

upon the subject of free schools; and although the immediate adoption of that system was in many instances negated by small majorities, yet the feeling in favour of the principle of free education, supported by a general rate upon property, seems to have gained strength in the contest. The more the subject is discussed, the better for the interests of education. John Kirkland, Esq., local superintendent, Guelph, (in the *Advertiser*) and "Preceptor" in the *British American*, Woodstock, have written warmly and with much force in favour of free schools.—A letter appears in the *Hamilton Spectator* of the 5th instant, which the Editor gives *verbatim et literatim*, denouncing the free school system as advocated by the Chief Superintendent of Schools. The perusal of the letter itself would, we think, convince the most skeptical of the absolute necessity of a more generous diffusion of education, especially in the neighbourhood of the writer—scarcely two words in the letter being correctly spelled!

FREE SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND, 1851.

It is a singular coincidence that the introduction and discussion of the principle of free elementary schools should be simultaneous in England and in Canada—in the ancient kingdom,

"Whose flag has braved a thousand years, the battle and the breeze,"

and in the youthful colony, whose emblem of nationality is but the Beaver and the Maple Leaf of her yet unbroken forests. England with the grandeur of centuries clustering upon her brow, and Canada whose modest front boasts not a single laurel, are but equal in the race. Yet in the introduction and advocacy of the principle of free schools, age does not seem to impair the one, or youth to retard the other. Of the two, the younger outstrips the older and more matured. Age and dignity adds no strength or skill; they seem rather to impede the vigorous strides of those ardent friends of the principle of free schools in England. Settled habits, and "time-honoured systems" of education have a much stronger hold upon the people of England than they can possibly have in a country whose very boundaries are but just marked out, and whose national characteristics are yet unknown even to itself.

The "National Public School Association"—a body which has been acquiring strength for some years in England—has at length put forward a definite "basis" of educational operations. We do not, of course, express any opinion upon the details of the plan advocated by the Association. We simply wish to direct attention to the spread of the feeling in favour of a more generous system of universal education in England than has heretofore obtained in that country.

The *Westminster Review*, for January, in an interesting paper headed "Educational Movements," remarks: "The interest excited in the public mind by the recent educational movement commenced in Lancashire is,—in the midst of much general discouragement, occasioned by the reactionary measures of continental governments, and the somewhat stationary policy of ministers at home,—one of those signs of the times, which, if we rightly read the future, should change despondency into hopefulness, and waken up afresh the best energies of every friend of human progress." The reviewer then proceeds with much clearness and force to combat alike the "voluntary" and "sectarian" systems of education, and strenuously advocates the adoption by the people of England of "the principle laid down by the new 'National Public School Association:' that the cost of primary instruction should be thrown upon the property of the country, administered by local representatives; and the poorest taught to regard it as the right of a free citizen."

The following resolution, or basis of the association, moved by the Rev. Wm. McKerrow, and seconded by Richard Cobden, Esq., M. P., was passed at a large meeting recently held in Manchester.

"*Basis.*—The National Public School Association is formed to promote the establishment by law, in England and Wales, of a system of *Free Schools*, which, supported by local rates, and managed by local committees, specially elected for that purpose by the rate-payers, shall impart secular instruction only; leaving to parents, guardians, and religious teachers, the inculcation of doctrinal religion,—to afford opportunities for which, the school shall be closed at stated times in each week."

COST OF SUPPORTING NUMEROUS SMALL SCHOOLS IN CITIES AND TOWNS IN UPPER CANADA.—Dr. CRAIGIE, ex-School Trustee, Hamilton, in a letter to the Chairman of the City Board of Trustees, thus forcibly illustrates the disproportionate cost of the present system of Schools in that city. The remarks apply with equal force to the feeble and expensive system of schools sanctioned and continued in nearly every city and town in Upper Canada, with the exception of London and Brantford:—"You have paid during the last year (for school purposes) the sum of £1,131. With this sum you have educated 415 scholars, being an annual cost of \$10 90 for each scholar; or, less £66 6s. of interest, the annual cost of each scholar is \$10 26. But you will say, "Which of the items of expense can I reduce? I answer, none of them; none of your officers are overpaid. But I say that, by bringing your Schools together, and properly subdividing the work and arranging the classes, you could make your Teachers instruct 140 each, as easily and in a much better manner than they can possibly do their 70 each on the present plan. With this sum the people of Providence would educate 712, and the people of Philadelphia 674, instead of your 415, and give them not only a common school education, but instruct all who require it in Classics, Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy. Let us look a little farther at the statistics on our table. What is the expense of the education of 804 who are being taught in the twenty-five private schools, the Grammar School, and Burlington Academy? Taking the average attendance of each, and the average of the school fees, where there is more than one rate; and estimating the cost of those in the Orphan Asylum and Roman Catholic Benevolent Institution at only \$4 each; and neglecting altogether the cost of the six in the hospital, you have the startling sum of £3,554 5s. as the annual cost of educating 804 scholars, or \$17 70 each! This is scarcely credible; but look at the facts before you, and you will see the sum may be below, but is not beyond the truth. Add to this your own expenditure, and then you have £4,685 5s. paid during the last year for the education of 1,219—not one-half of the number that ought to be at school—but a sum which, if properly and judiciously applied, ought to educate all of school age within the city, and at least 300 more, and give them a better education than those at school are at present receiving. At least with such a sum, the Philadelphians would educate 2,797, and the City of Providence 2,882; and I can see no reason why it ought not to be done here. You have only to proceed as does the manufacturer, who, calculating the proper size of his building, the machinery, and number of hands necessary, and subdividing the labour so that each may become expert at his particular duty, and all may be fully employed, and no time nor power lost, manages to produce the greatest amount of manufactured goods of the best quality and at the least cost; if he errs as to the size and cost of his building, the power of his machinery, or the number of his hands, he works at a disadvantage, and produces an inferior article at a higher cost. Thus have we been working with our Schools, paying \$10 50 for an article that should not have cost more than \$5, and \$17 70 for an article that should not have cost more than \$7; and, worst of all, supplying only half the demand."

LEGAL OPINION OF THE JUDGES OF THE COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH UPON SEPARATE SCHOOLS.—The following important decision of the Judges of HER MAJESTY'S COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH upon the legal construction of the 19th section of the School Act, taken in connexion with other parts of the Act, will prove interesting to many readers of the *Journal*. We copy the annexed "Extract