

Union. Insist on having a Minister for Education. I know the Duke of Richmond told the House of Lords that, as Lord President, he was Minister of Education; but really the Duke of Richmond's sense of humour must have been slumbering when he told the House of Lords that. A man is not Minister of Education by taking the name, but by doing the functions. To do the functions he must put his mind to the subject of education; and so long as Lord Presidents are what they are, and education is what it is, a Lord President will not be a man who puts his mind on the subject of education. A Vice-President is not—on the Lord President's own showing—and cannot be, Minister for Education; he cannot, therefore, be made responsible for mistakes and neglects. Now, what we want in a Minister for Education is this—a centre where we can fix the responsibility. Insist, therefore—as you, the chief sufferers by mistakes and neglects in the management of education, have a right to insist—insist on having a Minister for Education.

There is my counsel; now for my reflection. My reflection is one to comfort and cheer myself, and I hope others, at this our parting. We are entering upon new times, where many influences, once potent to guide and restrain, are failing. Some people think the prospect of the reign of democracy, as they call it, very gloomy. This is unwise, but no one can regard it quite without anxiety. It is nearly 150 years since the wisest of English clergymen told the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London in a hospital sermon that the poor are very much what the rich make them. That is profoundly true, though perhaps it rather startles us to hear it. On the other hand, it is almost a commonplace that children are very

much what their teachers make them. I will not ask what our masses are likely to be if the rich have the making of them. I prefer to ask what they are likely to be so far as the teachers have the making of them. And on the whole—and here is the consoling reflection with which I shall end—though the teachers have, of course, their faults as individuals, though they have also their faults as a class, yet, on the whole, their action is, I do think and believe, powerful for good. And not in England only, but in other countries as well, countries where the teachers have been much spoken against. I have found it so. I find plenty of deleterious and detestable influences at work, but they are influences of journalism in one place, in another influences of politicians, in some places both the one and the other; they are not influences of teachers. The influence of the elementary teacher, so far as my observation extends, is for good; it helps morality and virtue. I do not give the teacher too much praise for this; the child in his hands so appeals to his conscience, his responsibility is so direct and palpable. But the fact is none the less consoling, and the fact is, I believe, as I have stated it. Burke speaks of the ancient and inbred integrity and piety of the English people; where should this influence of the teachers for good be so strong and sustained as here? Thus, in conclusion, we are carried beyond and above the question of my personal gratitude, although that, too, is very deep and real. I love to think of the elementary teachers, to whom I owe so much, and am so grateful, as more and more proving themselves to deserve, and more and more coming to possess, in the days which are now at hand for us, the esteem and gratitude of the entire country.