



### THE OLD SWIMMIN' HOLE.

Oh! the old swimmin' hole! where the creek so still and deep  
Looked like a baby-river that was laying half asleep,  
And the gurgle of the water round the drift just below,  
Sounded like the laugh of something we once used to know  
Before we could remember anything but the eyes  
Of the angels lookin' out as we left Paradise;  
But the merry days of youth is beyond our control,  
And its hard to part forever with the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the long, lazy days  
When the hum-drum of school made so many run-a-ways,  
How pleasant was the journey down the old dusty lane,  
Where the tracks of our bare feet was all printed so plain  
You could tell by the dent of the heel and the sole,  
They was lots 'o fun on hands at the old swimmin'-hole.  
But the lost joys is past! Let your tears in sorrow roll  
Like the rain that used to dapple up the old swimmin'-hole.

There the bullrushes grewed, and the cattails so tall,  
And the sunshine and shadow fell over it all;  
And it mottled the water with amber and gold  
Til the glad lilies rocked in the ripples that rolled;  
And the snake-feeder's four gauzy wings fluttered by  
Like the ghost of a daisy dropped out of the sky;  
Or the wounded apple-blossom in the breeze' control  
As it cut across some orchard to ards the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! When I last saw the place,  
The scenes were all changed, like the change in my face;  
The bridge of the railroad now covers the spot  
Where the old divin'-log lays sunk and forgot.  
And I stray down the banks where the trees used to be—  
But never again will there shade shelter me!  
And I wish in my sorrow I could strip to the soul,  
And dive off in my grave like the old swimmin'-hole.

—James Whitcomb Riley.



### The Manitoba School Question.

It has invariably been the practice of this journal to refrain from expressing opinions on political questions, which may from time to

time be agitating the public mind. On questions of this kind it has always been our endeavor to maintain a strictly neutral position, but we have persistently reserved the right to comment upon existing facts, definitely established, especially when they relate to the well being of this country.

The Manitoba School question which is on the tapis just now, is one upon which there may be much difference of opinion as its correct mode of settlement, but one also about which there ought not to be any mistake concerning the harm that is being done Canada by the introduction of it into the field of politics.

Every true Canadian, who has the interests of this country at heart, must deprecate the bringing of religio-racial questions into the political arena.

That the raising of such cries is doing much to keep this country back and retard its growth there can be no disputing. We see this demonstrated in a thousand and one ways. By the bitter feeling which such questions create; by the unsettling of business, and by the intense hatred which is being engendered, causing a want of faith in the country. In these and in many other ways, too numerous to mention, are seen the disastrous consequences which follow the impolitic introduction of race and religious cries.

During the last ten years we have had a multiplicity of these questions brought before the electorate but the outcome of each has been identical. The history of such questions demonstrates that they are originated and called into existence for the sole purpose of advancing and keeping in prominence men who would otherwise have no weight or standing in the community whatsoever. We are convinced that these questions could be satisfactorily settled without recourse to politics at all if unscrupulous politicians would cease to use them as a means of catching votes; but these unprincipled men

are usually prepared to go any length in the advocacy of their violent and immoderate inventions quite regardless of the harm that is being done the country.

It cannot be the wish if any serious minded Canadian that we should be absorbed by the United States, and lose our national distinction and the numerous other advantages which the adoption of such a policy implies our parting with, but the course which many of our politicians are at present pursuing in bringing forward these questions of race and creed, is a sure one to bring about such a state of affairs.

By constantly arraigning the Protestant provinces against the Catholic ones; by continually opposing English Ontario to French Quebec; by perpetually antagonizing one religious denomination with another, the natural outcome must be that each will become so thoroughly disgusted with the hope of ever getting along with the other, that it will cast about for a means of escape from the supposed grievances that exist only in the fertile imaginations of those political humbugs whose creative faculties are certainly more extensive than their knowledge of truth and veracity. The escape, and the only escape, that will then present itself, will be assuredly annexation—a step that no Canadian in the possession of his normal faculties would think twice of advocating at the present day.

It should be the aim of every Canadian to strive to make this country big and great and powerful in the estimation of the nations of the world. It should be our endeavor to present a respectable appearance before strangers; for our future course, for some years at any rate, appears to be to endeavor to induce tourists and capitalists and men having money to pass through our land, in the hope that by so doing they may be induced to leave a portion of their wealth here behind them; of showing them the grand country we possess, in the belief that