

THE GUARDIAN.

"HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

VOLUME II.

HALIFAX, N. S. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1840.

NUMBER 37.

POETRY.

THE IDIOT BOY.

There is great beauty and tenderness in the description of the village idiot—the "pale-faced idiot boy."

"Tis sad to see the eye forget its ray,
And sorrow sit, where smiles were wont to play;
'Tis sad when youth is fair, and fresh, and warm,
And life is fraught with every sweeter charm,
To see it close the lip, and droop the head,
Wane from the earth, and mingle with the dead;
But, oh! nor death nor we can ever seem
So heart-appalling as that wild'ring dream—
That life in death—a desolated mind,
Around whose wreck the weeds of madness wind!

"Down yon romantic dale, where hamlets few
Arrest the summer pilgrim's frequent view,
The village wonder, and the widow's joy,
Dwells the poor, mindless, pale-faced maniac boy;
He lives and breathes, and rolls his vacant eye
To greet the glowing fancies of the sky;
But on his cheek unmeaning shades of wo
Reveal the wither'd thoughts that sleep below!
A soul-less thing, a spirit of the woods,
He loves to commune with the fields and floods;
Sometimes along the woodland's winding glade,
He starts, and smiles upon his pallid shade;
Or scolds with idiot threat the roaming wind,
But rebel music to the ruin'd mind!
Or on the shell-strewn beach delighted strays,
Playing his fingers in the noon-tide rays;
And when the sea-waves swell their hollow roar
He counts the billows plunging to the shore;
And oft, beneath the glimmer of the moon,
He chants some wild and melancholy tune;
Till o'er his softening features seem to play
A flickering dream of mind's recovered sway.

"Thus, like a living dream, apart from men,
From morn to eve he haunts the wood and glen;
But round him,—near him,—wheresoe'er he rove
A shielding angel tracks him from above!
Nor harm from flood or fen shall e'er destroy
The lonesome wand'rings of the maniac boy."

Academical Intelligence.

SPEECH OF THE REV. HENRY ESSON,

AT THE PUBLIC MEETING IN MONTREAL.

MR. PRESIDENT,—In calling upon this meeting and the public generally, to contribute towards the establishment of the projected College, it will naturally be expected that a previous explanation should be given, of the views of those who have originated the design, of the advantages which may be expected to be derived from the Institution, by the Presbyterian Church in particular, and by the country at large, and of the practicability of the means which have been devised, for raising the fund necessary to carry the project into effect. Fortunately, I am spared the necessity of entering into any detailed, or elaborate exposition of the principles on which such institutions should be framed, in order to be most perfectly effective of their great end—imparting to the community that higher education, which is the express object of their foundation. It will be an easier task to me, and I am persuaded, more satisfactory for you, to be informed that it is not proposed that the establishment in question shall be constituted, on any merely speculative views of its originators, upon any new or untried theory of education; it does not aspire to the very dubious and equivocal praise, as, in such a case, it might justly be deemed, of originality or novelty in its plan. Its projectors, with sound sober practical wisdom, have determined to adhere strictly to the model of the Academical institutions, which, for more than three centuries, have been in successful practice in our native Scotland, and, viewed in their adaptation to the circumstances of the people, and of the country, which are very similar to those of Canada, are allowed to have fulfilled their proper ends as perfectly, as any similar institutions throughout the civilized world. Following out this prudent resolution of adhering to the long tried model of the universities of Scotland, the Synod of our church in these Provinces had, some time ago, submitted their views on the subject to the Committee of the General Assembly, in correspondence with them, requesting their aid to draw up a plan on the model aforesaid, with such modifications and improvements, as their more experienced wisdom might suggest. This

Committee, it is understood, have engaged to draw up this plan,—the Rev. Dr. Lee, one of the most learned men of his country and of his age, who is eminently qualified for the task, by his intimate knowledge of the history and antiquities of Scotland, especially of her academical and ecclesiastical institutions. With the same view the Synod have authorized this committee to nominate the first Principal and one Professor, under whose auspices the College will be opened. The facts which I have now stated, will, I doubt not, have the effect of inspiring you with a perfect confidence, in the wisdom of the measures adopted for laying a sound and solid foundation of the proposed College.

The principal motive which suggested the project, was the necessity that has been long felt of establishing a Theological school, for the education of Pastors to supply the spiritual destitution of the Presbyterian inhabitants of Canada and of British North America generally. But it is manifest that no Theological School can be regarded as perfect and complete, when it stands insulated,—divorced from its natural union with the departments of Literature, Science, Philosophy and Ethics. Without this union there can be no effectual security against the hazard of having the minds of the students infected with dangerous errors and heresies, or even tainted with infidelity or materialism under the influence of men of irreligious or of sceptical principles.—By uniting all the branches, at once, of a secular and theological education, and giving the former such a direction as to render them most subservient to the interests of the latter, a sound, moral, and religious education is provided, which, while it is to be regarded as indispensable necessity to those who are preparing for the office of the Christian Ministry, cannot but be acceptable to those who are looking forward to civil life and its employments. If these views be correct, and I am confident they cannot be controverted, our theological institution, would have been defective, and worse than defective, had a less comprehensive and liberal plan been adopted.

It is not one of the least of the benefits which are derived from these superior seminaries, that they operate with a powerful and widely extended influence, in giving a higher tone and greater efficiency to education in all its inferior seminaries, and throughout all its subordinate gradations. The most faithful and successful teachers in the district and common schools soon acquire a name and a reputation, amongst the professors and heads of the universities in their vicinity, in virtue of the superior standing of their scholars, and the comparative merits of schools and teachers, thus ascertained, act not only as an honourable incentive to emulation and industry among the teachers, but draw after them that recompense which is due to the meritorious schoolmaster, increasing the number of scholars that frequent his school, and thereby his emoluments, in proportion to the comparative reputation of the school, as determined by this very fair and satisfactory criterion. This effect, it is obvious, will be greater in proportion as you multiply the number of colleges, and thereby the centres from which a quickening and vivifying spirit emanates to act upon all the other seminaries of an inferior order that lie within their sphere.

Little need be said, I am persuaded, in this respectable and enlightened meeting, of the invaluable service to a nation, in all its greatest and most vital interests, by the establishment of schools of literature, philosophy and science, like the one now contemplated. It is not, happily, in this our day, any longer a question of doubtful disputation, that the richest, most generous, and grateful soil, which a nation can cultivate, for the advancement of its prosperity and glory, is the human mind. The most manifold and inexhaustible wealth and resources of any nation are those which lie hidden, like the precious treasures in the bowels of the earth, in the minds of her people, until the hand of education draw them forth. Education in this view, has been compared by the immortal Bacon, to the first and noblest of the physical arts, and with his peculiarly happy and appropriate felicity of language, he denominates it the Georgics, or agriculture of the mind.

Could I, this day, point out to you some new source of improvement in arts, agriculture, commerce or internal communications—could I suggest some highly advantageous mode of investing capital, which would enrich yourselves and families, while in an equal measure it benefited your country, you would all press forward with emulous alacrity, to give in your names and your subscriptions. What less, my friends and

fellow citizens, can you do on this occasion, when we call upon you to aid in creating an institution, which thus springing from your bounty, will, I doubt not, gratefully repay that bounty, not only to you but to your children, and to the latest posterity, for this is none of your ephemeral institutions, like Jonah's gourd, which, "came up in a night and perished in a night," but it is one whose influence will be lasting as it is diffusive—an institution which shall give to our country, for ages to come, enlightened men, accomplished minds—without which all the bounties of nature are bestowed upon us in vain, and we are unworthy to be possessors of this mighty and glorious land, on which the hand of providence has lavished unsparingly the most various and incalculable resources—and with which we can, out of the most barren and ungrateful soil, and out of the most unpromising subjects, draw forth the most precious and abundant materials of national prosperity, greatness and glory. Give us such scientific artisans as Watt, Rennie, and Telford, give us such philosophers as Smith and Black, give us such a body of skilful and intelligent farmers, merchants, manufacturers as those of Scotland, and you open a career of national improvement and aggrandizement, which mocks all calculation as to its results. One such mind as that of Watt or Smith is, to a country, better than all the mines of Potosi. It realises all that fable has ever feigned, of the Philosopher's stone. Knowledge is power—science and art the great miracle workers of our day.—They have, in fact, achieved, in the words of Lord Bacon, what magic never pretended to do. But such men do not flourish, such minds cannot be formed in countries destitute of schools of art, science and philosophy. No force of natural genius and industry combined, could, without scientific instruction superadded, have availed to produce a Watt, a Smith or a Black. The institution, in favor of which I now solicit your liberality is one of those which are designed to develop the inventive and active powers of man, the most productive and inexhaustible of all the sources of national wealth, prosperity and grandeur. I do not invoke your aid to a languishing or even a faltering cause. From the latest intelligence which I can gather, a sum of from £12,000 to £15,000 in money or lands appears to have been subscribed already. It does honour to the enlightened and generous spirit of the people of Canada, and I am sure will awaken a sentiment of admiration, and triumph in the breasts of our brethren in Scotland, nor will it call forth merely a transient gleam of sympathy, but will, I am persuaded, be the means of exciting a fruitful liberality which will not be behind our own. The cause is going on prosperously, and I have little doubt that the most sanguine calculations will soon be realized. It only remains for us, my fellow citizens, to take care that our character for enlightened and generous liberality be not on this occasion lowered by a comparison with others, of whom we have always heretofore taken precedence, that, in such a cause as this, we do not be found lagging in the rear. I feel a strong, a proud confidence that you will not, in such a cause, as this, yield the palm to Quebec, Toronto or Kingston, which have all done wonders. I trust that not one rose will fall from the chaplet, not one feather will drop from the plume, which Montreal has so well earned and so long worn, standing as she does among the foremost cities of the mercantile and commercial world, for to none of them has she been inferior hitherto, in the exercise of a munificent and princely liberality, on all occasions where a worthy cause was presented. I cannot distrust your generosity, when I think of your never failing liberality in times past. Our honorable and justly popular Chairman is in himself, a host, and his munificence on all occasions is sufficient, to redeem the character of a whole community, were it open to the reproach of liberal parsimony.

All of us must show our gratitude for the inestimable boon of Education, to which we owe whatsoever honorably distinguishes Scotchmen throughout the world—and we cannot better acquit the great debt of obligation, which we all owe, to the noble institutions and endowments for Education in our fatherland, than by doing as much as in us lies, to perpetuate and transmit the same advantages to our descendants and successors, in this our adopted country. This is a cause which should be felt by all of us to have an irresistible claim, one to which the ears, the hearts, the hands of our countrymen should ever be open.—Let all contribute. While the rich man gives his talent, let the poor man bring his mite—and, if so, a monument will be raised, which will not only