

Acadia Seminary as a School for our Girls.

A certain pastor was reclining beneath shade trees in a peaceful and attractive valley. An unusually restful and contented feeling had possession of him, for he supposed the remainder of vacation would be care-free. The pen had just been laid aside after the writing of two papers for the Convention. How agreeable to have nothing to do for the few days before the assembling of the tribes. But there comes a letter. The hand-writing is easily recognized as that of the beloved ex-president of Acadia. Is the good doctor going to ask some favor? If so, it will be a pleasure to accede to his wish. But requests are often for hardest things, and so it happened in this instance. "A twenty-minute address at the Convention upon the education of our girls." It is not easy to turn just now to address-preparation, not easy to turn at any time to preparation of an address upon education, not easy surely to turn to preparation of an address upon the education of our girls, and most difficult of all to furnish an address covering but twenty minutes time. A while since, this same ease-loving parson made an extemporaneous speech of forty minutes instead of twenty. The speaker who followed him reached destination precisely on time and closed with saying that he had demonstrated his ability to keep within prescribed limits. Then when there cord of the meeting was read a month later, information was given as to the exact space occupied by the transgressor. Whether or not this was "a word to the wise" remains to be seen. I testify that there is in me an honest desire to mend my ways. But I am now fearful of two things, that what I shall give you shall be too large in quantity and too small in quality. Perhaps the presence of the fear may save a little in the matter of time, for it is when the speaker assures the audience with the first breath that he will occupy but a moment that he spins it out at great length. Let us do the best we can, however. The subject may stand thus: "Acadia Seminary as a School for our Girls."

For my own part, as a pastor in this Convention, and as a father who expects before a great while to send children from home for education, I have pleasure in thinking of Acadia Seminary. As Baptists of these Provinces it is the place of all places for our girls. Not that it is suited to them alone. What is good for them is good for others. It has been a delight to me to hear parents connected with other religious bodies refer with satisfaction to what our Seminary has proved to be to their daughters. Those who know the school are cognizant of its worth, while those who do not, if in search of a place of training for young women, are invited to enquire into the history of this institution, its present status, its locations, its courses of study,—what it has already accomplished and what it promises to do. We have every confidence that the investigation will issue in some such admiration as the particularly interested now have. We claim for Acadia Seminary those substantial qualities which bear the test of intelligent scrutiny. Any young woman who goes there with any desire for improvement will be enriched by her stay.

With the multiplying of years and experiences we become more and more impressed, if getting the right viewpoint from which to look out upon life's demands and possibilities, with the worthfulness of a sound moral and spiritual atmosphere in the formative period of youth. Such an atmosphere is primarily essential in the matter of education. Let there be never so great advantages in subordinate ways, if there is not a decidedly religious basis to all that is attempted, the course of instruction is radically defective. Upon this we are in no danger of laying too much stress. The ornate and showy, the brilliant and superficial, that which takes the worldly eye, is ever likely to get to the front and keep there, indeed it does reach and hold that position with all who have not a conception of man's existence upon earth as but a preparatory stage for a higher and larger and never-ending state beyond the seen and the transient. There is no reason to wonder that young people themselves should incline to make their choices, when it comes to schools and lines of study, solely from the temporal standpoint. This world as yet is not seen by them in anything like right perspective. The present state of being fills their horizon. Young people are ambitious to shine among those whose vision extends but little way. They want speedy advance in the passing hour. They are eager for such accomplishments as will pass them on quickly to circles where there is a deal of glitter. This we would expect from youth and inexperience. But older and wiser heads must temper their zeal in certain directions. Seniors should show juniors the proper goal. Ornamentation must have an enduring ground upon which to rest. Only as it is thus placed is it valuable. Adornment by itself is worthless. Things transient are made unprofitable when made, the all. There must be suitable adjustment of supreme and subsidiary, the putting of end and means into just relation, else there is no cause for congratulation on what is achieved. Skill in any art is little to be accounted of unless noble character lies back of it and determines its use. The cunning hand must move under control of a pure heart.

Nothing is cheaper nor more ephemeral than the approval of such as are attracted most by rounds of gaiety and pleasure.

Now the best judgment of parents and friends should be exercised to have a stable foundation beneath all courses of education followed by those under their care. The getting of a living is a mere incidental. The temporary pursuit of profession is but the scaffolding upon which the real business is to be prosecuted—the business of becoming something, and assisting others to become something, in conformity with the high purposes of God. To give delight to others through any sort of skill required is to be but means to a lofty end. We are not out upon holiday. There is something important on hand for each, and training should look to its accomplishment in excellent fashion. Where, then, the considerate parent or guardian will ask, the one anxious to have children filling honorably the spheres of divine choice, where is the school in which accountability to God is daily recognized? I want the feet of my daughter to be upon solid rock and not upon shifting sand. If I am not intent upon having it so she will yet condemn me. Unsophisticated youth clamors for the doubtful and harmful. But as God thwarts my designs, and blesses me in so doing, so I, in God's name and under his guidance, will do the planning for my child, in the earlier stages and persuade her along a way that shall receive her own subsequent approval. Tell me where I will find a school in which Jesus Christ is acknowledged as Head Master. Where Christian thought dominates all thought. Where newness of heart is deemed the first essential. Where loyalty to Jehovah is fostered. Where the aim is to marshal all study and acquirement for the furtherance of God's beneficent plans respecting the individual and the world. God would have knowledge to be gained and used for Him, power to think gained and used for Him, artistic skill gained and used for Him. Each soul has a quota to build into the kingdom that shall know no end. There is no correct adjustment, no harmony, no living that is worthy of immortal beings, no actual success, it matters not how much of human applause is heard, if God is forgotten or but faintly owed. Tell me, if you can, where there is such a school as I am seeking.

Well I believe that we can affirm with all truthfulness that Acadia Seminary answers this basal demand in very commendable degree. The revealed will of the Lord is there kept well in the foreground. Divine sovereignty is avowed. Divine leadership is sought in daily work. It is the declared intention to have the religion of Christ hallow the whole. Those who have seen the few written communications from the pen of the much loved Principal within the period of her administration, as they have occasionally appeared in our denominational organ and made us wish for more, or have noted the spirit of her annual reports, as they have come before the Senate and Board of Governors, are aware of the gentle yet strong Christian character which they evince. Miss True's influence, we are bound to say, is so benign as to be worthy of being heartily recommended and largely sought. And her associates in the teaching work have, as a body, we believe, been in nothing short of delightful unison with her in this benignity of operation.

That Hill has been, as many in this Convention are prepared to attest, one of the choicest of spots. For my own part I can testify, and here wish to do so, to the blessedness of its Christian atmosphere as felt by me,—atmosphere so subtle and pervasive withal, that its restraining and inspiring force was realized even while engaged in studies farthest removed from what we are wont to regard as distinctively religious. And the observations of these later years beget the conviction that what was of such value in that former time to us who have been away for quite a while, is still present doing its glorious part in the right fashioning of our dear young people. May this essential element, which binds the whole together, never be less, and may there be no forgetfulness among the scattered constituency that they have to do, by the attitude they maintain toward God and the school, with determining the spiritual condition in that quarter as surely as do those who have places there as instructors or pupils.

But beside an immovable foundation in a school, there must be a fitting superstructure. Beside the possession of a correct purpose, there must be provision of suitable means to promote it. There must be such variety in courses of study as the times require, and such teachers as are competent to meet the requirements in their several departments. Those who control the affairs of the Seminary are to be congratulated upon what they have furnished in both these particulars. An examination of the Calendar will confirm the inquirer in this opinion, as far as the four courses of study which lead up to graduation are concerned, the Collegiate course, the course in Piano, the course in Vocal Music, and the course in Art.

Attendance at graduating exercises and acquaintance with graduates, provide assurance with respect to the character of the work done. Not only is the standard high, but in goodly measure is it realized. Every year I have a few young ladies in my congregation, who come

to Halifax, from Baptist families in this Convention, and enroll themselves at the Halifax Ladies' College. That institution is doing creditable work, I believe, but much as I am pleased to see these young women before me on the Sabbaths, I would much rather have them sitting under the preaching of the Wolfville pastor. It is sometimes said that in Halifax, better advantages are held out in a musical way, and of course we can readily understand that in a more populous place, there are greater musical privileges of an outside nature. But it appears to me, at least, that upon the whole it would be preferable for our Baptist girls to be in our Baptist school. It is the general training and not any particular advantage that should govern the choice. The life about Acadia is such as is adapted, beyond what is found elsewhere, to what is likely to be before most of these young women. Numerous external attractions are not to be coveted in that period of school life of which we are here treating. In far advanced and special study it is different. Not that young folk should live as hermits. Not that they should see nothing but books and musical instruments, and hear nothing but their own and teacher's voices, and the wearisome sounds made by those who practice upon pianos and violins. It is one of the signs of advancement in educational work, that more notice is now taken than a while back, of the various sides of a human life. The physical nature and the social nature must not be ignored, anymore than the intellectual or spiritual. In order to best development in one direction, regard must be had to every other part of the individual. This mark of progress appears in Acadia Seminary. Compare the social life around our educational centre, for instance, with that of my college period, I can recall but one occasion when I attended a Seminary reception—an august affair to me you can easily imagine. Not that this was the only such privilege then afforded me, I expect that I had unused opportunities, but certainly they were few. The idea that ladies and lasses needed any such thing as social cultivation, had then hardly been well established. If a Collegian had a favorite cousin in the Seminary (a very common occurrence), it was most difficult in that darker time to effect a meeting. There was a yawning chasm to bridge. But a change has come, they tell me, making another reason why it is hard to be old. Not that there should be no restrictions, nor that none exist in that scholastic quarter today. There may be an extreme of strictness and also of laxity. If I am able to judge, and if the dear girls who talk with me, rightly report the case, as they certainly must, then this is the age of the golden mean. Under the old regime there were some unfortunate love-matches, I dare say, because the prohibitions were so many, but in these better times, interesting affairs of that sort move on much more as they should.

It is well known that surroundings have something to do in moulding us, I mean natural surroundings, and friends of Acadia never tire, you know, of sounding the praises of her natural environment. They ought not to tire, for others keep coming forward who need to be informed. They never weary of hearing visitors to Wolfville, especially prominent educationists, dilate upon the glories of the favored spot. Indeed if any one comes that way who does not extol the beauties of the classic region, he is known at once as one defective on one side of his make-up. If you want scenery that is varied and unsurpassed, along with the literary, scientific, musical, social and moral development, then your desire is gratified in what is seen from the spacious buildings of Acadia Seminary. Were we a little more given to blowing our own trumpet the general weal would be the more enhanced. Schools require to be advertized as well as soap. What is worthy must be persistently pushed before the public gaze, else it will not get what it deserves. Some have the notion that there is no such thing as being educated without going abroad. Just state regarding a young woman that she got her schooling in England or France or Germany, and that is quite enough with most who hear the statement. No questions are asked as to what she studied, under whom she studied, or how long. All sorts of superiority are readily imagined. There ought surely to be great advantages from foreign travel, and any who can get to the old world are fortunate. But there may be mere veneer from going so far, and sound culture from staying at home. "She was educated in England," may mean much or little. "She graduated at Acadia Seminary," is likely to mean considerable. People of the American continent pass by the physical wonder of their own land, to see the wonders of Europe. In like manner many the schools that are right, are undervalued. To be educated, rather than to be thought to be educated, will be the ambition of every honest and sensible girl who has it in her to be of some account.

Now, having said something about the basis and aim of our Seminary work, and having alluded in a general way to lines of effort that are followed, with intent to make our young women skillful servants of God in various spheres, let us take a few minutes, if you will allow, for reminding ourselves of benefits that accrue to our young people, from spending school days amid Baptist associations. Nor let this intimation be suggestive of narrowness and bigotry. If we believe that our denom-

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