

world home. Death, alas, has severed fond ties, which nothing but death could sever. But the first thing that enabled me thoroughly to identify myself with my adopted country, was the consciousness that as a teacher in one of its chief educational institutions, I am privileged to bear a part, however humble, in moulding the destinies of a young nation, and influencing the thoughts of the coming time. Let the consciousness of this stimulate us all nobly to fulfil to the utmost our noble trust. We are as the crew of a stately ship in mid-ocean. Each has his appointed work; and no one can forsake his post or neglect his duty, without retarding the voyage, and imperilling the hopes of reaching its still distant haven.

Amid the numerous schools and ancient seats of learning, and all the appliances of letters and science in the mother country, the fortunate possessor of a well-endowed college fellowship, or scholastic sinecure, may haply make its acquisition the passport to dignified idleness, like the luxurious cabin passenger in the ocean ship. But while some of you are the representatives of the remotest of our clearings, in others I recognize those who are honoured with the trust of grammar schools and other seminaries in some of the chief centres of industrial enterprise; and who I doubt not, find a pleasant relaxation in thus resorting to this educational metropolis, where already your pupils have distinguished themselves in a higher academic career, and made you sharers in their hard-won honours, by the evidence thereby afforded of your ability and zeal. The years in which I have been privileged to bear a part in the furtherance of education in Canada, brief though they have been, have already sufficed to indicate the rapid progress of our Grammar Schools, in the number of their pupils that now annually offer themselves as candidates for the highest honours and prizes of the University. The period has altogether passed away when Upper Canada College was considered the sole avenue to University honours; and this not by any lowering of the efficiency of that valued provincial institution, but by the elevation of one after another of the Grammar Schools, under the guidance of zealous and efficient teachers, to a status which enables them to enter into honourable rivalry with it; and year by year to carry off an ever increasing number of the coveted awards. And this recalls us to the all-important truth that the school system is nothing without its staff of teachers. Whatever tends to secure for the teaching profession a fair share of the best talent in the country, be it a juster appreciation by parents, Trustees, and Municipal Councils, of its important functions; the opening up of new avenues to professional distinction; or the most practical of all stimulants, an adequate increase in its emoluments—the result cannot fail to react beneficially on the system. Under the worst system an able, zealous teacher will triumph; under the best one an idle and inefficient one will fail. And on this account I hail the reassembling of this convention with the highest hopes of benefit to result from it. All of you must be conscious of the influence of that isolation which is the inevitable accompaniment of your professional duties; and all, therefore I conceive, must be glad to avail yourselves of this opportunity of comparing the results of your experience, and interchanging views on many practical questions of education. It is impossible that so numerous a body, scattered throughout the school sections of this Province, can fail to discover many things connected with the daily round of duties in the class-room, as well as with the general working of the school system, which admit of improvement. Every good teacher, moreover, is a no less diligent student, always learning, advancing, improving upon the past; ever keenly alive to his own deficiencies, and setting before himself a goal of perfection, which, if it be unattainable, is, at least, a generous stimulus towards the achievement of many attainable excellencies. No error is greater than that which assumes that a mere rudimentary knowledge is sufficient for him who has only to teach the rudiments of knowledge. The amplest stores of a richly-cultivated mind are never in excess; while the modesty which is the inevitable accompaniment of liberal culture, carries with it a lesson invaluable to the pupil; like that which Newton still speaks to every student of science, in the memorable words uttered by him towards the close of his life:—"I know not what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me."

A further stimulus to the constant increase of our stores of knowledge lies in the implicit faith with which the ingenuous youthful inquirer receives all that we communicate; and in this respect the country schoolmaster not unfrequently finds that such reliance on his opinions is by no means limited to the rising generation. Here, as well as in some older countries, his lot is often cast amid a simple rustic community to whom his opinion is law on all questions lying beyond the range of their knowledge and experience. We can still recognize, I imagine, not a few touches from a life familiar to our-

selves, in the gentle ireny blended by Goldsmith, with his picturing of his own youthful memories, where

"In his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,  
The village master taught his little school."

Such wisely skilled scholastic rulers are not altogether of the past; nor has our new-born school system so pervaded and leavened the community that it may not still be told of some Canadian preceptor by the scholar or the poet he has trained:—

"Yet was he kind, or if sincere in aught,  
The love he bore to learning was in fault;  
The village all declared how much he knew,  
'Twas certain he could write, and cypher too;  
Lands he could measure, terms and tides pressage,  
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge.  
In-arguing, too the parson owned his skill;  
For e'en though vanquished he could argue still;  
While words of learned length, and thundering sound,  
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around,  
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew!"

Yet when we consider that the generation has not yet passed away, which witnessed the opening of the first Common School in Upper Canada, it is no insignificant fact to remember that—without noting our, perhaps, too numerous Grammar Schools—there are now, including 147 Roman Catholic Separate Schools, 4,224 Common Schools in this Western Province; and that, through their influence, in many an outlying township and remote clearing, the teacher is a centre of light to the little community; and the minister of intellectual emulation and growing knowledge to those on whom are hereafter to devolve all the duties and responsibilities of a free people, and in whose hands the destinies of the Province must rest.

Much yet remains to be accomplished. But no one can look around him on the costly edifices and well-organized machinery devoted to educational purposes, with ungrudging liberality by a young and struggling community, without feeling that the people have done their part, and proved themselves worthy of the good old stock of mother England. When, indeed, it is considered that all this has been the work of a single generation, we might be pardoned if we look back at times with feelings akin to envy on the noble educational endowments which the mother country inherits from the pious liberality of many generations. Nor is their wealth their only enviable attribute.

From this distant Province of the empire many of us revert with loving memories to her ancient seats of learning, and all of us can estimate the worth of such schools as Cambridge, wealthy in rich endowments, but how much wealthier in the memory of such sons as him I have already referred to, on whose monument, in his own College Chapel, are inscribed the memorable words:—"Let mortals congratulate themselves that there has existed such and so great an honour of the human race;"—or of Oxford nursing the accumulated largess of generations reaching back to Saxon times, to which one of the most gifted of English statesmen, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, has recently paid the discriminating reverence of his filial reverence, at the termination of his political relations with the University, where his mind received its early culture and much of its peculiar bias. "My heart's prayer," he exclaims, "is that her future may be as glorious as her past, and yet more glorious still. But if it is to be so, that result must be brought about by enlarging her borders; by opening her doors; by invigorating her powers; by endeavouring to rise to the height of that vocation with which I believe it has pleased the Almighty to endow her. That, as in other times, the Universities of the land, and Oxford the first of them, led the mind and thought of the country on the path of improvement, so now they may still prove worthy of that high office."

The noble vocation thus ascribed to England's educational institutions is not less fitly applicable, as an exhortation to duty to each one of us, summoning us as the teachers of this Province to lead the mind and thought of this country ever onward into higher and nobler paths of improvement. If industry and zeal for the accumulation of wealth absorbs all other energies, let us the more earnestly show forth the value of intellectual riches, and guard the precious treasure of moral worth from contamination and debasement, amid the dust and turmoil of this working-day world.

But while tempted to envy England her ancient and wealthy foundations of learning, with teachers and students alike provided with all that wealth can supply to facilitate the highest intellectual acquisitions, we are recalled by the remarks of Mr. Gladstone, to a consideration of advantages peculiar to our own position, as the pioneers of learning in a new country. We have indeed no glorious memoirs of an ancient past, such as linger around the halls where a Chaucer, a Spencer, a Sydney and a Milton, a Bacon, a Locke,