

be placed in such a light, as to meet the prevailing errors and prejudices of our own age.

My present object is to combat the prejudices which have prevailed in this age, against the instruction of the lower orders, and particularly those which have hitherto prevailed against the instruction of the Canadians. In the execution of this duty, I shall consider,—First, the consequences which we might naturally suppose to follow from the instruction of a rural people;—Next, the consequences that have actually followed from it, in those countries in which it has been accomplished; Lastly, the application of the argument to the particular circumstances and condition of the Canadian people.

1.—OF THE PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE EDUCATION OF A RURAL PEOPLE. These may be considered as affecting a rural people, either in their political attachments, in their religious sentiments, or their individual happiness.

With regard to the attachment which the inhabitants of any country may form for the government under which they live, I would lay it down as a fixed principle, that no attachment of this kind can be depended on, while the people themselves remain in ignorance. While this ignorance continues, they are capable neither of appreciating the merits of their government, nor of foreseeing the fatal consequences of attempting a change.

When a government possesses only a moderate share of excellence, still it is better for the people to submit, than to risk the consequences of a revolution. This is a position of which the experience of all ages proves the truth. History renders it undeniable to all who are fitted to receive historical information. And all those in every country who possess only a moderate portion of knowledge, are convinced of its truth. They are firmly attached to good order, and regard revolutions with horror. But how are the totally ignorant to learn this important lesson? How are they to come to the knowledge of it, who have no means of instruction; who have no records of the past besides uncertain tradition, and the family tales which they learned almost as soon as they acquired the use of speech? To them the history of nations is sealed up, the experience of other times is lost. The admonitions conveyed in the revolutions of their country is never heard. Their mind remains as fearless of innovation, as if no such events had ever before occurred to illustrate its dreadful consequences.

But if general knowledge be advantageous under a government of only moderate excellence; it must be far more advantageous and desirable, under a government so transcendently excellent as the British. Under such a form of government, ignorance is to be deprecated as one of the most dangerous symptoms that can present themselves. Public information is, in such a case, the best possible means for securing good order; the most rational and successful method of promoting that attachment to the established system, on which the only reasonable hope of its permanence can be founded. For in what other way are the generality of its subjects to become acquainted with its merits? How can they be persuaded of its superiority, if they have no means of judging what portion of their happiness is derived from it, and if they are totally