

Summer Gatherings.—No. I.

BY THE EDITOR.

We happened into an educational conference in Halifax a few days ago. And such gatherings are not occasional in that city. When the educational pulse needs quickening, Supervisor McKay issues a manifesto, and behold! teachers, business men, lawyers, doctors and others gather together to discuss some educational problems that affect not teachers only, but the whole community. On this occasion the subject was penmanship. The vertical system was on trial. It was stated that Halifax had been the first city on the continent to introduce the system, but many of the business men are advocates of slant writing. Hence the meeting was held to discuss the whole question, and this was done with method and spirit by the advocates of both systems. There is much to be said in favor of making such educational matters questions of public interest. In this case the result may be some modification of the vertical system in the Halifax schools.

Some years ago I stood on a height overlooking the town of Antigonish, which nestles in a valley beautiful in its verdure and fringed with forest-clad hills. "What a view!" I exclaimed in admiration. "You should see Guysboro," said a friend at my elbow. And thither I have strayed in my late journeyings. Down through the Strait of Canso, that tidal river which connects the Gulf of St. Lawrence with the Atlantic, past Terminal City, once the dream of a great ocean port nearest to Europe, into the land-locked bay of Guysboro, then through a narrow inlet to a sheltered arm of the sea, and on three undulating hills with neat houses and grounds covering the slopes to the water's edge is Guysboro. Here, two centuries and a half ago, Nicolas Denys, lord of the shore between Canso and Gaspé, under King Louis of France, had a fishing station, and on the little eminence by the narrow passage leading into the harbor stood his fort. Surely he and many of the navigators who came after him had an eye both to beauty and security.

I will let another,* to whom I am indebted for a brief history of the place, describe this pretty

* Mr. E. F. Hart, of Halifax, who, with his wife, has taken much interest in the history of Guysboro.

town. "If you have seen Guysboro as I have on a still summer evening, the foliage mirrored in the water, the mirror so perfect on the western (town) side that one could not tell where water began or shore ended;—if you had seen Guysboro harbor as I did once lashed to fury in the August gale of '73, when every wharf and vessel on the water front clean swept up, high and dry;—if, I say, you had seen Guysboro as I have in all conditions and changes, I believe you would agree with me in saying that it is the prettiest place in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, it is also the quietest. I shall always remember a Yankee skipper leaning over the quarter of his schooner in Washington Treaty days talking to two or three of us youngsters in a boat alongside. 'Wal, boys, I guess this place is *finished*, ain't it?' 'How do you mean, captain?', said I. 'Why,' said he, 'I've been layin' here three days now and I haven't heard the sound of a hammer or the blow of a mallet, and I've come to the conclusion that this place is *finished*.'"

If the Yankee skipper had seen the gathering of bright teachers who held possession of the town on the 18th and 19th June, he would have given the quiet place "another chance." In the County Academy building, which occupies the most prominent site on Guysboro's three hills, were gathered teachers from Antigonish and Guysboro counties. The northwest wind that swept down from the hills was a nipping and an eager one, and gave vigor to the papers and discussions. Inspector Macdonald, as genial and inspiring a leader as ever guided an institute, brought out the best that was in everybody, and the air, far into the night, was filled with the clash of educational weapons, steel sharpening steel.

Some strong points of the Institute were: The reading at the public educational meeting of the will of the late Matthew Walsh, who died in 1818, and bequeathed to the district of Guysboro a fine property, the interest on which is still a valuable income to the schools. This inspired Supt. McKay and others to wish long life to Matthew Walsh and many more of his kind.

Principal Soloan made this good point: It is not necessary to divide the subject of English into grammar, composition, etc., but to teach boys and girls to speak the English language clearly, decently, looking their interlocutors in the face;