

**LIBRARIES AS WELL AS SCHOOLS.**—It must be gratifying to the friends of education in this province to find that public attention has been very extensively directed to the establishment and prosperity of Common and Grammar Schools, and of public seminaries for learning.—A well arranged and extensive course of education is unquestionably calculated to expand the mind and to raise it above those low, grovelling ideas which the uneducated must necessarily entertain to a greater or less extent. We conceive, however, that apart from Schools, Academies and Colleges, the intelligent portion of the community has it in their power to advance the state of education. In their several families, a number of interesting and useful publications could be easily obtained. To the contents of these the minds of the youth of the present generation could be directed during the leisure hours which are to be found in every household, and which are especially available in the long evenings of our winter months. Besides such reading materials for the family, we have no hesitation in saying that every village and town in the province should have a circulating library for the benefit of their inhabitants and of those of their neighbouring district. By such means an extensive variety of useful books might be brought into a district, and the public mind supplied with fresh subjects for thought and reflection. The consequence of establishing and sustaining such libraries would be that men would have enlarged ideas of subjects with which they had been formerly unacquainted, additions would be made to their stock of knowledge, and friends and neighbours, in their social intercourse, would have varied subjects for agreeable conversation. The adoption of such means of education as we have mentioned, would tend to occupy leisure hours in useful pursuits, do away with the necessity of planning "how to pass away the time," and help to remove those temptations to immorality and crime which too many find difficult to resist.—*Barrie Magnet*, Feb. 14.

**FREE SCHOOLS.**—We propose to offer a few observations upon the subject of "Free Schools." We do not think that we can render a better service than by calling attention to this question, and thus, if possible, to obtain for it a favourable consideration. We really do believe, that to make education free, to render knowledge easy of access to all, to open the door of the school house to the poor child as well as the rich, is one of our first duties. We believe further, that to secure this great accomplishment, is to render a great public service; for we are persuaded that in no way can the public interests be better promoted, in no way can the blessings of peace, prosperity and order be better obtained, than thus to make our population intelligent, peaceful and industrious.

We are not going to enter into any lengthened arguments to prove the truth of this position, because we consider it to be unnecessary. We would not manifest so mean an opinion of people as to suppose them ignorant or careless of the benefits of education. We take it for granted that all classes are united in claiming it as indispensable and inseparable from their prosperity and success. Indeed we know this to be the case, and we feel proud to know it, and we rejoice that we are thereby enabled to look forward with satisfaction to the certainty of the happiness of the people, and of our country's greatness.

But the great difficulty with us at present is, not that education is not appreciated,—not that our population is indifferent to its acquirement,—not the want of popular interest in its behalf—but the difference of opinion which exist as to the best means of its attainment. Many of its sincere and ardent supporters—many persons whose desires for general intelligence are generous and patriotic—whose efforts in the advancement of general education cannot be too much admired—are averse to the principle of rendering property the basis of its support. We have no doubt that they are perfectly conscientious in their objections, yet we would like to have them undeceived, and we are convinced that the time is not far distant when they will not only see, but admit their mistake.

The opinion as to the right of every one to education is admitted. The existence of the necessity of knowledge is admitted also, but the right to provide the means for its universal attainment is denied. Here then is the difficulty, and, starting from this point, we have faith that this difficulty will be removed. We have confidence in

the generosity and patriotism of our people, and we therefore feel satisfied that reason and reflection will eventually lead them in the path of duty and justice. We have faith that when they shall have become convinced that individual security and happiness is greatly, and we may add, mainly dependant upon public intelligence and virtue, and that individual prosperity is more or less augmented by the habits of prudent industry, maintained by the country, and that education is the only sure guarantee of these—that then they will be willing to contribute of their means largely for these great ends. And most sincerely do we pray that this question may receive that attentive consideration which it so largely deserves. Most sincerely do we hope that all those possessing the ability, will give it their countenance and support, that they will strive to make it understood and appreciated, and then, when the public mind shall have been convinced—as it surely will be—we shall see schools nobly encouraged, and in place of the comparatively few children in attendance upon them, we shall see all. Thus will we be spared the sorrow and humiliation of witnessing our population growing up in idleness and ignorance. We should like to see free schools established, if only for one year, by way of experiment, in this town, for we are persuaded that their beneficial effects would soon be felt and acknowledged.—*Peterboro' Weekly Despatch*, Feb. 21st.

**FREE SCHOOLS IN UPPER CANADA.**—It is a good sign that the Free School system is generally approved in Upper Canada. We hope to see it adopted throughout the Province.—*Montreal Pilot*, Feb. 16th.

#### EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE,—THE DUTY OF THE STATE—A PLEA FOR FREE SCHOOLS.

Oh! for the coming of that glorious time  
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth  
And best protection, this imperial realm,  
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit  
An obligation, on her part, to teach  
Them who are born to serve her and obey;  
Binding herself by statute to secure  
For all the children whom her soil maintains  
The rudiments of letters, and inform  
The mind with moral and religious truth,  
Both understood and practiced,—so that none,  
However destitute, be left to droop  
By timely culture unsustained; or run  
Into a wild disorder; or be forced  
To drudge through a weary life without the help  
Of intellectual implements and tools;  
A savage horde among the civilized,  
A servile band among the lordly free!  
This sacred right the hisping babe proclaims  
To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,  
For the protection of his innocence;  
And the rude boy—who, having overpast  
The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled,  
Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,  
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,  
Or turns the godlike faculty of speech  
To impious use—by process indirect  
Declares his due, while he makes known his need.  
This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,  
This universal plea in vain addressed,  
To eyes and ears of parents who themselves  
Did, in the time of their necessity,  
Urge it in vain; and, therefore like a prayer  
That from the humblest floor ascends to heaven,  
It mounts to reach the State's parental ear;  
Who, if indeed she own a mother's heart,  
And be not most unfeelingly devoid  
Of gratitude to Providence, will grant  
Th' unquestionable good—which, as we, safe  
From interference and external force,  
May grant at leisure, without risk incurred,  
That what in wisdom for herself she doth,  
Others shall ne'er be able to undo.

*Wordsworth,—the present Poet Laureate of England.*