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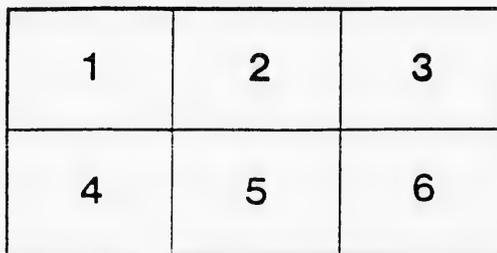
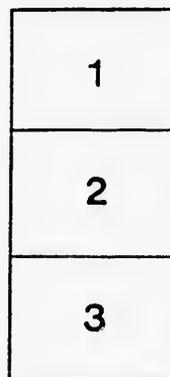
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MANITOBA COLLEGE LITERARY SOCIETY.



Pressing Education Problems.

Being the President's Inaugural Address.

BY

REV. GEORGE BRYCE, LL.D.,

HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

Given before the Society



November 2nd, 1894.

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MANITOBA COLLEGE.

Literary Association's First Open Meeting of the Session.

Rev. Dr. Bryce discusses important Educational Problems—An Entertaining Programme of Music and Reading—Presentation of Prizes won last year.

The first public meeting for 1894-5 of the Manitoba College Literary society was held in the spacious convocation hall of the college Nov. 2, 1894. There was a large audience present. After a musical and literary program the Rev. Dr. Bryce, honorary president of the society, delivered the following inaugural address:

Winnipeg is becoming an important university city. Through the energy and zeal of several religious denominations in founding and maintaining colleges, and through the formation of a provincial university, which receives a small government grant annually, Winnipeg has become a centre of higher education worthy of notice. It is the educational metropolis of Manitoba, but it is also found to be from year to year of service in extending knowledge to the vast North-West Territories and the province of British Columbia. The colleges of St. Boniface, St. John, Manitoba, Wesley and the Manitoba Medical college, nestling under the wing of the University of Manitoba, have thus succeeded in making Winnipeg a centre of educational force. When it is considered that the whole population of Canada west of Lake Superior does not exceed 400,000, the statistics of Manitoba university are not a little surprising. The following are the numbers of the various classes in the several faculties of the university for the year 1894:

Preliminary arts examination, 87.
Medical entrance examination, 33.
Previous arts examination, 62.
Junior B. A. examination, 39.
Senior B. A. examination, 44.
University law examination, 6.
Medical school attendance, 120.
Theological students not counted in arts, 60.
Total, 451.

This result, as the result of only seventeen years, for the university was founded in 1877 and its first degree was conferred in 1880, is remarkable. Two hundred and sixty-four candidates have in fourteen years received the degree of B. A., seventy-six that of M. D., and ten the degree of LL. B., and this without including those coming from other universities. The examinations for the licensing of medical men for the province are entirely under the control of the university. It was a wise step taken when it was decided that there should be only one source of degrees in the province of Manitoba. It has helped to give standing to the degree, and to free the province from the unseemly spectacle of rival universities debasing the standard of education to gain a temporary advantage. None of those who stood by the cradle of education in Manitoba ever thought of Winnipeg springing up in so short a time to be a full-grown Minerva—a queen of letters.

AN EDUCATIONAL PROVINCE.

If the results of educational effort in the higher sphere of education in Winnipeg have been thus so striking, the progress of public school education in the province of Manitoba has been no less remarkable. It was in 1870 that schools were begun under provincial control. For several years the growth of schools was slow, but as population came into the province the school system was used to begin many new schools in the rising settlements. The unfortunate division by which separate schools were allowed hindered the spread of schools in certain localities for a number of years. Since 1890, the year in which the new Public School act was passed the increase has been great. This is all the more remarkable when it is remem-

bered that of the ninety-one separate schools in operation in 1890 a number refused to avail themselves of the Public School act.

Year.	Schools in operation	School population.	Pupils registered.
1889	521	21,171	18,358
1890	627	25,077	21,256
1891	612	28,078	23,871
1892	699	29,561	23,211
1893	718	31,117	28,706

In the city of Winnipeg the growth has been equally gratifying.

Year.	No. of departments.	Attendance.
October enrolment ..	(1871) 1	
1889	61	3313
1890	61	3326
1891	66	3693
1892	67	3741
1893	78	4140

It is worthy of notice that during the years named the requirements for teachers' certificates have been steadily raised, and much fuller means taken for giving professional training to teachers. Local normal schools at six different points in the province have for three years been carried on, and the number in attendance at the provincial Normal school for first and second class certificates has risen from thirty-five in 1889 to ninety-two in 1894. Of the large number mentioned in 1894, fifteen are graduates of Manitoba university. It is safe to say that the discussions of the last five years have been of great service to education, and have given it a greater value in the eyes of the people.

THE FAULT-FINDERS.

But in the face of this progress both in public school and higher education, from several quarters comes the cry to halt in our educational career both as a city and province. Some men forgetting the high aim and enormous benefit of education are telling us that both in city and country too much money is being spent on the schools. Some land grasping speculator, who in early days bought large tracts of land at fifty cents an acre and now holds them at from \$2 to \$10 an acre is much exercised because the very school which is an element in raising the value of his land should cost half a cent a year for taxes. We are told that our city school buildings are much too expensive and that our city teachers are paid too great salaries. And yet the fault-finders want to plunge us into park expendi-

ture, the voting of railway bonuses and the like, ignoring the imperative claims of education, and forgetting that an ignorant nation will be a nation of slaves. Other wisacres are informing us that all that the schools should provide at public expense is the three R's of education, that the heads of children are turned by studying anything more than the merest common-places of knowledge, and that more than the rudiments of education disinclines the young to work and makes them idle and frivolous. Facts disprove this inhuman theory. If the object of a community is to make a class of serfs let us enact at once that no schools be provided, if ignorance be the mother of industry let us turn at once to the caste system of India, if boys and girls of to-day are to be given no higher education than their parents possess then let us blot out the record of the fact that many of the best public men, business men, professional men, and mechanics of Winnipeg and Manitoba are the product of the free schools of Canada, and would have been parish to-day but for the advantages supplied by these public schools. Macaulay in his essay on Milton said: "Till men have been for some time free, they know not how to use their freedom. The final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation and mercy." It looks now as if Macaulay's doctrine may need amendment. It seems as if when liberty and its fruits of free government, free education, and social rights are fully enjoyed there is danger of greed and selfishness introducing re-acton and losing sight of the value of our most cherished achievements.

FALLACIES OF NARROW-MINDED.

Lord Bacon in classifying the errors into which men fall, spoke of "idols of the cave" as being one of the most common classes. These are those wrong views that men adopt from looking only at their own personal circumstances, and from dwelling on their own disadvantages. These "idols of the cave" are becoming only too numerous in Manitoba. Farmers and business men alike brooding over the difficulties which bad seasons, commercial depression, and political mismanagement have brought are really proposing most radical and extreme measures to meet their difficulties. Imagining that society is all wrong they propose to abolish the legal and professional institutions which have grown up as the results of centuries of experience, one of their number in seeking parliamentary honors despised

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It is a pity the public press narrow and r eminent news lately: "Nov ity—not the a deeper con expenditure to more advance education?" halting way municipality more than the schools. ply a departr taxpayers nee their represe from the wan government b United States men chosen to choose their overcome. If governed ex and if the m represent the the electora for more edu for a cultivat result from e English educ men able fairl and spell are the intricate ance, the mar sewers and v

even the deficiencies of respectable dress, others maintain that even the institutions of religion are effete and only wait to be cast away. It is not remarkable that these cave-dwellers have declared war against education. Universities, they tell us are unnecessary, collegiate institutes are only cultivated pride and indolence, and even public schools are too burdensome to be maintained. The writer is quite well aware of the claims of our lobby upon us, and agrees with the celebrated writer, Elie Reclus, that for the statesman and the economist there is scarcely any question of more gravity than that of subsistence," but he would remind the narrow-minded worshippers of the idols of the cave that there is very high authority for saying that, "Man does not live by bread alone." While subsistence is a fundamental consideration, yet the joys of home, of the society of our fellow-men, of our church life, and of our educational progress are a great deal more than the half of life after all. Let us shatter the idols of the cave, and rise to our place as rational and progressive men.

THE PUBLIC PRESS.

It is a pity that some sections of the public press are pandering to this narrow and mistaken policy. A prominent newspaper in Manitoba said lately: "Now ought the municipality—not the state for that involves a deeper consideration—increase its expenditure to supply free education more advanced than a good English education?" That is just a poor halting way of saying that neither municipality nor province should give more than the mere rudiments of the schools. The municipality is simply a department of the state. Its taxpayers need intelligence to choose their representatives, and judging from the want of success of municipal government both in Canada and the United States, the ignorance of the men chosen to office, and of the men to choose them is the great evil to be overcome. If the state cannot be well governed except by intelligent men, and if the men chosen to public office represent the average intelligence of the electorate, surely there is a call for more education, rather than less, for a cultivation of mind which would result from even more than "a good English education." Boards of aldermen able fairly well to read and write and spell are not capable of managing the intricate affairs of city life. Finance, the management of streets and sewers and waterworks, the care of

the poor and sick and unemployed cannot be undertaken successfully by those who have no more than "a good English education." Nor are the members of any community fit to exercise the rights of electors in a free state when questions of tariff, taxation, railway construction, education and social administration are at stake if the voters have no more than "a good English education." It is readily admitted that we shall have to work constantly and systematically to get our electors up even to the general standard of "a good English education," but every argument for bringing the community to that standard is in favor of giving every member of the state all the education that his social circumstances and the ability of the state will admit of. No our newspapers should be educators, should lead the van in the hard struggle to advance, and should never stoop to gain the favor of the narrow-minded, the stogy, and the pessimist.

FREE SCHOOLS.

It is very seldom that poetry or lofty thought finds its way into an act of parliament, but the act of 1890 makes a notable declaration when it says: "All public schools shall be free schools." There is something of the ring in that sentence of the 40th clause of the Magna Charta: "Null vendemus, nulli negabimus, aut differemus, rectum aut iusticiam." "To none will we sell, to none will we deny or delay right or justice." The act of 1890 enunciates that every child in the province of Manitoba shall have the right to an education, and implies that the province by its own machinery or by the municipality which is its creation, will supply this education to poor and rich alike, to the children of every creed and nationality and condition within its borders. And here there is no weak-kneed limitation that the education shall be only up to the standard of a "good English education." As the law now stands, it declares that no fee shall be charged whatever the grade of the school, whether primary, intermediate or collegiate; and it means that up to the full measure of its resources the province binds itself to give the best education possible to all the children of Manitoba. The writer speaks from the standpoint of a city taxpayer, and from the position of one who reaps no personal benefit from the public schools, and yet is of the opinion that he and others similarly placed are bound to bear their share in giving a free education to all. There can be no exemption in this

duty. The ground for this opinion may be shortly stated:

First, the nation and the community need leaders. One man of ability is of great value to the land where he is born. Who can estimate the value of a Wellington to save his country from invasion, of a Faraday or an Edison to invent what vastly increases the comfort of life, of a Gladstone or a Cromwell to pilot the ship of state through troubled waters, of a Burns to cheer the heart of the poor and downcast, or a Tennyson or a Whittier to stir with trumpet note the flagging energies of the armies fighting for their countries? And in a less degree, but no less really, are men needed in every community, to think and plan for the well-being of the community. The state needs tens of thousands of leading minds, and to educate is the only means of obtaining the supply. Nature has scattered the bright mind in every grade of society, and in every nook and corner of the land and the nation can only get its best and do its best when it educates all to the fullest extent of its power.

Second, the body politic needs bone and sinew. A nation is only strong as its individuals are strong. An ignorant, vicious or useless man is a weakening element in any community or society. Therefore it is that the state is bound to educate. No one may say, Who is my neighbor? and pass by on the other side declaring the one robbed by ignorance or want of opportunity has no right to his help. The right of citizenship is an important trust. It is essential in our province, where virtually every man has a vote, that special pains be taken to give every one the means of being fitted, and well fitted for performing his public duty. Those who are believers in class government, in oligarchical or aristocratic control, who look down upon the "vulgar crowd," may not realize this, but for us who are the apostles of the rights of man as man, who vindicate the principles of liberty and equality and justice, it is an imperative duty, a very corollary of our opinions, that all the members of the community shall be educated to the highest degree possible.

Third—The free school method is the only one that meets the case of our province. We freely admit that compulsory education is the complement of the free school system. It is true this is not found in the act of 1890. It was omitted from that act purposely that no legal complication might arise as to the rights of the

province under the Manitoba act. But compulsory education is the logical outcome of free, representative government. If then the child is to be compelled to become fit for the exercise of the rights of full citizenship the school must be free. No barrier can be thrown in the way of general education, and no restriction ought to be placed on the amount of education, except the limit placed by ability to maintain the school.

Fourth. The free school plan is the profitable and wise course for our province to retain. Immigration is essential to the growth and welfare of our province. Manitoba is a chief candidate for the attention of the emigrants leaving other lands or provinces. Free schools—well-conducted and efficient schools will prove one of the chief attractions when the immigration wave again sets in in our direction. Manitoba's struggle on the school question has already advertised the province in this respect, and made it a desirable home educationally for strangers. Especially is it an attraction for the more intelligent class of settlers to know that the collegiate schools, while in no sense "miniature universities," as one of our newspapers ridiculously declined them, yet give a sound, broad education, and that our university, while not all that it ought to be, has yet the promise and the potency of greater things for the future. To Winnipeg especially is this an important consideration. Edinburgh, by its educational facilities of all kinds, draws thousands to its privileges every year. Toronto is the Athens of Ontario, and has largely increased its population on account of its advantages in the direction of learning. Winnipeg has the opportunity—surely too good an opportunity to throw carelessly away. It will be profitable to every community to keep up the character of its educational institutions even on the low ground of expediency and self-interest.

ERRORS AND DEFECTS.

But while we maintain the right and the necessity of public school free education we willingly admit that complaints of the kind we have mentioned should make us pause and examine our educational equipment. The fault-finder may be wrong in saying that the state should provide only a certain limited education, but right in his statement that the education given is far from fitting the young for the work of life. There are without doubt errors and defects in our systems and plans and customs of educa-

tion. It is no one of the problems of the youthful difficulty to the education of a group of or students of varied home talents in life. Many requiring experience to communicate since the grade. There is probably more than in the

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tion. It is no easy thing to deal with the problems of mind, and especially of the youthful mind. It is exceedingly difficult to adopt plans suited for the education in the same school room of a group of forty or fifty scholars or students of different antecedents, varied home training and different aims in life. Moreover, it is a thing requiring experience as to how best to communicate knowledge and to produce the greatest results of training. There is probably no field where errors and shortcomings are more common than in the training of youth.

TOO NARROW A VIEW.

All of us are apt to take too narrow a view of what education is. The phrase already quoted, "a good English education" has now a pretty well accepted meaning, and signifies the modicum of knowledge and training required by a boy of say fourteen years of age enabling him to write a good hand, read and spell English fairly well, make calculations of an ordinary kind, work out problems of interest, measurements and the like, with some acquaintance with general geography and school history. But is that enough with which to launch ninety-five per cent of the future governing body of Canada upon the voyage of life? Our provincial school laws all recognize that more time than that is required to fit the mind of the young for their life work. Sixteen is stated as the limit of school age, and every pupil in Canadian schools should remain at least that long at school. Is a mere boy at the age of fourteen, with his crude conceptions of life, his developing body and frivolous disposition fit to be taken from the guidance of earnest teachers, his education checked, and his whole attention to be confined to the hard requirements of the office, the store, or the workman's bench? Is it right that the future elector, citizen, member of society, or perhaps leader of men is to have no wider knowledge than that, is to know nothing of poetical, historical, scientific or general literature—the rich store treasured up in our English tongue? Are the two or three years when his mind is best fitted for receiving fastening impressions of value, when his ambition to know and do is beginning to be stirred, and when the habits of study of his previous schoolboy days are just at the point of becoming fixed, to be ruthlessly snatched from him and his aspirations all destroyed?

SELF-COMPLACENCY FATAL.

Another very serious evil in education is the tendency of all educators

to become self-complacent and indolent. As men become older they lose their disposition to examine and adopt new plans. They become wedded to the systems and views of their earlier manhood. The youth is full of the enthusiasm of enquiry; the older man, as Wordsworth says, "Perceives it die away, And fade into the light of common day."

The great majority of educators fail to keep up with the progress of the time. Some of them read the tomes of past generations or centuries—and there is nothing wrong in that—but they fail to find out what the throbbing, restless, unsettled world of today demands. The educator as he grows older, tends toward repose. His views are settled, his habits fixed, his lectures written, his mind inclines to seek escape from new investigations. Not that he is an indolent man, not that he is lacking in the sense of responsibility, not that he is careless as to the highest good of his scholars or students, but his mental attitude is one that tends toward restfulness. How well I'ope satirizes such educational conservatism!

"Placed at the door of learning, youth to guide,
We never suffer it to stand too wide.
To ask, to guess, to know as they commence,
As fancy opens the quick springs of sense,
We ply the memory, we loud the brain,
Blind rebel wit, and double chain on chain,
Confine the thought, to exercise the breath;
And keep them in the pale of words till death."

Teaching, that does not require constant mental strain and effort is not worthy of the name. It will be of no avail to let the mind rest on a successful university career on the perfection of a normal school training, on the number or excellence of the books we may have read years ago, on the reputation we may have acquired in the beginning of our teacher's life, or the success with which we attain the ideal of a generation ago; all will be unavailing; the Nemesis of a present, living, pulsating, clamorous age will dog the heels of such educational self-complacency.

LACK OF ADAPTATION.

What teachers in our schools, school trustees, the advisory board and university authorities all need is alertness, a watchfulness and a willingness to let the dead past bury its dead, and to act in the living present. Not that we are to neglect the past, not that we are to be so foolish as to

fall to profit by the experience of other days, not that we are to give up a thing simply because the past brings it to us, but we are bound to reduce all into the mould of the present, to fit our appliances to the need of to-day, and to grapple with living problems. Anyone can see that society is changing, privilege is disappearing; this is the reign of the common people. The masses have a right to be educated, the masses are clamoring for education, the masses must be educated or they will be a perpetual menace to the state. What is the use of bringing us a model from mediæval times and trying to fit that upon us? Why will you tell us of forms of education suited to England and Germany with their aristocratic institutions and their halting doctrines of the rights of the people? What is the use of bringing to us the country school house of Ontario of forty years ago and the antiquated system of the rustic school master? We need our own system, suited to the wants of a democratic, prairie community. We do not wish technical education in the schools, nor the fitting for trades at the public expense, but we want adaptation to the wants of this work-a-day world.

MANUAL TRAINING.

The mass of our people are to gain their living by the work of their hands. The mind trained in harmony with the training of the nerves and muscles and organs loses nothing, but gains. Let nimble fingers be trained in infantile years by the kindergarten system; let boys and girls receive the manual training leading on to industrial pursuits in the knowledge of form, in the facile use of the eye and hand and arm, and where possible let industrial training—schools be established, let the girls in our schools have systematic training in domestic economy, in sewing and cooking and the arts of the household. This may go on in harmony with the regular training of the mind on more abstract subjects and will help rather than hinder it. The advantages of this plan have been stated as follows:

1. It will tend to give pupils a practical turn or habit of thought and direct their attention in a common sense way to the opportunities opened to them in mechanical and industrial pursuits.
2. It will develop the executive power of the pupil and thus make him a more capable worker in any kind of work he may choose.
3. It will secure a physical training and give the average boy an out-

let for his sense of power, which the ordinary school rather represses.

4. The discipline thus given is the complement to that now given by the public school.

AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION.

The majority of the people of Manitoba will, however, be farmers. Their interests will dominate in all matters provincial. Their occupation should stand in high estimation among us. The ancients showed their high regard for farming by making Ceres one of their chief divinities, its patron. Schiller speaks of her as the "bountiful 'daughter of heaven'" who

"Roused each familiar household feeling;
And, best of all the happy ties,
The centre of the social band—
The instinct of the Fatherland."

What is our duty to the farmer? To adapt our educational facilities to his needs. To give him better school houses, more complete appliances and the best trained teachers. The revenue of school lands, made valuable by the farmer's toil, the full share of provincial resources that can be given for his education should be supplied. Moreover, as early as possible, the studies of the school in the plants, hurtful weeds, wild fruits, trees, birds, insects and features of country should be introduced and made interesting. A higher grade should be instructed by experiment with the elementary facts of air, water, components of soil, treatment of soil, farming processes, the care of the animals of the farm, and the elements of agriculture. All this can be done along side the regular training at present afforded in the schools, if teachers are found who have adaptability and alertness. Then an agricultural school, not an agricultural college which is chiefly useful in educating away from the farm, but a school to be held for two or three months each winter in different parts of the country, could be made of great service in this practical direction for those farmer's sons and daughters possessing a good English education.

PROGRESS.

Members of this society, be alert, progressive, wise. Let us act in the thought of Tennyson:

"Better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze
Like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. For-
ward, forward, let us range.

Let the great world spin forever down
The ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we
Sweep into the younger day:

Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle
Of Cathay."

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