

Philosophy shifts and changes with the lapse of years, but the spirit which makes the patriarch, the apostle, the martyr, this lives on through all time, the unity of the ages, the harmony of the worlds. Let the teacher labour in the light and power of these higher aspirations and impart them to his pupils. Teach them, indeed, the wonders of science; make them quick, discriminating, and learned; yet let it be reiterated again and again, while the world lasts, that knowledge is not wisdom, but only her handmaid, and that the great lesson for the child, as for the man, is to be brave, and true, to be pure, gentle and self-sacrificing; to work these virtues diligently and deeply into the habit of the soul, and to bring them out in the daily life, after the manner of Him who has embodied for us in one and the same character, the true, the beautiful, and the good. (Loud applause.)

At the close of the address, Mr. Scarlett moved a cordial vote of thanks to the learned President for his very able and interesting address. The motion was seconded by Mr. Waston and carried unanimously. Rev. Dr. Ryerson, by request, then briefly addressed the convention.

CHARACTERISTICS AND TENDENCIES OF THE TIMES.

The Rev. Mr. Dewart, of this city, also delivered the following address before the association. He said:

It is with unaffected diffidence that I appear before you, to address the Teachers of this Association, met in their Annual Convention. It was with some hesitation that I accepted the invitation of your secretary; and if a distant view of the task awakened apprehension and distrust, I assure you these feelings have not diminished by finding myself in contact with the actual responsibilities of the occasion.

DIFFICULTY IN MAKING CHOICE OF A SUBJECT.

I felt hesitation in attempting to address an audience of practical teachers, on the duties of their profession, lest, being no longer engaged in this work myself, I might appear to be binding heavier burdens on your shoulders than I would be willing to bear myself. We all know how very much easier it is to give good counsel to others, than to practise one's own advice. I felt embarrassed as to the selection of a subject. I thought if I should select a theme having special reference to your work as teachers, I might possibly find myself trying to enlighten you in questions which were better understood by the scholars than by the teacher. On the other hand, if I should address you on some topic having no special application to your profession and work, I feared that my remarks might be less helpful to you, as teachers, than if they had greater fitness. For I cannot but feel that in speaking to this association, I am speaking to a representative audience—I am speaking through you to the pupils you instruct. And if I could only succeed in saying anything to inspire your zeal, or to prompt you to cherish nobler and juster conceptions of the great work of training and furnishing immortal beings for the duties and emergencies of life, I would thus be reaching beyond you to the vast army of youthful minds whom it is your privilege to lead to the inexhaustible fountain of knowledge. But, believing that because you are teachers, you are not the less men and women, with hearts that respond to all that concerns humanity, I purpose, leaving professional themes for those of ampler experience than mine, to occupy your attention with a few observations on some of "the tendencies of the times in which we live," in order that from the study of this subject we may derive some practical lessons for the better direction of our own lives. While it is our privilege to study the lessons of history—to learn from the success and failure of those who have gone before us—and to gather inspiration to action from the contemplation of the future, it is especially our duty to take careful note of the present—to endeavour rightly to understand the circumstances, favourable and unfavourable, which surround us on this great battle-field, where we must either win the wreaths of an imperishable fame or suffer irretrievable defeat. As the mariner, who steers his venturesome barque across the ocean, makes himself thoroughly acquainted, not only with the reefs and shoals that lie along his way, but also with the prevailing winds and currents, so it is our duty to study those tides and currents of human life—those forces that operate in society, helping or hindering men, as they steer on to the goal of life.

SPIRIT IN WHICH WE SHOULD WORK.

We should not do our work blindly and mechanically, following rules the reasonableness or truth of which we have never seen, but with an intelligent appreciation of the difficulties to be overcome, and the best methods and agencies by which success may be gained. The times in which we live are difficult either to comprehend or describe. So complex, so contradictory, so rich in good and evil, so bright with hope and so dark with discouragement, that they exceed comprehension, and transcend description.

THE "GOLDEN AGE," OR THE "GOOD OLD TIMES."

One class of persons regard the present as the world's golden age, and render a homage, little short of worship, to the progress of the nineteenth century. Another class wail out their sorrowful lament, because of the degeneracy of the times. They look back with regret on conditions of society, that are rapidly vanishing. They are fully persuaded, that in almost every respect, the tendency of things is downward. They do not realize that there is more change in the eyes that look at things, than in the things themselves. Both classes are mistaken, though neither are altogether wrong. The present condition of the world is the product and outgrowth of a great variety of causes that have operated in the past. A vast number of streams, rising in very different regions, have united to form the great river of modern life, on whose current we are all borne along. Among the legacies we inherit from the past are things of very different value. Some things that are fitly represented by "gold, silver, and precious stones," and some by "wood, hay, and stubble." The great conflict between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, that has jarred along the ages, and finds a recognition in all the religious systems of the world, is still surging around us, and we are actors in the fateful strife. Yet despite the croakings of those who sing their ceaseless dirges over the departure of "the good old times," I believe the world moves, moves onward, upward, heavenward; slowly but surely nearer to that time of which prophets have spoken and poets sung, where righteousness and truth shall gloriously triumph over the wrongs and falsehood, that have so long bewildered and oppressed humanity. Those who live in the memories of the past, rather than in the throbbing energy of the present, tells us that there is far less simplicity and candour of character—less restfulness and trust—and less reverence for superiors now, than in former times. All this may be true, and yet be no just cause of complaint against the times. Every condition of society has its advantages. The very worst has some redeeming features peculiar to it. But it is absurd and unreasonable to expect to retain certain advantages, when the conditions of life in which they had their existence have passed away. You cannot have the ermine robe of winter and the fruitful green of summer at the same time. You cannot have the grand old forest, with its leafy canopies, and the waving fields of the golden grain together. So neither can we have the credulity of ignorance, with its mental sloth, and the searching scrutiny and activity of intelligence. We cannot have the crouching homage of the broken-spirited slave and the manly independence of freedom. And it is as undesirable as it is impossible. The swallow's nest in the old house might be very picturesque; but it should not prevent us pulling down the old ruin, to build the new and commodious home upon the old foundation. Feudalism and slavery developed many beautiful instances of fidelity on the part of the serf to his master; but we would not keep men in bondage for these. Ambition, extravagance, and artificial manners are not found in the primitive simplicity and society of pioneer life; but we would not forbid social progress on that account. The cultivated farm and commodious mansion are better than the wigwag and the forest. No state of life has so many charms and attractions as childhood; yet perpetual childhood would be an unspeakable calamity. So the world's manhood is better than its childhood. The stir and energy of modern intellectual life is better than the stolid credulity, which they have superseded. For we should not forget that "the good old times," so fondly cherished, were times of prevailing ignorance and gross superstition—times of intolerant bigotry and inhuman persecution—times of unjust and oppressive tyranny, when the rights of manhood were denied. People speak of the past as they speak of the dead, mentioning only what is commendable; and throwing the mantle of kindly forgetfulness over the suffering, ignorance and injustice, that found a genial home in the bosom of "the good old times." With all its faults, the present age is the best age the world has ever seen. The present day is the brightest day that has ever shed its lustre upon our race. There never was so much light in the world as now. There never was so much liberality and charity. There never was so pervasive a sympathy with the various forms of human want and suffering; and never such noble and self-denying efforts to remove them as now. There never was as much liberty of thought and civil liberty; and human intelligence was never so constantly and successfully applied to the promotion of human well-being, physically, intellectually and morally, as now. I freely grant that the picture is not without its dark shades, which may discourage and perplex. It has been fitly said, "It is dark with threatening, and bright with promise. It is like the autumn morning, that breaks amid wild and lurid clouds; yet through these lowering clouds there darts, at times, such glorious beams from the invisible sun, that we are held in palpitating suspense, uncertain whether the day will issue in storm and terror;