

"I do not at present wish to discuss this point, but supposing for the sake of argument that your charge were true, how can you blame the public school for it? There is nothing said or done in our schools calculated to keep the people from church."

"Certainly not, but on the other hand there is nothing said or done in your schools calculated to bring the people into the church, and there the fault lies. Any schooling not striving for this result is worse than useless, it is highly detrimental to the individual and the commonwealth."

"Do you really mean to say, Mick, that it is the duty, and even the foremost duty of the school, to bring a man to church?"

"Of course I do. It is not the only, but the chief obligation of the school."

"Well, that beats anything. The logical consequence of your astounding proposition would be that we could not have any public school at all, as it would be impossible to teach there the two hundred and aught religions which are in vogue in this country."

"Not as it is at present, I grant. But the loss would be a very small one, and a substitution could be made which would be of the highest importance and the most gratifying results to government and people, that is to say, the denominational schools could be transformed into public schools."

"I know, Mick, this is what the Catholics strive for, but I am sure they will not gain their point, at least not in this generation. If they persist to keep aloof from what opportunities we offer them, let them look out for themselves, and not try to compel us to educate their children in their religion for them."

"Well, Sam, this remark shows a good deal of narrowmindedness and proves that you, like so many others, are unable to see the point in question. I do not speak of the Catholics alone, but of the education of every child in the country, and what I claim for the Catholics, I equally claim for every Protestant and Jew, because education without religion is impossible."

"I cannot see that, as I said before."

"Please tell me what you understand by education, and how you would educate a child?"

"Why, education I take to be the development of the mental faculties, in order

that the future man may be able to judge rationally of questions regarding government, commerce, trade, etc."

"Which mental faculties do you refer to?"

"Of course, the intellect, reason and memory."

"But has not man also a will that needs direction and development?"

"Yes, he has, but the will following the lead of the intellect will be developed by developing the intellect."

"Development in what?"

"Naturally in those branches which form the object of teaching, like reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography and the like."

"Stop now for a moment, Sam, and let us try to find out what is in your principle.

You say that developing the intellect develops the will at the same time. Now suppose a boy in school is a first-class mathematician and knows his multiplication table, fractions, decimals and equations to perfection, or he has the history of the United States at his fingers ends and can give you the desired information about every river, mountain, cape and bay of the world, how will this knowledge direct his will? What deductions for practical life will he draw from it?"

"Mick, you are a trickster. You intentionally left out the principal branches of reading and writing in order to put me into the wrong. But this will not benefit you. It is in reading chiefly, and learning to develop our own thoughts and commit them to writing, that the education of our mind consists, and the branches you mentioned are only subsidiary, tho' highly useful, especially mathematics, which force the mind to think logically and yield to established laws."

"That's good enough, Sam, but a man can think very logically and still arrive at conclusions altogether wrong, because he starts from the wrong premises, in which case the better the logic, the more baneful the result. Hence, the education, in order to be proficient in good, must inculcate good principles as a starting point of thinking. Now your school books contain descriptions of landscape, sea, seasons, dogs, cats, cows and other ruminating animals, they tell us that 'Mary had a little lamb,' they describe in fluent rhyme some ad-