

I would ask, is done by our public institutions for the education of the mass of the people?—In the mechanical nature of our common schools, is it ever proposed to unfold the various faculties of a human being, and to prepare him for self-improvement through life? Indeed, according to the views of education now given, how defective are our institutions for rich as well as poor, and what a revolution is required in our whole system of training the young.

The great aim of philanthropy should be, that every member of the community may receive such an education as has been described. To bring forward every human being, to develop every mind, is the great purpose of society. I say of society, not of government, for government is a mere instrument for holding society together, a condition of its existence, and not the great power by which its ends are to be accomplished. One of the pernicious doctrines of the day, very pernicious to the working classes, is, that government is to regenerate society, and exalt the individual to his true dignity. Government enables us to live together in society, and to make efforts for our and others welfare. But social progress depends on the spring in each man's breast, and not on the operations of the state. Government may be compared to the foundation and walls of a manufactory, which enclose and protect, not the moving and guiding power, but the necessary condition of their action. The people must not look to it for what their own energies can alone effect."

We need add nothing to this account of what education ought to be or aim at, nor is it necessary for us to point out in detail how far our present system falls short of attaining this end, or even of proposing to attain it.

For five or six years past the subject of education has been discussed in the Provincial Legislature, and several plans have been proposed for its improvement, but nothing as yet has been done. A Commission was appointed by His Excellency Sir George Arthur to enquire and report on education, as a branch of the general commission appointed to enquire and report on the Public Departments. The Commissioners on Education were the Rev. Dr. McCaul, the Rev. H. J. Grasset, and the Hon. S. B. Harrison, and their report on the subject sketches a plan for the action of the Legislature. They remark that the subjects to which they were instructed to direct their attention may be classed under the following heads—The past and present state of education in the Province—the state of the school funds—the constitution and revenues of King's Col-

lege—and a plan for the diffusion of education. On the first they observe :

1.—The Past and Present state of Education. The Provincial Legislature manifested at a very early period, their conviction of the necessity of making provision for so important an element in a nation's prosperity, as the education of her youth. In the year 1707, both Houses united in petitioning His Majesty for the appropriation of a certain portion of the waste lands of the Crown as a fund for the establishment and support of a respectable Grammar School in each District, and also of a College or University for the instruction of youth in the different branches of liberal knowledge. In the year 1807 an act was passed that the sum of £800 should be annually (for four years) paid for the establishment of public schools. The clauses of this act provided that there should be one public school in every district. That £100 should be paid annually to the teacher of such public school—appointed the places where these schools were to be established—gave authority to the Lieutenant Governor to appoint trustees—gave the nomination of the teacher to these trustees, subject to the approval or disapproval of the Governor—also the power of removing, and nomination to the same with the same restriction ; also the power of making rules and regulations respecting said schools.

It is to this act that we are to trace the establishment of the District Schools, as they at present exist, which, although they have not effected all that was expected, it yet must be admitted have been the instruments of effecting much good. In the year 1803 the Legislature seem to have been so impressed with the importance of this, their first step towards making a pecuniary provision for National Education, that we find the clause repealed limiting its duration to four years.

But the wants of the humbler classes of society demanded attention ; accordingly in the year 1816 an act was passed for the establishment of Common Schools. The clauses of this act provided, that during its continuance, £6,000 should be annually paid for this object—£600 to the Home District, £400 to the Newcastle, £1000 to the Midland, £800 to the Johnstown, £800 to the Eastern, £600 to the London, £600 to the Gore, £600 to the Niagara, £600 to the Western, and £200 to the Ottawa. The third clause provides that when a competent number of persons shall unite and build a school house, furnish 20 scholars, and in part provide for the payment of a teacher, such persons giving eight days notice, might meet and appoint three fit persons trustees to the said school, which trustees were to have the power to appoint a teacher of said common school. Power also was given to the trustees to remove the teachers and nominate others ;