

THE MCGILL GAZETTE.

Wednesday, March 15th, 1876.

Amongst the first symptoms of the appearance of an aristocracy in any community, is that desire which would-be members of this aristocracy possess, to have their children and wards educated and brought up entirely apart from the rougher and less refined offspring of the *commune vulgus*. This wish for separation, we do not mean to question. Arguments might be adduced to show that such feelings are not conducive to the best interests of any country, and equally strong reasons might be urged to prove that the feeling is perfectly justifiable.

However we imagine no amount of argument would bring with it conviction, and so we shall not discuss this point. But a natural, nay we might almost say a necessary, consequence of this wish for isolation is the existence among us of so called 'private educational establishments,' 'select academies for young ladies or gentlemen,' as the case may be.

These flourish in abundance, and the more private, the more select, and the more expensive, the greater the number of parents and guardians who desire to place their charges in the blissful abodes where their young minds will be uncontaminated by association with less favoured (peculiarly speaking) juveniles.

These academies and private schools are generally undertaken by parties who, whatever qualities they may possess to properly educate and train children, nearly always have the object in view of making the most money in the shortest possible time. So "Mrs. Jones, (widow of the late Mr. Jones) having engaged the services of the most eminent masters, will open a first class school for the board and education of young ladies. Terms \$500 per annum, payable in advance. A limited number of day scholars taken at moderate rates" So reads the advertisement. Often too, references, always 'by permission' are given to B. Fitzfaddle Snooks Esq, and O. R. Brown Esq, (of the firm of Brown & Robinson) and others, all of whom have probably been patrons or acquaintances of the late Mr. Jones, and are

on this account deemed perfectly capable to guarantee to confiding mammas and credulous papas, that Mrs. Jones and her eminent masters are in every way competent to give a full and complete education to any young ladies who may be given to Mrs. Jones, 'and her eminent masters' charge.' Under these auspices the school is started, Mrs. J. announces that 'she has a few vacancies,' and these are immediately filled up.

But now comes the more serious consideration. Should schools like the one above mentioned, free from all restrictions and liable to no inspection by competent officials be allowed to exist. Should a scheming woman be permitted, or should a speculative man be permitted, to engage what teachers he or she pleases; to engage teachers whose qualifications for the immensely important work they are to perform, have never been tested? We answer, No. But it may be argued that if the teachers are incapable it is the parent's affair entirely. To a certain extent it is, but still all parents cannot distinguish a good school from a bad one, and many would, even could they draw the line, prefer to send their charges to a fashionable academy, no matter what the character of the instruction there imparted.

What we think necessary is, to have all desirous of teaching, compelled to undergo an examination, or else render the inspection of private schools by public officials compulsory.

By this means many of those pernicious systems of instruction now in vogue would be done away with, and the result would be that the young of every class would all receive a thorough education on approved principles instead of the present anomalous and baneful system.

As most of the Students probably know, the "memorial" requesting the Faculty of Arts to cede to the students the room in the right wing immediately adjoining the Arts' Buildings, for the purpose of a reading-room, is now complete. A meeting of Students in Arts and Science was called last Thursday, to receive the report of the Committee who had been appointed to draw up this memorial, and also