

of mathematics; together with the whole array of *ologies* which the multitudes of scientists have ever discovered or invented. Seriously, the frightful number of branches which are crowded into some of our schools crowd all real education out. While the poor teacher is worked almost to death, the pupils generally, though they undertake so much, accomplish very little; and eventually leave school deplorably deficient in the branches of education necessary to qualify them for the practical duties of earnest life. Such are many of our best miscellaneous schools, located in the more populous and flourishing settlements.

But there are other places—not a few—where the people are not so aspiring. The acme of their ambition is to secure the services of “a third class female teacher.” In these places the people have no thought of paying any part of the teacher’s salary directly out of their own pockets. They provide a few dollars to keep the school-house and furniture, such as they are, in repair, and to procure a little fuel; but they depend upon the liberal provision made by the Government, in County and Provincial funds, for the payment of the salary. To such an extent has this contemptible “cheese-paring” policy been carried, in some sections, that the trustees, after paying their teacher, out of the public funds, have a balance left. In such substitutes for schools how can the pupils be educated? The teachers themselves can lay no just claim to attainments higher than the lowest rudiments of education, and are generally quite inexperienced in teaching. They may, and often do, exact the most scrupulous accuracy from their pupils in reciting lessons from text books. Even in history the poor little people are not exempted from this miserable slavery; but must render the prescribed *task verbatim*. This and a terrible constraint, oppressive as a nightmare, and miscalled *order*, constitute, in the estimation of these teachers, the great excellence of the work. Of demonstration, illustration and elucidation, of the educating or developing process, they know little and practice less. When, Oh! when, will parents awaken to a full sense of their responsibility to God, for the proper training of their children? If a father have an old watch, worth \$4.00, to put in order, he will treat it immeasurably better than he does his little child, whom he sends to such a school. Yes, that old watch has delicate machinery, and no hand but that of a master must touch it; but the exquisitely delicate machinery of that little one’s immortal mind may be entrusted to a novice—to any one who works at a cheap rate.

Before closing my remarks on the unsatisfactory state of our Public Schools, permit me to offer a word or two upon the frequent change of teachers, so prevalent in country schools. It is largely owing to this cause that so few, on leaving school, are qualified for the places which they must occupy in the various industrial departments of life.

With a change of teachers comes a change of school management, and a change of system of teaching. A teacher of rare excellence is often succeeded by one who knows little, and, it may be, cares less about teaching; his principal object being to obtain a few dollars to enable him to go another term to college, or as an addition to a capital, with which to start in some other occupation. Of the hundreds of young men who to-day occupy teacher’s desks in Nova Scotia, how many intend to make teaching a life work? How many intend to teach even five years? I venture to affirm that not one-fourth have any such intention or desire. At least three-fourths aim at the “ministry,” or some other profession, and are only making the public schools convenient stepping stones to enable them to “pass along.” Though many of these young aspirants to the pulpit or the bar may lack all the most essential qualifications for teaching, yet personal friends and relatives are ever ready to lend them a helping hand, and hoist them into schools, even over the heads of able professional teachers. By alternately teaching and studying a few years, the desired goal, or rather starting post will be gained, and then adieu to schools forever, unless indeed Inspectorships, or some other offices in the Educational Department, can be secured.

I would not be unnecessarily severe with a very worthy class of young men; but I respectfully submit to the Council of Public Instruction, *i. e.*, the Executive Government of Nova Scotia, that this country has advanced beyond the necessity, or even desirability of having student-teachers in the public schools. For what purpose, may I ask, is our excellent Normal College? To what purpose do so many teachers attend its sessions year after year, at no little personal expense and inconvenience, if

they are to be crowded out of their chosen fields of labor? Every spring, a little before the commencement of the summer term, a host of students come forth from college, hungry for schools, or rather, in most cases, for the salaries which the schools afford; for I am persuaded that if they could make as much money at any other employment, equally light and respectable, four fifths of them would eschew teaching in *toto*. But what is to be done? How can these young students be debarred from teaching, after they have passed successful examinations and obtained honours? This question, Mr. Editor, has already been answered in your columns, but I here repeat them:—

I. Let no one be eligible for a school license who has not attended the Institution at Truro for at least one term, and who will not give a definite pledge to teach at least for five consecutive years.

II. If a teacher vacates the school-room six months to engage in any other employment, except by permission, let his license be revoked. Of course the permission should be contingent upon the necessity of the applicant, and not upon his mere convenience. If any one prefer other employment because of higher remuneration, let him go into it, or at least stay out of the schools. If he wish to go to college to study for another profession, let him not be allowed to make the public schools subservient to his ulterior purposes.

The pressing necessity for more—many more—graded schools next claims a few closing remarks. Trustees and other interested parties may boast as long and as loudly as they please, of the superior excellence of schools with fifty or sixty pupils of ages so various, and in studies so abundant, under one teacher; every thorough educator knows the hollowness and absurdity of such boasting. I will not occupy your space and your readers’ time in here discussing the necessity of graded schools, of two and three departments, in all the more populous sections; every one knows, or ought to know, that both time and money would be saved by the arrangement. But how obtain so many schools of this class? Simply enough. Let Provincial aid be disallowed by *Act of Parliament* to every school in which there are not two departments for a *minimum* of forty, and a *maximum* of sixty pupils; and three departments for over sixty pupils. This would awaken the people, if not to a sense of their duty, at least to the doing of it; and in a short time the sense would come.

A TEACHER.

### L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE AU CANADA.

We have received the above named work recently issued by the Hon. H. Chauveau, formerly Minister of Public Instruction for the Province of Quebec. The volume received, is a history of the establishment and progress of public instruction in the Provinces of Canada, and also of Newfoundland. The author has evidently expended much time and labor on his valuable work, which certainly affords a very large amount of important information on the educational movements in the several Provinces of the Dominion. The work is in French, and persons familiar with that language speak in terms of high commendation of its style and general character. M. Chauveau’s position as Minister of public instruction identified him with the education work of Quebec, and to a certain extent with the educational efforts in the other provinces, and hence his work may be accepted as reliable on the subject of which he writes; and as he has collected with much labor such a large amount of most valuable information, and as the present issue must be restricted to those speaking French, we might suggest the desirableness of an English edition, as likely to make the work of M. Chauveau increasingly useful.

THE *Dalhousie Gazette*, and the *Acadian Athenæum*, for February, are received. We congratulate the editors of these papers on their continued success, and in giving increased interest to their work. Certainly there is no relaxing of the intellectual vigor with which these excellent periodicals have been conducted. By the former students and friends of the colleges especially, their papers are read with an increasing interest, and they no doubt are doing much to stimulate a love for collegiate education in our province.