

## CHARACTERISTICS OF BRITISH AMERICAN MIND.—BY PRINCIPAL DAWSON.

He said we have been called a new nationality, and this word implies national character as well as national existence. Now what is our national character, if we have any? In one respect, we are very heterogeneous, belonging to various nations, but in other respects we are homogeneous, being surrounded by similar circumstances. He (Dr. Dawson) spoke now of British Canadians, a class to which he himself belonged, and could therefore speak freely. The Anglo-Canadian differed from the Englishman in three particulars. His colonial position was that of a sleeping partner in the Empire, and almost lost sight of by the mother country. This has a belittling effect on the colonial mind, and it can only be overcome by education. We must become better acquainted with the Empire, better with Canada, and better with the great experiment of self-government going on alongside of us. Newspapers should give more information on all these points, but these papers are only the exponents of public opinion. Now the recent change in our condition has caused a great ferment in the public mind, and required a corresponding activity in education in all its branches. Nor was this effect of Confederation confined to those who approved of it. Those who opposed it had equal exercises of mind concerning independence or some other change. The second cause was, the absence of the fixity and constraint of long established customs and conditions. The rough independence thus produced was advantageous in one respect, it gave more poise and vigor, but it was apt to degenerate into hard, selfish individuality, in which case the sense of the beautiful in the moral or natural world was lost. The love of nature should be a characteristic of the Canadian mind, but trees were in too many cases looked upon, not as ancestral memorials as in England, but as so many cords of wood. The educator had therefore much to do here to imbue the mind with a taste for the beautiful in nature, in art, and literature, and to this end much more attention should be turned.

The third cause of difference between the Englishmen of England and of Canada, was the absence of marked ranks in social position. This had much effect on the national character,—all offices and callings are here alike open to all. There is nothing reserved for special classes or orders. Every man here is to a considerable extent his own master. But the want of those rigid social distinctions which make men run in grooves, renders it the more necessary that the educator should prepare the Anglo-Canadian for the energetic and independent life that lies before him. Indeed, in Europe itself the state of society is drawing nearer and nearer to our state. The individual is becoming more and more important, and the corporate less and less. There is as good a proportion of mental capacity among the youth of this country as any other, and it was perhaps fully as active; but it is useless to expect the fruits of culture without culture. We cannot have manufactures and fine arts without the necessary schools. In old countries and in the States, the greatest pains were taken to raise up schools of art and design, and we might as soon expect a good soil to produce good crops without culture, as to expect the fruitfulness of the good mind we have to work upon without education. We had also, as a minority, peculiar need to occupy a high and influential position, as this we must do not by numbers, but by mind. We had a right to rely on the magnanimity of the majority, but that is not the position of Englishmen. We must rely upon ourselves, and the way to do so was to diffuse high educational culture among the Anglo-Canadian population, that they might hold their own, however far out-numbered.

## AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.—BY LORD AYLNER.

He said our prosperity is entirely owing to agriculture. We have a productive soil, and all our interests are dependent upon it. The success of all classes hangs on that of the agriculturist. Of his intelligence, industry and prosperity, all will reap the benefit. If agriculture languish, all the rest will suffer. Have we then improved agriculture as we ought? Look back at our agricultural history and enterprise, and say what has been done. Are we in advance of the first settlers? We fear not. Is agriculture not looked upon as a low, common-place toil, instead of a profession of the highest importance? In what respect is science brought practically to bear on agriculture? What does the farmer know of mechanics, geology, chemistry, and many other sciences with which he must practically come in contact? The soil is the capital of the country, and the farmers who own it should be the highest educated class of the community; but if the farmer undervalues his own profession, what respect can he expect for it in others. Every art and science aims at the highest perfection; but the farmer goes on only using his hands. Every branch of industry is rapidly improving except agriculture, which needs it most of all. Though there are distinguished colleges, none of them teach agriculture. There are theological, medical, law, and military schools, with fine libraries, but

poor agriculture, which sustains them all, gets no attention? Nay, if our legislators, who are so liberal to other kinds of education, are asked for an agricultural school, they give forth no response. What finer sight could there be than a farm of 400 acres, showing all the attainments of ages in agriculture, where pupils from every part of the country would be instructed in all the sciences connected with agriculture. There every new agricultural implement might be tested, every new kind of seed tried. If objection be made to the cost, is it not reasonable that the class which pay most of the taxes should get a small share laid out on themselves?

## EDUCATION IN QUEBEC.—BY HON. M. CHAUVEAU.

The Hon. Mr. Chauveau said there never was an epoch when the French Canadian people was destitute of education. The excellent education of the family, supplemented by the education of the church, always prevailed. There were also schools of instruction, adequate to the wants of the people, according to the views of those times; and it was only after the conquest that schools were found deficient for the growing population. The Assembly of Lower Canada tried to establish an educational system, but was hindered by the Legislative Council. Finally, however, a system was established, which had been gradually improving, and, if Lower Canada was behind Upper Canada in this respect, it was before the Maritime Provinces. Four-fifths of the French Canadian women under thirty could read and write, and three-fourths of the males of the same age. He then drew the attention of French teachers to the deficiency of their school-houses in a hygienic point of view. The schools rooms were small, and they were very badly ventilated, so that both scholars and teachers were stifled. The seats were not low enough, and had not suitable backs for the children, who were very uncomfortable; but when the children are fatigued by long lessons, or sitting idle in an unnatural position, it was exceedingly bad for them as well as the teachers. There should be variety in the exercises of the school, and recreation should be interspersed with lessons. The closeness of school-houses, and tiresomeness of the exercises, caused great mortality among teachers, many of whom fell victims to consumption. He might add that teachers speak generally too loudly to their scholars. This is caused by the noise which they cannot otherwise surmount; but the more noise the teacher makes, the more noise the scholars will make also. The proper way to obtain attention is to speak naturally and in an interesting manner. Teachers should resolve, both for their own good and that of their scholars, to be cheerful, composed, and self-possessed. An important point in Canada was the teaching of French to the English, and English to the French scholars, and the only way of learning a foreign language is to speak it. This is the natural way, and arrangements should be made to carry it out. Of course, reading and grammar should follow or accompany speaking. It is also necessary that the history of Canada should be studied, and there is to be a more suitable history for schools than the compilation from Garneau, which had been used because there was no other. These teachers' institutes, conventions, or conferences should also be introduced among the French Canadians, as of the greatest importance in aiding teachers.

## MORAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.—BY THE HON. M. DUNKIN.

The next speaker was the Hon. C. Dunkin, who remarked on the relative importance moral and social progress; material advantages were highly important, but the intellectual and the moral are far more so. It was to diffuse these, therefore, that teachers should chiefly address themselves. He once visited the island of Nantucket,—a mere sandbank,—which had not a tree, and scarcely even a harbor. Every vessel of any size has to be lightened, even to its masts and rigging, in coming over the bar; yet that island contained a large and flourishing city, with fine houses and a dozen of churches well attended; and that population, though it had had no advantages, and every difficulty, was holding its own in every respect, with others much more favorably situated. The only thing it lacked was paupers. What was the reason of this prosperity under difficulties? The settlers of that island had been the cream of the cream: they had fled from persecution on the mainland, as the people of the mainland fled from persecution in England. They were the most moral portion of the population, and hence their prosperity. New England, as a whole, is another instance of the same thing. A great proportion of the men who rise to distinction, as western men, southern men, or middle-state men, were originally from New England, where the moral influences he desiderated were most abundant. He concurred with Dr. Dawson in thinking that we as a minority should so educate and conduct ourselves as to command the respect of the majority; though he could assure the audience that it was impossible for a majority to be more disposed to be just and considerate to the minority than the French Canadians were. He could say that the English were better treated in