

whatever party, as if prompted by a malevolent instinct, to seek to invest the agency for its extension with a party character, and then strangle it as a party monster. And even unintentionally and incidentally, the interests of education have largely suffered from the same unpa influence. Among our American neighbours, I have been assured, that party selfishness and contests have proved one of the most serious obstacles to the progress of their educational systems and interests. The working of their machinery of government involving countless elections and endless party conflicts, the local, if not higher, administration of their school systems has often been perverted and pressed into degrading service as an engine of party—to the grief of the earnest and patriotic friends of education; and it has been alleged, that to the intrigues of party aspirants may be traced the origin of no inconsiderable number of their projects of school laws and school reforms. It is highly honourable to the discernment and patriotism of our neighbours, that under a system of polity which to so high a degree lives and moves and breathes in an atmosphere of almost theatrical excitement, the interests of education have been so nobly sustained and its progress has been so rapid and extensive. I regard it as an interesting incident in our Canadian history, and a brilliant sign and certain augury of educational progress, that our system of popular instruction stands forth by common consent and suffrage, *the exclusive property of no party, and the equal friend of all parties*. If one party introduced legislative enactments laying the foundation and delineating the general outlines of the system in 1841 and 1843, and if another introduced a legislative measure to modify and essentially to improve it in 1846, both parties have united to mature and consolidate it in 1850. I think there was a moral sublimity in the spectacle presented by our Legislature at its last session, when the leading minds of both parties, (with only subordinate exceptions unworthy of formal notice, and reflecting just darkness enough to give stronger expression and greater majesty to the general outlines of the picture) forgetting the rivalships and alienations of party, and uniting as one man to provide the best system they could devise for the universal education of their common country—the spirit of sect being merged in the spirit of Christianity, and the spirit of partizanship absorbed in that of patriotism. I have stated the fact to several distinguished public men, as well in the United States as in England, and in every instance the comment has been one of admiration of such a spirit in the public men of Canada, and congratulation on the educational and social prospects of the Canadian people under such circumstances. As a practical development of the same spirit in administration, which had been thus illustrated in legislation, the same persons have been reappointed, in 1850, to perpetuate and extend the work of education under the law, who were first appointed in 1846 to devise and establish it. The example and spirit of these acts should thrill the heart of every man of every party in Canada, and tell him that in the education of youth he should forget sect and party, and only know Christianity and his country.

I have a third general remark to make, and it is this—that our system of municipalities affords unprecedented and unparalleled facilities for the education and social advancement of our country. Since I came to England, a member of the Canadian Legislature now in this country, an able political opponent of the author of our present municipal law, but deeply interested in the financial and general advancement of Upper Canada, and who has to do with matters affected by that law, has expressed to me his conviction that our Municipal Law is the grandest, the most comprehensive, and most complete measure of which he has any knowledge, for developing the resources and promoting the improvement of a country,—especially a young country. But what is thus stated by an impartial and competent judge to be true of this law in respect to the general resources and interests of the country is I think, pre-eminently true in respect to its educational interests. Among the conditions essential to the advancement and greatness of a people, are individual development and social coöperation—to add as much as possible to the intellectual and moral value and power of each individual man, and to collect and combine individual effort and resources in what appertains to the well-being of the whole community. That system of polity is best which best provides for the wisest and most judicious operation of these two principles—the individual and the social. Now, to the development of the former, self reliance is requisite; and in order to that there must be self-

government. To the most potent developments of the latter, organization is essential; and such organization as combines the whole community for all public purposes, and within convenient geographical limits. In our system of municipalities, and in our school system which is engrafted upon the municipalities, these objects are carefully studied, and effectually provided for, and provided for to an extent that I have not witnessed or read of in any other country. In the neighbouring States, there are excellent town and city municipalities with ample powers, and in some States there are municipalities of townships and counties for certain objects; but these are isolated from, and independent of, each other, and are far from possessing powers commensurate with the development of the resources and meeting all the public wants of the community within their respective limits. It is in Upper Canada alone that we have a complete and uniform system of municipal organization, from the smallest incorporated village to the largest city, and from the feeblest school section and remotest township to the largest county or union of counties—the one rising above the other, but not superseding it—the one connected with the other, but not contravening it—the one merging into the other for purposes of wider expansion and more extensive combination. By their constitution, these municipal and school corporations are reflections of the sentiments and feelings of the people within their respective circles of jurisdictions, and their powers are adequate to meet all the economic exigences of each municipality, whether of schools or roads, of the diffusion of knowledge or the development of wealth. Around the fire-sides and in the primary meetings, all matters of local interest are freely examined and discussed; the people feel that these affairs are their own, and that the wise disposal and management of them depend upon their own energy and discretion. In this development of individual self-reliance, intelligence, and action in local affairs of common interest, we have one of the primary elements of a people's social advancement; whilst in the municipal organizations we have the aggregate intelligence and resources of the whole community on every material question and interest of common concern. What the individual cannot do, in respect to a school, a library, a road, or a railway, can be easily accomplished by the municipality; and the concentration of individual feeling and sentiment gives character and direction to municipal action. The laws constituting municipalities and schools are the charters of their government, and the forms and regulations for executing them are aids to strengthen their hands and charts to direct the course of those who are selected to administer them.

The application of this simple but comprehensive machinery to the interests of schools and general knowledge opens up for Upper Canada the prospect of a glorious future. One of the most formidable obstacles to the universal diffusion of education and knowledge, is class isolation and class exclusiveness—where the higher grades of society are wholly severed from the lower in responsibility, obligations, and sympathy, where sect wraps itself up in the cloak of its own pride, and sees nothing of knowledge, or virtue, or patriotism beyond its own enclosures, and where the men of liberal education regard the education of the masses as an encroachment upon their own domains, or beneath their care or notice. The feeble and most needy, as also the most numerous classes, are thus rendered still feebler by neglect, while the educated and more wealthy are rendered still stronger by monopoly. Our municipal and school system, on the contrary, is of the largest comprehension—it embraces in its provisions all classes and all sects, and places the property of all, without exception, under contribution for the education of all without respect of persons. Thus every man, whether rich or poor, is made equal before the law, and is laid under obligation, according to his means, of educating the whole community. And our law provides, for the application of this great principle, not only for the establishment of schools and all requisites for their support and efficient operation, but also for the establishment and maintenance of libraries of general knowledge and reading; nor does it leave each municipality, unassisted, to collect books where and how it can, and at whatever prices, but calls in the position and assistance of government to arrange for procuring, at the lowest prices, a selection of books ample in number and variety, and suitable in character, to meet the wants and wishes of every municipality in Upper Canada. The Department of Public Instruction having to do in respect to books with no private parties, but with school and municipal corporations only, the legitimate field of private trade cannot be entrenched upon,