

As an example of the class of subjects which should be left to the discretion of the Department, I may refer to the matter of dress. This is evidently not a proper matter for the interference of Congress. It happens, indeed, that the present law prohibiting to diplomats any kind of official dress or uniform has certain advantages. These uniforms are expensive, a full equipment, even for an attaché or secretary, costing from five hundred to a thousand dollars. This would be more than a secretary who was receiving a salary of \$2000 a year, and who was liable at any time to lose his place, could afford to pay. It might seem to be just as well, therefore, that the diplomat should have the law as an excuse for his not going to this expense. Still, this is obviously not a subject upon which there should be a hard and fast rule.

I am aware that these are suggestions which would not be well received by the American politician of the old style. They are, indeed, of a kind one would not have thought of making a few years ago. The truth is, the spirit of reform has already accomplished so much in this country that it is very cheerful about its prospects of success in the future. It is less and less afraid to support any principle which has justice on its side. I do not believe that it will cease its endeavors until the Government shall be an example in the midst of us of honor, reason, and good taste, which last, as has been said, is only a finer kind of justice.

*E. S. Nadal.*

#### An American Diplomacy.

THE questions which have been pressed upon the minds of many citizens by recent incidents of our diplomatic service go much deeper than mere matters of organization and administration. The occasions on which, of late, the service has been brought most conspicuously to the public attention have been the persistent efforts of certain traveling Americans to secure introduction into a certain circle of society into which they claimed a certain indefeasible right, as American citizens, to be introduced by the official representative of the Republic. And this functionary has been seriously criticised in the public press for his course concerning these grave cases, and has been censured for his too great ease in consenting in some cases, in others for his excessive scrupulousness in refusing. But through the whole discussion it seems to be assumed or conceded, first, that the Government of the United States is maintaining a great and costly system of "diplomatic service," one main function of which, in quiet times, is to aid the aspirations of certain citizens to be introduced in a social circle where they are not, as a rule, very much wanted; and secondly, that honorable gentlemen like Mr. Lowell and Mr. Phelps are officially charged with the function of rating the standing in the social scale of their traveling fellow-citizens, and of smelling out the antecedents of republican women who yearn to be presented to royalty. Is it strange that the disinterested spectator of this paltry business should begin to raise some radical questions—as (1) whether the Republic has any interest in aiding its traveling citizens to be presented at court, and (2) whether the business of determining on the eligibility of aspirants to such honors, and of making the inci-

dental inquiries, is a business which ought to be imposed on a gentleman of dignity and honor, and not rather upon some such person as the late Mr. Brown of Grace Church, with such assistance as he might occasionally need from the office of Mr. Pinkerton?

There is serious danger that the people, in their disgust at such exhibitions of the silly side of the diplomatic service as have been witnessed, may rush some time to the extreme measure, which has more than once been urged, of abolishing the diplomatic service, and so solving at a stroke these momentous questions of costume, and eligibility, and fitness for distinguished society, which now perplex the councils of the nation. This would be a pity, for there is no doubt that the Government has business to transact with other governments, from time to time, sufficient to justify the keeping of a competent agent in communication with the office of foreign affairs in each important capital. The Administration which should succeed in rigorously cutting down the whole diplomatic service to this business basis, and should say boldly, the United States, having no "court" at which to receive embassies, is not in a position to send ambassadors to court, but only ministers to "reside near" the Foreign Office, would at once unload itself of a multitude of vexatious and contemptibly paltry questions, and set our Government and our people in a logical, consistent, and dignified relation towards other governments. Let it be added that this measure would be one of appreciable economy and of general popularity. Only Miss Flora McFlimsy and her friends would seriously lament, and the young gentlemen whose talents for distinguished society inspire them with longings for the position of attaché.

Will any one tell us what danger it would involve to the Republic if our business with the British Government should be intrusted no longer to an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary near the Court of St. James, but to a competent attorney, like Mr. Phelps, near Downing Street; and if this functionary should be instructed that he had no official duties whatever, either at Buckingham House or at Windsor Castle, and that to the Government which he represented it was a matter of utter indifference where he dined or danced, or whether he dined or danced at all, so long as he behaved himself with propriety and paid strict attention to business?

I am aware that these artless questions will have a barbarian sound to the ear of the average attaché; but none the less they suggest the outlines of the true American Diplomacy.

*Leonard Woolsey Bacon.*

#### Moral Teaching in our Schools.

RECOGNIZING the fact that there are serious defects in the moral results of our school training, we have given below certain plans for improving our schools in this respect which have met with much success.

One very good plan is something like the following. From two to four pupils are selected, and it is made the duty of each to look up and copy a short moral sentiment or maxim to be read at the opening of the school in the morning. Another set is selected to present similar maxims the next day, and in this way all the



pupils are selected in turn. When the pupil has read or repeated his sentiment to the school, it is illustrated, or commented upon, by the teacher, till the meaning is not only clear but well impressed. After the reading of the sentiments they are copied on the black-board, where they remain all day, and each pupil in the room copies them into a blank-book. After the first day, the teacher calls upon volunteers to repeat sentiments given on preceding days. Five or six sentiments may be called up in review each day. Some pupils, not much accustomed to general reading, may find it difficult to look up new sentiments; but let it be understood, that if a new one cannot be found, an old one will be accepted. Under judicious management there will be no trouble here. Children do not like to be parrots, repeating the words of their mates; and when review sentiments are presented they will be quite sure to be such as deserve repetition.

This plan leads to several valuable results. It keeps children on the lookout for fine moral sentiments. It often leads to more extensive reading, and quite generally to better reading, and it directs the attention to the moral import of what is read, and thus keeps before the mind high ideals of thought and action. With this plan pursued for a year, the pupils will each have copied into his book five or six hundred excellent maxims.

Most of the shorter and better of these will have been repeated a good many times in the school, and will have become well fixed in the memory of a large number of the pupils. The frequent repetition and illustration of the more striking maxims is of more importance than the number of new ones. Children need the foundation principles of right in a condensed form ready at hand, and as thoroughly inculcated as is the multiplication table. Variety is required to keep up a lively intellectual interest, and the same sentiment found in different authors, couched in different words, will contribute to this variety, and impress the thought more deeply. Occasionally a day, or a week, or a month may be given to anecdotes illustrating the favorite maxims, or to the biographies of men whose lives have illustrated them; or subjects may be chosen and maxims found to embody them; as, for instance, some days may be devoted to patriotism, when pupils will be invited to bring in sentiments that embody this virtue. Truth may be selected for another time, or any other moral attribute. It will be found wise to keep to one subject as long as a lively interest can be maintained. More moral momentum will be acquired in this way than by too frequently changing the current of thought.

Sometimes the sentiments may be restricted to poetry, at other times to prose; sometimes to some particular author,—and what a rich fountain Solomon or Pope would prove,—sometimes to one particular nation, or period in literature. These are only suggestions. A live teacher, determined to lop off vicious excrescences in character, and to train the pupils into a noble manhood and womanhood, will see what is needed, and invent a thousand ways to hold the interest of the children till the sentiment is impressed.

Religious instruction with children had its moral effect, not so much because it was derived from the Bible, as because of the pertinence of the stories and maxims, and the frequent repetition and the serious earnestness the teacher imparted to it. The simple maxim, "Hon-

esty is the best policy," can be heard a good many times with profit, and yet such a worldly-wise maxim will not intrench itself in the imagination of a child as a finer one will, nor will it be heard with quite as much favor.

Ten minutes a day is probably enough to give to explicit moral instruction; children must not be cloyed with it, and an intelligent teacher will have little difficulty in finding something fresh for his short everyday lesson. The work of inculcating good moral principles could probably be accomplished if it was scattered irregularly through the school work and given only as occasions arose; but if there is no especial time set apart for it, the pressure of the lessons is almost sure to crowd it out.

It is far better to make it an essential part of each day's work. The very fact that it is given a definite place invests it with dignity in the child's mind. Just when and how the instruction is given is of little consequence, but it is of imperative importance that there be a determined aim to give a strong and sound moral education in our schools, a determined aim that moral instruction shall have just as recognized a place as any other branch of education, and that teachers shall be held as responsible for their results in this as in arithmetic. This is not impossible, nor even very difficult. The fault is simply that it has not been attempted. Religious instruction has slipped out of our schools, and the public have not called upon teachers to substitute anything in its place. That teachers have not more generally taken up the work themselves seems a singular oversight, resulting probably from the fact that our teachers are accustomed to depend upon text-books, and no text-book of moral instruction has been put into their hands; and just this right one has not been made. A quarter of a century ago, William Ellis, an English political economist, prepared a little digest of moral and civic duties, designed for schools, which developed and explained in a series of questions and answers, in catechism form, our duties in the various relations of life. Though never finding its way into many English schools, the little books, if not just what are needed, have much merit, and are full of hints and suggestions in the right direction. If teachers earnestly begin the work of moral instruction, the needed text-book will soon appear. Many teachers have done more or less of this work, and, in some cases, all the schools of a city have had moral lessons in their programme, but the work has been unorganized and irregular; it has not become permanent,—has not secured its recognized place by the side of spelling, and writing, and arithmetic. In the kindergartens moral instruction has been systematically and effectually begun, and it only needs to be extended to all children and carried on through all grades of school work.

With careful moral instruction permanently established in our schools, our children would have reason to feel that in the public mind a knowledge of right and wrong is of as much consequence as a knowledge of accounts. They do not feel so now. Our greatest educator, Horace Mann, believed if the school, and the home, and the social environment were right, right men and women would be the result; and William T. Harris, only desiring a little element of time added, holds the same view.

Mary E. Beedy.