

The Church Times.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1856.

EDUCATION.

THAT the masses ought to be educated is a truth which no good citizen will dispute—that they will be educated in some way or other,—that they demand “knowledge” with a tone which will accept no denial, is a truth which no wise statesman will dare to hide from himself, and no earnest Christian will fail to improve. We all admit that “Knowledge is power”, but do we all realize the truth, that this is a two-edged aphorism—that it is as powerful to do evil when misdirected as it is potent for good when guided well—that knowledge, without godliness, is as keen an arrow in the hand of Satan, as sanctified learning is a most efficient weapon in the armory of God.

The first godless School ever created was beneath the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—the teacher Satan—the education sin—and the first lesson there learnt, which is a warning ever fresh, was this, that knowledge unsanctified by, and in defiance of God's word, is merely the “power” to be miserable, the faculty of being lost. This we need bear in mind when we see the inhabitants of every country leaving tumultuously in its struggles for knowledge, for the only voice that can calm those waves and still that rising storm is the voice of heaven—the oil on the waters must be religion. How the increasing demand for enlightened instruction on the part of the people is most wisely to be met, how this tide of knowledge which is either to devastate or enrich the land through which it is surging, can be best controlled, is a problem which all civilized Europe is now engaged in solving. Nor is Europe alone in the study,—it is not too much to say that the whole of Christendom is interested and hard at work on this giant task, which, in its failure or success, must determine how shall be written many a page of its future history. We all know with how determined a legislation the United States urge on the advancement of useful knowledge among the people—and doubtless to this general diffusion of instruction and the expulsion of ignorance, is owing to a great extent the unparalleled rapidity of growth which marks that country.

And now in Nova Scotia it has become a most legible truth that the State must either vigorously legislate for the Education of its people, or we must be content to lag far in the rear of the sister colonies.

That the system now worked is most miserably adapted to the wants of the Province is painfully evident—or rather it is the utter absence of system which is the cause of complaint. This must be remedied and at once—but how? is the question for which His Excellency has prepared us in his opening Speech. The measure thus promised will be soon before the country, and it is most natural that a great anxiety should prevail to see in what mould the Education of the country is to be shaped.

It is confessedly, in the present divided state of the Christian world, a most difficult subject of legislation. Apart from the difficulty of maintaining the Schools, there arises this question: What shall be taught in them? The education must either be of a merely secular character or be blended with religious teaching—both of these would meet with many opponents. The first would be denounced as unfit for men who must live eternally—the next would be censured by every denomination, few if any of whom would be content with the doctrine of teaching only the great indisputable truths of Christianity. No, each communion does in reality set too much value on the distinctive doctrines which separate them, to admit of their being kept out of the sight of their young members—it is but natural that they should wish to train up their children in those distinctive tenets, or the vital importance of which they rest the grave responsibility of separating themselves from the elder Church—for if it be admitted that the points of difference be immaterial, separation being a breach of the unity of the faith is indefensible on any grounds. Even among those who demand the infusion of religion into secular education, there are so many shades of opinion, so many doctrines vital in the estimation of some, expedient with others, indifferent with many, that even were the offer freely made, that we might frame a religious system, there would be still room for discussion, what limits to distinctive and dogmatic teaching should be fixed—so that all creeds might meet and meet without compromising any truth worth contending for. The preliminaries would be comparatively easy—the great truths, the denial of which make a man infidel and a Church apostate, might be amicably accepted. But let us ask ourselves, as honest men—are we prepared to obliterate all those features of doctrine and

discipline which we recognize as rules of the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Would we, would the mothers of the English Church, calmly hear that their babes were to be left to the unprovoked mercies of God, would they patiently abide the teaching that their children should not be allowed to go with them to the moray seat and in the full spirit of adoption, cry “Abba Father”—yet if these truths are worth contending for by the parents, surely it is robbing the children to keep them in ignorance—youth cannot cancel the obligation of knowing the whole counsel of God, so that each separated body of Christians would (and each universally except the Church does) teach their young disciples the distinctive doctrines of their communion.

It is moreover evident that whatever be the system of Education prescribed by the State, there will be a modification and adaptation given to it by each Christian body—it may form the general reservoir, but its contents will be drawn off by very different channels. Religion will give tone, and the peculiar phases of Religion a colouring to the system of the State. We shall not call this bigotry, and we therefore expect that no honest non-conformist will brand with that odious title the efforts of our Church in securing that the young of the flock, at least before their years of discretion call them to God's altar to be confirmed in the faith, shall know the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.”

To effect this we chiefly rely on the faithful endeavours of our Sunday Schools; if these put out of sight the Baptismal Service, and neglect to impress on the memory and understanding of the baptized, those fundamental scriptural truths which are provided for the binding up God's children in the faith, we do not marvel that a clamour is raised when we ask for the same accredited formulary in the Common School.

As long as we are Churchmen we must hear our Church, and we know that Church education can only be based on the Church's doctrine, and this can only be sought in her authorized formularies.

Our Sunday Schools must be fully impregnated with the Church Catechism, and then our Common Schools will even without dogmatic teaching, never wear away the affection of young Churchmen.

We have been led to these remarks by observing the stir which has been lately made to invigorate the National School, the interior economy of which as far as depended on the Master is in its meridian, but its exterior arrangement was seemingly in its evening of life—we now however, having before our eyes the cheerful generous sympathy which was aroused by a call for assistance to King's College, and in reading over the names of the gentlemen who compose the new, practical and active Committee, (which we published in a previous number,) in whose hands are placed the destiny of the National School, believe that it will assume new life, and that having interested the right men in its behalf we shall soon wipe off the disgrace of having such an institution almost in ruins—and hope that we shall soon behold our venerable Cathedral Church and its handmaid the National School, put on with Spring a new dress, and be a satisfaction to Churchmen and an ornament to this city.

We understand that a Bazaar is to be held at Dartmouth in aid of the Funds of the Dartmouth Church School, and that it will take place on a day, the associations connected with which are not yet faded from the recollection of many among us.—The present generation know but little of the enthusiasm with which the Anniversary of the birth of good old George the Third was celebrated, by their fathers, both at home and abroad. That is the day appointed for the Dartmouth Bazaar, and we have no doubt that the reminiscences that it will give rise to will cause a large assemblage at Dartmouth, and a large contribution of every thing likely to aid the cause,—from the old who have not forgotten the occasion, and their descendants who value the Church of which the old King was so strenuous a defender, and her institutions, which in every part of the habitable globe are lending their aid to civilize and christianize the people.

THE ATHENÆUM.—We are glad to know that the Athenæum Committee are, by the kind offices of the Citizens, in a fair way ere long to pay off the debt upon the Institution. Another of those intellectual entertainments which have afforded a charming variety to the amusement of our winter's evenings, took place on Tuesday last, when Hugo Reid, Esq. delivered an extemporaneous lecture on the historical parallel between the royal houses of Stuart and Bourbon. The lecturer was perfectly at home upon his subject, and by the way he treated & imparted

a good deal of information and material for thought to the student of history. He was succeeded by Mr. Passow, who gave a series of dramatic and poetic readings from the dramas of Sheridan Knowles and others, which agreeably entertained the large audience for the space of an hour. The fine band of the 70th regt. played at intervals between the addresses, and the audience which was large, dispersed, with a disposition to swell their numbers upon the next occasion.

The Legislature of New Brunswick was opened on the 14th inst. The Lieut. Governor's speech commences with an expression of gratitude to the Almighty for the many blessings which have been bestowed on the people of the Province during the past year—notices that the agricultural crops have been abundant and the fisheries successful—is thankful that the Province has been exempted from the recurrence of disease—and alludes to the Railway mission of the Attorney General, and to measures for the purpose of facilitating and promoting the construction of railways, which he is sure will receive earnest attention.

The expenditure of the year 1855 has largely exceeded the revenue during the same period, but strangely enough, it appears that the revenue collected has been nearly identical with the amount stated in the estimate. It follows that for some reason or other the Government of New Brunswick has been living much above its income, and there are strong symptoms that with governments as individuals the natural result will follow.

The Lieut. Governor directs the attention of the Legislature to the state of education with a view to provision being made for its improvement, and the establishment of a good academic and common school education, on liberal terms, without distinction of class or creed.

The Assembly, at the latest advice, was discussing a vote of want of confidence in the administration. The result was uncertain, although the officials spoke confidently of a majority to sustain them.

NOVA SCOTIA LEGISLATURE.

The Assembly met again on Tuesday, when Mr. Wadd was chosen Speaker. Since then there has been but little done to expedite the business which the Governor's speech led the country to anticipate. Indeed, it is said that divisions amongst the ministers and their supporters threaten a serious hindrance to several of the contemplated measures. The Educational Bill has not yet made its appearance.

The New York Church Journal of Feb. 14, contains the following information relative to the appointment of a Bishop for the Island of Jamaica:

JAMAICA.—A letter from the West Indies gives us the following information, as authentic. We have seen nothing of it as yet in the English Papers, and await its official confirmation:—

“The present Bishop of Jamaica, the Rt. Rev. Aubrey Spenser, D. D., has determined to retire from the active duties of his Diocese, in consequence of his declining health. The Hon. and Rev. Reginald Courtenay has been appointed to fill the station of the former Prelate. Mr. Courtenay passed through St. Thomas en route for England in the last steamer, two weeks since, for consanguinity, and will return to the West Indies in about eight or ten weeks. Dr. Spenser still retains the title of “Bishop of Jamaica,” and Dr. Courtenay's will be “Bishop of Kingston.”

The R. M. Steamer Canada arrived on Friday morning from Boston. The New York Herald, in a temperate article on the threats of the British press towards America, and a glance at the resources of the United States, recommends it to Congress as a duty to prepare for the emergency, by taking up the subject of the navy, increasing the steam vessels of war, looking after the coast defences, and placing the United States in an attitude that will show to the world that they are prepared to maintain their rights at all hazards. There is, however, in all the comments of the United States press on British relations, a monarchical perversion of British magnanimity towards that power, which shows the national peculiarity of the people, and may perhaps drive them into a contest, the end of which, judging by human means, will redound neither to their profit or honor.

From despatches received at Washington Feb. 22, Great Britain informs the American Government that she has made full and ample apology on the enlistment question, and can do no more—as to Central America she is willing to submit that question to arbitration—there is no intimation that the British Ambassador will be recalled. There appears to be no prospect of an early settlement of the matters in dispute. Mr. Fremont has received fresh instructions not to absent himself from Washington as he heretofore contemplated, but to attend to the unfinished business of the departments.