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EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

MADE BY THE REV. E. RYERSON AT THE PREPARATORY
OPENING OF THE COLLEGE, OCTOBER, 1841.

GENTLEMEN AND YOUNG FRIENDS,—

In opening this Institution as a preparatory Collège, with a view to its commencement as a College proper, at the beginning of the next Academic year, I deem it advisable to make a few observations on the leading features of that kind of Education which it is intended to impart at the Victoria College, and to offer you a few practical suggestions for your present assistance and encouragement as Students, in your ordinary and preparatory studies.

Lord Bacon has truly remarked, that "The mind is the man, and the knowledge of the mind. A man is but what he knoweth." It is mind that distinguishes man from the rest of the animal tribes; it is the cultivation of mind that distinguishes one man from another. In practical life, not to know is but one remove from not possessing the faculty of knowing. An uncultivated man, within the means of knowledge, is a voluntary animal. Education is the elevation of a thinking animal into a reasoning, active, beneficent, and happy intelligence; the culture and ripening of the seeds of reason, judgment, will, and the affections, into a teeming harvest of virtue, enterprise, honour, usefulness, and happiness. The object of education, rightly understood, is, first, to make youth good men—good members of universal society; secondly, to fit them for usefulness to that particular society of which they constitute an integral part—to form their principles and habits—to develop their talents and dispositions, in such a way, as will be most serviceable to the institutions under which they live, and to the interests of the country in which they dwell. Any narrower view of the great end of education is essentially defective and erroneous.

1. Education, then, to be useful—such as it is intended to impart at this Institution—must be *practical*. To be practical, it must, first, be suited to the station and intended pursuits of the educated. The elementary principles of a scientific education, are, indeed, the same under every aspect, as the laws of the human constitution are the same in all ranks and conditions; but the combinations and modifications of the several parts of a liberal education should be adapted to the various professions and pursuits contemplated by its subjects. An education for music or for commerce, for physic or for law, for mechanics or for literature, for navigation or for legislation, must be as different as are those professions and employments. Education is a means to an end; and ought, throughout the process of its acquirement, to be connected with the end proposed. Habits, views, tastes and feelings, should be