

Riding which forms my field of labour,—and I believe the remark will hold true with still greater force in regard to North Simcoe—the school-houses which are sufficiently large, well ventilated, fully furnished, and provided with an adequate supply of requisites are very few—perhaps less than half-a-dozen all told. It is true, however, that since the New School Law and Regulations came into operation there are indications of a change for the better in regard to the matters to which I have alluded. I could mention not less than twelve or fourteen school sections in which steps have *already* been, or are being taken for the erection of new school-houses which are designed to replace the old buildings, and which, in regard to adequate school accommodation, are also intended to meet the requirements of the New School Law, and to be in every way suitable for school purposes. And it is to be distinctly noticed that in all the cases to which I have referred, the *initiative* has been taken by the people or the trustees themselves; and I, for my part, feel that I cannot but regard this as a very significant fact—a very hopeful and encouraging symptom. I look upon it as an omen for good, and as an important and gratifying evidence of the favourable and successful working of the New School Law and Regulations. For being intimately acquainted with the southern part of the county for the last fifteen years, I have no hesitation in maintaining that the effects spoken of, or the action taken by school trustees or the people, can be fairly traced to no other cause than to the working and influence of the New School Law and Regulations. I can testify that latterly—I mean particularly since the passing of the New School Act—I have marked among the people of these townships a deepening sense of the importance of a sound education, and likewise an increasing desire to encourage and promote it. I have noticed, also, I think, both among trustees and parents, a growing conviction that not only the efficiency of the teacher, but, also the discipline and spirit of a school, the progress of children in their studies, their proper training, and their successful education, are far more intimately connected than it was one time imagined, with the style and character of the school-room in which the work of instruction is carried on, and with the kind of school accommodations provided for and enjoyed by pupils. If things continue to progress as they have done since the New School Law was placed upon the Statute-Book, I feel persuaded that in less than four years, few, if any, of the old log school-houses will be left standing in this county; but, on the contrary, that they will all be replaced by buildings of a very different stamp, and much better adapted for the health and comfort, as well as for the educational requirements of school children. And all this I trust to see accomplished without a great deal of pressure or stimulus having to be used by the Inspector, and most certainly without anything like a harsh, dictatorial interference on my part.—In a very few cases only—(I would fain hope there may be none)—do I expect that it will be necessary for me to do more than tell the trustees what the law is; and what are the duties which it requires them to discharge; and to remind them of the great importance as regards the educational interests and the advancement of the young of having good school-houses; and of providing adequate school accommodation for all the children of school age within the section.—(Cheers.)

REV. DR. RYERSON.—I wish to say that I have impartially watched over the advancement of the Separate Schools, as well as of the others. I look upon it that education, without a recognition of the great principles of the Bible, would be a disaster. Whilst looking fully after the interests of the Public Schools generally, it was his end and aim that all sects, all religious bodies should have free and unimpeded opportunities for educational progress, and he believed that the Rev. gentleman who had just sat down would fully bear him out in his assertion that Roman Catholic separate Schools had received to the full as much care and attention as any others in the Province.—(Loud cheers.)

W. D. ARDAGH, ESQ., M. P.—The many olive branches I see around me, which are far too numerous to count, make me feel that I shall soon pass for an old man in the town of my adoption. Old age is not without its ambition, and as time rolls on I may hope to achieve the position of that wisest of men, “The oldest inhabitant.” The numbers of these young people show that we have increased in material wealth, and with wealth comes the desire to do our duty towards them, to educate and fit them for the responsibilities of matured life. Dr. Ryerson has, in the Public School System, raised a monument to himself more durable than one carved in brass. If Heaven should spare me, I hope yet to live to see the rising school-house supplemented. Schools give protection to life and property. For many years past it has been a pleasure to me to be able to place my grounds at the services of those who annually get up the usual festivities for the school children. I regret that this year I cannot be personally present, as I leave for the old country next week, and shall be away most of the summer months. Nevertheless, the grounds will be open as usual, and it will add a zest to the pleasure

of my trip to know that young, happy faces are romping and swinging in their usual place of meeting. I am here charged with an apology from Judge Gowan for his unavoidable absence. The arrangements of his Courts, which require his presence in another part of the County to-day, has prevented his attendance. I am commissioned to express his great regret at not being here on this occasion, and especially in not being able to meet the Chief Superintendent, to whom he has been indebted for many courtesies in the past, and much information.

REV. MR. WILLOUGHBY, M. A.—My friends, for I suppose I can hardly call these little boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen as yet, I am glad to say that I am a native of this country. In my young days this country did not afford sufficient facilities for education, and I had to seek what I wanted elsewhere.—There were no \$8,000 school-houses in those days.—Had I stayed in Simcoe many business opportunities were open to me, but my mind was set on other things, and I went away. I was highly pleased with the Chairman's speech, and especially with the religious and moral tone which pervaded it. I did not think a lawyer could speak so.—(Laughter.) I feel that he is the right man in the right place, and a gentleman in whom the lovers of education should have full confidence. I am delighted to meet here the Chief Superintendent. He says he is growing old. But Dr. Ryerson will never grow old.—(Laughter.)

GEORGE DAVIS, ESQ., Warden.—I am happy to see that the School System is gradually but surely improving. Dr. Ryerson, in his scheme of public education, has shown himself no partizan, but has chosen whatever was good from all systems and from all countries.

JAMES MORGAN, ESQ., M. A.—I have three reasons for not making you a speech. First, because brevity is the soul of wit; that I am not accustomed to public speaking; and that there are a great many little feet very weary of standing so long and I beg leave to allow the children to speak for me.

The children sang “God bless the Prince of Wales,” and the Band followed.

REV. MR. FRASER.—There is no country where education is so important as it is in Canada. According to our free institutions, all power is placed in the hands of the people, and if they be not educated so as to understand how to use this power properly, the result, as we see it in other countries, would be most disastrous. Look at France. Look at Spain. Look at Italy! And look at our own world too. Witness New York, for example. And what is the import of these “Trades' Unions” and “Strikes” of which we hear? Clearly the power is in the hands of the people; or, as the Romans were wont to say, “*Vox populi, vox Dei*,” the voice of the people is the voice of God. The next point which I bring before you is, the necessity of having the people qualified to exercise their power judiciously, that is, in other words, the necessity of having the people educated.

“Were I to reach from pole to pole,  
Or grasp Creation in my span;  
I'd still be measured by my soul,  
The mind's the standard of the man.”

Sir Wm. Hamilton had written on the wall of his study, “There's nothing great on earth but man, there's nothing great in man but mind.” Newton realized the value of knowledge; he saw the necessity of having the people educated, and as a consequence laboured for this end. “I know not what I appear unto others,” he said, “but to myself I seem only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, finding sometimes a brighter pebble or a smoother shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lies all undiscovered before me.” Now this house, of which the corner-stone has this day been laid, is for the educating of the people, for the enlightenment of the masses. I rejoice to see such a building in course of erection in Barrie; long has it been needed, and long has it been talked about; now it is in progress, may it succeed! The man who conceived the idea of building this school-house deserves credit, and the name of Dr. Ryerson, the Chief Superintendent of Education, the layer of the corner-stone, shall long be remembered in connection with this structure; and longer far in connection with the planning, the laying down and building up of our present admirable Canadian School System. And while the mind is educated, the intellect developed, the moral nature must not be overlooked. Religion must be attended to. It has been said that,

“While stands the Colosseum, Rome shall stand,  
And when falls the Colosseum, Rome shall fall,  
And when Rome shall fall—the world!”

I would rather render it thus:—While stands a people's true enlightenment, religion shall stand; and when falls a people's true enlightenment, religion shall fall; and when religion shall fail, or fall, if you will,—the world. I am proud to say that I was once a Normal School boy. Having this day, then, so auspiciously laid the corner-stone of your Public School-house, let us go on; let our motto be “*Excelsior*.” Like the young man who pierced his way