

During a recent visit to Boston, I was deeply interested in the discussion, with Dr. Howe—so well known to all as the teacher of the remarkable blind and deaf mute, Laura Bridgeman, on the condition and prospects of the colored population of Canada. The influence of the prejudices of caste, especially in the school room, was freely debated, in reference to Canadian and New England schools. "But, after all," he added, "I must confess much seemed to me, during my visit to Canada, to depend with you on the personal feeling of the teacher. Where he contemptuously designated his colored pupils as *niggers*, his prejudice found a responsive echo in every unreasoning little aristocrat. But," he added, "where, as in the chief school in Hamilton, its excellent teacher, Mr. McCallum, recognized no other difference in the colored child than that which called for a greater exercise of tender courtesy and help, to lift him up from his degradation to the common birthright of humanity, the effect was conspicuous in the friendly rivalry of white and black children in all the emulations of the school and the play-ground." No better illustration could be found of that undesigned and unconscious education which we are daily communicating in the school room or in the college-hall. Yet what education can be more important than that on which may depend the social relations of diverse sections of the community? Sectarian jealousies, prejudices of race, of caste, or creed; elements of disunion that go far to counteract the healthful workings of our free institutions; may all be fostered by the idle words of a rancorous partizan, or softened and eradicated by the gentle courtesies of a sincere Christian, undesignedly exhibited day by day in the intercourse even with children of tender years.

Let the consciousness of such far-reaching influences stimulate and encourage the humblest member of our profession in his arduous and often ill-requited task. Some of you gather here, to aid in our common deliberations, from the log-house or homely frame-building of our remotest clearings, where savage haunted wastes are being reclaimed to the services of civilization, and where, by the wise providence of our national system, you are called to cast in the first seeds into the intellectual soil; to claim the infant mind as a heritage of that civilization of the future; and, amid many privations and difficulties, are inaugurating that education of the new generation which is the indispensable basis of the well-being of a free people. I may confess now, after a sojourn of twelve years has made of me a thorough Canadian; that the memory of many loved friends, and the charms of Edinburgh's unrivalled social circles, long held me back from a complete naturalization in my new-world home. Death, alas, has severed fond ties, which nothing but death could sever. But the first thing which enabled me thoroughly to identify myself with my adopted country was the consciousness that as a teacher in one of its chief educational institutions, I am privileged to bear a part, however humble, in moulding the destinies of a young nation, and influencing the thoughts of the coming time. Let the conscious-