his notes gives them a philological cast. Another dwells most persistently on points of grammar. Another affects the rhetorical element; and others are fond of historical, mythological, or purely literary treatment. It is often possible to prepare, from a mass of such material, a better school edition than any one of them is by itself; and every scholar knows that the preparation of such a work requires the exercise, not merely of brains, but of critical insight and literary skill, tempered by actual tutorial experience. The Canadian editions of English, Latin, and French texts are creditable to this country, instead of the reverse, and the Canadian teacher may safely take it for granted that hereafter one or other of the editions prepared by his fellow-teachers here will be found more useful, as a rule, than any imported one.