

What use can the pupil *now* make of ideas, that are as yet unborn? If one of the most important objects of education is mental discipline, and, if this can result only from exercising the understanding, I see not how that end can be attained but by apprehending the ideas which the language of the lesson was designed to convey. A course of instruction, to be useful, must be so given that one step in its successive stages shall be preparatory to another. What becomes of this linking together of all the parts, each depending on its predecessor, if the comprehension of any part is to be postponed to a future period? If the lesson of one day depends on that of the day preceding, then the former cannot be successfully studied till the latter be well understood. The truth is, the text-book cannot do the work of the teacher. It may aid him; but he will still have more to do with the subject than with the author. He will need to pay chief regard to the pupil's attainments and mental activity, and aim at evolving new ideas from those already possessed. In order to this, the language employed must be conformed to the ideas of the learner. At first, only a very general idea, an outline, so to speak, of the subject in hand is apprehended, for the designation of which familiar and popular language is best adapted. It is sometimes necessary to conform, for a little time, not only to children's habits of thought, but to their vocabulary also. As their ideas become more definite by the addition of minuter details to the outlines of the picture previously formed in the mind, there will be a demand for greater precision in terms: and so there is a natural progression in the accuracy and completeness of a pupil's ideas, requiring a corresponding progression in language. Books, which are always less specific in their adaptations than the words of the teacher, cannot be exactly conformed to each one's individual wants. Hence the necessity of an instructor, who can learn the exact wants of his pupils, and bring his thoughts into close contact with theirs. It is with their ideas of things that he has to do at first. When he has a fast hold on the mind, and can draw out from it true ideas on the subject in hand, then the words best suited to their expression will naturally suggest themselves.

### THIRD LECTURE ON FREE SCHOOLS.

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A third argument which I adduce in favour of the free school system is: That universal education, with its habits of industry, frugality, &c., and the security which these give to society, raises the value of property; and, consequently, property may with reasonable propriety be taxed to educate the whole people. Property, especially landed property, among a peaceful, moral, and industrious population, is much more valuable than among a people the reverse of this in their habits. This difference does not arise from the soil nor the climate, so much as from the character of the people. The same soil and climate, in the hands of an educated and intelligent people, will become like the garden of the Lord in productiveness, and like a mine in value; and in the hands of a peasantry without learning, and destitute of enterprise, will become a wilderness. Thus in Great Britain see the enormous price of landed property. One hundred and sixty years ago, when England was both badly educated and governed, Moostroopers abounded in that country. They entered houses in daylight, and plundered them, and drove off whole herds of cattle. Such was then the insecurity of moveable property, that owners of cattle were necessitated to pen them up at night, beneath the overhanging battlements of the feudal castle. The inmates slept with loaded fire-arms at their sides. Huge stones and boiling water were in readiness to crush or to scald the plunderer who might venture to assail them. Then little or no effort was made to educate the masses. At that period a damsel in high life, if she had the least smattering of literature, was esteemed a prodigy. Ladies of high birth, and naturally quick, were frequently unable to write a line in their mother-tongue without solecisms and bad spelling, such as charity school girls would now be ashamed of. At this time the civil power was unable to maintain order in some parts of the metropolis,—even the warrant of the Chief Justice of England could not be executed without the aid of a company of musketeers. In the same imperial city, a little earlier in its history, shops in Cheapside-street were rented at from eleven to eighteen shillings a year. Land, near the same city, was also rented at from fourpence to sixpence per acre. These

shops, in the same street, rebuilt, but standing on the same site, now bring from £200 to £500 per annum; and land, the same as above, will now bring from £5 to £10 per acre.

Great Britain, for general intelligence and an equitable and just government, stands foremost among the nations; and great prosperity and increased wealth and power is the result. When, lately, nearly all Europe was upheaved with a great political earthquake, and thrones, and institutions, and governments of a thousand years standing were tossed from their foundations, Old England "sat calm on tumult's wheels." Whither also did those refugees of other nations with their fame and fortune come? It was to the shores of Old or New England, esteeming them the most secure and hospitable lands on earth.

When Canada's shores were first discovered, and her only inhabitants were the red man, they were utterly destitute of culture and intelligence; their dwellings were wigwams; their employments were war or hunting. What were these *now* surveyed townships worth? Now we see another race inhabiting them. Education, intelligence, and enterprise appear everywhere: vast tracts of country are being cleared and cultivated—mills and factories and foundries appear on every hand—villages and towns and cities are rapidly rising, and prosperity and comfort appear among our thriving population. What has done all this? The education, the industry, and the skill of its population. And now see how landed property everywhere rises annually in value; and if we possessed a higher state still of early, intellectual and moral training, and our political, judicial and municipal establishments were more perfected, property would still rise higher. And if property becomes the more valuable when a people are properly educated, is it not reasonable—is it not just—that property be taxed to promote this object? QUEEN VICTORIA, our beloved Sovereign, seems thus to reason. Believing that property has its duties as well as its rights, she has voluntarily, and at her own expense, provided school-houses, and drawn together the children and provided them with teachers on her Balmoral Estate. This is a noble example to our aristocracy and gentry to to go and do likewise in the universal education of the people.

A fourth argument in favour of the free school system is: "That it is the cheapest mode to procure the education of all." I give you a table of rates of assessment for free schools, as published by authority in the State of New York. This table alludes to the year 1849, and shows how small such a tax is, when judiciously levied and applied:

#### RATE UPON EACH \$100 OF VALUED PROPERTY.

Flushing,.....	5 cents per \$100.	Poughkeepsie, 12 cents per \$100.
Brooklyn,.....	6 " "	Bushwick, ... 14 " "
Albany,.....	7 " "	Newton, ..... 15 " "
New York,.....	10 " "	Rochester, ... 19 " "

At these rates, all children of school age might receive a good common education, in these several cities or towns. Thus a citizen of the city of New York having property valued at \$4000, would be taxed only one dollar per thousand,—a very trifle when compared with the important object for which it was given. And who is there so sordid as would not willingly be taxed such a sum, that an entire people might have the opportunity of obtaining a thorough and an early training.

But to illustrate the fact, and set it if possible in a stronger point of view still, and to show its adaptedness even to our rural sections, we will look at it in one of these country divisions. Suppose any board of trustees engage a teacher at a yearly salary of say £50 per annum. On the rate-bill system only those send children who are intent on having their children educated; and those *only* who are the most needy of their children. In selecting for the school, the youngest, under such circumstances, are seldom sent. Parents suppose it is of no use to send children of 5 or 6 or 7 years of age, to bring on themselves a heavy rate-bill—they will then suppose they learn nothing. When they come to 9 or 10, or upwards, they begin to be useful about a farm; and thus, unless the desire of educating their children is intense, the years of school age are frittered away under one pretence or another, and the children grow up in ignorance and neglect. They, therefore, who are careless under the rate-bill, do not send at all, or only one instead of three or four. Thus, whilst there may be 60 children of school age in the section, it is a large attendance where there are 25; in this case, only a minority of the children in the school district attend. On the free school system, the school-house and teacher are alike at the com-