

of New England and New York as near perfection as any kind can be. In all the new large tracts of land are reserved for the Seminary of high school to be found in every part, and are continually increasing. Of the hundred and twenty-five new tracts established since the year 1810, within the last year, Education is justly appraised as the most important of the age. The public opinion demands that Government should be a benefit rather than a burden—that it should be carried on in harmony with the feelings as well as the interests of the governed—fully recognizing the important principle of ultimate responsibility to the people, and that it should adjust itself to the varying developments of the times.

These views prevail, not only in Great Britain, where political freedom has made great progress, and the elective franchise has been widely extended, but also in France, Holland, Belgium, and many of the German States,—in fact, wherever knowledge is diffused, and, in proportion to the extent of enlightened responsibility, the people are more ready to see that they are consonant to truth and equity. Interested and obstinate men will continue to oppose them; and long established despotic institutions, such as that of Russia, will resist their introduction; but opinion will be in favor for the nations will assuredly preserve in their efforts to obtain freedom and self-government, and will not recede from their purposes as accomplished.

Although I am addressing an audience composed of persons of different denominations, and under the auspices of an institution which abjures all interference with religious peculiarities, I trust that it will not be considered out of order, to advert for a moment to the encouraging aspect of the times, reference to religious liberty and the rights of conscience. Who, in his continent, will stand up in defence of the exploded dogma, that man is responsible to his fellow-men in his religious opinions? Who, in the nineteenth century, will venture to plead for their repression, restriction, or even discouragement? Who will dispute the position that civil government, being constituted for the protection of life, liberty, and property, is bound to secure the benefit to all members of the commonwealth, recognizing the equal rights of all, and treating all as equal, in every respect, as long as they obey the laws? And who will refuse to admit that when the British Parliament, in the years 1823 and 1829, removed from the Statute-book certain prohibitory enactments, and opened the doors of office and employment to all competent persons, irrespective of their religious professions, it performed an act of strict justice, restoring a right which had been taken away, rather than bestowing a boon which might have been withheld? These questions can receive but one answer, and that meeting will allow me to affirm on their behalf, that they anticipate with high satisfaction the period, now fast approaching, when absolute religious equality shall be the basis of all laws, when all bounties and all restrictions, in regard to religion, shall be abolished, and make cease to "hurt and destroy" one another, on account of those differences, for which we may as well be thankful to any human tribunal, but to God only, the "Father of Spirits," and sole Lord of conscience.

I now come to notice the benevolent efforts which have sprung into existence since the year 1820. But it is not possible to mention even a tithe of them, so great is the number. During the last fifty years, philanthropists have lived with each other in devoting plans for relieving the misery, the suppressive of vice, and the moral and religious improvement of mankind.

How gracious has been their success! We have hospitals—general and particular—as well for all kinds of diseases, as especially for those of the eye, and the star-blink, fever, consumption, and other disorders; Asylums for the deaf and dumb, the blind, and the idiotic—for widows and orphans—for the destitute, the decrepit, and the disabled; and, as we have before observed, Schools for all.

We have Charitable Institutions of every description, and adapted to meet all possible forms of necessity—and we have Societies in all parts of the world, for moral and religious objects, embracing the multifarious evils which are current in Christendom, and employing a vast number of agents for the promotion of those views, by means of the printing press, education, and oral teaching. If he asked what has been done, we may reply, in the language of the inscription in St. Paul's Cathedral, in honor of Sir Christopher Wren, its architect, "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice." (If you ask for a monument, look around you.) We may adopt the words of the Saviour and say, "by their fruits ye shall know them."

But, instead of descending to particulars, let me only refer to two or three of the most interesting illustrations.

In the year 1820, the Temperance movement was unknown. Men brutalized themselves, almost without rebuke—killed their wives and beggared their children with impunity. They cannot do it now. The blighting curse of society would be upon them. Drunkenness is at a lower discount than ever. It has been discovered that it is wise to abstain from that which can do no good, and may do much harm; and that it is right to deny oneself to have a fellow-creature from misery and ruin. The result is, that many a home has been made happy—many a wretched being restored to his proper place in society—and that a salutary impression has been produced favorable to the general principles of the great reform, even among those who have not enlisted in its ranks.

In the year 1820, modern missions had only commenced their career. In 1850, we review their progress with astonishment and thankfulness. Missionaries of every Christian denomination have braved all danger, and endured all privation and toil in the prosecution of their noble enterprise. They have planted Christianity in every clime, and in almost every country. They have laid the foundation of a magnificent building, to be reared in coming ages. They have carried with them knowledge and civilization—reduced barbarous languages to writing—introduced the conveniences and comforts of life among savages—taught them to think and to reason—raised them to the true dignity of human nature—opened to them new and fertile sources of enjoyment—and shown to them that the true religion has "the promise of this life" as well as of "that which is to come."

In 1820, Great Britain was a slave-holding country. She stole men—and she bought them, and sold them. She was the principal partner of the great African trade. But she has abandoned the traffic. She has denounced it as a crime, and treated it, in the case of her own subjects, as piracy. At an immense cost she has sent her ships of war to watch the dealers in human flesh and

blood, hunt them down, and snatch the prey from their grasp. She has done more—she has purged herself from the guilt.—She paid a hundred millions of dollars to the planters, and then burst asunder the chains of the bondmen throughout her territories. There is now no British slave for the sun to shine upon. Pardon the egotism of the speaker—and allow him to say that it is among the most pleasant recollections of his life, that he took some part in this holy crusade—that he had the honor to co-operate with the great and the good in rousing the people of England to that state of virtuous indignation before which slavery withered and fell,—that he heard the noble and eloquent George Thompson—the cutting sarcasms of Daniel O'Connell—and the thundering denunciations of William Knibb;—and that he saw the venerable Clarkson at the great Anti-Slavery Convention in Exeter Hall, bending under the weight of more than fourscore years, receiving the plaudits of congregated thousands—yet meekly enjoying his triumph, and expressing in terms of devout acknowledgment, his gratitude to Almighty God for being permitted to see that day! It was a British Poet who said—"I would not have a slave to till my ground, To carry me, to fan me while I sleep And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth that I could buy, and all the honors that I could win." And it is the dominions of Great Britain that all men are really born "free and equal."

In 1820, men revelled in war. It was the rage and the fashion. Englishmen had "natural enemies," and they would fight them. They have paid dearly for it, and they will smart for many years to come. But a great change has taken place in the public opinion of the country. England is no longer a nation of enemies' now. Thanks to the influence of Christianity, better understood, we may adopt the words of the poet to our purpose, and say—"Was a time, when, now that men are wiser, Kings must not play at it." Not that the fighting is all over. There will be conflicts yet;—but men will not "play it" war, as they have done. It will be the last resort, and all other means of adjustment first exhausted. And who formerly, it was the rule, and it constituted the history of the nations; heretofore, it will be the exception, and counted as a blot on the record. Bleeding humanity exclaims, "Oh, that war would cease!" Universal science, philanthropy, plead for common brotherhood. The voice of God declares that men shall "break their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; that nation shall not lift up sword against nation; and that 'men shall learn war no more.' That time, we believe, is not very far distant.

Having thus endeavored, briefly and imperfectly, to sketch the progress of society, since the commencement of the present century, and to contrast 1850 with 1820, I presume that all present will admit the conclusion, that it is our happiness to live in a very extraordinary age,—an age which has been distinguished more than any that preceded it, by profound research, brilliant discovery, and far-reaching beneficence. The second half of this century will be much more illustrious than the first, and ere the year 1900 dawn upon the world, mankind will have been blessed by such an unfolding of the true and the useful, in every department, as "eye hath not seen nor ear heard," nor the mind of man conceived.

Man's duty is present duty. Faithfully to avail ourselves of the advantages thus lavishly bestowed upon us—to cherish a deep and serious sense of the responsibilities thus arising—in regard to intellectual training, to exercise a sound discrimination in the choice of authors, preferring the practical to the showy, the fanciful, and the romantic—to cultivate the spirit of the age, and prepare to advance with it—and especially to take part in promoting all well-ordered plans, and enterprises for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, our country, and the world at large. Ours is a noble vocation. Let us cheerfully respond to the calls which are addressed to us on every side.

In the progress to which your attention has been directed this evening, Canada has largely participated. Her advancement since the year 1820 has been steadily rapid. In that year, the population of Lower Canada was 250,000; and in 1850, it was 750,000. The population of Upper Canada was 70,000; it has increased more than ten-fold, being now 721,144. In 1820, sixty-four vessels arrived at the Port of Montreal—of which one thousand and sixty-four. In 1850, the Provincial Revenue was less than £30,000; in 1849, the returns for two quarters exceeded £300,000. In 1820, a vessel might be seen at Montreal as was occupied in crossing the Atlantic; now we leave one city at sunset and reach the other at sunrise. In 1820, there were no Common Schools, and in Upper Canada no Colleges; in 1850, our schools are frequented by 200,000 pupils, and in addition to the Colleges and Seminaries connected with the French Canadian population, we have McGill and Lennoxville Colleges in Lower Canada, and, in Upper Canada, Queen's, Riponville, and Victoria Colleges, and the University of Toronto, besides numerous private seminaries for education, well conducted and crowded with students. In 1820, there was no gas, no steamboats, nor railroads, nor plank roads—no many places scarcely any roads at all.—The changes in these respects need not be enlarged on; they are well known, and duly appreciated.

At that time, the country wore an aspect of rude and discomfort; the population was scattered, toilsomely pioneering its way through the forests. Settlements were few and far between, and towns were but here and there visible; but in 1850, wherever the traveller goes, he discovers symptoms of enjoyment, enterprise, and prosperity; well cultivated farms, flourishing manufactures, thriving villages, populous towns and cities, displaying the best style of modern elegance, together with abundant proofs of remunerating commerce, are presented to his view; while in all directions he observes with satisfaction the care which has been taken to provide the means of mental culture and religious improvement.

Before us, also, an exhilarating prospect is opened. What remains, but that we resolve to be wisely patriotic,—that whatever position we may individually choose to occupy, politically or religiously, we will encourage to the utmost extent all purposes tending to the advancement of the interests of the land;—that we will foster the institutions, and labour to bring them as near perfection as any thing human is capable of;—that we will promote, as far as in us lies, the union of Canadians in furtherance of

education, agriculture, manufactures, and all moral reforms;—and finally, that we will live for this country, and combine with all true patriots in the prosecution of such measures as shall render Canada as great and glorious as she is free!

A preliminary meeting of gentlemen was held yesterday, at the room of the Shakspeare Club, Great St. James' street, to consider the project of presenting a testimonial to John Young, Esq., for his successful exertions on behalf of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Rail Road Company.—The Honorable Peter McGill occupied the Chair. The following resolutions were passed unanimously, and a subscription list opened; sums to exceed four dollars: Moved by J. Leeming, Esq., seconded by G. E. Cartier, Esq., M. P. P. Resolved 1st—That in the opinion of this meeting, some public testimonial should be presented to John Young, Esq., by the citizens of Montreal, for his active and successful exertions on behalf of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Rail Road Company.—The Honorable Peter McGill occupied the Chair. The following resolutions were passed unanimously, and a subscription list opened; sums to exceed four dollars: Moved by J. Leeming, Esq., seconded by G. E. Cartier, Esq., M. P. P. 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