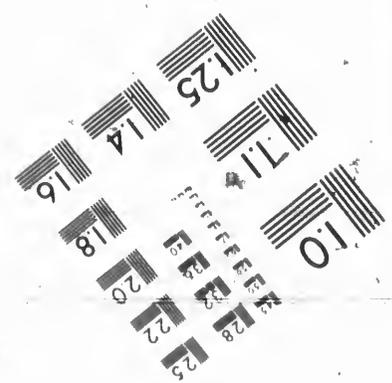
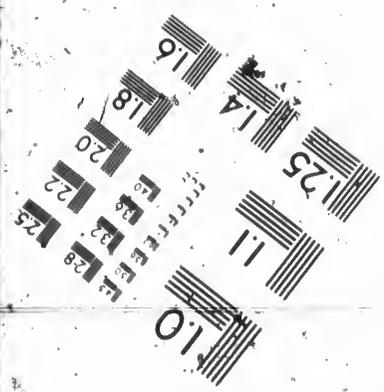
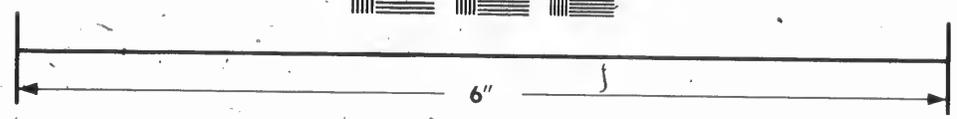
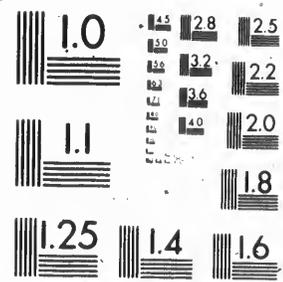


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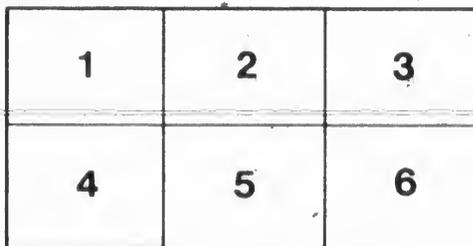
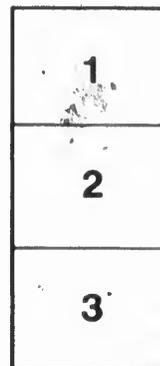
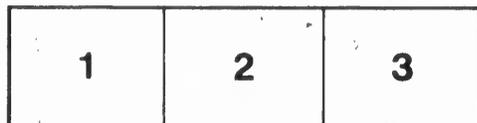
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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

FOR THE

Mercantile Library Association,

DELIVERED ON THE 9TH JANUARY, 1854,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM T. LEACH, D. C. L.



MONTREAL :
PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
1854.



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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

WHEN the request of this Association to deliver the opening Lecture this winter, was first communicated to me, I thought upon the instant, that I ought to decline the duty. The difficulty, on such an occasion, of saying anything that might be useful, anything not already familiar to you, anything which has not already been much more worthily spoken than I could hope to express in language—these things, together with a certain reluctance, which I believe many persons experience, to face the publicity of a position where something new is expected from them, and to which they are conscious they have no particular vocation, admonished me to decline the position which you have done me the honor of inviting me to assume.

These were my first thoughts, but it then occurred to me to think that one is hardly at liberty to refuse bearing his part, when called upon, in forwarding the designs of an Institution which so large a portion of his fellow citizens believe, and believe justly, may minister to the community unexceptionable pleasure and intellectual profit. The common interests of society, now better understood than they were when the prime of youth first darkened the faces of some of us with a beard, are not supposed to admit, without question, the right of any one to remain neutral in the contest of civilization with barbarism, of knowledge with ignorance. All are required to contribute

according to their ability ; some to contribute the sinews of war, some to take the field in offensive arms, others to plan the campaign and direct the movements of the forces. If it is fair that the inhabitants of a city, in proportion to the advantages which they receive, should be taxed for public improvements, as they are called, for reservoirs to save their properties from conflagration and give to the whole population the means of personal cleanliness and other numberless conveniences ; for sewers to preserve the air they breathe from pestilence ; for gas, that lengthens the light of existence and scares away many works of darkness, and for an efficient police to prevent the breaking of the peace and the breaking of heads, and for the protection of private property and public decency ; if any one may be fairly taxed for these, and admits the fairness of the tax, it seems no less equitable that every one should practically discharge and acknowledge his obligation to such an Institution as this, which unquestionably heightens the moral order, the general intelligence and refinement of manners of those with whom he must hold a constant intercourse, and upon whom so much of his own happiness and that of those whom he loves, so materially depends. If it is better to live in the midst of an orderly, polite and intelligent people, than among a herd of human beings of ferocious dispositions and brutish manners, no one ought to grudge a little voluntary tax or some due proportion of his time and toil. These are, after all, only a *quid pro quo*. They are only an equitable price for the benefits he receives, and give a proof even honorable to himself that he refuses to enjoy in a sort of surreptitious way, the beauty and fragrance and fruit of a garden upon the cultivation of which others have generously expended their money and labour.

Perhaps the day is not far distant when, of the merchants of Montreal, there will be few found that will decline a helping hand, I shall not say in the *support* merely of this Association, but for its expansion and elevation. The present time demands and invites renewed efforts on the part of its friends. The increase of population is an argument for the necessity of fresh exertions in its behalf, and the general prosperity holds out an

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encouragement, that they will prove successful. I utterly misapprehend the excellence of its aim and the extent of its beneficial influence, if it does not merit a tenfold addition to its friendly advocates and auxiliaries, if its list of members should not be thousands instead of hundreds. Its efficiency for progress, its fitness as a locomotive in aiding to drag along the social car speedily and powerfully to the destination which it is created to seek, requires only to be demonstrated and well understood. Whatever may be the obstacles, this city is by no means wanting in fine and proper spirits to enterprise for the consciousness and the honorable distinction of deeds of goodness and light, and as long as this is the case, it were a meanness of spirit altogether unworthy of an intelligent people to mistrust the help of a propitious Heaven, and the prosperous progress through remote ages of the machinery they have put in motion. The individuals who had the first hand in its construction, have done what may well inspire them with a delightful emotion. They must have one happy remembrance at least, that will often glide in like a smiling angel, among the many thoughts and cares of a dutiful life. They must have the grateful persuasion, that in this they are well deserving of their fellow citizens, whose approbation is always pleasing to the better men, not so much, it may be, for its own sake, as for the incidental testimony which it bears to the goodness of the cause they have selected for their love. To such men, to deserve praise is far better than to receive it. I know that, in this also, it is more blessed to give than to receive, if given with discrimination and an honest purpose. But let us give it, notwithstanding, were it only to show that in honouring the agents, we appreciate the public welfare and the spirit that works for it. I have been informed that the Hon. John Young and Mr. David Vass, are the names to which we must ascribe the honour of being the founders of this Association.

A general craving for information forms one of the prominent features of the present age. The ready concurrence of this Association with the prevailing spirit of civilized countries, has, in this place where it was infinitely needed, served to foster the love of knowledge and supply the demand for it. It has

done good service in rousing us from an incurious and dormant state. It has contributed to infuse mental vitality and to preserve it. It has exhibited an example of intellectual buoyancy on the dreary waste, and has had no small share in redeeming the principal city of this portion of the empire from the reproach of being a market place for traffic and *nothing more*. The good order of society cannot, on this continent at least, be maintained for any length of time, without a liberal diffusion of knowledge among all ranks of society. The decencies of life cannot exist without it. It must here go in company with all that is graceful in manners, and ornamental in the arts. It is of its nature to purify the taste, and give delicacy and tenderness to the natural affections. It removes from the face of the heavens the saddening clouds of superstition, and lets down from the skies an ethereal shower of happiness, as it were, which, like the rain on the woods in the early days of May, inclines all God's creatures to laugh and sing.

Some one has said that knowledge is *pleasure* as well as *power*. This is true. But it is a truth to be experienced rather than demonstrated. "Is it not knowledge," says Lord Bacon, "that doth alone clear the mind of all perturbations?" How many things do we esteem and value otherwise than they are? This ill proportioned estimation, these vain imaginations—*these* be the clouds of error that turn into the storms of perturbation." It is a delightful state to be free from all perturbations, and if knowledge is efficacious to prevent them, the acquisition of it must be a ministration of *pleasure* such as none can object to, and such as every benevolent heart would seek to communicate. According to Lord Bacon, it is knowledge alone that gives composure of mind, that pleasing calmness of nature's passions which the heavenly good attain to, and which is the opposite of those "inordinate affections" which, Dryden says, are hell. When you sit on the top of the diadem mountain that crowns this city, gazing on the prospect beneath, on the crowded dwellings of 60,000 souls, and revolve in your mind what wild works of human passion are at that moment being done, what tragical and comic scenes, what stratagems of covetousness, ambition, love and revenge, what mad merriment and sorrow, what indo-

lence and toil, what strife of proud and pugnacious hearts, what "ill-proportioned estimations"—all these, while you sit aloft unruffled, fanned by the breath of the summer gales, and soothed by the voice of the murmuring woods and the hum of the bee people—while thus engaged, you are an apt illustration of Lord Bacon's man of knowledge, who has erected "the dwelling of his peace so high" that the perturbations by which others are annoyed and startled and sometimes distracted, reach him not.

This is a higher strain than I intended to adventure, but Lord Bacon's idea of knowledge is comprehensive, comprising divine as well as human knowledge.

There was a time when the pleasure and profit of knowledge were confined within a very narrow enclosure. It was supposed to be dangerous. The diffusion of it was dreaded as an unknown power that might commit inconceivable devastations, a ghost that might clutch, no one could tell whom, and do, no one could tell what. That superstition is exploded, and, "as the fire which the old Persians worshipped is now in every man's house," so the general knowledge which was once regarded as the stratagem of some diabolical policy, is acceptable to all, and has been accessory to the well being of all. The opinion of Dr. Olinthus Gregory on this point seems at length to have prevailed. He says, that the improvement of the people to the very extent of their mental susceptibilities is most healing and generous. It operates on all classes and orders; it promotes universal instruction; it reforms by representing itself; it mitigates bad constitutions and improves imperceptibly laws, manners and opinions; yet, he says, is every advance or proposal to this effect received as a challenge to insurrection; to instruct the people is reputed as a declaration of war, and every progress is made at the hazard of a battle. No wonder, that so beset and waylaid and maligned, every partial success to improve the race of Adam should be hailed as an achievement.

But though no danger on this score is now apprehended, and no impediments arising from such a prejudice obstruct the diffusion of general knowledge, it is still difficult to propagate it

widely enough in extent, and largely enough in degree. It grows with every view you take of it, and the more you acquire, the more you discover the greatness of the quantity you want. We have, however, this encouraging and gratifying consideration, that the knowledge which we may be taught is really knowledge. The great evil in all the ages past has been, that error has been as ardently taught as truth; the great difficulty has always been to discriminate, to put the garland upon the right head, and stamp as gold with the royal image only what was gold. The means of arriving at this certainty, or at such a degree of probability as the limited powers of the human soul, and perhaps the very conditions under which all intelligences but God subsist, oblige us to accept for certainty,—the means of arriving at this certainty or substituent probability, is that subject, which above all things else has evoked the proudest intellectual powers of man. To lay a solid foundation for our confidence in the conclusions of science; *i. e.* in those general laws, under which the particular instances or facts are comprehended, as being related to a common cause, was infinitely necessary. It was necessary both for confidence in scientific results and as a means of discovery; it has been a work of enormous labour, and has so far been accomplished only after ages of interruption, and by persons raised up, providentially, with the rarest endowments of nature, by Aristotle, Bacon, Locke, Kant, Mill, Sir William Hamilton and others.

The sources of error common to the species required to be pointed out and very significantly marked, as also the sources of error arising from the various conditions, under which the mind subsists and acts, conditions that may weaken or pervert, or even enslave it. The powers of the mind, particularly its subtle intellectual operations, together with the formal laws of thought required to be investigated and explained; the modes of investigation appropriate to the different branches of natural philosophy—the philosophy of fact and observation, the rules for estimating the value of oral and documentary testimony, the rules for the conduct of controversies and the interpretation of written documents, have been elaborately studied and laid down. Some of the advantages which mankind have derived from

this species of labour, are these ; we are taught the right way of cultivating the field of science which we may have chosen for cultivation ; we know when to believe with confidence that a question has been decided,—or when the evidence falls short of conclusiveness ; we know, when all the counterbalancing considerations have been estimated, whether the evidence for, or the evidence against the question, be the greater, or whether so equally balanced, that all belief is to be suspended. The moral effects which naturally result from this intellectual discipline, are to render one very decided in some things, where the evidence is conclusive, and very cautious in most things—to disincline to any compromise between truth and falsehood ; to discard, as utterly mischievous and fatal to the interests of truth, all intemperate dogmatism and animosity, to beget a thoroughly tolerant and charitable spirit, a spirit, pensive and sorrowful it may be, on the view of our human errors and frailties, but buoyant and loyal to the heavenly majesty of truth, of all truth, for God is truth, and in Him must be our hope.

The species of knowledge, together with history and general literature, commonly derived from the libraries and lectures of institutions of this description, is that, which has been of late years, accumulated as the product of the philosophy of facts and observation. Its diligent cultivators have prepared accurate histories of their respective sciences, histories of the facts which, before receiving them into their book of data, they are supposed to have minutely and carefully examined ; and the results, after a process of comparison and elimination, are open to the easy acquisition of every understanding. It was long before the labours of Bacon, called the father of this Philosophy, became generally useful, indeed before they were understood, a circumstance which is to be attributed, perhaps, to the nature of the subject, and the veil of poetical language in which he has invested it. Since his time, however, and especially during the last half century, the physical sciences have been cultivated with unprecedented ardour and success, and every conceivable means have been employed to make them intelligible. The press of Europe and America sends forth every year a vast abundance of scientific works, not so much with the design of

conveying new truths, as with that of simplifying and illustrating those already received and established. Except for those who teach sciences, and those who cultivate them with a view to discovery, it is not absolutely necessary to sound many depths, to be a first rate Logician, or Mathematician, in order to acquire a vast amount of valuable knowledge. The merchant or clerk who employs even his superfluous hours upon any particular science, may soon amass a much larger stock of information, than the wisest could accumulate a few years ago, by the most laborious and prolonged efforts. This facility must operate as a pressing invitation upon the principle of curiosity. It is difficult to conceive it possible that any one endowed with rational powers and having the opportunity of exerting them, should not labour with some industry, to become acquainted with the grand facts of Modern Astronomy, for instance, and should feel no interest in the discoveries, which, from time to time, are being made as to the number of the members of our planetary system, and the various conditions under which they exist, and no interest in the astounding revelations, which the great improvements lately made in the instruments of observation, have been the means of bringing to light in the remoter regions of space. Curiosity in the best sense of the term, imagination and the religious sentiment naturally receive their gratification in keeping acquaintance with the increasing volume of facts in this science. The progress of Chemistry, its application to agriculture and many of the useful arts, its efficiency as an auxiliary for the explanation of animal and vegetable tissue and a great variety of other interesting phenomena in the functions of animals and plants;—the knowledge of these cannot fail to give pleasure, and may be useful to every one. I might mention, in like manner, the system of observations that has lately been instituted for the collection of facts appertaining to the magnetic currents of the globe—to the course of experimental inquiries now in operation on the nature, the properties and laws of light and heat, to the researches of Geology, whose facts and deductions are so well calculated to arrest the attention and give an added interest in every hill and valley of the earth, in every field and

rock, in every crevice you may meet with, wherever you may go. Political economy may be called the merchant's own science. He is immediately conversant with many of the facts, he is immediately interested in its deductions. He may be expected to have a particular aptitude and spontaneous leaning to enter upon the questions which it proposes for investigation. These are, indeed, some of them of a more limited, some of a more general nature, but they refer so directly to the social and political state of a community, affecting so closely the means of its sustentation and the fastenings which bind it, that it can hardly be thought innocent in a merchant to neglect the study of them, especially when he belongs to a class whose wealth and intelligence, and general influence are, in this country predominant. Nor does it seem less naturally to coincide with the occupations and duties of a merchant to be thoroughly informed on those points, in moral Philosophy, which refer to the nature and end of civil laws, to contracts in general, to the origin of civil government, and the internal structure of states, to the laws of war, to the nature of treaties and rights of ambassadors &c. The growing importance of this colony asks for a more general and complete acquaintance with subjects of this kind. And this city especially, the central point of its population, the terminus, by the ordination of providence, of the many-sailed ships and sea-traversing steamers, and the rightful heir to the honour of holding the stirrup to the sovereigns of legislation, ought surely to be the focus of intelligence, both the eye to see and the heart to undertake the good and glory of Canada.

The several departments of knowledge to which I have now particularly adverted, are those for which the Library of this Association and the Lectures delivered under its direction, make provision. They require beforehand no profound acquaintance with mathematics, no classical acquirements, no laborious study of the principles of evidence and the methods of scientific investigation. Here, it is rather a matter of taste and pleasure to attract the attention, than a hard service that demands it of necessity. A little enthusiasm and a retentive memory, which is the daughter of enthusiasm, will carry one

on a great length, if the opportunities here afforded are constantly seized. For those young persons especially, who may have but lately entered upon the serious business of life, these opportunities are singularly valuable. The Lectures in particular serve to create a taste for pursuits of science and literature, furnish material for conversation, help to subordinate unprofitable amusements, and remove many a temptation to waste the golden hours of evening leisure, to waste health, to make shipwreck of reputation, virtue, all that is truly desirable in life. The fast young men soon sink and disappear, many of whom, ay, hundreds of them, if animated with a manly love of knowledge and imbued with a pure taste for the literature of our language, would find in the objects of this Association, a recreation far too charming to be readily exchanged for the dreadful stuff of books that consume their leisure time, or for the still more despicable recourses to any forms of vicious self-indulgence,—many, whose talents turned into a virtuous course, might find a recompense in prosperous circumstances and an honourable name.

Here I cannot but take occasion to advert to a class of publications which are read by the young almost universally,—I mean the works of fiction in the form of novels. All who have any regard for the uncorruptedness of their own minds, will be as careful in the selection of the books which they read, as of the company with whom they familiarly associate, and it cannot be denied, that there are books, almost innumerable of the kind referred to, whose tendency it is, to enfeeble and corrupt the mind while they amuse and divert it. Who that witnesses the avidity with which they are read, must not lament the precious time thus thrown away and the errors and debasing impressions thus created? How indiscriminating people are in this matter! It never seems to occur to them, that errors in principle of the most fatal tendency, may be thus inculcated. They may keep themselves and those whom they are able to influence as far away as possible from the sights and language of contaminating vices, which, shown in their open turpitude, are calculated to disgust, but often admit into the chambers of their imagination and affections the seductive

and vitiating imagery which those productions supply. I must be careful, however, to remark, that these observations do by no means apply to the *whole class* of novels. The eminent individuals whose works are to be excepted from this condemnation, are *authors* of a different species, though their *writings* do belong to the class of novels. The opinion expressed by Sir John Herschel on this point, in his address to the subscribers to the Windsor and Eton Public Library, will, I am persuaded, be generally approved of. "The novel in its best form, he says, I regard as one of the most powerful engines of civilization ever invented—but not the foolish romances which used to be the terror of our maiden aunts; nor the insolent productions which the press has lately teemed with under the title of fashionable novels; nor the desperate attempts to novelise history, which the herd of Scott's imitators have put forth, which have left no epoch since the creation, untenanted by modern antiques, and no character in history, unfalsified; but the novel, as it has been put forth by Cervantes and Richardson, by Goldsmith, Edgeworth and Scott. In the writings of these and such as these, we have a stock of works in the highest degree enticing and interesting, and of the utmost purity and morality—full of admirable lessons of conduct.—Those who have once experienced the enjoyment of such works, will not willingly descend to an inferior grade of intellectual privilege,—they have become prepared for reading of a higher order, and may be expected to relish the finest strains of poetry, and to draw with advantage from the purest wells of history and philosophy."

The Lectures of this Association are open to the ladies, who generally form no inconsiderable proportion of the number of the audience. It is, of course, a gratifying circumstance to know, that they derive pleasure and instruction from the subjects here usually treated of, and perhaps our gratification might be increased were we fully aware of the beneficial effects which, in a social point of view, hence arise. If the divisions of knowledge, which I before expressly mentioned, are in some degree cultivated and liked by any considerable number of the women of a place, that is a sure sign that there the public

mind will soon be energetically directed to those objects. It is in the power of woman to cause man almost to be born with the love of knowledge—certainly to infuse it into the youthful mind—certainly to render it in the society which she perfumes and adorns, reputable and honourable. The indirect effects of her well stored mind must in this way be far more extensive and prevailing in proportion to her stores, than they will be with men. The idea of scientific and literary knowledge being inappropriate to females, or in any way inconsistent with their relative duties, is now, I believe, seldom *seriously* entertained. Nor is exception often taken to it on the ground of any natural inferiority of intellect. In the days of the Second Charles of England, when female virtue was less honourable than now, it was a favourite theme to depreciate the intellectual abilities of woman, and show cause why she was better in a state of ignorance. They alleged that the female brain was not designed for the burden of knowledge, that it was of a moist and soft nature, not sufficiently hard for the retention of impressions—they asserted, too, that it was a dangerous possession to entrust her with, since it was her desire of knowledge that brought death into the world and all our woe. Those were the days when women went to the theatres in masks, to hide their little shame on witnessing the base performances then in fashion. Ignorance and moral degradation were then too generally associated, and though it is true that great virtue may, in the individual, subsist with a small degree of knowledge, and abundant knowledge with a world of vices, it is not true that this is the law generally—it is not true, that this the law of *social* life. In social life, intelligence and virtue go not asunder, and we happily live in an age when this union is recognized, and its benefits experienced. In the United States, the more general and superior education of women, is a national characteristic, and though we sometimes hear men dilating upon the errors of those called the strong minded women, in a certain derogatory tone, which bespeaks an inclination to satirize the superior education of all women, this is never done among the wise and good, and is indeed only the natural jealousy of weak minded men, who may have cause to be

suspicious of their own inferiority. The powers of female minds to comprehend and communicate knowledge, have been demonstrated by their works of talent in science; and works of genius in literature. For myself, I shall say that I owe to no single man, any knowledge, which through life I have found more worthy of being prized, than what was the gift of an aged maiden. Other points of comparison between the two sexes, would lead to a train of thought diverging from my subject, but I may appeal to all who are well experienced in the many thorny ways of human life, whether they have not often been disposed to join in the exclamation of the divine Psalm, "I said in my haste all *men* are liars." I do not believe that *this* could be spoken of *all women*.

There is another matter closely connected with the same grand objects which this Association seeks to advance, a matter which I rejoice to have an opportunity of bringing before your notice. Its ends are the same with those of the Mercantile Association, and this I am sure will plead my excuse with you for introducing it. Indeed it would not be complimentary to the understanding and philanthropy of the members of this Association, nor to the just influence exerted by the merchants of this city, to deem other apology necessary. Upon every efficient institution for the advancement of human knowledge, I may surely presume their approbation. The whole of the educational system of the lower division of the Province would soon be improved, were the intelligence and influence of the mercantile class seriously applied to that all important subject. The effects of universities and colleges upon the prosperity of that system, the powerful influence of these parts upon the whole would soon be well understood, and those institutions be thought worthy of every fostering care. The youth of the country have hitherto passed at a very early age from the school to the counting house, at an age much *too* early; for the too speedy acquisition of wealth is seldom a great blessing to them; the question comes, how do they employ it? If in self-indulgence, their good fortune is a calamity; if in rigid parsimony, the chances are, that they are in for a passion which will infect their souls with a disease that will endure till life's

closing day; at any rate, they have missed the special training which is necessary, in ordinary cases, to enable them to bear their part in public life, with much satisfaction to themselves, and with any superior degree of ability and dignity. The gigantic strides which our country is making to political consideration, warn us to take care that her children be men, not unworthy of her cause. It is a notion which has been too readily received, that when the great duties of public life and eventful emergencies, require them, there will never be wanting the men who are equal for them, or to use a common phrase, that when the *times* come, then will come the *men*. Is this notion true? Is its truth evinced by the greater number of historical examples, or is it merely an idol of the tribe, an over-hasty generalization contradicted by experience? It has no claim, I fear, to be regarded as a general truth, that is, a truth at all. Only recollect how numerous are the instances in which the men have been wanting, in great conjunctures, to navigate the tide of affairs, which wisely and bravely taken, might have led on a nation to prosperous fortune. Think of the number of opposite facts, and the general assertion appears at once, a broken reed to lean upon. Think how often men have given to the times their character and direction, and have hope in the efficacy of every means that can strengthen in the young their soul of reason.

It has become a matter of popular conviction, and woe be to the people that swerves from it, that the instructions usually given in the Common Schools, to read and write and calculate arithmetically, are, in the present state of society, common necessities. Certainly a greater reproach could not be cast upon any Government than that the people in any large proportion should remain, from ignorance of these simple arts, incapable of reaping the advantages which they bring. The government has shown some laudable zeal for the advancement of this inferior description of education, and the sums furnished on that account from the public treasury are not inconsiderable. Many philanthropic persons look to this common school instruction as a provision at once for the prosperity of individuals and for social order. This is the key, they suppose, that will

unlock the treasures of knowledge, demolish superstitions, unite us in charity, and so sharpen our perceptions of private and public justice that the state of society will hardly need any other means of improvement. No suspicion of the inadequacy of these means for the production of such effects ever seems to distress them. So much has been spoken and written on this subject that it has come to be regarded as a sort of axiom that the good effects adverted to will infallibly result from the system of common school education, and that alone—an expectation utterly mendacious.

Besides the private utility of this species of education, and its productiveness as a means of national wealth, there is no doubt but that it places the scholars in a favorable position, independently of its effects in a religious point of view, but here lies its demerit or defect, it does not put them in a position *sufficiently* favorable, because it does not improve those powers of their souls which are best worth being improved, and are the most susceptible of improvement. It gives the instruments, but does not teach the use of them. It supplies the formula, but gives no satisfactory instructions for its application. It opens the gate, but leaves one still in the lurch. It neither inclines nor trains any one to discriminate between truth and error, to estimate the value of evidence, to detect sophistry, nor to be obedient to the sovereign powers of reason and conscience. The common school system does not train any one to these things, but this training is the kind of education that everybody in the world stands most in need of. Since much that is read is false, often injurious to the individuals, and sometimes pernicious to society, the qualifications which the common school system of education confers, are qualifications which expose the reader to the errors that may be written. It is not all gain in this case. If a larger surface is exposed to the genial rains of truth, the same space lies open to the pestilential blasts. Hence there are innumerable instances in which the advantages reaped may be no compensation for the pernicious influences thus exerted. Some higher education is therefore needed to enable as many as possible to be free from these influences and to counteract them. In regard to social

order, public and private virtue, and clear perception of duty, we should gain almost nothing from the common school education, but for the operation of other means, and especially that superior and severe course of study by which the scholars, under another system, laboriously improve the best faculties of their nature. By this system, or as it ought to be, this part of the system of education generally, they are taught not only to accumulate multitudes of facts, but to be accurate in the scrutiny of those which they admit into their stock of knowledge, to detect fallacies with comparative facility and to reach their conclusions, where any thing is concluded, in a certain legitimate way which gives them confidence in the opinions they hold. This is the sort of education that tells or perhaps I should say, ought to tell, in our popular and legislative assemblies, in all didactic literature, and in the editorial chair of the newspapers, whence so many measures of momentous import receive their ratification or rejection; and which, according to the head that indites them, may either do the world a world of good, or a world of evil. In short, it is by this additional and higher training that the rational and moral powers of our nature are cultivated which give the ability to judge of numberless questions of public importance, or which are supposed to be important, and also to recommend them to others when public duty requires it, by appropriate proofs and in fitting terms.

There is no difficulty in conceiving how the bodily strength and activity can be improved; look at the happy effects of constant and varied exercise, of habitual temperance in all things, of suitable clothing, purity of air and cleanliness. Look at the happy effects of gymnastics, the exercises of the *decoræ palaestrae*. How do these contribute to health, development of strength, personal activity, and gracefulness? If the human body were carefully trained from early youth till manhood, we should see fewer men of stooping and contracted chests, of shuffling gaits, and awkward carriage of head and hand, but stronger men, more active, more capable of endurance both physical and spiritual. Now if the body can be improved, far more can the mind be improved. Experience proves this. Unless it be educated more or less, it must grow up with all its natu-

ral blemishes thick about it, but its blemishes and defects will be far more important and numerous than those of the *outer* man, although not so visible. Ten times more numerous will be its awkwardnesses, its shuffling gaits, its lapsednesses and disproportionate powers and inconsistent movements; far more its proneness to stumble and stagger, and wander, groping about in its dim sphere of speculation; consider how much *more* the mind is susceptible of improvement than the body, how much more important are the human interests that are involved in its improvement; consider how constantly in every waking hour of life, there are questions of public and private moment to be discussed and decided upon, and you will surely agree with me, that it is no trifling business for a sensible people to keep back the youth of the land, the heirs of its promised greatness, from the best possible training that can improve the reasoning of their souls and the *persuasiveness* of their tongues. To cultivate the memory of words, together with writing and arithmetic, is nearly all that can be done in the days of boyhood. This is a valuable and indispensable part of education, but not enough. It is a great addition to it to cultivate the understanding, to communicate large quantities of information, and store the mind with knowledge of the physical sciences and with the axioms of moral truth, but this is not enough either. The imagination, the taste, the reasoning powers are not hereby improved, by any special *means*. But the improvement of the reasoning powers, is a main thing to be kept in view in every complete course of education, and that part of it which gives culture to these powers, and confers at the same time the ability to give clear and effective expression to their operations, cannot be rejected from the educational system of this country, without the just reproach either of wickedness or ignorance. The colleges, those properly so called, are the institutions intended to confer this higher training, and have generally been found to be the foci of intelligence and the chief causes of the agitation of thought upon subjects the most necessary, profitable and interesting, and at the times when it is most needed. It is clear that no government here can neglect these institutions without proclaiming by this very neglect, its

belief that the people generally, better be ignorant and injudicious, and liable to all kinds of erroneous impressions. No government here can do this without acting traitorously to the interests of the country, and if the inhabitants of this Province decline the humility of suffering their children and posterity to be led along stupidly and blindly in their career of life, they will not only be disposed to advocate and demand support for the universities or colleges, but will have a warrantable pride in lending their assistance in every way to their prosperity.

There is another consideration of some value. Colleges may exist, and be in some measure prosperous where the education of a people is partial in extent, and of a defective description. They may be prosperous when sustained by rich endowments and by the support of the wealthier class of society to which their advantages are accessible. This is true, but there is reason to believe nevertheless, that without the higher description of education conferred in them, even the common school system of education can never become so general and be made so useful as it ought. The article becomes in demand whenever it is conceived to be valuable, and is estimated in some degree proportioned to its intrinsic worth where people see the lustre with which it shines, and the wonders which it works, and the education in the common schools is then eagerly sought for, as an almost indispensable foundation for the seemly and admirable structure that may be raised upon it. The citizens of a free state, who have privileges to defend and public duties to perform, cannot hope to maintain either their national integrity or fulfil with honour the responsibilities which they bear, if the majority or a large proportion of them are incapable of being reasoned with; and hence, in the United States, for example, the necessity of qualifying every class first through the common schools, to read and thereby know what is said, and next through the superior training of their colleges, to enable some classes not only to judge of what is said, better, but to expound ably and clearly all that ought to be understood. Among a free people the common education cannot easily flourish without the stimulus of the colleges. The

colleges give value to the article, they generate the taste, they provoke the pride, they disclose the necessity for the highest training, and this pride and sense of necessity, exert a powerful and universal influence upon *every* part of the educational system. That the colleges supply the other schools of instruction with better qualified teachers than they could otherwise possibly have, is a consideration, however material, even of minor moment in this view of the case; it is the stimulating effect which they produce upon the system of education generally, upon every parent that has a child to be taught, upon every child that learns, and every master who instructs, in short upon all the common schools in the land—it is in their efficacy for the production of this additional demand, this national zeal and taste for school learning and the sense of its absolute necessity, that a large part of the inestimable usefulness of the colleges consists. The institution of colleges therefore, their number and efficiency ought to advance simultaneously with the extension and progress of the school system,—a plan, which in consequence of their mutual reaction, cannot fail to advance the improvement of the whole body politic.

I have dwelt longer upon this subject than it perhaps became me to do. Your own earnestness in the general cause of improvement held out a sort of temptation to me to try to scatter a little light upon the mutual dependance of those institutions which we possess for the advancement of knowledge and the enjoyment of its blessing. It was only a natural wish to omit no favourable opportunity of awakening thought upon an important subject in a place where thought is free, and where I was sure to be understood, for where else could I have better hope to be understood than among those whose very Association being such as it is, is a proof of their personal intelligence and devotion to the public good.

