

bilities. That we may rank high amongst, and be prepared to act in concert with, the other free nations of the earth, whom Providence has designed to be instrumental in regenerating and raising the sunken millions of our species from the depths of degradation and barbarism, it is necessary that a sound education, based on God's revealed truth, should permeate all classes of our people. With our internal resources for the acquisition of wealth, with the ease and speed with which we can hold communion with each other, with ever facility for commercial enterprises with other nations, what can prevent us from taking a high position and an efficient part in the advancement of civilization? Nothing but an unpardonable apathy unworthy of the liberty-loving ancestry from which we are sprung. We can have no guarantee for our safety and growth in all that pertain to us socially, politically and religiously, excepting in the internal power we possess for creating and sustaining those privileges, and that power must be based on a thorough development of our youth, physically, intellectually and morally, by living instructors, who bear the special impress of Him who has raised them up and called them to so important a work. Important work! Language fails to give expression to it. It embodies in it an idea, that when forms of speech are exhausted to convey its purport, the mind looks beyond the boundary circumscribed by language, into an amplitude of meaning, when contemplation is lost in infinitude. The well known figures of the sculptor and a block of marble, and that of the clean white sheet of paper have been used, to illustrate the force of education. But these poor, weak, passive similitudes convey but a feeble impression of the power of education on the living organism. A little child. What is it? A poor, tiny, helpless creature, whose fragile body is the casket of a mysterious agent, on the right development of which its great future depends. The beginning of its existence, the mode of sustaining that existence, its slow growth, its improbability, its maturity and decay, are subjects that would look more like miracles than natural events were it not for the obtuseness which familiarity with scenes always produces, when frequency of recurrence brings us in contact with them. The mere novice in artistic skill by a misdirected touch may mar the statue; a careless hand may spoil the clean sheet, but there are other blocks of marble and other sheets of paper upon which the uninitiated may practice; but the man, who by misdirected instruction or bad example, blights or stultifies or mars the mind of youth has his doom pronounced by lips that "spake as man never spoke." That the masses of our people may be fitted for the mission of life, for the great and onerous duties that will devolve upon them—for this country will likely rank high on the scale of nations—the avenues to knowledge must be made as available as possible. Heaven's repositories on earth unlocked, and the bright gems of truth and wisdom brought forth, and presented as free gifts to a perishing world. As a foundation for all this, we must have in the fullest sense of the term a good common school system, with commodious school-houses placed within the reach of all. When the high and the low, the rich and the poor, parties of every description, of every shade of politics, and of every religious denomination, may meet to receive that early training that gives a bias to the greatness of a people.

Common school! What a word, fraught with the deepest interests and gravest results. The heart of a nation, the very life-spring of a great people, the miniature world, where those impressions are received, that character given those acts performed which are the "father of the man." Thou common; yes, thou free common school. Thou greatest product of unfettered thought. Thou great moral lever of freedom. Thou child of much solicitude. Thou most formidable antagonist of tyrants. Thou day star and harbinger of the millenium glory. Thou handmaid of pure Christianity, speed thee on thy glorious mission, until

Lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
And boys in flow'ry bands the tiger lead;
The ox and lion at one crib shall meet,
And serpents lick the weary pilgrim's feet;
The smiling infant in his hand shall take,
The crested basilisk and speckled snake;
Pleased the green lustre of the scales survey,
And with their fork tongues shall innocently play.

Perhaps we, in Upper Canada, have been misinformed relative to your school system in Lower Canada. If so, we wish the error rectified. We have heard, and, I think, have read, that you have no common school system, in the right acceptation of the expression, that may be practically worked; that the primary educational institutions amongst you are, in effect, under the control and management of the Roman Catholic population, who are the majority and whose school books are so managed as to teach the peculiar dogmas of their church, which prevents them from being used by a mixed population; that, as a protection, there are dissentient schools. If these statements be true, we most heartily condole with you under such a state of affairs. Your condition is not very

enviable. There must be (especially in your rural districts) some places where the mere elements of an education can scarcely be taught your children. We, in Upper Canada, have been favoured with a fine school system for more than twenty years, fostered and matured by one of the ablest men on the American Continent, the Rev. Dr. Ryerson, whose liberality of mind, benevolence of purpose, and largeness of heart, have stamped our school system with that wisdom which has fitted it for being the safeguard of the conscientious scruples of a mixed people.

Our schools are what they import to be—common schools. Children of all religious persuasions can meet in them, without any danger of infringement on their religious creeds. Indeed some of our school sections, where the greater number of the inhabitants are Protestants, Roman Catholic teachers are employed to teach the children, without reference to any other consideration, save mental qualifications and good moral character. While common Christian sentiments and a sound morality are strongly inculcated in our school books, yet they contain no expressions that interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any party. And we know of no other way of training up a nation to act in harmony on all the great questions pertaining to that nation.

We believe, and I think, that I express the opinion on this question of a large majority of the people of Ontario, that provision should be made for free secular and moral education by the state, and taught to all on common ground, as the peculiar birthright of all, leaving instruction in special religious creeds and church dogmas to the teaching of the home circle, Sabbath Schools, pulpits and altars. Is there any other mode of forming a great nationality, which should be our aim in our New Dominion. We at present are a conglomeration of nearly all nations, kindreds and tongues. To fuse and mould this mass and give it a true national character, there are no other appliances that can be substituted for a good free Common School system, separated from sectarian elements. We have, it is true, in Upper Canada, provision made in the Consolidated School Act, for Separate Schools, and some Schools are conducted according to this provision. But, whenever such exist in rural sections, so far as my knowledge extends they are of a very inferior grade, not only detrimental to the best interests of their supporters, but injurious to the progress of Common Schools in their vicinity. Are the people of the New Dominion ready to make that sacrifice which the truth, freedom, and loyalty of the present hour demands? If they are, let us unite and petition to have purged from our statute book the leaven of sectarian education. If not, let us work, and agitate until the force of enlightened public opinion is brought to bear against the stalwart walls of brass, old costumes and old prejudices, that the unimpeded progress of science and truth may accomplish their intended earthly mission.

The educationists of all ages have had a great work to perform, and those who have gone before us met their difficulties and fiery trials with unshrinking fortitude. Let not the shades of those great men grieve for our remissness in duty. Let us follow in their wake and give a fresh impetus to the great work of improvement, and success must crown our efforts. We know of no better means of meeting the formidable obstacles in our way than by associations such as the one you have organized in this city, and kindred conventions elsewhere. It is in such meetings that men, impressed with the importance of their calling, can, through their mutual experiences, and sympathies, make suggestions and devise plans that individual effort could scarcely accomplish. Attendance at, and membership of, such conventions, are good tests of the mere hireling and the teacher stamped with the spirit of his work. No man will absent himself from these means whose deep, earnest, enthusiastic endeavor in the work show that he bears the character of the true teacher. It is an index to Trustees to distinguish, without his bearing even a diploma, the rightly constituted school teacher. The earnest man will always be in his place at such gatherings, and will not only assist with his experience, but his purse will be open for the furtherance of so good a cause. The drone and the hireling may attend, but it will be from selfishness or to find fault, or to try and discover a pretence for non-attendance, and evil reports of these meetings are frequently put in circulation by men whose position (if nothing more) should keep them from all such despicability.

Fellow-teachers, as you value your profession, as you anxiously desire the moral renovation of your race, as you look forward with earnest anticipation for the ushering in of a better state of educational affairs, sustain your teachers' assemblies. It is from these places (as from great centres) you can send broadcast over the land your thoughts on the great leading topics of your profession. It is from such gatherings our people will learn their real wants in matters pertaining to the diffusion of knowledge. It is at resorts of this kind that great educational schemes can be concocted and brought to the bar of public opinion, and pressed on the attention of those who hold the helm of our public affairs. Be true to your-