

being examined as well as employed by Trustees. In all these respects, the advantage is admitted by the most experienced educationists in the United States, to be on the side of Upper Canada.

We have borrowed some features of our School System from our American neighbours, and we have endeavoured to improve upon whatever we have borrowed. Their writings, legislation and proceedings have furnished us with many useful hints; and we have been much assisted by their noble example in the general education of youth. Our institutions have afforded us peculiar facilities to apply the principles of free government and self-reliance in the working and extension of our School System, and the British Canadian energy and patriotism of the people have achieved the results which place Upper Canada in so honourable a position in comparison with other countries, and which are conferring such priceless blessings upon her youthful population. May God grant that the success and progress of the past shall but symbolize the greater success and progress of the future!

II. Papers on Practical Education.

1. THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION.

(From the *Educational Equipment of the Trained Teacher.* By the Rev. William Fraser, Paisley.)

It is now nearly three hundred years since, amid the deep gloom which the great plague cast over London, a goodly company sat dining in the quiet chamber of Sir William Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's principal secretary. Sir Richard Sackville, treasurer of the Exchequer; Sir Walter Mildmay, chancellor of the Exchequer; and the scholar Roger Ascham, with some others, were there, making, we are told, "a company of so many wise and good men together as hardly there could have been picked out again out of all England beside." "I have strange news brought me this morning," said Cecil, "that divers scholars of Eaton have run away for a beating." The topic of discussion thus raised and prosecuted with great animation was the science of mind in relation to public instruction. The discussion is lost, but the fruit remains in Roger Ascham's "Schoolmaster," in which profoundly philosophic thought blends with the plainest and most practical directions. Although this strong intellect and kind heart gave impulse then to one of the most important themes with which statesmen or philosophers, having in view higher national life, may grapple, the subject was for more than a hundred years left untouched.

Nor does it attract much attention until Locke in his well-known work at last shed new light on the subject, and Milton gave to it the radiance of his genius. Another long silence. For nearly a century and a half the literature of education is a blank. Is not this simple fact sadly suggestive as to the interest taken by the higher minds of the country in the condition of the people? "Even Locke and Milton," truthfully observes Mill, "though men of great benevolence towards the family of mankind, and both men whose sentiments were democratical, yet seem in their writings to have had in view no education but that of a gentleman." Not until the commencement of the present century was there any attempt to secure the establishment of public instruction on a scientific, that is, on a natural basis.

The great value of Locke's treatise arises from the author's accuracy and acuteness as a metaphysician, and his attainments as a medical student; he united a knowledge of the two physiologies, mental and bodily, and was thus highly qualified for educational expositions at once philosophic and practical. The field then entered on has yet been but lightly traversed by British writers. Discussions on metaphysics and treatises on the structure of the body almost daily abound, but metaphysicians write with too exclusive reference to psychology, and physicians write with too exclusive reference to the physiology of the body; the one is too spiritual, the other too material; we need fresh works like those of Locke and Abercromby, occupying the same relation to present knowledge which they did to that of their time, shedding a fuller light on the now extended mutual relations of physiology, psychology, and ethics, and expounding the best means of a complete culture, bodily, intellectual, and moral. Meantime, it is obviously your duty to glean from physiologists, metaphysicians, and ethical writers, such hints as may be of practical value for this purpose; let me refer you for scattered suggestions to Dr. Wilson's "Five Gateways of Knowledge;" Morell's "Elements of Psychology," especially chapters iii. and vi.; Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding;" Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind," in which throughout he deals with the senses; Stewart's "Elements;" and Brown's "Philosophy of the Human Mind," from the first to the fifty-second lecture. I, of course, do not mean that you are to waste time and strength on "insoluble problems" and profitless transcendentalisms, but that you master those processes and laws of feeling,

thought, and habit, about which comparatively little discussion is raised, and that you may map out distinctly, and measure for yourselves, those ultimate principles on which the art of education depends. The study, though, at first, to some of you uninviting, and to all, fruitless in *materiel* for school-work, will ultimately prove invigorating and instructive, and bring its own rich rewards. There are other treatises which no accomplished trainer will leave unstudied, because connecting the strictly philosophical with the directly practical. I may specify Locke's "Thoughts on Education;" Richter's "Levana;" Pestalozzi's "Gertrude;" Stow's "Training System;" "Home Education," by Isaac Taylor. Many passages of great beauty and philosophic breadth lie scattered through the Inspector's "Reports," but the labor of searching through the blue books, in which they are entombed, reminds us of the toils for the buried treasures of Herculaneum and Pompeii. A volume of extracts from these reports has been published, containing many ennobling thoughts which will amply repay perusal, but many, perhaps still richer, have since been added, and should also be separately published.*

But the best volume, guiding to a sound practical philosophy of moral training, is the mass of your own scholars. You must individually and closely study the character of each pupil. Mental life is seen in the school-room, moral character in the play-ground, bodily conditions in both; all must be closely examined, separately and in combination. The peculiarities of memory; the laws of suggestion by which facts and truths are associated and recalled; the processes of reasoning, whether slow or rapid; the presence or absence of imagination; the apathy, sensitiveness, or vigour of conscience; the coldness or excitability of the disposition; the nervousness, slowness, or passionateness of bodily temperament, and other evidences of life and character, must be closely and continuously scrutinized and weighed, in order to an effective training of the young entrusted to your care. It is only by the wide diffusion of such regular investigations, sympathized in and systematically sustained by the teacher himself, that uniform results and unquestioned generalizations may be obtained. The teacher's claim to recognition as a learned profession can never be honoured until they resolutely establish a scientific basis, or elaborate a higher philosophy of education, that will at least win respect for the scholarship, which supplies its elements, if not assent to the conclusions which it proclaims. The deep responsibility of your office, in connexion with its profounder studies, and its most ennobling applications in art, cannot be more distinctly unfolded than in this well-known passage:—

"There is another art, however, to which knowledge of the intellectual and moral nature of man is still more important—that noble art, which has the charge of training the ignorance and imbecility of infancy into all the virtue, and power, and wisdom of mature manhood—of forming, of a creature, the frailest and feeblest perhaps which heaven has made, the intelligent and fearless sovereign of the whole animated creation, the interpreter, and adorer, and almost the representative of the Divinity. The art, which performs a transformation so wondrous, cannot but be admirable in itself; and it is from observation of the laws of mind, that all which is most admirable in it is derived. These laws we must follow indeed, since they exist not by our contrivance, but by the contrivance of that nobler wisdom, from which the very existence of the mind has flowed; yet if we know them well, we can lead them, in a great measure, even while we follow them. And, while the helpless subject of this great moral art is every moment requiring our aid,—with an understanding that may rise from truth to truth, to the sublimest discoveries, or may remain sunk for ever in ignorance, and with susceptibilities of vice that may be repressed, and of virtue that may be cherished,—can we know too well the means of checking what is evil, and of fostering what is good? It is too late to lie by an indolent indulgence of affection, till vice be already formed in the little being whom we love, and to labor then to remove it, and to substitute the virtue that is opposite to it. Vice, already formed, is almost beyond our power. It is only in the state of latent propensity, that we can with much reason expect to overcome it, by the moral motives which we are capable of presenting; and to distinguish this propensity before it has expanded itself, and even before it is known to the very mind in which it exists,—to tame those passions which are never to rage, and to prepare, at a distance, the virtues of other years,—implies a knowledge of the mental constitution, which can be acquired only by a diligent study of the nature, and progress, and successive transformations of feeling. It is easy to know, that praise or censure, reward or punishment, may increase or lessen the tendency to the repetition of any particular action; and this, together with the means of elementary instruction, is all which is commonly termed education. But the true science of education is something far more than this. It implies a skilful observation of the past, and that long foresight of

* Extracts from Inspector's Reports. Longman, 1864.