

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE TOWNSHIPS.

PART II.

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure."

In the Magazine for April, we referred, incidentally, to the fact that a very large proportion of our public schools are elementary. Such is necessarily the case. It may appear to some that the cause of education in the Townships would be improved by greatly diminishing the number of elementary schools, and making those retained of a higher class. We think this to be true to a certain extent. We fear that in many cases parents have been influenced more by considerations of convenience than of the character of schools, in the arrangement of school districts; but at the same time we doubt whether the present number of schools could be materially diminished without depriving many altogether of an opportunity for common school education. It may be said that children should acquire the elements of education at home. With this we agree; and in many instances such is the case, and might probably be in many more. But in a large majority of cases, it cannot be done. In many instances parents have not the ability, in more, not the time, to instruct their children, and hence the elementary school is a necessity. As was remarked in the former number, these schools furnish to the mass of our youth, the main source of education. To increase their efficiency and usefulness should be the aim of all those interested in the prosperity of our Province. To secure good elementary schools—1st. *We must secure teachers well fitted for, and feeling a lively interest in their work.*

Miss Robertson, in her admirable essay (known as the "Galt Prize Essay,") very well remarks, "It may be true that it is neither desirable nor possible that the children of our common schools generally, should be carried beyond the simple rudiments of an English education. But it is also true that even the rudiments of an art or science cannot be well taught by one who has not gone far beyond these rudiments. Any one may teach a child his letters, or drill him in spelling words of an indefinite number of syllables, but to teach a child to read well, one must be able to do far more than to tell the letters, or to put the syllables together. A limited knowledge of arithmetic may suffice for the teaching of the simple rules, the mere mechanical work of adding or multiplying,