


JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.



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In entering upon the fifth year of the *Journal of Education*, the retrospect of the progress of the work to which its pages have been devoted during the last four years furnishes strong ground of thankfulness and congratulation. Viewed in respect to educational matters, Upper Canada in 1852 and 1847 presents as many points of contrast as of comparison; we shall not however dwell upon either at the present moment. But we improve the opportunity presented by the commencement of a new school, as well as civil year, to offer a practical suggestion or two to all parties concerned in providing and diffusing the blessings of education and knowledge,—especially to Councillors, Superintendents, Trustees and Teachers.

1. An acquaintance with their duties and the proper course of proceeding in the many questions which arise in working out the great problem of universal education, must contribute no less to their personal satisfaction than to their public efficiency. We would therefore recommend to their careful perusal the last *Annual School Report for Upper Canada* which has just been presented to every Municipality and School Corporation in the Province,—especially the Papers contained in the Appendix. In one or other of those papers most of the questions are explained and discussed which have caused difficulty or embarrassment to Municipal Councils, local Superintendents, or Trustees. As a further ever convenient publication of reference, we would intimate to them again the advantage and importance of procuring the *Journal of Education*—conducted as it is, gratuitously, under the direction of the Head of the Department to which application is constantly made for information, directions and decisions, and containing as it does, from time to time, elucidations and expositions of the very matters that are so often submitted, besides notices and references important to school officers generally. Many instances have occurred during the last year, in which Municipal Councils have erred in their proceedings, and Trustees have got into difficulty and incurred loss and trouble, for want of information which had been given in the *Journal of Education* weeks before; and in several instances local Superintendents have, in embarrassment and perplexity, written to this Department on matters to which their attention had been specially called, and respecting which all needful information had been given in the *Journal of Education*. Instances have also occurred of Teachers experiencing inconvenience and loss from the same cause. No vagrant taste is consulted in the management of this *Journal*; its mission is special, and it pursues its one great object, omitting no topic that may be necessary to school officers, and doing what appears best calculated to awaken the curiosity and direct the attention of the country at large to principles and objects vital to the interests and progress of a free and Christian people. Those who will not co-operate with us in this work, will only have themselves to blame for any inconvenience or disadvantage which may ensue to them or their children from a penny wise and pound foolish policy.

2. We would also suggest to all friends of educational progress, in both town and country, not to be in the least discouraged by any kind of opposition that may be arrayed against them. No great reformation, nor any important improvement was ever yet introduced in any age or country, without encountering great opposition. The introduction of Christianity itself was made the occasion of violent hostility and even fierce persecutions on the part of the vicious, the proud and the selfish, and was declared to be the cause of many social contentions and public calamities. The first efforts to establish free constitutional governments, in all countries where they have been made, have had to brave successive storms of opposition from individual ambition and cupidity. And not unfrequently are the discussions and efforts connected with the election of Members of the Legislature, and Municipal Councils, and other kindred accompaniments of free government, pointed to as the melancholy fruits of having disturbed the tranquil realms of a time-honoured despotism, where free discussion is treason and popular election-meetings rebellion. Similar objections are urged against all efforts to promote popular education—especially the free universal education of a neighbourhood or city. The opponents of this great mission of modern civilization, while they have remained unchanged in spirit amidst the progressive changes taking place around them, have shrewdly varied and adapted their objections and language to the varying and novel circumstances in which they find themselves placed. Formerly it was boldly maintained, that ignorance was the providential allotment of the labouring and poorer classes of society, and that to educate them was unfitting them for their condition and invading the prerogative of the rich. The gross error and inhumanity of this objection having long since been exposed, the spirit that formerly employed it has recourse to others more plausible. At one time the objector says that, “to be sure, all ought to be educated, but the assessment law is unequal, and men ought not to be unequally burdened to support schools,”—though this objection is never thought of being urged against taxes imposed for any other of the numberless objects of public necessity and improvement, from the planking of a side-walk to the construction of a railroad, and just as if the doors of knowledge are to be closed against the needy many on account of some alleged defects in the assessment law and to save to the wealthy few, rather the selfish few, some pence of taxes which they think they ought not to pay! At another time the objector says, “the poor ought to be educated, and I do not object to pay something for that purpose; but they ought to be educated as poor”—just as if the spirit of pauperism ought to form a part of education, and as if it were better to educate children as paupers than to educate them as free-men! It would indeed be a calamity, if the spirit and character of poor and ragged schools in Great Britain were introduced into any part of our school system. Such schools have originated in Christian feelings in the Mother Country and are accomplishing benevolent objects, but they are there the partial mitigation of an evil which would not have existed had education for all been duly provided for by public authority, and the existence of which should be prevented here by a system of free education.

“But,” says the objector again, “I have no objection to provision being made for the education of all, but I object to the indiscriminate mixture of all classes and descriptions of children in the same school; I object to the building of expensive school houses; and object to a system which relieves men from paying who are able to pay for the education of their children, and imposes that burthen upon others.” The principle of the system of free schools is, that every man (without exception) should pay and pay annually, according to his property; and if there are any who have