

EDITORIAL NOTES.

"PER VIAS RECTAS."

HE who looks narrowly into the motives which influence men in their daily pursuits will not find much that is creditable to humanity. We are all conscious, more or less, of acting from interested motives in our contact with the world; and we too often pursue our course in paths that are not righteous. In these days it is "the heathen Chinee" and not the stern Puritan that is our model and exemplar. Yet we all profess to admire, and to have a word of commendation for, that stalwart rectitude of our forefathers which was the distinguishing mark of their character and the glory of the olden time. In our spirit of emprise, and eagerness to lay hold on the good things of the land, we have departed from their slow, old-fashioned ways, and have lost the mould of that simplicity and genuineness of character which made them beloved, and threw a sanctity over old-time life and its relations. But we of these modern times have fallen upon an age of competition, and consequently one of shams. The life that used to be heroic is now poor and commonplace; and in the struggle for position and power we make a sacrifice of dignity and throw chivalry to the winds. This decadence in the life and manners of a past age, unhappily, is not limited to any one profession. It is exemplified in all. But it may be beneficial to refer to some of its traces, particularly in the vocation of teaching, that its progress may be arrested and a return made to higher ideals.

In education nothing is more noticeable than the inroads which trade and trade tactics have made upon its domain. Competitive examinations and the race-heats between rival schools have introduced elements fatal to good training. The grind for an examination day, and the injudicious prominence given to certain studies, have also had a pre-

judicial effect. The machinery of the system, moreover, has been turned to its disadvantage. In our own Province this has been debauched for personal ends, and the tone of the schools has been lowered in consequence. Inspectors have not always been mindful of their judicial character, nor have they held the balance evenly. They have had their preferences, and, not unseldom, have made themselves friends of "the Mammon of unrighteousness." This has wrought a great evil, and set a bad example before the profession. The traffic in the implements of instruction, to which some have unscrupulously lent themselves, has been another departure from the path of rectitude. In high places, politics and partisan bias have further dethroned the lofty ideals of the profession. The Department itself has not been a sanctuary of honour, nor a Bethel round which pure hearts and clean hands have gathered. The official kalsomining of the ex-Clerk of the Depository has been no aid to morals. The influence, from the centre outwards, has not been elevating; in some respects it has been positively pernicious.

At the meetings, moreover, of School Boards and Teachers' Conventions we hear not a little of the arts of the schemer, and the schools themselves are being infected with the universal malady. There is a perceptible decline in the tone of the profession, and a lack of loyalty to, and rough crowding of, one another. We seem to have lost what Carlyle calls "the habit of behaving with justice and wisdom," and to be unable to act with "unpremeditated sincerity." Some Inspectors we could name are making rapid proficiency in wire-pulling, and their districts are fast being steeped in the atmosphere of intrigue. Wits are being sharpened at the expense of morals. If we are to credit the statements of passed pupils, our Normal Schools, too, signally fail in their duty; and