

## Current Topics

### The Editor

'An editor', says the 'S.H. Review', is a man who is liable to grammatical blunders, toothache, typographical errors, and lapses of memory, and usually he has half a million people watching to catch him tripping. And yet the world is full of people who want to be editors!

There are at least some people who seem to regard the editor of a religious paper at least as necessarily a wicked man—a member of some new and uncatalogued brigade of 'the devil's own'. And they are seldom content to leave him to the uncovenanted mercies of God. Outside Texas he is not commonly upholstered in tar-and-feathers, or turned into a colander with 303 bullets. But the unfriendly critics whose wings he clips or whose illegibly written names he misinterprets in type sometimes make the editor feel that it would be more tolerable for him if he were a Deeming or a Charles Peace. Most of the religious editor's high crimes arise out of the use (or shall we say abuse?) of those two beneficent institutions—the blue pencil and the waste basket—which a merciful Providence has provided for the protection of a long-suffering and afflicted public. But time and many weals make him at last somewhat of a pachyderm in feeling. And there are so many gentle souls who can

'Be to his virtues very kind;  
Be to his faults a little blind'.

Are there not, too, the apologists who plead for him—as Douglas Jerrold did for the editor of his day—that even the devil may be painted in shadow; or as Artemus Ward pleaded once upon a time with the powder-blazing miners out West—'not to shoot the man at the pianner, as he is doing his best'?

### Bible-in-Schools

On the subject of 'Bible-teaching in schools', our esteemed local contemporary the 'Outlook' (the Presbyterian-Methodist-Congregationalist organ) says:—

'We are not all body, neither are we all mind. There is a greater and loftier part in the wonderful trinity of our being, which must be cultivated and developed, if a nation is to be an all-round perfect nation. Can a purely secular education ever evolve a people truly gentle and courteous in bearing and considerate of the feelings of others—a people who are fully alive to the responsibility of life, and who are of sterling integrity in character and conduct? And when calamity befalls an individual or a nation, what is to sustain in that day? Athletics cannot do it; mental attainments cannot do it. Only one thing can do it, and that Lord Byron called "the exalted hope of the Christian." Then again, how is a nation to grow old gracefully? It can only be done by the possession of that same "exalted hope," which shines in the face, which comes out in the speech, and which surrounds its possessor with an atmosphere of "other-worldliness." These things make the aged "the salt of the earth."

A generation ago, only the Catholic clergy or a Catholic newspaper could have written thus plainly on 'Our Great National System'. The body of the non-Catholic clergy either accepted the 'purely secular education', or raised against it nothing better than a flabby, half-hearted, and spineless opposition. True, athletics cannot sustain a nation in the day of trial, nor surround either its youth or its old age with 'an atmosphere of "other-worldliness"'. But neither will the Bible-in-schools prescription—homeopathic doses of diluted Unitarianism, or the shapeless, nebulous, undefinable Thing called undogmatic religion. This figment of a riotous imagination is dismissed in the following terms by the voluminous agnostic author, Mr. Leslie Stephen:—

"To be a Christian, in any real sense, you must start from a dogma of the most tremendous kind; and

an undogmatic creed is as senseless as a statue without shape or a picture without color. Unsectarian means unchristian'.

Such means of 'feeding' the starved souls of little men and maids at school are suggestive of the methods of the baby-farmer; they are reminiscent of the 'charity' of Douglas Jerrold's philanthropists, who in a time of dire famine ordered for the skeletonised victims of want—a supply of toothpicks. There is, however, this important difference: the philanthropists had at least the grace to furnish the toothpicks at their own sole expense; the Bible-in-schools folk, when on charity bent, are of more frugal mind—they clamor to have their own peculiar brand, manufactured at their own private toothpickery for their own private use, purchased by State funds and distributed in their private interest at the expense of the general taxpayer. Why do not the Bible-in-schools people follow the example of Catholics and give their principles (such as they are) concrete shape? One Bible-in-schools school, built, equipped, and maintained by Bible-in-schools advocates, would speak more eloquently than all the torrents of words, words, words with which they have been hosing the public for the past twenty years.

### Our Great System

The process of sharpening the wits of 'the young idea' may easily be carried too far. If we may judge by one of the discussions at the Medical Congress last week, 'Our Great National System' is hollow-grinding the youthful intellect almost to the point where it can no longer stand the strain. 'There are', said Dr. Lindo Ferguson, the noted specialist, 'some of these children who ought to be fed up and massaged instead of being stuffed with free education. . . It ought to be remembered that one cannot put more into a pint pot than it can contain; and by increasing the curriculum indefinitely, and putting on extra lessons, you cannot get more into the children'. 'I heartily concur', said Dr. Truby King (who has made a close study of mental fatigue under school-work), 'with the spirit of Dr. Lindo Ferguson's remark that you cannot get more than a pint into a pint pot. But there are tasks attempted or imposed under the conditions of our school life which utterly pass the proper capacity of any growing person. I know instances in which girls worked as much as thirteen hours a day for examinations, and yet Professor Kraepelin, the greatest authority on the subject, says that the only thing that prevents children from being made demented at schools where they are kept continuously at work, is the fact that they are unable habitually to sustain the thought and attention expected of them for more than three-quarters of an hour at a stretch. Nature is less cruel and exacting than we are.' 'The first thing to do', said a teacher who took part in the discussion, 'is to produce a good animal. And if the whole of the school-time is to be devoted to mental training—and there are those receiving that training who are not physically capable—the State is spending money to no purpose'.

### The 'New Theology'

Literary and theological reputations are nowadays often manufactured by ways that are dark and tricks that are vain. Any small cleric of tenth-rate scholarship is tolerably sure of a blazing newspaper advertisement if, while professing to be a Christian minister, he publishes a pamphlet or preaches a sermon that attacks the foundations of Christian faith and morality. He has simply to be, so to speak, a cheap phonograph emitting odd notes from the discordant jangle of the little tin gods of the rationalistic and destructive 'higher criticism' that is 'made in Germany'. The sixteenth century reformers employed their principle of private judgment to make a fetish of the Bible; the lesser twentieth century 'reformers' employ the principle of