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PAST AND PRESENT EDUCATION.

We select the following from an excellent speech by Lord JOHN RUSSELL,—who, following the examples of the Duke of NEWCASTLE, (Lord Lincoln,) the present Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earls of CARLISLE, BELFAST, ELLESMERE, and other noblemen, has recently been lecturing at the Mechanics' Institute, at Leeds.

The example of the noble champions and advocates of education in England in the olden time, is of infinite value to a young country like Canada, and its spirit seems to have been imbibed at a recent meeting held at Hamilton, to promote the establishment and endowment of a College in that city. Lord JOHN RUSSELL remarked that—

“Before the Reformation, and immediately afterwards, great sums of money and broad lands were given for the purpose of endowing academies, colleges, and schools for education. Our ancestors thought, and I believe wisely thought, that the best plan they could adopt was to teach, or to provide means for teaching the science and the literature which have been derived from ancient nations, for in those days that science and that literature contained all that was known, that was really worthy of study, the most profound works upon the subjects of geometry and science, and the best models of literary writing. I am far

from thinking that our ancestors committed an error, either, when they directed the education of youth almost exclusively to these objects, or when they decided that a great length of time should be given to that knowledge; but we have to consider that at the present day we stand in a totally different position. Not that we ought to forget what great advantages we have derived from the science and the literature of ancient nations: because upon the geometry delivered to us from the ancients has been founded all that increase of knowledge which ended in the discoveries of Newton,—from the writings of the poets of antiquity the great poets of modern times have derived the best models they could imitate,—from the jurisprudence of the Romans were derived the laws by which most of the nations of the continent have been ruled. But, while this tribute must be paid, it is a paramount object of attention that we, in the course of the three centuries and a half that have elapsed from what is called “the revival of letters,” have added to the stores that we have received immense stores of our own,—that by the side of that rich mine we have opened other mines, which, if not of richer ore, are more easily worked, and are more abundant in their produce. It was Lord Bacon who first pointed out that the mode of the pursuit of science for modern nations ought to be different from that mode for the discovery of truth which had been pointed out by some of the great philosophers. It has been much questioned whether Lord Bacon was in fact the guide by whom other discoverers have been enabled to pursue the track of knowledge and of invention, and upon that point I think it is certainly clear that it was not Lord Bacon who enabled Galileo and Torricelli, Pascal, Tycho Brahe, Copernicus, and Kepler to make the great discoveries which have immortalized their names. But what is true, is, that Lord Bacon at a very early period laid down the rules by which all modern men of science have guided themselves. He pointed out the road they have followed, and laid down more clearly, more broadly, more ably than any one else, the great method by which modern discovery should be pursued. You will find, I think, if you pursue this subject—if those who belong to mechanics' institutes will study the two works of Lord Bacon, the one called the “New Organ,” and the other on the “Instauration of the Sciences”—you will find that the latest discoveries, the latest inventions, have been made according to that mode which he pointed out. A work was published but a year ago by Mr. Fairbairn, giving an account of the experiments which he adopted under the direction of Mr. Stephenson, and by which that gentleman was enabled to construct the tubular bridges at Conway and over the Menai Straits. You will find that all those experiments were according to the rules which Lord Bacon has laid down. Take another work, on geology, and a most interesting work it is, called the “Old Red Sandstone,” by Mr. Hugh Miller, and you will find in that interesting work, which is as remarkable for the beauty of its style as for the importance of its matter, that Mr. Hugh Miller, being at first a mason working in a stone quarry, pursued, in his method of investigation, the same rules which Lord