

JOURNAL OF



EDUCATION,

Province of

Ontario.

VOL. XX.

TORONTO: NOVEMBER, 1867.

No. 11.

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MENTAL OUTFIT OF THE NEW DOMINION.

BY HON MR M'GEE, M.R.I.A.

All political observers are, I believe, now agreed, that all the forces of a nation may be classed under three heads, of moral, mental and physical force. It needs no argument to prove, that in this reading and writing age, "the age of the press" as it has been called, power must be wherever true intelligence is, and where most intelligence, most power. If England conquers India by intellect and bravery, she can retain it only at the price of re-educating India; if a Czar Peter and Czarina Catherine add vast realms to the Russian Empire, they, too, must send out the schoolmasters to put up the fences, and break in the wild cattle they have caught; if a United States reaches the rank of first power, it must, at the same time, send its best writers as Ambassadors of its interior civilization. To this end Benjamin Franklin, Irving, Everett, Paulding, Bancroft, Motley and Marsh have been selected with the true instinct of mental independence, to represent the new country at the old courts of Christendom; while Howard, Payne, Hawthorne, Mitchell, and other literary men, have filled important consular offices, by the dictation of the same sentiment of intellectual self-assertion.

MENTAL SELF RELIANCE ESSENTIAL TO THE NEW DOMINION.

Regarding the New Dominion as an incipient new nation, it seems to me, that our mental self-reliance is an essential condition of our political independence; I do not mean a state of public mind, puffed up on small things; an exaggerated opinion of ourselves and a barbarian depreciation of foreigners; a controversial state of mind; or a merely imitative apish civilization.

I mean a mental condition, thoughtful and true; national in its preferences, but catholic in its sympathies; gravitating inward, not outward, ready to learn from every other people on one sole condition, that the lesson when learned, has been worth acquiring. In short, I would desire to see, gentlemen, our new national character distinguished by a manly modesty as much as by mental independence; by the conscientious exercise of the critical faculties, as well as by the zeal of the inquirer.

MENTAL PABULUM OF THE NEW DOMINION.

Our next census—in 1870—will find us over 4,000,000: educationally, as far as rudimental learning goes, as well advanced as "the most favored nations" in that respect.

I am indebted to Mr. Griffin, Deputy Postmaster-General, for valuable evidence, not only of the quantity of reading and writing matter distributed by post in Ontario and Quebec during the present year, but also during the last four years. Mr. Griffin sends me these figures as to the letters and newspapers circulated through the former Upper and Lower Canada offices from 1863 to 1867, inclusive:—

	Letters.	Newspapers.
1863.....	11,000,000	12,500,500
1864.....	11,500,000	12,500,000
1865.....	12,200,000	11,800,000
1866.....	13,000,000	12,800,000
1867.....	14,200,000	14,000,000

As to 1865-66, "I think it probable," says Mr. Griffin, "that the postmasters were not as accurate as they should have been." The same gentleman adds that "of the fourteen millions of papers circulating this year, about eight millions are Canadian, going direct to subscribers from the offices of publication, and the other six millions are made up of United States and European papers coming into the country. Of the letters there were above ten millions domestic and four millions foreign." (The close proximation of the two sets of figures is very remarkable). We are by this showing, or ought to be, a reading people; and if a reading, why not also a reflective people? Do we master what we read? Or does our reading master us? Questions surely, not untimely to be asked, and so far as possible by one man to be answered.

Our reading supplies are, as you know, drawn chiefly from two sources; first, books, which are imported from the United States, England and France—a foreign supply likely long to continue foreign. The second source is our newspaper literature, chiefly supplied, as we have seen, from among ourselves, but largely supplemented by American and English journals.