

features of a system devised for a totally different state of society, are sacred in their eyes as the geese of the Roman Capitol; and even the cumbrous furniture and incongruous vestments inherited by public schools of England from ages which introduced them—not as antiquarian relics, but with every purpose of practical utility—are guarded from improvement as akin to impiety and sacrilege. It is impossible to look on such manifestations of unreasoning conservatism, thus clinging to worn out legacies of the past all the more passionately because of their utter inaptitude to the wants of the living age, without feeling that in our unshackled freedom we enjoy some compensation for our poverty, and can turn our limited resources to the best account, if we but have the wisdom, as we have the will to do it.

Let us then, while gratefully remembering all that we inherit from those ancient seats of learning on which England looks with loving pride, and all that they are still accomplishing for the progress of scholarship and science, retain a just estimate of the advantages we enjoy in this favored province of the same great Empire. Still more let us not fail to appreciate our own responsibilities entrusted as we are with the sowing of the first seeds of knowledge in the virgin soil of this young country. The destinies of a great future are in our hands. We are privileged to form and fashion, as it were, the young giant's limbs; and if it be a true figure of speech that 'as the twig is bent the tree inclines,' we are now setting influences in motion which will operate, not years only, but centuries after we are returned to dust. The minds of the rising generation are in your hands as clay in the hands of the potter. Your lessons stamp their impress on each. Your teachings are no idle words; but impulses pregnant with good or evil, far-reaching and comprehensive as time itself; for

"Words are things; and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think."

But you have now left behind you, for a brief period, the school room and its responsible duties; and assemble here as a deliberative body, uniting in your collective capacity much of the best educational experience of the province. Important questions are to be submitted to you, with the result, I doubt not, alike of pleasure and profit to all in the free interchange of opinions. It cannot fail to be the case that differences of views will arise between those with whom the modifications of our school system originate, and you who are required to carry their ideas into practical operation. Under any system this must be the case, and especially is it to be looked for as inevitable in one of so recent development, and wrought out amid a people hewing out new homes for themselves from the virgin forest. But in such opportunities of friendly intercourse and exchange of thought as your annual conventions supply, lies one important means for turning this diversity of sentiment to the best practical account.

Important changes, for example, are now in contemplation in reference to the apportionment of the grammar school fund. The proper