

INTERPROVINCIAL CONVENTION.

Proceedings of the High School Section.

The High School Section met in the Hall of the Victoria school, at 8 A. M. o'clock, on Tuesday, July 18th. W. M. McLean, A. B., of St. John, occupied the chair, and H. V. Bridges, M. A., of Fredericton, acted as secretary. In addition to the principals and teachers of high schools throughout the Atlantic Provinces, there were present Sir Wm. Dawson, Dr. Bailey, of the University of N. B., Professor R. G. Huling, of New Bedford; and others.

SCIENCE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

The first paper read was by A. H. MacKay, B. A., B. Sc., Principal of Pictou Academy, on "Science in the High School Curriculum."

Mr. MacKay said:—

Fellow Teachers:—I venture some thoughts on our High School Curricula, solely with the object of eliciting an interchange of opinion as to what we should attempt in the present stage of our educational development, so as to produce the most desirable results. In the Pictou Academy, during the course of my incumbency, I have had charge successively of the instruction in each of the departments, English, classics, mathematics and natural science. The latter department is now my special care, not so much from choice as from necessity. I have had some opportunity, therefore, small as it may have been, of indulging in the pleasure incident to a more or less specialized attention to each of the leading groups of high school work; and can somewhat appreciate the genuineness of the feelings which often with the brilliancy as well as with the erratic playfulness of auroral corruscations have presented as the sole superior form of mental culture, now the classical, now the mathematical, and now the vernacular literary or the scientific.

We meet together here from different environments. The world, while in some leading respects the same to all of us, has been a different world to each of us. Even the poetic reference to *Jupiter frigidus*, to the whisper of the zephyr, the monotone of the ocean, or the blue-bell tossing in wind, lights up different pictures in the galleries of our memories. Our minds have been developed by contact with different phases of this great world, our delights have sprung from various sources; and as many flavored as are our tastes are the hues of what we may think best for our common humanity. With such thoughts in our minds we are ready to understand that there may be sources of enjoyment as deep as ours in realms of nature not visited by us; that there

may be superior culture in mental gymnastics which we have not tried; and that the *consensus* of the teachers of three provinces is likely to be a safer guide than the notions of the most experienced unit among us. Let us therefore simply compare notes, and learn through others what we may not have learned ourselves.

The school is only an adjunct in completing the education of the individual. Education I would briefly define, as the harmonious development of all the faculties of the being, with special reference to his environment. When the individual is mature the education must become more special or technical. This stage lies beyond the proper realm of the high school. For the mass of mankind it must lie only immediately beyond the common school. For an extremely small percentage of humanity it may lie beyond the university. This technical education, which fits for the business of life, varies from the simple art of the fisherman to the mind-wrestlings of the metaphysician, to the inventive skill of the scientist who creates a new industry. The secular school is simply an adjunct, to supply at the proper time and in the best known manner that kind of culture which will most economically advance the good of society. The high school may be considered to be the general, all round developer of the mental powers of those who are likely to be the leaders in all the different phases of human activity. A few will go to the universities and specialize for the learned professions, some in the direction of letters, some in the direction of art, some in the direction of science, and so forth. Still further, specialization in each of such groups will give us those who should be the first among the leaders in thought, and the pioneers in invention. This leaves the high school responsible to a great extent, for directing the tastes and suggesting the courses which may in future be developed in the under-graduate career and post-graduate courses of the universities and in technical colleges. It also leaves the high school responsible for much of the general contour of mental habits in the greater number who leave it for the profession of teaching, of medicine, of law, of theology, and for the legion of industrial vocations which now demand intelligent laborers and directors. The modern high school has to lay a much broader foundation than the olden; but as the limit of human accomplishment remains pretty much the same as before, we may have to cease to build some of the foundation walls so high. The high school was once a sort of technical school for the literary arts and professions. Now we are expanding it to give the elements of a truer—because a wider—culture. The guiding star of the old was