

Having so far done justice to Dr. Ryerson, we now proceed to the discharge of a similar duty to the public, in candidly pointing out wherein we regard the provisions of the Legislature, as well as the disposition of the people in favour of successful general education, as falling altogether short of the desired mark; and this we shall endeavour to exemplify in at least three remarkable instances, namely:

1st. The utter neglect, still manifested, of the just claims of common school teachers to far greater consideration and more substantial remuneration, as a highly respectable, influential, and important class of men;

2nd. The extraordinary manner in which the urgent moral propriety of, as far as possible, providing for the education of the female sex, in separate schools, is almost entirely lost sight of;

And 3rd. The remarkable fact that the establishment of district grammar schools, on a suitable liberal foundation, as the higher of the two branches of primary instruction, and the great connecting link between an elementary or common school, and a university education, though the first to be provided for, should have been shuffled off for half a century, and still remain in an embryotic state;—for it cannot be supposed that either the late generally miserable district schools, or the present contracted grammar schools, were intended to supply their place,—while the less urgent claims of a university, destined for the exclusive benefit of the higher and richer portion of society, who can best afford any extra expense, should have been unceasingly agitated and forced on to precocious maturity, until, becoming the bane of contention among rival political and sectarian parties, it has more than once convulsed the province, and threatened to shake the very government to its centre.

As these are rather serious charges, it would have been very desirable to have been able to take a rather extended view of the grounds on which they are based, although only partially connected with the documents before us; but our space not allowing of such a step at present, we are constrained to refer our readers to such parts of the widely circulated Reports on education as bear upon them, and to content ourselves with prefacing our first objection by a brief outline of the noble scope of the otherwise highly promising elementary system now in progress, and then proceeding to the demonstration of the impossibility of the expected results being realized, from the inadequate means and instruments at present employed.

In few words, then, be it remembered, that it is intended that our provincial system of primary instruction should be universal, *i. e.*, embrace the whole body of the people; that it should be practicable; that it should be founded on religion and morality; and that it should develop all the intellectual and physical powers, and should therefore provide for the efficient teaching of the following subjects, *viz.* 1st, biblical history and morality; 2nd, reading and spelling; 3rd, writing; 4th, arithmetic; 5th, grammar; 6th, geography; 7th, linear drawing; 8th, vocal music; 9th, history; 10th, natural history; 11th, natural philosophy; 12th, agriculture; 13th, human physiology; 14th, civil government; and 15th, political economy.

So vast an array of branches of mere elementary education, may perhaps startle those who have not been accustomed to look deeply into such matters, and may even be considered by some as altogether visionary; but whatever doubt may exist in this colony of the practicability of so comprehensive a course of instruction being realised, must be at once set at rest by the convincing reply made by the Provincial Superintendent—that the whole of these subjects are connected with the well-being of the community, and should therefore be made accessible to them in the common schools; and that if the higher classes are to be provided with the means of a university education, surely the common people, the bone and sinew of the country, should be provided by the State with the means of the best common school education; and, farther, that as all the branches above enumerated have been and are taught in the common schools in many other countries—in the mountains and valleys of Switzerland, in the interior and *not* fertile and wealthy countries of Germany, in many parts of France, in many of the schools of Great Britain and Ireland, and in a considerable number of the Eastern and Middle States of America, surely what has been done and is doing in so many other countries in respect to elementary education, may and ought to be done in Canada.

Taking for granted then, that such is the true state of the case, and that such are the results that ought to be expected from a well organized provincial system, it becomes a matter of great importance to enquire how far the means and instruments at present applied, are likely to prove adequate to the accomplishment of the noble end in view; and if such be done, we hesitate not to aver, that the answer of every reflecting man will be—that it will be morally impossible, so long as the common school-master occupies his present degraded position—whether we regard the emoluments of his highly important office, or his general status in society—and that, too, in spite of the institution of the best Normal and Model Schools in the world.

As very justly observed by M. Guizot, the able Prime Minister of France, on introducing the law of primary instruction to the Chamber of Deputies in 1833:

*"All the provisions hitherto described would be of none effect, if we took no pains to procure for the public School thus constituted an able Master, and worthy of the high vocation of instructing the people. It cannot be too often repeated, that it is the Master that makes the School. What a well-assorted union of qualities is required to constitute a good Master! A good Master ought to be a man who knows much more than he is called upon to teach, that he may teach with intelligence and with taste; who is to live in a humble sphere, and yet have a noble and elevated spirit; that he may preserve that dignity of mind and of deportment, without which he will never obtain the respect and confidence of families: who possesses a rare mixture of gentleness and firmness; for, inferior though he be, in station, to many individuals in the Communes, he ought to be the obsequious servant of none; a man, not ignorant of his rights, but thinking much more of his duties; shewing to all a good example and serving to all as a counsellor; not given to change his condition, but satisfied with his situation, because it gives him the power of doing good; and who has made up his mind to live and to die in the service of Primary Instruction, which to him is the service of God and his fellow-creatures. To rear up masters approaching to such a model is a difficult task, and yet we must succeed in it, or we have done nothing for elementary instruction. A bad Schoolmaster, like a bad Priest, is a scourge to a Commune; and though we are often*