

been done there would have been; no lack of funds to carry a liberal and useful system into operation. Perhaps it is not even yet too late, and sure I am that the statesman who shall succeed in establishing educational institutions upon a liberal and practical footing, need look no further for a civic Crown to grace his brows. It may perhaps be fairly enough objected that I over estimate the claims of the agricultural class, and that in fact, they are neither anxious to hold, nor qualified to maintain so high a position. To some extent this may be admitted of the present generation. A large portion of our farmers are men, who, after steadily grappling with hardships and privations of no common magnitude, now find themselves at an advanced period of life, in comfortable enjoyment of the fertile acres, which in the sweat of their brow, and during the best period of life, they had reclaimed from the forest. With such men, the architects of their own fortune, education necessarily assumes a simple and limited form. Neither time nor opportunity offered them more. It is different now. They contemplate a generation rising around them for whom they desire better things. They regard their lads as men who are to fill a large and influential position in the province—their girls, as no less destined to promote social improvement in the domestic circle. Their hearts yearn to secure for those dear to them, that enlarged knowledge which untoward circumstances denied to themselves, and every generous mind must rejoice that such praiseworthy desires have a reasonable prospect of being realised. In Europe the education of the rural population has begun to excite much attention, and has led to some happy and promising attempts at mental culture in the various parts, both of the Continent and of Britain perhaps in none more conspicuously than ill-fated Ireland.

It would be premature to discuss the details of systems, books, &c., adopted in these institutions, it may be sufficient to state that they are economical and simple. In some of them substantial elementary instruction is bestowed without any other remuneration to the teacher than the profits accruing from the labor of the boys upon a piece of land during a limited portion of the day. The system carries with it many advantages, none perhaps more decided than the feeling of self dependence which the boys acquire, and the just estimate which they so early form of the value of industrious habits, while the pleasing reflection to affectionate hearts, that without neglecting the invaluable blessing of education, their hard working parents are relieved from all expense, must prove through after life a cheering remembrance.

The Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, ever prompt to foster schemes of social improvement, has made considerable progress in

grafting agricultural instruction upon the Parish Schools, and the teachers who have commenced the experiment are unanimous in approval of its success, and in urging the Society to persevere. With these remarks I would for the present leave the subject to commend itself to the public attention, trusting that public feeling will awake, to its high importance as a means of vital improvement to the province, and as one in which all political discord may, nay, must be submerged. Without a strong and decided expression of public feeling, the scheme must languish. With a hearty determination in its favor, the Legislative and Executive will readily acquiesce. The means are easy and obvious,—the expense must be a trifle when put in the scale with its importance and benefit to the public. Our Common and District Schools must be easily prepared to receive it, and competent instruction in scientific and practical agriculture conveyed to the public in a useful and economical form. In considering the object in view, we ought to bear in remembrance that the tenure of land holding in Canada is widely different from that of Britain. We have no large and distinct class of men, toiling in a great measure for the behoof of others, and I sincerely hope we never shall have any such class in Canada. Our farmer is the freehold owner of the soil which he tills, and his children seem destined to realize the captivating picture of rural life, so graphically drawn by the Roman Poet:

‘Beatus ille que procul negotiis,
Ut prisca gens mortalium,
Paterna arva, bobus exercet suis.’

Neither must we forget that our almost unlimited command of land precludes all necessity or pretext for that painful disjunction in the family settlements which forms the law of our fatherland. A landed proprietor in Canada, without any extravagant expectations may calculate upon giving freehold estates to half a dozen of sons, should their taste lead them to rural pursuits, and it is evident that the great body of landed proprietors must in an equal proportion become influential and large. Let us then, without delay, enable the farmers of Canada to profit by the ‘*Schoolmaster abroad*.’ (not thereby alluding in any manner to our Superintendent,) and of affording them the means of qualifying their children for the most useful, healthy, and interesting pursuit which can engage the attention of man:

I have to claim your pardon, sir, for this unwarrantable inroads upon your columns, but I trust you will concur in regarding the object as one of paramount importance, and that you will do your best to interest the members of the Legislature, District Superintendents, and your numerous readers, in giving it due consideration.

When Parliament shall assemble, I for one am ready to lend my zealous, though humble aid; to promote its success. Meantime.

I remain your obedient servant,

ADAM FERGUSON.

Woodhill, Dec. 1st, 1845.