

PRACTICAL LESSONS ON EDUCATION FROM BOSTON.

In another part of this number will be found the impressions received by the managers of two of the Toronto City papers, at the late Railroad celebration in Boston, in regard to public schools in the metropolis of the New England States. Boston can indeed boast of being the focus of more railroads than any other city in America, and that chiefly through enterprise of its citizens—thus more than counterbalancing the disadvantages of geographical position by the appliances of intelligence, skill, and energy. But Boston has higher claims to distinction than those founded in railway and manufacturing enterprise, or military prowess. It is the birth-place of FREE SCHOOLS. If here the right of self-government was first asserted in the western hemisphere, it was also here, more than a century before, the right of every child to be educated, and the corresponding duty of the State to secure the enjoyment of that right, was first propounded and proclaimed as a fundamental principle of government. Hence Boston as she is—the acknowledged Athens of America, and the radiating centre of an enterprise which clothes half the new world, makes highways of commerce through mountains, navigates every ocean, and trades with every trading country. We will set down a few impressions which a few days' stay in Boston makes on the mind of a Canadian visitor in regard to popular education and schools.

1. The respect in which Teachers of youth are held, and the value attached to their labours. The teachers of the public schools in Boston rank with the members of the Legal and Medical professions; and several of those teachers receive larger salaries than the Governor of the State. The Boston City Superintendent of Schools (having the oversight of 219 schools) receives a salary of \$2,500, or £825 per annum. The Secretary of the State Board of Education receives a salary of \$2,000, besides his travelling expenses. The salary of the Governor is only \$2,500; and that of the Secretary of State, \$1,600. To no offices or departments in the State is higher importance and value attached than to those connected with public common school education. The daughter of the present President of the United States was two or three years since a Normal School Student at Albany, and since then a Teacher at a public school in Buffalo. Governor SEWARD, of New York, was once a common School Teacher; and so was Dr. JARED SPARKS, present President of Harvard College or Cambridge University; and so was the great DANIEL WEBSTER, who was so remarkable for the accuracy and precision of his language when a teacher, that certain young ladies gave him the cognomen of "Mr. Set-speech." These distinguished men exerted themselves as much by their industry and character to honor and make honorable the position of common school teacher as they have since to do honor to the more prominent, though not more honorable, positions to which they have been called by the voice of their fellow citizens.

2. The interest and affection with which every man of every profession, pursuit, and condition, regards the common schools, is another circumstance which must impress the mind of the observing visitor at Boston. In his conversation and inquiries, he will find there no class of literary, professional or public men who look upon the common schools as no concern of theirs, as a matter beneath their attention, if not as an innovating nuisance. From the Governor downwards, every man with whom you meet and converse on the subject, refers to the common schools as the glory of the city, the first and most vital interest of the State—that to which all other interests are quite secondary—the first and most potent lever of civilization, and the palladium of public liberty.—You will find no difference of sentiment on this subject, and little

diversity of feeling. Every man feels himself as much obligated and concerned to support the public schools, as to support public order and liberty. Such a feeling is the soul of enlightened patriotism, and is the great desideratum in our country. Its prevalence and predominance would produce an amazing revolution in the public press, and elevate and expand the entire public heart to the generous and noblest impulses of an intelligent, industrious and free people.

3. A third circumstance, impressive and suggestive to the Canadian visitor in Boston, is, the system of police in respect to juvenile offenders. They are sent to school and set at work, under a system of oversight and discipline, parental, judicial and christian. Truancy at school and vagrancy in the streets are legal offences, and are sure to place the young offenders in a corrective school of instruction and employment adapted to weaken every vicious propensity, and develope and strengthen virtuous principles and habits. Some most respectable citizens commenced their career of virtue and successful industry in these schools of correction and reformation. Thus is vice nipt in the bud, the number of criminals reduced by scores, the number of useful citizens proportionably increased, the prevalence and influence of crime and the expenses of criminal jurisprudence vastly reduced. Political economy, no less than Christian philanthropy and benevolence, requires something of the same kind to be done, to prevent the multitudes of idle and vicious youths in our cities, towns and villages from becoming a numerous and giant race of criminals, expensive, miserable, and dangerous, instead of being made intelligent, happy and useful citizens.

4. Another circumstance which both attracts the eye and arrests the attention of the visitor in Boston, is, the economy and taste evinced in public *school architecture*. The school-houses are not indeed the most expensive, but they are among the most beautifully situated and the finest buildings in the city—removed from the noise of the streets, central in the districts for which they have been erected,—plain but elegant without, admirably arranged, completely furnished, and perfectly clean within—each costing about \$40,000, besides the grounds, and each accommodating from 800 to 1,000 pupils—each having a head master with several assistants, mostly females—each including a primary, intermediate, and grammar (or English high) school—the premises throughout neat, and the pupils cleanly and orderly. It is the result of long experience in this model city for schools, that it is much cheaper to build one large house for the accommodation of 1,000 children, than to build ten houses for the accommodation of one hundred each, or five houses for 200 each; that it is much cheaper to warm and furnish one such large house than ten small ones; that it is much cheaper to employ one able head master, with several assistants, for one large school, than to employ ten head masters for ten small schools; that 1,000 pupils can be much more advantageously classified, according to age and attainments, taught and advanced from division to division, from class to class, and from school to school, when collected in one large house, and under one master and system, than when divided in ten buildings, under as many different masters, if not systems. Upon the ground, therefore, of economy as well as of efficiency, the system of having large school-houses has become the practice not only in Boston, but in most of the cities and towns of the New England States. We are happy to observe that the Boards of Trustees in several of our Canadian towns and villages are pursuing the same course, though, we regret to say, in some instances, in the face of most misguided opposition. It is held by men of property in Boston, and other towns in New England, as a good speculation to build large and fine school-houses, from the