

classes of the population, except one, there was a general lack of education, and of the means of obtaining it. The poor were not educated at all; the lower middle classes were worse than uneducated—they were trained in pretentious ignorance by private "Academies;" the class above them found a limited number of openings into the great schools of the country, and thence into the Universities, but the education thus furnished was chiefly useful in helping boys out of their class, not in qualifying them for its duties. The whole education of the country had, in fact, settled down into one narrow groove, determined by the requirements of the Universities. With incalculable resources around us, with endowments scattered liberally throughout the land, we were yet, in the mass, an uneducated people.

We are even yet very far from having remedied this deficiency; but the thirty years just past will be memorable for the sustained and comprehensive efforts which have been made to render a "sufficient and efficient" education accessible to all. From the Universities to Ragged Schools, philanthropists, professors, and statesmen have been at work, until the outlines are at least indicated of a complete system of National Education. We began with the extension of education among the poor; we then reformed the Universities, we passed from them to the Public Schools, and, finally, took in hand the multitudinous mass of middle-class endowments. It has been, at the same time, the age of the school-master. His profession has risen to a new dignity, and has acquired an unprecedented authority. The result is that we have an intelligent and vigorous body of men labouring to solve the problem of providing for each class the special education it needs, while the Legislature has rendered all existing resources available to the utmost. We see accordingly on every side old foundations starting into new life, and new foundations springing up to fill the gaps still remaining. Whatever a parent's means or whatever his expectations for his son, he will have little difficulty in finding some school or other in which his demand may be supplied: and as the demand grows the supply increases in proportion. Considering that there is not any very great distance between the knowledge of the present day and that of a quarter of a century back, it is surprising to reflect what an immense advance has been made in the diffusion of that knowledge among all classes of the people. The day is not distant when not merely will a ladder have been planted with its feet in the gutter and its summit in the Universities, but when every boy, whatever his destination in life, will be able to acquire the utmost intellectual training compatible with his occupation. The latter provision is, perhaps, even more important than the former. It is neither desirable nor possible that every clever boy should become a Judge, a Bishop, or a General, but it is both possible and desirable that all the work done in the country should be done with the utmost intelligence practicable. Our people work very hard, but if their intelligence were equal to their industry they would far eclipse the present results of their exertions.

In this great "revival of learning," which will be not the least conspicuous mark of the present century, we have maintained in a singular degree our traditional English methods of reform. We have not like some people, cut down everything old, and thrown the remnants into one vast cauldron on the chance of something better emerging. We have made, on the contrary, as little change, either in local circumstances or in methods of teaching, as was compatible with inevitable requirements. Take, for instance, the ceremony of yesterday at Reading, which has suggested these reflections. It is the hope of the people of Reading and the neighboring country that they have set on foot a great Middle Class School which will equally meet the wants of the boy who is designed to be a thorough scholar and of the youth who is at an early age to enter on some practical career. But this new establishment arises from a simple re-arrangement of an old foundation, and the liberal subscribers who have given the Reading School so splendid a start are encouraged by the thought that they are building on the traditions of the past. As the Lord Chancellor stated, the history of the

Reading School dates back to the time of Henry VII., and has since then been associated with several famous scholars and men of the world. It is still to be a Grammar School, in the best sense of the word. Boys are to be taught before all things the art of writing, speaking, and thinking accurately, and when furnished with this indispensable instrument, they are to apply it to the special subjects they may select for the work of their lives. No reform in our ideas of education has inverted, or can invert, this order of training. We may improve the process, by dismissing the barren routine of mere parrot imitation in which so many valuable hours are still spent at our great schools, but it would be a fatal error to set the young mind to substantial study before it has learnt the elements of speech and thought. It is in this respect that the old study of Latin can never lose its value, though we cannot altogether follow the Lord Chancellor in his stanch adherence to all the time honoured practices of Winchester. It is a pity that a man is so rarely struck between the advocates of radical innovation in instruction and enthusiastic "old boys," who, however radical in public life, are conservative of every custom of their schoolboy days. The Lord Chancellor justly urges in favor of composition in Latin and Greek, that it is impossible thoroughly to know a language without practice in writing and speaking it. But what has this to do with the custom of verse making? Is no Englishman capable of writing and speaking his native tongue with correctness and vigour unless he can string rhymes together in feeble imitation of good poets? Prose composition is an invaluable exercise; but, except in the rare instances where a boy has a poetical turn, the time spent on verses, which, to the last, are little better than "nonsense verses," is simply wasted. We believe, with the Lord Chancellor, that the old system was substantially sound; but the great problem for the masters of the present day is to retain its substantial elements while discarding the exercises which arose in days when learning was valued more for ornament than for use. Our modern schools, in their system of teaching as well as in their material resources, must grow out of the old foundations, but must enlarge and adapt themselves to the altered demands of the times.

(Written for the *Journal of Education*.)

Jacques Cartier's First Visit to Mount Royal.

(By MRS. LEPROHON.)

He stood on the wood-crowned summit
Of our mountain's regal height,
And gazed on the scene before him
By October's golden light,
And his dark eyes earnest,—thoughtful—
Lit up with a softer ray,
As they dwelt on the scene of beauty
That outspread before him lay.

Like ocean of liquid silver,
St Lawrence gleamed 'neath the sun,
Reflecting the forest foliage
And the Indian wigwams dun,
Embracing the fairy islands
That its swift tide loving laves,
Reposing in tranquil beauty
Amid its blue flashing waves.

In the last lone frowning mountains
Rose in solemn grandeur still,
The glittering sun light glinting
On each steep and rugged hill;
Whilst in the far off horizon,
Past each leafy dell and haunt,
Like a line of misty purple,
Showed the dim hills of Vermont.