

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER, 1851.

"A PEOPLE WILL BE INDUSTRIOUS IN PROPORTION TO THEIR INTELLIGENCE."

Such is the title of a chapter in Dr. WAYLAND's admirable little work on the "ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, *abridged for the use of Students from the Author's larger work*;" and we cannot more clearly and practically present the great question of universal education as one of *political economy* itself, than by re-producing and adopting in this place the chapter referred to. We are persuaded that no person can rise from an attentive perusal of the following observations without a stronger conviction than ever, that the most ample and efficient provisions for the universal and thorough education of the people in every city and township, village and neighbourhood in the country, is the best economy as well as the noblest philanthropy—the surest method of developing the resources of the country, as well as of rendering its inhabitants respectable, prosperous, and happy. Dr. WAYLAND proceeds as follows :

"A North American Indian is very indolent ; while he has food enough in his cabin, he will lie for several days together basking in the sun and dosing away his existence ; he does not go out to hunt again, until he is forced away by the pressure of hunger ; he then only procures enough for his present necessities, and relapses into his former indolent stupor.

"One reason of this is the following. He does not know of any method, in which, by labour, he can benefit his condition ; he knows of no weapon better than his bow and arrows, and of no covering better than the skins of animals slain in the chase. Hence, he has no motive for labour, beyond that amount which will procure him these simple necessities.

"But, let a benevolent man go into this tribe, and to show them how great additional benefits would be secured by additional labour, and there would at once be created a motive for that labour. If the Indian found out, that by procuring thirty or forty beaver skins more than before, he could purchase a rifle, he could easily be persuaded to labour to procure them. If he knew that by some additional labour, he could procure an axe, or a saw, and the materials for a house, and plenty of blankets for his winter-clothing, all these would be strong motives for labouring every year more and more assiduously.

"Now, this change would all be the result of knowledge. The Indian knows more, and hence he is more industrious ; knowledge has opened his eyes to see what benefits he may secure by labour, and he now labours to procure them. But the case of the Indian, is the case with every man : just in proportion as men see the advantages which they may gain by industry, just in that proportion may we expect their industry to increase. Knowledge supplies motives to labour, which did not exist in a state of ignorance ; and, just in proportion to the strength of these additional motives, will be the increase of the labour to which they give rise.

"But suppose a man have ever so strong a disposition to labour, he cannot labour unless he knows how ; and suppose that he knows how to labour in a very imperfect manner, so that his remuneration be very small, he will labour with much less zeal than he would if he could labour skilfully, and thus, with the same amount of toil, procure a much larger share of the means of happiness.

"Thus, suppose a man own a farm, and be perfectly aware of the comforts of life which he could procure by the produce of it, he would have motives sufficient to induce him to labour. But, if he did not know anything about farming, he would still be in difficulty, for, though he might desire the comforts which he might procure, and be willing to labour for them, he would, nevertheless be destitute, for he would not know how to proceed.

"Hence, we see that it is very necessary to furnish all men with the means of knowledge. The farmer ought to understand the nature of soils, of vegetables, of animals, the best modes of cultivation, and the best and cheapest manures, and everything relating to his business : the mechanic should know everything about the material

on which he labours ; the tanner should understand the chemical principles on which tanning depends ; the carpenter and house-builder should understand the principle of architecture ; the manufacturer should understand everything relating to the machinery with which he works ; the merchant should be well acquainted with the natural history of the articles in which he traffics, the mode of their production, the best places from which they can be procured, and the best articles which he can send in exchange for them.

"Besides this, every one of these person ought to be able to write a good hand, and to keep accounts skilfully, accurately and neatly. By means of this knowledge, a man is able to communicate his thoughts and wishes to persons at the greatest distance from him ; to write down his own reflections for his own benefit, and be assured that he deals honestly with others, and that others deal honestly with him.

"Let it not be said, that it is enough for the master manufacturer, the rich farmer, the extensive merchant, to understand these things ; for this is a very false motion. A labourer on a farm will earn much better wages for being intelligent, and understanding thoroughly the business in which he is employed. The case is the same with a manufacturer, a merchant's clerk, or any other person. Besides, to perform an operation understandingly, improves a man's mind ; while to perform it blindly and ignorantly, does a man's mind no good whatever. A professor in a lecture-room shows the working of a steam-engine, and teaches his class the principles on which it operates, by means of a small model of a foot or two in length ; and this is considered a very improving and valuable employment. But an engineer on board of a steamboat, if he understand the whole process and its principles, is performing the same experiment all the while. If, however, he do not understand the principles, he is in fact doing but little more than the fireman who is employed in supplying the furnace with fuel. So, the farmer, who understands the laws of vegetation, is constantly performing experiments in botany, and by every experiment he is disciplining his own mind.

"He who, in this manner, is labouring understandingly, is qualifying himself for a more lucrative employment. He who is thoroughly acquainted with the business of farming, will soon be able to procure a farm on his own account. He who is an intelligent and active clerk, will soon be qualified to be admitted as a partner. He who is a skilful and intelligent manufacturing labourer, will soon be promoted to be an overseer, or an agent. Thus we see that knowledge is desirable, not for one class, but for all classes.

"Now, in order to enable men to acquire this knowledge, every one should be taught to read, and write, and cypher. He who has obtained as much knowledge as this, is then able to inform himself concerning anything that pertains to his own department ; and, hence, he is able to qualify himself to rise from one branch of business to another, and to become a rich and well-informed man. Thus, Franklin, from being a poor printer's boy, became one of the greatest philosophers of his age ; and Sir R. Arkwright, at first a barber's boy, rose to be one of first men in Great Britain. In this manner, by skill and intelligence, all the great men who have made their own fortunes, have risen from obscurity to eminence.

"Hence, we see the reason why we should have schools for teaching these branches in every neighbourhood. If any persons be unable to procure education for themselves, it should be furnished to them for nothing ; and, in order to do this, a sufficient number of schools should be supported by the public at large. In this manner, every one pays in proportion to his ability, and every one has an equal privilege of sending his children to school. This plan is specially beneficial to those persons who are in moderate circumstances, or who are poor. The rich can easily furnish education to their children, the poor cannot always afford to do it, or if they could afford it, they could not easily unite together in such manner as to procure a proper instructor. When this is done by the public, they have the instruction at the lowest expense, and without any trouble in procuring it.

"But this is not all. I have said, that if a man have a knowledge of reading, and writing, and accounts, he can then educate himself, and acquire all the knowledge that he may need in conducting his own business. This is true. He *can* do it, but he will be much *more likely* to do it if he have been taught in youth the elements of the sciences. If he have been taught the elements of mathematics, he will be much more likely to make a good machinist. If he