

concrete to be required by the circumstances of the country. In doing so, I shall strengthen and illustrate my own views by references to the best authorities, both European and American, in order that the Government and the people of Upper Canada may be satisfied—against objections which may be urged from any quarter—that the sentiments which I may advance, and the recommendations I may venture to submit, are not rash novelties or crude speculations, but the result of the largest experience, and the deepest investigations on the part of the best judges resident in both hemispheres, and under different forms of Civil Government.

By Education, I mean not the mere acquisition of certain arts, or of certain branches of knowledge, but that instruction and discipline which qualify and dispose the subjects of it for their appropriate duties and employments of life, as Christians, as persons of business, and also as members of the civil community in which they live.

The basis of an educational structure adapted to this end should be as broad as the population of the country; and its loftiest elevation should equal the highest demands of the learned professions, adapting its gradation of schools to the wants of the several classes of the community, and to their respective employments or professions, the one rising above the other—the one conducting to the other; yet each complete in itself for the degree of education it imparts; a character of uniformity as to fundamental principles pervading the whole: the whole based upon the principles of Christianity, and uniting the combined influence and support of the Government and the people.

The branches of knowledge which it is essential that all should understand, should be provided for all, and taught to all; should be brought within the reach of the most needy, and forced upon the attention of the most careless. The knowledge required for the scientific pursuit of mechanics, agriculture and commerce, must needs be provided to an extent corresponding with the demand, and the exigencies of the country; while to a still more unlimited extent are needed facilities for acquiring the higher education of the learned professions.

Now, to a professional education, and to the education of the more wealthy classes, no objection has been made, nor even indifference manifested. On the contrary, for these classes of society, less needing the assistance of the Government, and having less claims upon its benevolent consideration than the laboring and producing classes of the population, have liberal provisions been made, and able Professors employed: whilst Schools of Industry have been altogether overlooked, and primary Instruction has scarcely been reduced to a system; and the education of the bulk of the population has been left to the annual liberality of Parliament. Nay, even objections have been made to the education of the labouring classes of the people; and it may be advisable to shew, at the outset, that the establishment of a thorough system of primary and industrial Education, commensurate with the population of the country, as contemplated by the Government, and as is here proposed, is justified by considerations of economy as well as of patriotism and humanity.

First, such a system of general Education amongst the people is the most effectual preventative of pauperism, and its natural companions, misery and crime.

To a young and growing country, and the retreat of so many poor from other countries, this consideration is of the greatest importance. The gangrene of pauperism in either cities or states is almost incurable. It may be said in some sort to be hereditary as well

as infectious,—both to perpetuate and propagate itself,—to weaken the body politic at its very heart,—and so multiply wretchedness and vice.

Now, the Statistical Reports of pauperism and crime in different countries, furnish indubitable proof that ignorance is the fruitful source of illness, intemperance and improvidence, and these the foster-parent of pauperism and crime.

The history of every country in Europe may be appealed to in proof and illustration of the fact,—apart from the operation of extraneous local and temporary circumstances,—that pauperism and crime prevail in proportion to the absence of education amongst the labouring classes, and that in proportion to the existence and prevalence of education amongst those classes, is the absence of pauperism and its legitimate offspring.

To adduce even a summary of the statistical details which I have collected on this subject, would exceed my prescribed limits; and I will only present the conclusions at which competent witnesses have arrived after careful and personal inquiry.

F. Hill, Esquire, Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons in Scotland, at the conclusion of a statistical work on National Education in Great Britain, Prussia, Spain and America, states the following amongst other inferences, as the result of his investigations:

“So powerful is education as a means of national improvement, that with comparatively few exceptions, the different countries of the world if arranged according to the state of education in them, will be found to be arranged also according to wealth, morals and general happiness; and not only does this rule hold good as respects a country taken as a whole, but it will generally apply to the different parts of the same country.

“Thus in England, education is in the best state in the northern Agricultural District, and in the worst state in the southern Agricultural District, and in the Agricultural parts of the Midland District; while in the great Towns, and other manufacturing places, education is in an intermediate state; and at the same time, the condition of the people and the extent of crime and violence among them follow in like order.”

J. C. Blackden, Esquire, of Ford Castle, Northumberland, England, in concluding his evidence before the Poor Law Commissioners, expresses himself thus: “In taking a short review of my answers to the Commissioners' Queries, the advantageous position of our laboring population, when compared with the position of those in the more southern districts of the country, must be manifest.

“It is impossible to live among them without being struck by their superior intelligence, and their superior morality.

“I am fully justified in this assertion by the Parliamentary Returns of criminal commitments in the several Counties of England, which prove Northumberland to be very much more free from crime than any other County.

“A principal cause of this I have no doubt arises from the education they receive at the Schools scattered over the country.”†

* National Education: its present state and prospects, by Frederick Hill, vol. ii, pp. 164 and 165.

† Report of Poor Law Commissioners. Appendix.