

standard, we forget that *but for a higher standard on the part of the few the many would not have attained to their present position, that they could never go beyond it, and that even in the meantime our hold on it would be insecure. . . . It is to the influence of the higher educational institutions of the country that the very existence of the lower ones must be traced; it is to the knowledge which they have rained down from above, that the wide field of popular instruction is indebted for its present verdure. If John Knox had received no higher instruction than that of his own parish schools, the schools themselves would never have existed.*"*

This truth might be illustrated by abundance of facts, some of them within the range of our own experience. We have never known an institution for the higher branches of education established in any part of the Province, however imperfectly it accomplished that end, that did not soon exercise a beneficial influence upon the education of the whole surrounding country. We hear frequent laudations of the New England primary school system, and the wisdom of the puritans, who founded it; but we must remember that a large proportion of the expatriated founders of New England were graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, otherwise their primary schools would never have existed—that they very early established colleges likewise, otherwise their vigor would never have been continued.

We indeed hear of the Normal School, which has lately been inaugurated with a flourish of trumpets. We are not going to deny the usefulness of such an institution, but we have little doubt that the expectations entertained of it in many quarters have been far too high. That it is to make straight all that which is crooked in our common school system, is an unreasonable expectation. Besides, while we admit the difference between the possession of knowledge and the facilities of communicating it, and therefore the necessity of such an institution, yet surely it is the *first* point to give the instruction required in those who would teach others, and to found the necessary institutions for that purpose; and then afterward, if you choose teach them to communicate it to others. How can men communicate to others knowledge which they do not possess themselves? Yet in the present state of the education of Nova Scotia, this is just what the Normal school professes to accomplish. The experience of other countries has shown, that the establishment of good universities is the most efficient means of filling the common schools with a superior class of teachers. In Scotland, the efficiency of the parish school has arisen, in a great measure, from the fact, that many of their teachers were graduates of the universities, men of extensive attainments, of cultivated intellect and literary taste. We do not say that all or nearly all the parish school masters of Scotland were of this character, but many were, enough to establish the character of the system, long before Normal schools were heard of, aye, and to give them a character which, without such means, Normal schools could not have given.

But supposing that an efficient common school education could be attained without a university, we ask, are Nova Scotians to have access to no higher education than that of common schools and academies? Are they forever to be excluded, at least while they remain in their own country, from all opportunities of entering upon the higher walks of science? While the inhabitants of the other colonies have, through the enlarged views and enlightened liberality of their governments, been enabled to en-

* North British Review, No. 26—on Scottish Universities.