

of our people, and the necessity of continued efforts to persuade the public in general that better salaries must be given in order to secure better teachers than we have in our common schools. In reading the reports forwarded to the Department by the different local superintendents throughout the country, we notice one universal complaint — that the trustees generally engage those who will accept the lowest salaries, and there is but one cry—for more reasonable remuneration. There is certainly reason to hope that the changes in the manner of granting certificates to teachers, the appointment of county inspectors, and the enforcement of compulsory education will have a tendency to secure a better paid, and therefore a better, class of teachers. Meanwhile the state of elementary education in many of our schools is sufficiently deplorable. It is in a knowledge of our mother tongue that the pupils seem to be most deficient. If anything is taught to the “fathers of the coming men,” surely it ought to be spelling and enough of English grammar to enable them to detect the most glaring blunders; and yet our own experience and the reports of all competent judges pronounce the common schools of this country most lamentably destitute of these accomplishments. We will content ourselves with presenting the evidence of this with regard to the common schools in our towns; for it will readily be admitted that the country schools cannot as a whole surpass the former in any respect. A quotation from the report of A. Bartlett, Esq., of Windsor, will suffice in relation to the latter: “Our board of Public Instruction for the county is a mere farce, in so far as the majority of its members know anything about examining teachers, and they are often a great stumblingblock in the way of doing impartial justice to persons being examined. A township superintendent may not be able to construct or even spell out a sentence in English, but his vote at the County Board is as good as that of a man with a university education.” The greater includes the less: if the attainments of the examined are presumably less than those of the examiners, *a fortiori* will the attainments of the pupils be less than those of the aforesaid township superintendents? The Inspector of Grammar Schools, that worthy and indefatigable man who visits twice a year more than one hundred schools in all parts of Ontario, has yet found time to examine and report upon the condition of education in some of the common schools in cities and towns. Let us hear what he says of them. Speaking of the Brockville school he says: “I tried them in the exercise which I have been in the habit of giving to the grammar schools in English dictation and false syntax. Here, for the most part, they failed. With few exceptions the spelling was bad, and the class very generally failed in detecting the violation of the rules of syntax.” The Kingston and Galt common schools are very highly spoken of; but of Prescott he remarks: “The master told me at once that *none of them* would be found equal to my usual spelling and grammar test. I had to content myself therefore, with lower work. The pupils, for the most part, were not apt in spelling orally the more difficult words of the lesson they had previously read; and where, in poetry, the construction was in the least degree involved, or where the words were somewhat unfamiliar. I found that a large number—sometimes, indeed, the whole class—had but little comprehension of what they were reading.” All he could say of the *senior* pupils at Brighton was that they “were sufficiently expert in detecting ungrammatical constructions and accurate enough in spelling to justify the belief that they might *soon be advanced* to what I consider ought to be the standard of admission into our high schools. At Strafford four boys and twenty girls were subjected to his customary tests in dictation and grammar; the result being that six of the girls were fit for promotion into a high school, but not one of the boys. We close with his remarks anent the school at St. Thomas; “Six boys and eight girls were put to the test, and in every case failed. In about half a dozen instances the syntax, though not faultless, was respectable, but the spelling was in every case poor. The exercise was new to the class. The grievous deficiencies of some and the weakness of all in the orthography of their own language were therefore not surprising, though demonstrating painfully,

when taken in conjunction with similar shortcomings elsewhere, that some simple and vital points in education are being overlooked in too many of our public schools.” Nor have the grammar schools much to boast of in this all important particular; but the limits of this article will not permit any further reference to them. If Educate! Educate! were made the popular cry, we might hear less of Agitate! Agitate! from the lips of demagogues.—*Hamilton Spectator*.

The Debate on the Lords' Amendments to the University (England) Tests Bill.

(Standard, May 24.)

The House of Commons made terrible havoc with the Tests Abolition Bill yesterday. The measure as originally draughted by the Government, and sent up to the Peers from the lower House, declared in the preamble that the removal of the existing tests should be accompanied with “proper safeguards for the maintenance of religious instruction and worship in the universities and the colleges and halls now subsisting within the same.” The peculiarity of the Bill was, that while it dealt with the tests in the most sweeping manner, it wholly neglected to provide the “proper safeguards” insisted upon in the preamble. It not only threw open the University prizes and distinctions to all comers, but removed every restriction hitherto imposed with the view of ensuring that the governing and teaching bodies should be composed of persons favourably disposed to religion. The effect of the Bill was to remove these restrictions so fully that there would be no statutory impediment to the advancement of declared infidels to such posts as the headships of colleges, the fellowships, professorships, and tutorships, with the single exceptions of the clerical fellowships and the divinity departments. The Peers were not exorbitant in applying a remedy for this state of things. They desired to close the long-pending controversy, and simply proposed, while consenting to the surrender of all restrictions upon the award of prizes and degrees and the lay fellowships, that the headships should be exempted from the operations of the Bill, and that members of the tutorial staff should be required to sign a declaration pledging them not to teach “anything contrary to the teaching or Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures.” It was the only concession they demanded, in return for giving up every restriction which now confines University rewards and posts of authority to members of the Church of England, and it was insisted upon, not in behalf of the Church, but in the interests of religious education in the broadest sense of the word. The Peers were simply anxious, in surrendering the exceptional privileges of the Church, to secure some guarantee that the religious elements should not be wholly banished from University education. Mr. Gladstone asked the House of Commons yesterday to reject both these amendments as at variance with the spirit of the Bill. The first was given up without a division, Mr. Gathorne Hardy protesting that it was not worth while to retain the test when the denominational principle had already been abandoned, while Mr. Walpole saw an objection to the form of the declaration, and declined to oppose its excision. A division was taken on the question of excluding the headships from the operation of the Bill, but the discussion was limited to a brief but earnest protest from Mr. Beresford Hope, and the majority against the propositions of the Upper House was overwhelming. The effect of these two decisions was to make Mr. Bradlaugh eligible either for a headship or a tutorship, and the Radicals below the gangway contemplated their work with serene satisfaction.

At the end of the Bill the committee came across two new clauses inserted by the Upper House, which enact that the governing body shall provide “sufficient religious instruction” for all Churchmen *in statu pupillari*, and for the daily use of the Church services in the college chapels as heretofore. Mr. Gladstone insisted that these proposals were entirely just, and within the meaning of the Bill, and announced that they would