

methods, as adapted to the business of a general merchant, a banker, a commission agent, and a railroad or steamboat company. In addition, some, if not all, profess to train specially for banking business, by passing young men through all the forms of a banking office, providing them with apparatus even to the extent of engraved bills, as if for circulation. To this is added an inkling of commercial law, and of the technical business of telegraphing.

The time required for the acquirement of their knowledge is supposed to be about six months.

Now, in the case of young lads who have previously enjoyed a good education, there can be nothing better, as a preparation for mercantile life, than to pass through one of these colleges and learn something of mercantile forms and methods. It will save their future principle, or senior clerks a good deal of trouble, and will put them a few months forward in the practical work of the office they enter.

But for young men, farmer's sons, for example, whose education has been deficient, and who have had nothing like mercantile experience before—for these to imagine that by a six months' course of training in a commercial college they can fit themselves for a Book-keeper's place in a bank or mercantile office is a gross delusion. Many, no doubt, have imagined it could be done, and have gone to merchants and bankers with confident faces, fully believing, in their simplicity, that their college diploma would be a sure passport to a place. Having, in their own judgment, their profession, they are much astonished to find that, in the eyes of practical men, they are reckoned only to have learned its A. B. C. This is, indeed, the real truth,—as one and another, to our knowledge, have found out by painful experience. The fact is: to become a skilful book-keeper, to understand how to conduct business correspondence, and to be able to fill a place in an office where a rapid style of work has to be kept up day after day and week after week all the year round, is not a thing to be learned in six months, or, for that matter, in twelve months either. Years of practice and steady application are required for it, and however much the training of a commercial college may do towards laying the foundation, it is sheer folly to think that anything but the foundation can be laid.

We make these remarks, as we observed before, principally for the benefit of our country readers. Farmers' sons, it is well known, flock into the towns in search of mercantile employment. The training of a college they fancy will fit them for it. Tempting inducements are held out in the shape of statements as to how many months it will take to give them a complete insight into business. They enter the college and get through their course—in some instances probably with credit—but are disgusted and astonished to find themselves, when practical work begins, placed on a level with lads many years their juniors, but who have had the advantage of a good education. They find they have almost everything to learn; and more than that, they have the *habits* of a man of business to acquire. Their previous occupation has been of so totally different a nature, that the steady routine of an office, with its many hours a day of confinement and close employment, is extremely distasteful to them. Their employers, on the other hand, find them very dull and very slow, and far inferior to lads who began their business training at an early age. The result is that after a few months of unsatisfactory probation, the unfortunate candidate for mercantile pursuits has to abandon them, and, as he does so, he curses the day when he was tempted by the hope of an easy preparation to make the venture. His time and money thrown away, he returns to the country, a sadder and a wiser man, unless, indeed, he can turn his knowledge of book-keeping to account in a sphere where it is much needed—viz., in farming.

We believe there is not one farmer in ten who can tell with any approach to accuracy how much he has made or lost in any given year. The rough and ready rule of thumb style of calculating may do well enough in the early years of a farmer, when the gradual progress of his clearing affords a pretty fair index as to his progress in general. Even then, however, there may be a gradual growth of indebtedness, which a farmer is too apt to overlook, and which he will be sure to underestimate so long as he keeps no account. But when the farm gets clear, and the work requires to be done in a business-like style, when he has a variety of crops, with pasturage for sheep and cattle, a farmer cannot carry on his business in an intelligent manner without keeping accounts. Now if our farmer's sons, intending to follow farming, enter a commercial college to learn something of book-keeping, we believe a few months' application in that direction would well repay them, and it would well repay the College in Western Canada at all events, to devise a system of book-keeping for farmers, as they have already done for merchants, bankers, and railroad companies. If this were of a simple and practical character, young men from the country would learn it without trouble. The college would then render a valuable service to the farming community, and help the development of the country, instead of as now fostering a miserable delusion, and

drawing young men from a sphere for which they are suited to another where they can be only a burden.

While giving them this hint, they will, perhaps, pardon us adding another. The bank book-keeping they teach, is generally, we believe, founded on some system in vogue in the United States. Now, some little experience enables us to say that the system now practised by most of the banks in Canada with its elaborate apparatus of checks and counter checks is as superior to the other in thoroughness and scientific accuracy as the book-keeping of a wholesale merchant is to that of a petty grocery. The style of book-keeping in vogue in the banks of our neighbors is altogether behind the age. It has been improved upon again and again, until now, it is at least twenty years out of date. A lad might as well learn farming from one of our *habitants*, as bank book-keeping for Canada from a system prevalent in New York.—*Montreal Witness*.

## 2. NATIONALITY AND UNIFORMITY OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

The most obvious and the chief defect in the common and the higher schools of Upper Canada, is the want of uniformity and nationality in the text books which they use. This defect is no doubt becoming less prevalent within the last few years, but it is still sufficiently observable to call forth a few remarks on the subject. First, then, as regards the nationality or rather un-nationality of School Books; we are obliged to confess that many of the text-books used in the Upper Canada schools are anything and everything but Canadian. In the Readers we find speeches of Webster, Clay, and Patrick Henry, glowing descriptions of our Southern neighbours, notices of their prominent men, and pictures of their natural scenery and wonders of art; but what of Canada, what of her worthies, her institutions, her progress, her beauties of nature, absolutely nothing. Our Geographies are generally of the same nature; full particulars relative to any State and Territory in the Union—usually occupying a third or more of the book—while the whole of the British Provinces in North America are hastily and carelessly summed up in the compass of four or five pages. Our histories and many others of the books still in use are just as faulty as those named.

Now we do not pretend to say that a child cannot just as well be taught the art of reading from a book made up of foreign miscellany as from any other, but what we do say is that a book adapted to Canadian scholars would not be used in the United States, nor would a book intended for Republicans be allowed in the public schools of any of the Monarchies of Europe. In all countries where a complete system of education has been developed the nationality of a text-book has been considered an essential point, and is one of its greatest elements of success. Book makers, book sellers, and book buyers, equally well understand this; we wish the principle was as well understood and as strictly acted upon in Canada.

What, then, is the tendency of this system of using un-national text-books in our public schools? Is it not—either by presenting to the minds of our youth foreign models of excellence, or by excluding them from that which is most essential for them to know—to make them foreign in their taste and predilections, and admirers of everything abroad—and, we might add, despisers of everything at home. We have been led to these remarks from an examination of a series of school books exhibited at the show by Mr. John Lovell of Montreal. Many of these books have been repeatedly noticed by us, but we have never before had an opportunity of noticing the whole series. We have always spoke in terms of high approval of the publications of this our chief British American publisher, and a careful examination of the manner in which he has carried out the patriotic design of furnishing teachers with a truly national and complete series of text books has not lessened either himself or his work in our esteem. We are much pleased to learn by the reports of the Educational Department that many of these books of Lovell's are rapidly taking the place of those which they were intended to supersede. But what we complain of is that the whole series—all of which have been specially prepared for, and are admirably adapted to the use of our schools, is not permanently introduced into the public schools, by which course uniformity in our text books would be secured, and parents relieved from the annoyance and expense consequent upon frequent changes. If we would see those that are to come after us, and to inherit our birthrights, worthy to enjoy, and fitted to promote, that high destiny which awaits our country, we must put into their hands purely Canadian books to be read and studied at school. When this is done, prosperity is in store for ourselves and our country; for as we sow so also shall we reap.—*Hamilton Spectator*.