

Although still young, our Province has already been called to mourn the removal of not a few of her gifted sons, who have severally adorned the different walks of public life. In weight of character, wealth of manhood, and width of human sympathy, the late Chief Superintendent of Education stood amongst the foremost and mightiest of them all.

Egerton Ryerson was a man of rare diversity of gifts, of remarkable energy, and of abundant mental resources. It would have been easy for him to have excelled in any one sphere of human greatness, but it was his to stand high in several. He was a many-sided man; richly endowed in various ways. He was a laborious farmer, a zealous student, a successful teacher, an eminent preacher, a prominent ecclesiastic, an influential editor, a forcible writer, a sagacious counsellor, a most efficient principal and professor, but he was chiefly noted as a great public educationist.

For a third of a century he was the head and inspiring genius of our school system, establishing, moulding, adapting, controlling it; and this, the main work of his life, will endure, and command in the future, as it has in the past, the admiration of all both at home and abroad. During all these years he was the teacher's true friend, and the ardent well-wisher of the young. His sympathies—tender and true—as helpful as they were healthy, went out to every earnest worker, whether in acquiring or imparting knowledge. The enquiring left his presence directed; the downcast, cheered; the doubtful, confirmed.

Unselfish, generous, disinterested, he devoted himself wholly to his work. How often did his lip quiver and his eye fill when he addressed the gatherings of teachers and pupils upon whom he looked not only with the eye of a patriot, but of a parent,—“Ye are my children all.”

We can never forget him; we profoundly mourn our loss; we fondly cherish his memory. Affection, gratitude, a sense of what is due to so eminent a man, impel us to perpetuate that memory in some suitable way, which will render such a noble life an inspiring example to young men now and in the coming days.

In obedience then to one of the purest and loftiest instincts of our nature, let us unite in paying a common tribute of admiration and regard to the memory of him to whom we all sustained a common relationship, and to whom we also, without distinction as to nationality, political preferences, or religious belief, can pay sincere homage, as the founder of our present excellent and comprehensive system of education.

In honouring him we do honour to our common country, and recognize our obligation to pay fitting homage to the great men of our Dominion whose names, with his, are inscribed high upon the roll of Canada's famous sons.

WM. ORMISTON (New York), } Committee.  
J. GEORGE HODGINS, }

Signed on behalf of the General Committee,  
JAMES L. HUGHES, Secretary. J. GEORGE HODGINS, Chairman.

## Contributions.

### EDUCATIVE INSTRUCTION.

BY WILLIAM CROCKET, A.M., PRINCIPAL OF FREDERICTON  
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Most men look at things in the direction of their own tendencies. They see properties in which they are interested but fail to perceive what does not immediately concern them. The carpenter sees in the tree the boards of his workshop; the lumberer the deal for the market; the botanist the characteristics of its structure, and the poet “a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.” In the inanimate rock the builder sees the corner-stone of a noble edifice, the sculptor the full proportions of a finished statue, and the geologist reads the story of the olden times. So it is with the subject of Education. The clergy man sees in it the elevation of the masses, the politician the diminution of crime, the practical man the training for a particular pursuit, the parent the passport to the position he contemplates for his son, and the miserable bachelor nothing but a bill of expense. The subject touches on so many interests, and has so many aspects,

that every man is more or less concerned with it, and has got his own notions regarding it. Formed as these generally are, not upon a search into principles, but according to the bias or tendency of the individual, it is not to be wondered at that opinion regarding its subjects, methods, and results should be so conflicting. One man would limit the subject to the three R's, another would embrace whatever subjects are required to fit the pupil for the business of life. One man ignores method, and makes knowledge paramount, another subordinates knowledge to method. One man believes that the diffusion of education will diminish crime, another believes nothing of the kind—“it may give it a different direction, but statistics prove that it does not diminish it.” Thus the contest has been going on for many years, and will continue until fundamental principles are generally known and recognized.

What is the grand ideal underlying all this agitation, all this interest, all this desire for the diffusion of education? Is it merely that the pupil may be crammed with so much knowledge? Does the man who would limit the subject of instruction to the three R's ask for simple knowledge? Does he not expect faculty—faculty to read words and sentences distinctly, to handle the pen and form letters, and to manipulate numbers? To aim at this, is to aim at endowing the pupil with a power which he had not before. This, as far as it goes, is capacity acquired through the instrumentality of these subjects. When the Province, at the beginning of the century, granted £10 to each parish to encourage only two of the three R's—Reading and Writing, it intended that the pupils should acquire the power to read and write—that they should be trained to do the things specified. When Lord Brougham, after the French Revolution, sounded the note of the education of the people, it is true that the favorite phrase was the diffusion of knowledge among the people—useful knowledge. But there accompanied it the aphorism which is still current—“Knowledge is power.” Knowledge is not in itself power. Power is the result of the effort put forth to acquire knowledge. It would then seem that unless the diffusion of education gives faculty, power, capacity, the grand national idea underlying education is not realized.

This underlying idea is the one that has run through the ages, however much in our practice we may depart from it. The old Persian ideal of education was one of capacity, not of acquisition—to ride, to shoot with the bow, and to speak the truth. The accomplishments of the perfect knight were not what he knew, but what he was and could do. Among the Greeks knowledge as mere knowledge did not count much. They aimed not at the acquisition of knowledge but the acquisition of perfect habit. Philosophy was a life, not a system which could be written down on paper. Such was the idea as it grew out of Greek experience. It is true there were then, as there are in our own day, professional crammers—men who defended cram on principle. There were the Sophists, teachers who undertook to furnish their pupils with ready-made talk, which could be produced on any occasion. They could make a speech or write a leader on any side of any question without knowing anything about it. During that brilliant period of Athenian history, about two centuries before the death of Cato, when almost all the citizens were equally well qualified to fill offices or conduct business, these Sophists had little foothold, but as Greece went down in virtue, honesty and patriotism, these crammers came more and more to the front, and the term crammer—which in the good time was held opprobrious, lost its offensive construction and came to mean simply a public teacher. But this was degeneracy and decay. In the uncorrupt time education was the agency by which character was to be formed and capacity acquired. And this is the grand central ideal, in whatever form we may seek to clothe it, that the modern spirit is more and more casting about to realize.