

ment, his children have the advantage of all the books in the school which they are advanced enough to use. These benefits would be derived from any uniform set of books, but when we consider the superiority of the list provided, the boon is increased tenfold. It is a matter of regret, however, that so admirable a provision for books should be attended with one great disadvantage, viz: that the children cannot take them home, so that in the evening they may prepare the lessons which are to be gone over in school the following day. In the want of home preparation, an important element in the utility of the school is sacrificed. It strikes a stranger with a painful sense of deficiency when he meets groups of children returning from school empty-handed; he finds it difficult to suppose that a real and earnest work of education is going on, when he misses the familiar satchel slung over the shoulder, or bundle of books under the arm, which he has been accustomed to consider a *sine qua non*.

SCHOOL HOUSES.

In visiting the various districts, I have marked with pleasure an obvious distinction between the old and the new school-houses; those built during the past year are larger and better fitted up than those built in former years; but still the majority are too small, and many are most deplorably supplied with desks and seats. It is altogether a mistake to suppose that a small building, set down in the midst of a wood, or in the open clearing, is more comfortable and warmer than a larger one. A small, low-roofed school-house would take more fuel to keep it warm in winter, and would be incomparably less comfortable in summer than a larger building, with a lofty ceiling. It affords me pleasure to record that a few of the school-rooms presented a most cheering aspect, being furnished with desks and seats, large varnished maps, blackboard, and cupboard or desk for books, etc. By such furniture, school-rooms are made to look opulent and happy. Education seems there to be appreciated, and "well to do in the world." When in one school, in addition to the furniture already mentioned, I saw a neat, portable little globe, and observed the cheerful countenances of children and teacher, it was impossible not to feel at how trifling an expense teaching may be beguiled of many of its discouragements.—As it is left to the trustees and parents to furnish the school with suitable apparatus, and to maintain it, the success of the school greatly depends upon their cordial and unanimous co-operation. A teacher of even the most humble acquirements would work with more zeal and energy in a properly ventilated and well-heated school-room, and would be stimulated and encouraged by having comfortable seats and desks, with an adequate supply of books and maps. On the other hand, nothing can be more discouraging to a teacher who is disposed to pursue his work earnestly and faithfully, than to be met at every point by obstacles, such as insufficient furniture, and the opposition or niggardliness of parents in procuring the requisite number of books.—But the children are the chief sufferers from such culpable indifference and parsimony. The education that is imparted in a room where the stove makes but a feeble attempt to vanquish the biting cold, which the walls and floor let freely in, cannot be expected to be attractive to a child, or to enlist his interests and sympathies, even so far as that education goes. It is to be hoped that the parents will in future form a truer estimate of the importance of that part of the educational machinery which is more immediately placed in their hands, and will cheerfully and cordially unite in providing all the "means and appliances" which can facilitate the progress of their children and the efficiency of the school. The disputes and animosities with respect to school sites, which I have repeatedly encountered, have a most injurious influence on the interests of education, while party strifes and the selfishness of petty interests separate the parents of a district, dividing those exertions which should be united, the children are sacrificed and made victims to their ignorance and prejudice.

EDUCATION AND MORAL PROGRESS IN CANADA.

From Mr. Hogan's Prize Essay.

Having shown the rapid advance of Canada in population, in wealth, and in all the various arts which can minister to man's material enjoyment, it seems right to consider whether equal advances have been made in her moral condition and the general tone of society. She can boast then, with truth, that while wealth has been accumulated, and luxuries multiplied, she has faithfully discharged the higher duties imposed upon her, of promoting with unremitting care the progress of Religion and Education.

Of the social benefits to be derived by a nation, from the general spread of intelligence, Canada has been fully aware; and there is not a child in the Province without the means of receiving instruction combined with moral training. In fact, the system of education now established in Canada far exceeds, in its comprehensive details, any thing of the kind in Great Britain.

The manner in which this great question of elementary education has been dealt with is worthy of attention, not only from the results

produced in the Colony, but from its general interest. The gradation of the school system has been found superior to the establishments in England and Scotland, the Normal and Model Schools having been found of the greatest value. Speaking of the spirit and unanimity of the people of Upper Canada upon this subject, the Reverend Dr. Ryerson, the Chief Superintendent of Schools in Upper Canada, on the occasion of laying the first stone of the Normal and Model Schools, said:

"There are four circumstances which encourage the most sanguine anticipation in regard to our educational future: The first is the avowed and entire absence of all party spirit in the school affairs of our country, from the Provincial Legislature down to the smallest Municipality. The second is the precedence which our Legislature has taken of all others on the western side of the Atlantic, in providing for Normal School instruction, and in aiding teachers to avail themselves of its advantages. The third is, that the people of Upper Canada have voluntarily taxed themselves for the salaries of teachers, in a larger sum in proportion to their numbers, and have kept open their schools on an average, more months than the neighboring citizens of the great State of New York. The fourth is that the essential requisites of suitable and excellent text books have been introduced into our schools, and adopted almost by general acclamation; and that the facilities for furnishing all our schools with the necessary books, maps, and apparatus, will soon be in advance of those of any other country."

In 1842 the number of Common Schools in Upper Canada was 1721, attended by 65,978 pupils, and in 1853 the number had increased to 3127 schools and 194,736 pupils. There are now, in the Upper Province, in addition to the above, 8 Colleges, 79 County Grammar Schools, 174 Private, and 3 Normal and Model Schools, forming a total of educational establishments in operation in Upper Canada of 3391, and of students and pupils 263,986.

A careful comparison of the school system of Upper Canada with that of the adjacent States of the American Union, both in regard to the number of schools, the scholars attending them, and the amount paid for their support, shows that the colony has unquestionably the advantage. Ohio, with a population largely exceeding that of Western Canada, and with double the number of schools, had less than two-thirds of the pupils attending them in 1850, and paid £11,706 less for their support. Illinois, with a population one-fourth greater, had, in 1848, 271 schools less; and, in 1850, she had but one-third of the pupils, with 742 fewer schools. In the State of New York, too, it is found that the sum expended on education is three and one-fourth times less than that spent on education in Upper Canada, taking population into account.

These facts serve to show the rapid progress that has been made in Western Canada in providing institutions for the education of the people. The common school system of that Province, which has so largely contributed to these results, cuts up every inhabited township into small divisions somewhat resembling the squares on a chess board. These divisions are designated "school sections," and average an area of five square miles, each having its elective corporation of trustees for its management, with a library of standard literature for the general use of the school and the inhabitants.

The school houses are generally well supplied with maps, standard school books, geological specimens, philosophical apparatus, and other necessary educational appliances. In some sections the schools are free; that is, they are open to all children between the ages of five and sixteen, without charge. But in the greater proportion, a tuition fee of a quarter of a dollar, or a shilling sterling, a month, is charged; and this is the highest amount allowed to be imposed by law.

In these schools,—rarely not more than a mile and a-half from the most remote of the settlers in the district,—the children receive a sound and useful English education, quite adequate to all the ordinary avocations of life. In some sections, however, where the school fees already mentioned are paid, the higher branches are taught, and masters of considerable attainments are employed.

A large proportion of the teachers of the common schools in Upper Canada are trained at the Normal School in Toronto, and the funds for the payment of their salaries are derived from the following sources:—First, a sum is appropriated by the Legislature from the general revenue, and this is exactly proportioned to a sum the county which is an aggregation of school districts—may raise for the same purpose,—the Legislature thus measuring its liberality by the educational spirit of the people themselves. The residue is made up of the quarter dollar tuition fees already alluded to, and of any additional sum the inhabitants in each section, at their annual school meetings, may determine upon, or require.

In most of the schools in Upper Canada the Bible is read as a school book. The Irish National Series are the books universally used; and no religious instruction of a denominational character is permitted. Permission is granted to Roman Catholics by the Legislature to have separate schools,—a privilege which has been rarely exercised in rural districts, though not unfrequently in cities and towns.