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## Editorial Notes.

WE would not say a word, we hope we have not said one, that might seem in the smallest degree to detract from the force of the statistics which Miss Spence has quoted. We could not do so if we would. Facts are stubborn things. Those facts speak volumes. They should go far to correct some erroneous impressions which are quite too prevalent, with regard to the relations between ignorance and crime, and the effectiveness of the Public Schools in the prevention of the latter. Miss Spence deserves the thanks of all concerned for having called attention to these loudly-speaking facts. We should be glad to see her letter quoted by our contemporaries, especially by those who have given currency to the mistaken notions and unjust inferences which that brief letter so effectually disposes of.

WE had supposed that the day for the bare and not too clean plaster wall, with which we were so unpleasantly familiar in the days of boyhood, had gone forever, so far as Ontario schoolrooms, at least, are concerned, save, perhaps, in some remote woodland section, Mr. Boyle being witness that such walls still abound in some of the old sections of Ontario. We should be sorry to suppose that there is one among the readers of THE JOURNAL who does not recognize tidiness and cleanliness as among the great educational forces. The teacher who can sit, and permit the boys and girls entrusted to his or her care to sit, day after day, in the midst of ugly and unclean surroundings evidently lacks something essential to the make-up of a good teacher. School trustees are, we well know, often very hard to move. But they will generally succumb to importunity, especially the resistless importunity of a tactful lady. And, even if trustees cannot be induced to spend a little money in cleansing and decorating the rooms in which their own children spend, probably, a larger portion of their waking hours than in their own homes, something can almost always be done by enlisting the children themselves,

and their mothers. In these days of cheap wall papers, cheap prints, cheap maps and charts, to say nothing of cheap soap and water, there is absolutely no excuse for untidiness or for the utter absence of æsthetic surroundings in the school-room.

AN influential deputation, representing the Anglican Synod of Toronto, waited upon the Premier of Ontario and some of his colleagues, the other day, to plead for compulsory religious teaching in the Public Schools. It is needless to add that, while they were eloquent in portraying the great need that children should early be trained in the knowledge of Bible truth, they quite failed to show how the many difficulties which stand in the way of imparting this instruction in the Public Schools are to be removed or overcome. The Premier made the usual promise to bring the matter under the consideration of his colleagues. But until some available means of surmounting the obstacles referred to can be devised, and the public generally can be convinced that the teaching of religion is a proper function of a political and partisan Government, and that every certificated teacher is a fit and proper person to be made a theological teacher, not much further progress is likely to be made in the direction desired. We are strongly of opinion that the sooner the leaders of the churches can be brought to see the hopelessness of all attempts to have the work of religious instruction done by the teachers of the secular schools, and can arouse the members of their churches to gird up their loins and take hold of their own special work more energetically and effectively, the better will it be for all concerned.

## EDUCATION AND CRIME.

WHILE sympathizing most heartily with Miss Nellie Spence in her spirited defence of the Public School teachers as a whole against any imputation of want of faithfulness in the moral training of their pupils, we may say that, having read most that has recently appeared

in Ontario papers upon the subject, we are inclined to think that in the articles to which she refers little or nothing that was said was designed to cast blame upon the teachers as a class. The attack, so far as there was one, we understood to be directed rather against the Ontario system, in that it makes no provision and provides no place on the curriculum for distinctly ethical instruction. We have long thought the Ontario system seriously defective in that particular. While, as we have indicated elsewhere, we are strongly of the opinion that it is neither feasible nor desirable that the teachers in the Public Schools should be required to undertake the work of religious instruction, we have long thought that it is both possible and highly desirable that a reasonable portion of time and a distinct place on the programme should be assigned for instruction in conduct, or morals. The method of instruction in this, as in almost every other subject, should be the inductive, not the didactic. The end in view should be twofold, viz., the cultivation and development of conscience, or the moral faculty, and the training and exercise of the children's own powers of moral discernment in discriminating between right and wrong. That nature has implanted in every child a faculty whose function it is to approve it when doing what it believes to be right, and condemn it when doing what it thinks to be wrong, few parents or teachers can doubt. That the sensitiveness of this faculty is increased by use and cultivation, and diminished by neglect, is equally a matter of everyday observation. These two facts, if accepted as such, will sufficiently indicate the great desirability that the first part of the work of moral training, as above intimated, should be done thoroughly and systematically. How it is to be done, and the relation in which it stands to the second part of the work, must be left for discussion in a future number. We may just add here that, though no text-book should be placed in the hands of the child, one might very usefully be provided for the guidance and help of the hard-worked teacher.