

THE OBJECT, BENEFITS AND HISTORY OF NORMAL SCHOOLS,

WITH ACT OF LEGISLATURE OF NOVA SCOTIA ANENT NORMAL SCHOOL, &c.

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It is pleasing to observe the deep interest at present taken in the cause of national education. Whatever be the diversity of opinion respecting the mode, all seem to be agreed respecting the thing itself—that it is alike the duty and the privilege of every enlightened Government to provide and foster that system of popular education best adapted to the condition and circumstances of the nation at large,—that system which is commensurate with the population, and which will best qualify all, of every rank and degree, for their appropriate duties and employments, whether as citizens or as christians.

And this interest is of no evanescent or transient character. It will deepen and widen as society progresses, and as the bearing of a nation's prosperity on a nation's education is apprehended and appreciated. There are no countries on the face of the earth for which a national education has done more than for Scotland, Prussia, several States of Germany, the United States of America and Upper Canada; and though the system of education in these countries varies considerably, there is not the semblance of pretension on the part of one of them to any thing like perfectibility. On the contrary, with one voice they declare the felt deficiencies of their educational schemes and operations, and their susceptibility of improvement; and this conviction seems to grow in very proportion to their measure of advancement and the universally admitted efficiency of their educational institutions.

Now one of the most substantial results that has flowed from the recent agitation of the whole question of education has been, the elevation of teaching to something like its legitimate position—the rank of a science—the dignity of a profession. Along with this as a natural consequence, has been raised the standard of qualification of Teachers—of qualifications not merely as to scholarship, but as to the real

business of their profession—their capability of teaching. Hence the noble efforts lately made by Teachers themselves with a view to mutual improvement, by the establishment of Associations, Teachers' Institutes, Annual Conventions, and the like. And hence, too, the praiseworthy endeavours of societies, of Churches, and of States, in providing the requisite means for the training of Teachers, by assigning to this work particular departments in High Schools and Academies, or, still more formally, by the setting agoing and supporting of Normal Seminaries with their varied equipments of Model Schools, of Professors, Lecturers, and Teachers.

The Province of Nova Scotia has imitated, in this respect, the example of all enlightened countries both in the old and new world, and is now erecting at Truro, in the County of Colchester, a Normal School, which it is proposed to open about the beginning of November next. As the Superintendent of Education has been appointed the Principal of this Seminary, he has felt it his duty to lay before his fellow-colonists a brief statement of the object, benefits, and history of Normal Schools in general, with a few explanatory remarks on the Enactment passed by the Legislature in 1854, along with its bye-laws, in the hope that prejudices may thereby be removed, and public sympathy awakened in favor of the enterprise, in some measure, at least, proportioned to its importance.

1.—OBJECT OF NORMAL SCHOOLS.

The epithet *Normal* is derived from the Latin word *norma*, a rule or law; and when applied to a School, it primarily signifies one conducted according to a particular rule, or a prescribed, fixed plan. Generally speaking, however, the term has received a more extensive signification, and is employed to designate those institutions which have for their object the training or the qualifying of Teachers for the bet