

former experience, related by the elder members, which included much of historical interest, and served an excellent purpose in the perpetuation of a sound political and national faith. Like the Spartan mothers of old, they inculcated lessons of instruction which *compelled* their children to be victorious, and which branded with eternal disgrace all who shrank from duty. When sufficient means could be collected, a teacher was employed, and the rudiments of necessary branches were taught in some unoccupied part of a log house, or a hastily-constructed room intended for the purpose. The persons usually selected for exercising the prerogative of the school-room were not very well qualified for the responsible task imposed upon them, being, with few exceptions, discharged soldiers, who had become infirm and unfit for further active service. It may also be remarked here that the majority of these primitive pedagogues were of Irish nationality, for reasons we are unable to define. The Irish peasants must have enjoyed superior privileges at home for acquiring an education, or else they were more unfortunate in meeting with the casualties and accidents of a military life. The first supposition is doubtless correct, and this fact, so generally acknowledged, is a credit to the Celtic race, which, we are happy to affirm, they honorably maintain. But, it must also be admitted that this practice of engaging as teachers old, infirm and unqualified military incapables, had an injurious effect upon subsequent efforts for the improvement of our Public School System. Such persons were always willing to give their services for a nominal pittance, so long as their living was secured; and there were many corporations willing to favor them for similar reasons. Really competent teachers could not compete successfully with the dilapidated specimens of "Mike Cavanaugh" who thronged the country; and as a consequence the standard of education was at a low ebb for many years after better things might be reasonably expected. It is but comparatively a short time since the last lingering remains of this intellectual status gave way before the advantages of an improved system. But with all their faults these primitive teachers were often the means of benefiting

the pioneer settlers to a great extent, and as they were sincere in their humble calling, due credit should be given them for the results accomplished.

Among the early applicants for the honor of teaching the Canadian youth were many who came from the United States, and who were, like those above referred to, physically incapable of performing ordinary manual labor. This latter class were instrumental in bringing into the country a number of American text-books, and also introducing a peculiarity of pronunciation which has not yet been entirely eradicated. So prevalent did this habit become that in 1846 a strong feeling was excited against it, particularly in the vicinity of Kingston, which was then regarded as the centre of civilization in the Province. A writer in the Kingston *Herald* of that date, who signed himself "Harris," made a determined attack upon what he regarded as "a glaring corruption of the English language," and pointed out a number of the most prominent vulgarities. A prejudice gradually arose which ultimately drove the American customs out of the Common Schools, and hence completely checked the tendency towards vulgarizing our national brogue. With regard to American text-books, the same objections were urged, yet in some instances they were a necessity that could not well be dispensed with, owing to our inability to supply their places with better. But their influence upon the minds of the rising generation was prejudicial to a sound national feeling, and the prominence given to American characters and American institutions did not tend to promote a proper respect for the claims of their native and adopted country.

Garrison schools seem to have been the means of furnishing some of the early settlers with the rudiments of a common education. These were generally established at military posts, and conducted by discharged soldiers, possessing the required ability, or the chaplains of the forces. As might be expected, from circumstances usually attending such uncertain dependencies, these schools were not of a very efficient character, nor did they furnish the usual facilities for those who availed themselves of the advantages offered. Col.