

# JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

## SCHOOL SECTIONS.

THE division of the Province into school sections was a wise and necessary preliminary to the present educational system, and so localized it that the advantages of the whole are concentrated in each section wherever situated. It was a starting point in harmony with the work that followed. In the majority of cases, these sections rarely extend beyond a distance of three miles, and many of them are of less extent, and are supposed to have at some point, near the centre, the Section School House. Where this arrangement has been practical, as it assuredly is in most cases, and the designs contemplated by the framers of the law, honestly and carefully adopted, results have shown the benefit of the sectional division, and on all sides, the benefits arising are standing inducements to guard with jealous care these local divisions and interests.

When the School House is near the centre of the section, and, once the people see the advantage of a well sustained school, such as can be had only where material in quantity and quality is found, rarely in such a case is there a disposition to disturb existing arrangements, except where the development and successful expansion of the school interests render enlargement in the means of instruction a necessity. When sections divide because of such results, and from having fostered and cultivated the elements of growth, the new sections most assuredly will not retrograde or recognise a standard of attainment falling below that, of which division and enlargement are but the necessary and hoped for outgrowth.

Notwithstanding this necessary and simple division into sections, there is, and it is to be lamented, more friction in the educational machine, at this point, than elsewhere. At this time a number of sections are seeking for division, when evidently division is the last thing to be thought of. In a few cases the interest of education demands it, but in many instances the aim is to reconcile contending parties and interests. Obstinate men—sometimes men are conscientiously obstinate, and dogged to the last point, compatible with integrity—are in extreme divisions of sections and hold extreme views. They differ in politics, in religion, in opinion, relative to the location of a School House, or the grade of the required teacher, or the amount of money required for the School Section. Each has the *great man's* ambition narrowed and flattened down to his own autocratic aspirations, hence Commissioners are petitioned to divide sections, which are not able to erect one house of respectable dimension, and sustain one efficient teacher. The Commissioners demur, and are charged with a want of promptitude. The Council of Public Instruction is next appealed to. "The interests of education demand division, the school interest will be sacrificed unless we have a division," and so they press the sundering of sections, that in reality ought to combine with neighboring ones, as the only practical way to obtain an effective school.

Evidently all this is wrong, and where this ambition for division exists, and where it is pressed as a remedy for evils that are altogether personal and local, the best interest of the school must suffer. We think the Council of Public Instruction is decidedly opposed to the division of sections, except for reasons evidently good and obviously tending to the enlarged and successful working of the Public School System.

As a general rule, large sections are almost sure to have good schools, while small ones, except in a few localities are exposed to all the disadvantages of limited means. Parents generally mistake the true interest of their children, when for the sake of having a school close to their own dwelling, they allow their influence to go for dividing school sections. Better send five miles to a good school than have an inferior one at a stone's cast.

Large sections, we do not mean beyond the limits prescribed by the present law, will generally, if not always, have a large School House, and probably a graded school, with suitable grounds, apparatus and all the appendages of successful work, a first-class teacher, with large attendance; and who does not know the powerful impulse imparted to youthful minds, by surrounding numbers? The entire aspect will tell favorably upon all interested, Parents, Teacher, Pupils, and even the rate-payers themselves will be conscious of a generous pride as the successful school, sustained, it may be with a sacrifice, becomes an instrument of good apparent to all.

When sections divide merely to harmonize contending and clashing interests, the school interest will be weak and intellectual, and the generous man will look in vain for results gratifying to his ambition. An inferior House, a Teacher of low grade, a limited attendance, things measured by a low standard, and dragging like an insupportable burden upon an unwilling people, are a picture without a solitary lineament of beauty. We think, that in

most cases where division is sought, it is the last remedy for existing evils, and the removal of which must assuredly be in another direction, requiring, it may be, a little of that somewhat scarce endowment, self denial, with a generous regard for the interest of others, but yet in the end better for the head, the heart, the purse, and the section. Let there be union, combinations and harmony, and soon it will be found that one good school is worth a multitude of inferior ones.

We urge this as self evident, and advise that division of sections be not for a moment contemplated until success makes such imperative. Do not divide merely to harmonize contending interests and discordant opinions. Aim for larger sections, teachers of higher grade, commodious houses, and very soon a measure of success will be reached amply rewarding all the labor and the sacrifice.

CATHERINE E. BEECHER AND HARRIETT BEECHER STOWE have recently published a work entitled *The Principles of Domestic Science*, as applied to the duties and pleasures of home, and designed as a text-book for the use of young ladies in schools, seminaries, and colleges.

The authors of this work have been long known as occupying a distinguished place among the literati of the United States. Miss Beecher especially, has distinguished herself in Female Education and the work now referred to, the result of years experience, exhibits an intimate knowledge of the art of uniting the useful and the ornamental in this department of education.

This work abounds with suggestive hints not elsewhere found, and we think the author's views suited the Teachers of this Province, and may afford valuable aid to Teachers in our own public and private Seminaries.

We give below a specimen of the author's style, and commend the book to such as wish to combine the useful and practical with high literary instruction. The quotation below relates to an Institution for Female Education, an important desideratum in Nova Scotia, and exhibits the views of the gifted author on this subject:

"But a time is coming when women will honestly perpetuate their name and memory, by bestowing endowments for their own sex, as they have so often done for men.

The first indication of this advance is the organization of an association of prominent ladies and gentlemen of the City of New York, for the purpose of establishing institutions in which highly-educated women shall be supported by endowments to train their own sex for the practical duties of the family state, and also to some business that will secure to them an independent home and income.

The plan aimed at is large and comprehensive, but will commence on a small scale, and be enlarged as means and experience shall warrant. When completed it will include the departments:

1. The Literary Department, which will embrace a course of study and training for the main purpose of developing the mental faculties. Much that goes under the head of acquiring knowledge will be omitted, until it is decided what profession the character and tastes of a young girl indicate as most suitable. When this is decided, the studies and practical training will be regulated with reference to it, and the pupil will select that department of general knowledge most connected with her special profession.

The public mind is fast approaching this method in the education of young men who do not aim at what have heretofore been called the liberal professions, and who enter institutions where the course of study is adapted to the profession to be pursued. At the same time our colleges are gradually modifying mediæval methods to those which bear more directly on practical life.

2. The Domestic Department, in which the pupils of the literary department will be received and examined as to their practical acquaintance with the varied duties of the family state, aiming to supply every deficiency in past training, so as to fit them to be economical, industrious, and expert house-keepers. The Principal of this department will have a family of about twelve, consisting of her assistant principal and ten pupils, who will be carried through a regular course of domestic labor and instruction, and then vacate their place to another class of pupils. In another family, consist-