

van among the nations in the great and important work of providing an efficient system of general education for the whole community." His keen interest in the question is evinced by a sketch which he gave in an official despatch embodying an account of the plan in its religious aspect by its leading organizer, Dr. Ryerson. His biographer points to the contrast between what had been done in the Colony twenty years ago and the present state of the question in the mother country, and observes that it may call to mind Lord Elgin's remarks as to the rapid growth which ensues when the seeds that fall from ancient experience are dropped into a virgin soil. In the case of the mother country, however, there is an obvious connection between the existence of an Established Church, claiming the education of the people, and the tangled state of the Education question; and equally obvious is the connection between the solution of the Church question and the solution of the Education question here.

The advocates of religious education will read with pleasure the Governor General's eloquent words, which were spoken at the opening of the Normal School.

"And now let me ask this intelligent audience, who have so kindly listened to me up to this moment—let me ask them to consider in all seriousness and earnestness what that great work really is. I do not think that I shall be chargeable with exaggeration when I affirm that it is *the* work of our day and generation; that it is *the* problem in our modern society which is most difficult of solution; that it is the ground upon which earnest and zealous men, unhappily too often and in too many countries, meet not to co-operate but to wrangle; while the poor and the ignorant multitudes around them are starving and perishing for lack of knowledge. Well, then, how has Upper Canada addressed herself to the execution of this great work? How has she sought to solve this problem, to overcome this difficulty? Sir, I understand from your statements—and I come to the same conclusion from my own investigation and observation—that it is the principle of our common school system that its foundation is laid deep in the firm rock of our common Christianity. I understand, sir, that while the varying views and opinions of a mixed religious society are scrupulously respected,

while every semblance of dictation is carefully avoided, it is desired, it is earnestly recommended, it is confidently expected and hoped, that every child who attends our common schools shall learn there that he is a being who has an interest in eternity as well as in time; that he has a Father towards whom he stands in a closer and more affecting and more endearing relationship than to any earthly father, and this Father is in heaven; that he has a hope far transcending every earthly hope—a hope full of immortality—the hope, namely, that that Father's kingdom may come; that he has a duty which—like the sun in our celestial system—stands in the centre of his moral obligations, shedding upon them a hallowing light which they in their turn reflect and absorb—the duty of striving to prove by his life and conversation the sincerity of his prayer that that Father's will may be done upon earth as it is done in heaven. I understand, sir, that upon the broad and solid platform which is raised upon that good foundation, we invite the ministers of religion of all denominations—the *de facto* spiritual guides of the people of the country—to take their stand along with us; that so far from hampering or impeding them in the exercise of their sacred functions, we ask, and we beg them, to take the children—the lambs of the flock which are committed to their care—aside, and to lead them to those pastures and streams where they will find, as they believe, the food of life and the waters of consolation."

A tender feeling of what was due to subject races was a noble part of Lord Elgin's character as a colonial governor. He expresses this towards the Indians, and advocates a system of drafting their most promising youth into civilization through industrial schools. He seems, however, far from sanguine as to their future. "Unless there be some reasonable ground for the hope that they will be eventually absorbed in the general population of the country, the Canadian rule is probably destined in the long run to prove as disastrous to them as that of the United States." If it is as disastrous to the Indians, however, it will not be so disastrous to us. We escape the guilt, and the moral consequences to our own character, of the extermination of those unhappy tribes which the Americans are carrying on. There will be no skeleton of a murdered man beneath the hearthstone of the Canadian nation.

On the question of colonial defence, Lord