

2. VICTORIA SCHOOL, BROCKVILLE.

From a recent report of the Local Superintendent of Schools in the town of Brockville we select the following:—

The apparatus which your board has secured for the school is a great improvement, as it gives the school a higher position in the estimation of the community, and presents a strong attraction to the pupils. As it is gradually made use of in the conduct of the School, I am persuaded that it will elevate the general standing of the pupils and School.

You have acted with intelligence and much judiciousness in granting prizes.* These will furnish a spur to all to study, and those who are unsuccessful in one competition, will be stimulated to make greater exertions in the future. My experience has been that prizes are an excellent feature of any school, and that the objections brought against them are greatly more than counter-balanced by the good they do. One thing is greatly needed, punctual attendance on the part of pupils. Many are yet very irregular in their attendance, too many drop in late, and great is the injury which is thus done to all parties. This at present is the greatest evil in the school.

I shall close with a few suggestions to your board, which I think are worthy of your consideration.

1. The first division is too unwieldy for one teacher, and for vigorous working needs to be divided.

2. The mid-summer examination would be a more suitable time for the distribution of prizes, when the classes have been carried up to the standard in each division.

3. It would serve both as a stimulus and reward to success, if the names of the successful competitors for prizes were published in our local papers.

4. I would suggest the propriety, as speedily as possible, of securing a library for the use of teachers and pupils. It is much needed and in places where it has been obtained, has been followed by excellent results.

5. The teaching of vocal music in the school appears to me a very desirable thing, and is becoming more common in our schools. In many ways it has a good effect upon the pupils.

6. I would also recommend that the ten commandments should be taught in the school.

3. CIRCULAR FROM THE LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT TO THE TRUSTEES AND RATEPAYERS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1, COUNTY OF BRUCE.

(Inserted by request.)

GENTLEMEN,—Finding great difficulty in getting many of you together at School Lecture meetings, and the subject of Education not at all commanding that share of attention we should like, I have taken the liberty, to the trouble and expense of addressing you on the most important subject by the press.

I know the country is new, and the settlers generally poor; and, compared to other places, there is much to commend and to comfort. But still a great deal remains to be done that should and could be done with no loss, but much profit and honor to the whole community—especially the youth on whose training the piety, the morality, the wealth and prosperity of the whole country so much depend.—The old people are almost worn out and will soon be in the grave; and the country with all it contains will very shortly be in the hands of the youth, and the measure of their success shall depend on the training we shall be able to give them.

Permit me, therefore, gentlemen, to call your attention to the fact as deserving solemn consideration, made known by the last half-yearly returns, that of 2026 register scholars only 618 average scholars of teaching time are made out; and if we add, one-fifth that are never sent at all, the attendance of our district is only one-fourth of the children of school age. Placing a great number on the school Register amounts to very little, when we find some names for one day in the year, a great many from one to twenty days and continuing every single day, it takes 3½ register scholars to make an average, one of full time. This I publish for conviction and correction. There is a small increase of the past year over the previous, however, far short of what it should be: for it would cost you little, perhaps not one cent to double the attendance of our schools, they being all now free.

As schools houses are now built very conveniently at a regular distance from a quarter of a mile to 2½, all children from 6 to 12 years of age should attend as a matter of sacred duty, whilst a teacher is engaged, paid by the section, and charging no fees. We are careful not to hurt our horses or oxen by using them too young. Should we not be equally careful of our children? If you give them the second six years in school, they ought to have the elements of an English Education. They are out of your way, being under the eye of a careful guardian, more safe from injury and accident, and

the last three years of their school time, if poverty or necessity require it, may be used by the parent.

In the Southern States where four millions of slaves are sold and bought as animals or chattels they are not wrought for fear of hurting them, but allowed to run wild till 12 years of age. Should not we show equal care of our own children, with all our boast of superior freedom and christian civilization? No fees being required, you, gentlemen, as you love your children, love to see a growth of the mind as well as that of the body—as you love your country and the vast interests of the immortal soul, and without confusion give account to God for your charge, give that training to your child that God puts within your reach.

What a sin and disgrace that when the good, the wealthy, and the intelligent party of the community build a school house and engage to pay a teacher for the education of the children of the poor, that the undutiful and miserable parent neglects and despises the favour, and in spite of the love and patriotism of others, force on his unhappy offspring one of the worst hereditary evils that can afflict humanity—which is *gross ignorance*.

If this will continue, the State after the example of other countries, being the true guardian of the weak, the injured, and the oppressed, will and should interfere, and fine this as a crime, when not excused by sickness or some natural necessity.

Look at the weak and helpless condition of a wild Indian, a South Sea Islander, or a poor African, and you clearly see in comparison with intelligent and properly trained people, the weakness, the superstition, the destitution, and the awful miseries entailed upon man by ignorance, and that it has been well said that "Knowledge is better than strength." Yea by its aid we find not unfrequently one man doing what 20,000 men could never think of doing.

Whence our conjugal virtue, and social order, our commerce, our wealth, our almost miraculous power of travel, manufacture and traffic?—from training. Knowledge thinks nothing of taking a tramp round the world with 4 or 8,000 tons, on a trackless path never seen before, at the rate of 12 or 15 miles per hour. Take up 10,000 men, with all their arms or baggage, and with a power begotten by few splinters of wood, run with them, if they please asleep, from 30 to 60 miles an hour on a land route. Or hold conversation with the man on the other side of the earth as on the other side of the street, or along the very bottom of the ocean, for 2,000 miles or more.

But more particularly, Whence the many thousand comforts of the poor untutored man in the midst of light and civilization? Are they not greatly from the knowledge of others? Blessings spread around him unconsciously, like the light of the sun on the animal which never understands whence the benefit is enjoyed. The child in his trying struggles and weary pilgrimage through a life of sorrow, in a fallen state, is greatly favored by throwing light on his path. You do this as you enlighten his mind: enlarge his capacity to deal with the sure opposition of his lot, and make the very best of the favourable wind in his sails by teaching him to set them to the very best advantage.

Therefore, the voice of all material things he has come to in contact with, master and govern, is "teach the child if you would make him a man." The peace, the wealth, the commerce, the honor and prosperity of our country, and the necessary claims and advancement of the present and coming generation returns the echo, "Teach the child" to act out his share in the great competition of this highly favored and happy age of experiment, discovery and advancement. Yea, fully admitting the truth of the sayings of the wise that "Education is the torch of Christianity and the handmaid of Religion," no wonder that the peremptory voice of Revelation is "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." "It is not good that the soul be without knowledge." "Fools are said to hate knowledge, but in hating it they are said to love death." The animal by instinct is fully prepared to answer his end, and fill his lot; but poor man, although the lawful governor of the animal, and designed to answer an end ten thousand times greater, is said by a great writer to be *without training* "very little above the animal," and in some points far below the same.

How shall man secure that great and most desirable power, that is, power over himself? A new nature created and trained to govern the old man that is corrupt. Is it not by knowledge and teaching? For the enlightening of the mind, the renovation of the nature and sanctification of the heart, *teaching* is the great duty of the parent, the minister, and the teacher. We leave the power with God but the means with the creature. The child rather loves to be let alone in *ignorance* and sin, although the same will be sure to ensure his *ruin* at last.

Whence comes the knowledge of the Immortal and Invisible? What lifts the *veil* of the future, and secures to man a good hope through grace? Is it not imparted to man by teaching. Therefore, all our Missionaries to the dark and untutored heathen, work their

* Obtained from the Educational Department, Toronto.