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RELATIONS OF GRAMMAR SCHOOLS TO COMMON SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

To the appropriate functions of our District Grammar Schools attention was drawn by the writer of these remarks early in 1846, in his *Report on a system of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada*, pp. 9, 149—156. We know not that we can better introduce some practical observations on the relations of District Grammar Schools, than in the words which we employed upwards of three years since:—

"The basis of an educational structure adapted to this end should be as broad as the population of the country; and its loftiest elevation should equal the highest demands of the learned professions, adapting its graduation of schools to the wants of the several classes of the community, and to their respective employments or professions, the one rising above the other—yet each complete in itself for the degree of education it imparts; a character of uniformity as to fundamental principles pervading the whole: the whole based upon the principles of Christianity, and uniting the combined influence and support of the Government and the people."

Then, in the *Second Part* of the Report, after having explained and illustrated by references to European countries the kind and character of the gradations of schools required for carrying into operation the system of instruction indicated in the words just quoted, the following observations occur:

"Under this view the same principles and spirit would pervade the entire system, from the Primary Schools up to the University: the basis of education in the Elementary Schools would be the same for the whole community—at least so far as public or governmental provisions and regulations are concerned—not interfering with private Schools or taking them into the account; but as soon as the pupils would advance to the limits of the instruction provided for all, then those whose parents or guardians could no longer dispense with their services, would enter life with a sound elementary education; those whose parents might be able and disposed would proceed, some to the Real School to prepare for the business of a farmer, an architect, an engineer, a manufacturer, or mechanic, others to the Grammar School to prepare for the University, and the Professions."

In the carrying out and completion of such a system, the courses of instruction in each class of Schools would be prescribed, as also the qualifications for admission into each of them, above the Primary Schools: each School would occupy its appropriate place, and each Teacher would have his appropriate work; and no one man in the same School, and on one and the same day, would be found making the absurd and abortive attempts of teaching the a, b, c's, reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, (in all their gradations,) together with Latin, Greek, and Mathematics.

I think it is true in the business of teaching, as well as in every other department of human industry, that where there is a suitable division of labour, each labourer is more likely to become more thoroughly master of his work, and imbued with the spirit of it, than where his time and attention and energies are divided among a nameless variety of objects; and as the example of England may be appealed to in proof of the almost miracles which may be performed in regard both to the amount and qualities of manufactures, by a skilful division and application of labour, so may the examples of other countries of Europe be adduced in illustration of what may be achieved as to both the cheapness, the thoroughness, the various practical character, and this general diffusion of education, by a proper classification of Schools and Teachers, their appropriate training and selection by competition, together with an efficient system of inspection over every class of Schools,—the latter being the chief instrument of the wonderful improvement in the Holland system of Public Instruction.

The full development of such a system of Schools, is not the work of a day; but I hope the day is not distant when its essential features will be seen in our own system of public instruction, and when its unnumbered advantages will begin to be enjoyed by the Canadian people."

It is to the topics referred to in the passages which we have italicized, that we desire at the present time to call attention.

The District Grammar Schools were clearly intended to occupy an intermediate position between the Common Schools and Colleges. Their object is distinct and peculiar; and so should be their organization. They are the first of the three stages in a system of

liberal studies. As the College prepares for professional studies, so does the Grammar School prepare for the Colleges. Ought not the organization and system of instruction in the Grammar Schools to have reference to the Colleges to which they are intended to be introductory? Or should they be suffered to remain a compound of every thing? Do not the interests of classical learning require the existence and endowment of separate schools for that purpose? Is not such the object of the District Grammar Schools? As they are partially endowed for that object, ought they not to be made efficient for its accomplishment to as great an extent as possible? Can that be the case as long as Grammar Schools are allowed to teach everything that is taught in the Common Schools? Are not the subjects peculiar to a Grammar School ample to occupy the time and employ the energies of any one man? The eyes of an Argus and the arms of a Briareus would hardly suffice for the double duties of a Common School Teacher and a Grammar School Teacher. The Rev. Dr. G. W. BETHUNE, of Philadelphia, in a recent address before a literary society of HARVARD COLLEGE, Mass., speaks of an "omnigenous competition which is equally ready at inventing a cooking-stove on an ethical system, and will take to the pulpit, the bar, a professor's chair, a seat in the Senate, or the Presidency of the United States, if only sure that the emoluments of the new speculation will only exceed those of a quack-medicine, a peddling-wagon, or a singing school." Some such "omnigenous" powers seem to be ascribed to the master of a Grammar School, when, in addition to teaching Latin, Greek and Mathematics, he undertakes to teach all the branches of an English Education. The result of such an attempt must be, that no branch will be effectually taught. Those who send their children to the school either to acquire an English education or the elements of Classical learning, will be alike disappointed; both classes of children will sustain irreparable injury; and the design of the Legislature in endowing the Grammar School will, in a great measure, be defeated. The Common School in the neighbourhood of such Grammar School will also suffer corresponding injury—a considerable portion of its legitimate support being diverted from it by the rival competition of the Grammar School! Surely it never could have been intended that Grammar Schools should occupy the same ground as Common Schools—should compete with them; thus lowering the character and impairing the efficiency of both the Grammar and the neighbouring Common Schools. It is the bearing of this question on the interests of Common Schools that has induced us to depart in this instance from our usual course, to discuss matters relating to any class of seminaries in the Province not managed under the provisions of the Common School law. We venture then to suggest,

1. Whether a formal and thorough inquiry (by Commission or otherwise) into the state and character of the District Grammar Schools in Upper Canada ought not to be instituted. The facts that notwithstanding the existence of from 30 to 40 of these Grammar Schools in Upper Canada—of there being no less than 60 Grammar School scholarships established in the Provincial University—of the University being munificently endowed and provided with able Professors, and yet only eight students matriculating at the last Annual Convocation—a smaller number than annually enters the youngest of the Colleges in the newest States of the neighbouring Republic;—these facts, it appears to us, are quite sufficient to justify, if not demand, the most careful inquiry into the working of that class of schools on whose contributions the University depends for its numerical efficiency, as well as great numbers of youth for a sound elementary Classical education.

2. Whether a course of studies and general rules of discipline should not be prepared and prescribed for the Grammar Schools,—