

and prosperity of the people must mainly depend upon the soil, yet we remember also, that

"The riches of the commonwealth  
Are free strong minds and hearts of health,  
And more to her than gold or grain  
The cunning hand and cultured brain."

A good work is worth a thousandfold more when it bears the stamp of imperishability. It is not easy to build above the storms. The great empires of olden time have passed away; the beautiful temples have crumbled; the marble statues remain only in fragments. Modern empires and modern temples will, perhaps, perish in their time. But when the teacher gathers before him the children of his school and their bright eyes look up into his, he knows that though living in a world of shadows and of wrecks, there is in his presence and under his control the one substance in all the universe, out of which he may rear an imperishable fabric, on which he may carve lines of beauty that shall defy the pittings of the rain, and under whose dome shall resound the music of an eternal song. The immortal mind, with its apprehensions of truth; the immortal mind, with its energy of will; the immortal mind, with its gorgeous dreams that do but prophesy yet more gorgeous realities; the immortal mind, with its pure affections and sympathies clinging like the tendrils of a vine to the Infinite Unknown; the immortal mind, with its ever-enlarging capacities for progress and enjoyment; this is the enduring monument of the teacher's toil, and this his ample reward.

#### EFFECT OF THE DIFFUSION OF EDUCATION.

It is the glory of our age, and especially of this land, that educational advantages are widely diffused. In eminent examples of mental power we may never surpass the giants of other days, but the culture of our time has an infinitely higher praise in that it reaches the people at large, stretching its impartial hand to those who, among the most highly cultivated nations of antiquity, would have groaned in ignorance and bondage. The light which once illumined only the mountain peaks, now floods the plains, and finds its way into the valleys. Under this diffusion of light, the noxious vapours are scattered; the ghosts troop home to churchyards; witches, hobgoblins, and a thousand "gloomy spectres of the brain," with a thousand physical evils, are driven away. What a famous monarch once prayed for, "that every peasant might have a fowl in his pot," has become a reality, at least in America; and what is more, every peasant has or may have his newspaper and his Bible, with the Common School and Sunday School for his children. Here, at least, we have the groundwork of national weal and the first great stride toward the millenium. Thus the range of the teacher's influence has widened to the universal brotherhood of man. Like the preacher of the Gospel, he has become the friend of the poor, the liberator of the slave, the solace of the weary, and the instrument of a new social order. The love of freedom was not less strong in ancient times; but the conditions of freedom, the school-room and the printing-press, these were wanting. Men died for liberty; yet liberty died also. They could repel external aggression, but could not resist internal dissolution. An army of schoolmasters is found to be better than an army of soldiers. We eulogise Christianity as the last best gift of Heaven; and we do well. But one of the chief peculiarities of Christianity is that it begins and advances only by means of popular instruction. The old Pagan religions amused the people with shows and corrupted them by superstitions; Christianity comes to them with a revelation of truth, and by her never-ceasing appeals to the understanding and conscience, compels every system of worship to make good its claims as a "reasonable service." She alone of all religions demands and creates the schoolmaster; she alone does not fear him when he appears. This appeal to the court of reason in matters of faith is not, indeed, without its perils. All progress is full of peril, and the drift of much of modern thought is well calculated to give perplexity and alarm to serious minds. The age is calling with a cry of anguish for the man who shall speak "the word of reconciliation" to the warring forces of the church and the school. The voices of a thousand would-be peace-makers do but add to the clamour of the strife. Yet, no one whose opinion is worth hearing, imagines that peace shall come by the slumber of slavery of the intellect. Nay, rather let us hope that as the continued exercise of political freedom is the best security for political order, so the exercise of thought and the universal diffusion of knowledge will eventually bring only greater honour and stability to the true religion.

#### IMPROVEMENT IN METHODS OF EDUCATION.

We shall, I think, do well to cherish a strong faith in the *improveability of educational methods*. It was said by Dr. Johnson, that "education was as well understood in his day as it would ever

be." With all deference to so great a name, this must be set down as one of the many absurd sayings of famous men. There are always some who despair of progress and who frown upon all experiments, however judicious. Some doctors will kill or cure only with the old drugs; some religionists are wedded to the old forms and hackneyed phrases—

"Hollow creed and ceremonial  
From which the ancient life has fled;"

Some politicians cling to the dear old abuse because it has come down from their fathers. Copernicus and his new astronomy; Columbus and his new geography; Jenner and his vaccination; Harvey and his circulation of the blood; Stephenson and his locomotive; all in their turn have had to fight their battle with this "old King CLOG," the god of the timid, the superstitious, and the lazy. Nevertheless, "King JOG," as Mackay calls him, generally wins the battle at last.

"King CLOG was a mighty monarch,  
He sat on his lofty seat,  
With his golden crown and his ermine gown,  
And his courtiers at his feet.  
His power seemed firm as the mountains—  
Inert, but strong was he;  
And he ruled the land with a heavy hand  
And a placid tyranny.  
And whenever a boon was asked him,  
He stared with a calm amaze,  
And said: 'Ye foolish people,  
Ye must stand on the ancient ways.'

And he folded his arms on his bosom,  
And slept, and never heard  
The measured beat of the trampling feet,  
And the oft-repeated word  
That came from the solemn conclave  
Of the people, met to plan  
Some better laws, to aid the cause  
Of the happiness of man;  
Nor the voices loud resounding.  
Like waves upon the shore,  
That proclaimed to the listening nations  
That CLOG should rule no more.

But JOG, the next successor,  
Who understood his time,  
Stepp'd on the throne:—"Father, begone;  
To linger is a crime.  
Go to thy bed and slumber,  
And leave the world to me:  
Thy mission's done; thy race is run—  
I'm ruler of the free.  
So CLOG retired, obedient,  
And JOG, his son, was crown'd.  
We hope he'll govern better—  
And so the world goes round."

Thus, notwithstanding the dictum of the great lexicographer. I hope you will take the side of King JOG rather than of King CLOG. Believe in the possibility of something better, "and better still, and better thence again, in infinite progression." Lord John Russell told the Reformers of England a few years ago that the time had come to "rest and be thankful." In educational matters the true motto is to be thankful and rest not. It will be time enough to talk of resting when we have reached something like a settled science of the mind and an education in harmony with that science; time enough to rest when the leading educators in Europe and America have come to something like agreement as to what should be taught, how it should be taught, and when it should be taught; what place should be given to physical science, and what to languages; what to ancient languages and what to modern; how far the curriculum should be uniform, and how far varied or special or optional; what should be done with the girls, whether they should be taught like the boys, or otherwise, whether with the boys or away from them; whether, with Mill and others, we are to take up in defence of woman's rights and adopt new views of education to correspond; or whether we are to resist these notions as dangerous heresies leading back to chaos; these are but a few of the questions which remain to be answered, and which, on one side or the other, we are practically answering for good or evil every day of life. It belongs to the teachers of the land, as men of thought and experience, to have well-considered views on these matters, and in all suitable ways to press home their views on the public mind. And in this respect the practice of our Chief Superintendent may be commended, in that he not only travels to study the educational institutions of other lands, but visits from time to time the various counties of our own Province, to discuss with the people face to face the operations of our system of public instruction, and to elicit especially the opinions of teachers and trustees.