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From the ...

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

FOR
NOVA SCOTIA.

CONDUCTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION.

Vol. 2.

JANUARY 1853.

No 4.

The present number of the Journal closes the second volume, and it is to be hoped that the third will be commenced under better auspices. The aim of the Journal and of all the other efforts of the present superintendent, has been to elevate and improve the elementary education of the province as far as possible under the present arrangements, and to prepare the way for such a revision of the whole system as should place it upon higher ground, and remove the difficulties that now oppose the improvement of the schools and the extension of their benefits.

In looking back upon the labors that have now extended over nearly three years, there appears nearly equal reason for thankfulness, hope, and regret.—Thankfulness for the removal of many threatening difficulties and dangers, and for the cheering signs of change for the better appearing everywhere on the surface of our provincial education.—Hope that the increasing agitation and interest on the subject will bring forth happy results, and that we are near on the threshold of a better system.—Regret that so many fields of usefulness have been of necessity neglected, and that over large districts education still presents the same dead and unfruitful aspect as in former years.

The earlier efforts of the Superintendent were much hampered by the impossibility of obtaining reliable information on the actual state of the schools, and by the difficulty of dealing in any general way with the variety of methods that prevailed in all parts of their management. These evils are now greatly mitigated, though the defective nature of the present mode of supporting education has prevented their entire removal; and a new officer, with an improved system to administer, will enter on a very different field from that which presented itself in 1850.

It is a remarkable and significant fact that so many changes for the better are visible within counties where Education was previously in an advanced condition. There every suggestion for improvement has been acted upon with activity, and energetically pushed out to useful results. On the other hand in many districts in which Education has all along been little better than a name, every attempt to improve and stimulate has been received with apathetic indifference. Some

of this untilled ground, however, has been broken up, and it is satisfactory to learn that one step in advance is sure to be the prelude to others. There is not a Teacher in the Province who has not since 1850 been again and again visited by items of information respecting the importance of his position and the means of making it more useful and honorable. Scarcely any intelligent parent remains ignorant of the nature of those systems which in sister Colonies and in the New England States have raised up the standard of universal popular instruction. There is now abroad a spirit of inquiry and anxious longing in reference to a new School Law such as this Province has not previously witnessed in the case of any previous Educational measure, and which cannot be gratified till we have in reality and wholly, what we long had nominally or in part, good Schools for the children of our whole population.

For nearly three years the present Superintendent has been laying down by the weight of a responsibility which he felt could not be fully met by any efforts he could put forth or any sacrifices that he could make. Henceforth he throws this burden from him. He will watch with interest the progress of a School Law through the Legislature, and will be ready to contribute anything that may be useful from the store of facts he has gathered, but the responsibility must now lie wholly on the people themselves and their representatives, who should in this as in other public matters, fully body forth the wishes and capacities of their constituents. Even if all the general measures he has proposed should be rejected, he will console himself for the fruitless result of much thought and labour, by the reflection that he has done what he could, and by that faith in the progress and destinies of his country which assures him that present failure can be but the postponement of results which must ultimately be attained.

Now, however, is the time for exertion on the part of the people. The great questions of Free Schools, trained Teachers and Trustee-representatives for the districts, are balanced on a point, and the weight of a straw may incline them to either side. Let then every parent who values the education of his children, every patriot who desires to

have his country held up her head among her neighbours, every one who has lamented the short-comings of our present Educational system, exert every effort by personal influence and by petition to stimulate and inform the Legislature. Let no time be lost; for though last year the subject lingered through the session as if no one cared for it, it is not unlikely that this year the battle of the Schools will be "short and sharp."

MISTAKES RESPECTING THE PROPOSITIONS MADE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION FOR A NEW SCHOOL LAW

Some persons appear to suppose that the Provincial Normal School proposed in the new School Law, is to be supported by assessment. This is entirely an error; the support of that institution is intended to be derived entirely from a Legislative grant. The county assessment is solely for Common and Grammar Schools within the county.

An idea seems also to prevail in some quarters that the choice of Teachers is to be taken from the people, or that no Teachers are to be employed except those trained at the Normal School. On the contrary the choice of the Teachers remains entirely with the Trustees elected by the people, subject of course to the Teacher receiving a license from the Commissioners; and the only advantage possessed by pupils of the Normal School is that their certificate from that institution will be as good as a license.

Another unfounded impression is that there is to be something compulsory in the raising of that part of the Teacher's salary which the district or section has to contribute. The only thing compulsory in this is that if a district neglects to hire a Teacher and establish a School it cannot draw its share of public aid; and of course as there will be two funds, the Provincial Aid and County tax, both will in that case be lost to the district. But the Trustees will be perfectly free in hiring a Teacher, and can offer him precisely the sum authorised by a meeting called for the purpose, which sum will be less than that at present necessary, in so much as the aid drawn through the Commissioners will be double what it is at present. When the Trustees have hired a licensed Teacher, the matter for what salary, they will draw from the Commissioners in proportion to the usual

ter of scholars sent to school, so that it will be the interest of the teacher to take all the scholars he can get, and no parent or other person can be obliged to pay any more to the support of the school except his share of what the meeting of the people of the Section may agree to raise either by subscription or assessment.

The intention is to abolish *frees* or *subscription per scholar*, and when a person has paid his share of the county tax, to give his children admission to the school without any other payment, except what he may choose to subscribe to aid in raising the teacher's salary, or what he and his neighbors may think proper to assess themselves.

The whole system is contrived for the following purposes: (1) to make it easy to get up a good School in each section; (2) to admit every child both to the common and grammar schools on the easiest possible terms, and to make it be to the advantage of individuals and districts to keep as many children at school as possible. (3) To bring the wealth of the Province to the aid of those who have children to educate and little means to do it.

Some persons have endeavoured to propagate the opinion that the Provincial aid will be withdrawn, and the counties taxed to an excessively large amount. On the contrary the Provincial aid must be continued in order to give any chance of success to the system, and no county can be taxed to a greater amount than that of the Provincial aid it actually receives, which is very much less than the sum which a portion of the parents in the several counties now raise for the support of the schools.

The means recommended for these purposes are not new and untried. They have been in operation for 200 years in New England; and in almost precisely the form proposed here, are now educating the people of the great and rapidly advancing Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada.

Free Schools and Attendance.

Misconceptions appear to prevail among well informed persons as to the true connection of Assessment and Free Schools with school attendance. It is often supposed that even with Free Schools supported by assessment it would be difficult to secure a full attendance of children, and Free Schools supported by assessment are thus confounded with what may be called pauper Free Schools and free scholarships, and with the support of schools by rate-bill or fee per head. Experience has fully proved that free scholar are irregular in attendance and that schools supported for free instruction, by charitable contribution or State funds, are poorly attended. The results of Free Schools supported by assessment on property are the very contrary. Experience in New England, Canada, and such districts in this Province as have assessed themselves, show, that when

all have to pay in proportion to means whether they send pupils or not, and when after paying all can send pupils without further charge, the largest possible attendance is always secured; simply because the stimuli of pecuniary loss on the one hand and cheap instruction on the other are constantly at work to ensure it. This should be steadily kept in view and constantly urged by the friends of Free Schools, as it is the principal fact on which the utility of the system rests.

Thoughts for Teachers.

It is now the middle of the winter half year of the schools. The older children are at school. Many of them perhaps may not enjoy another winter's schooling. Since the commencement of the half year the teacher and his pupils have had time to know and understand each other. It is a good time to think of the work and its probable results.

What progress has been made. We do not mean how much book has been got through, but how much has been learned since the beginning of the half-year? Is it such as to warrant a hope that the pupils will all have made large advances in the spring? If not now is a good time to enquire what better means can be employed. Is the progress in one department good, in another indifferent? Think of the means by which this weak point may be strengthened. Are some scholars far behind the rest, and have you almost ceased to try to keep them up? You now know their peculiar talents and dispositions better than at the beginning of the term. Think of what they most need, and make another trial with them.

Is all the work of the school thoroughly understood, or are there reasons to suspect that some individuals or classes are blundering on through grammar, arithmetic, or geography, without knowing much of what it means? If the latter, the evil should be remedied at once, if you would not stultify rather than instruct. Let vigorous efforts be made to interest and excite healthy mental activity, and make sure that everything taught is within the reach of the faculties of the learner, and that these faculties are being stretched out to attain it.

Perhaps some of the scholars have entered the school with habits of incorrect pronunciation, or of using ungrammatical or vulgar language, or with idle, mischievous, or immoral habits; and perhaps instead of being cured of these they have succeeded in teaching you to become accustomed to them, so that now you do not observe them at all, or are content to pass them over unnoticed. If anything of this kind exists in the school, remember that while uncorrected it is a corrupting influence, and make another effort to counteract it. Perhaps now that you have more influence over the mind of the pupil, you may be more successful than formerly.

Many similar subjects of reflection may

occur to teachers. By thinking and acting on them, much may be done to make the schools of this winter so useful that the scholars may in after life look back on them as the most useful time they have ever spent.

Slate Lessons.

In the examination of Mr. Jack's department in Pictou Academy, a short time since, we observed a lesson in geography of a character new to us. The pupils were called out with their slates, names of places were given out and they were requested to write an account of each, and afterwards to point it out on the Map. This must be an agreeable and interesting mode of teaching Geography, and excellent for a review of subjects previously studied. The use of the slate for class lessons is becoming much more general than formerly, and has the advantage of enabling much work to be done in a short time, and of testing the progress of the scholars in spelling, writing, composition, and rapidity and accuracy of thought.— Like all other good methods however, it may be carried too far, and it is liable to the disadvantages that pupils of good memories may copy from books which they scarcely understand, and that habits of careless writing may be acquired. Where such results are observed, the practice should be discontinued for a time, or employed only at intervals. As an occasional exercise however in spelling, grammar, composition and geography, practice in classes with the slate, accompanied with careful questioning, can scarcely be too strongly recommended.

Free Schools in Musquodoboit.

The people of this district have long been in advance of those of most others in the province on the subject of Free Schools and assessment. The following extract from a private letter, gives a most encouraging view of the results of assessment, even under the imperfect facilities afforded by the present law:

"Two of the Schools have adopted the principle of assessment, viz: Musquodoboit Harbor, and No. 10, the district in which I reside. They are both likely to work well. In the former, the average attendance has doubled; and in the latter, nearly trebled. What it would be I cannot say if the house was large enough, but the school is full and many have been refused admittance. The district pays the teacher £50 a year, and assesses for £50; the present average is 60."

Forms of Petition.

Teachers who have received these forms will understand that they are under no obligation to circulate them, unless they consider it expedient to do so. They are however requested to hand them to their trustees, or other persons likely to take an interest in the matter. In cases where signatures cannot be obtained, it is correct

unnecessary to send any reply to that effect. When the petitions are filled up, they may be handed to any of the members of the Assembly, or if more convenient, forwarded to the Superintendent.—Several petitions respectfully signed, have been already sent in, and there seems room to hope that they will be favorably received in most of the localities in which they are circulated.

An additional Error.

We have just learned from a private letter, that in some quarters an opinion prevails, that the system of supporting schools in part by county assessment equal to the provincial grant, will diminish the salaries of teachers, in consequence of the people of the districts raising no farther sum. This objection was fully answered in the Journal of Education for March last; and it was shown that in Upper Canada the people raise in the separate sections as much as the Provincial aid and county tax united, and that the arrangements in reference to the duties of the trustees, in the School Bill of last Session, were of such a nature, that each section must realise for the teacher at least half as much as the average sum which they now raise; and that with the County tax, this would leave the teacher's salaries as at present, only that they would be better paid. Taking into account however the advantages of hiring a first class teacher, the facilities afforded to trustees for raising funds and the cheap education offered to all, there can be little doubt that the salaries will be larger than at present. Thus if a teacher now receives £11 from the Province and £25 from the people of his section, he would under the new system receive £22 from the Province and county, and the parents and others deeply interested in the school would only have to raise £14 in order that the school should receive this sum of £22. Thus they would be relieved and the additional burden would fall on property generally throughout the county.

School Report for 1852.

The Report of the Superintendent for 1852 will consist in great part of a condensed review of his recommendations for the extension and improvement of our school system, with the facts and arguments on which they are based. Extracts will be given from the interesting reports with which he has been furnished by several of the Boards of Commissioners, and the statistical matter will, it is hoped, be more complete than in any previous year.

Schools in Halifax.

The Commissioners of Schools for the city of Halifax, on report and recommendation of their visiting Committee, resolved to call attention to the importance of improvement in Reading, by offering rewards for excellence in that department, to the children of the Schools which came under their supervision.

Notice to the Schools, was given accordingly, and the subject was given in charge of the visiting committee.

The requisite preliminaries were attended to,—and the examination was held on Saturday, September 25th.

About fifty lads, including the best readers in the schools represented, accompanied by their Teachers, assembled in the Royal Acadian School room.

Varied exercise resulted in awarding four general rewards, to the four best readers without distinction of school, and then a reward to the best reader in each school.

The Committee expressed much gratification at the number in attendance, the good order that prevailed, and the interest that was evinced.

The exercises were creditable to the young persons assembled,—but proved the desirableness of still greater attention being given to the principles and practice on which excellence is founded.

The occasion was one of pleasure and profit,—other anticipated examinations are expected to exhibit features of greater advance and more interest.—*Chronicle.*

We have as yet received the Reports of a few only of the Teachers' Associations. Of those received, that of the Durham Association, Pictou County, shows the greatest amount of energy and success; and may therefore be given here as a specimen of what such societies can effect. Notices of other Associations will appear in the Superintendent's Annual Report.

Report of Durham Teacher's Association.—The "Durham Teacher's Association" convened at Durham this 27th of Dec. 1852, beg leave respectfully to submit to the Superintendent of Education a summary report of its proceedings for the past year.

At the commencement of the present year, there were eleven schools and fourteen teachers connected with the Association; there are now fifteen schools and eighteen teachers in connection therewith.

Five meetings have been held during the winter, one lecture was delivered, "on the different kinds of composition and style of the sacred Books; their Prose, Prophecies, Parable and Types, and the mode of interpretation peculiar to each."

In order to interest, and if possible, to benefit the public, and at the same time accommodate the association, it was agreed to hold a public meeting in each school district immediately after the examination of the school.

The association commenced the visitation and examination of schools in May last; since which time 11 schools have been examined and 13 meetings held, at ten of which lectures have been delivered on the following subjects; 1st. On the means of acquiring knowledge; 2nd. On education, and the necessity and advantages of the improvement contemplated in the new school law; 3rd. On vegetable chemistry and the parallel between the functions of the plant and of the animal, 4th. On animal chemistry; 5th. On the advantages of the study of history; 6th. On the present state and future prospects of Nova Scotia; 7th. On the importance of geographical knowledge; 8th. On practical education;

9th. On the chemistry of vegetation; 10th. On the teacher's office,

The Association has not been able to visit the four remaining schools, in consequence of the badness of the roads &c.

From two years' experience, the Association can speak with some precision of the advantage of the association to teachers personally and to the public generally, and also of the state of public feeling on educational matters, and of the obstacles to improvement requiring to be removed,

ADVANTAGES TO THE TEACHER.—1. It has been the means of forming and maintaining a friendly acquaintance among the Teachers.

2. It has afforded the means of professional counsel and aid, and thereby united the Teachers as a band of brothers.

3. It has made the amount of professional knowledge which each individual possessed, common property; thus each obtained the advantage of the experience of all.

4. It has rendered teachers better qualified for the important duties of their office.

5. It has secured to them a somewhat more elevated position in the public estimation.

ADVANTAGES TO THE PUBLIC—1. It has afforded to the public, teachers who are better qualified than hitherto, and who can bring into the schools the best systems of teaching and modes of discipline which experience can suggest, under existing circumstances.

2. It has secured to the public better schools, by acting as a check upon superficial or careless teaching.

3. It has led to the improvement of school houses and secured to many districts, besides those connected with the Association, a better supply of maps and books, than they hitherto possessed, without giving them either the trouble or expense of purchasing them.

4. It has excited a deeper interest in the cause of Education, and diffused (it is hoped) some additional information on Educational matters.

THE MEANS EMPLOYED TO SECURE THESE ENDS.—1. By the teachers frequently meeting upon a footing of equality, and candidly discussing educational matters.

2. By all visiting each other's schools, pointing out errors and suggesting improvements.

3. By teachers addressing the scholars upon their privileges and duties, and the people upon the various subjects connected with the efficiency of schools and the introduction of improvements.

4. By having all the meetings open to the public and delivering lectures on literary and scientific subjects, and by eliciting discussions on the same.

REMARKS.—1. That the public take a deeper interest in the cause of Education

and in the prosperity of this Association, is evident from the fact, that, last year, although intimation was given of all the school examinations and the public invited to attend, yet not more than three or four heads of families attended in any of the districts, except two; whereas this year the attendance was large and respectable in almost every district.

2. Although none of the school-houses are yet just what they should be, nearly all have undergone some improvement since last year.

3. Last year an utter destitution of maps existed in nearly all the schools.—This desideratum has been partially removed. The Association by petition to the Board of School Commissioners, has secured to many others, as well as those connected with the association, Dawson's Map of Nova Scotia and Mitchell's Hemispheres and key (outline series). This supply, though by no means adequate to the necessity of the case, has been an inestimable boon to the teachers and scholars.

4. The association has received the most cordial reception in every school district.

OBSTACLES WHICH IMPEDE IMPROVEMENT.—1. The shortness of the teacher's continuance in the same district. This is owing in a great measure to the fact, that a large proportion of those engaged in teaching, are young men who are preparing themselves for some other calling; and who teach only during the vacations in the respective seminaries to which they belong. As an illustration of this may be mentioned the fact, that one school district, connected with the Association, has had four different teachers within the space of two years; two other districts have each had three different teachers within the same period.

2. The practice of boarding or circulating the teacher from house to house is productive of more evils than space will permit to enumerate. It prevails in nine of the fifteen districts connected with the Association.

3. The backwardness of Districts in furnishing the schools with suitable books, maps, &c., increases the labour of the teacher, and detracts from his usefulness, and is a positive loss to the people themselves.

4. The want of punctuality in pecuniary matters is an evil of no ordinary magnitude.

This being the annual meeting, the following persons were elected office bearers for the ensuing year: Mr. Andrew Graham, President; Mr. Charles Mosher Vice-President; Mr. Daniel McDonald, Secretary and Treasurer; Messrs. Hugh McKenzie, James McCabe and Alexander Grant, Committee.

By order of the Association,

DANIEL McDONALD, Secy.

The claims of Universal Education.

It is not uncommon for those who have never reflected upon the subject to consider it unjust, under any circumstances, to tax the property of one man to educate the children of another. Such are ever ready to inquire, Of what interest is it to me whether the children of others are educated or not? True, the whole subject has been thoroughly discussed, and its bearings clearly shown again and again; yet there are still found, in almost every community, some whose minds remain unenlightened. To such it is therefore necessary to present anew the considerations which have led thousands of others (who once thought as they now do,) to believe that a liberal provision for free education is the cheapest and best insurance which can be effected upon property, and the surest guarantee for the safety of property, reputation and life. Among these are the following:

The statistics of *crime* inform us that nine-tenths of all the criminals confined in jails and penitentiaries are deplorably ignorant, as well in regard to science and knowledge in general, as in respect to morals and religion. Had they been properly educated in childhood and youth, instead of preying upon its best interests, they might have contributed to the improvement of Society, or honoured its highest stations,

If proper inquiry be made, a large proportion of the paupers sustained at public expense, will be found to belong to the ignorant class, and to have been brought to their present condition by their want of the intelligence necessary to enable any one to manage business for himself. A good common school education would have saved them from becoming burdens upon society, and enabled them, beside maintaining themselves respectably, to bear their share of those burdens which are unavoidable by human foresight or sagacity.

Could the statistics of intemperance be fully ascertained, it would be found that the great majority of those who have ruined themselves and beggared their families by intemperate drinking, have, by the neglect of the culture of their minds, been rendered unable to enjoy any other than sensual pleasures. Does not every observing person know that those who frequent the grog-shop are not generally the intelligent.

It can be shown that more than one half the sickness in our country is the result of ignorance, of a want of that acquaintance with the laws of health which might easily be obtained, and that consequently more than one half of the expense occasioned by illness, and the loss of time labour, etc., attendant upon it, might be saved if the whole community were properly educated.

It is well known that a large proportion of the litigation in this country arises from the inability (or the indisposition occasioned by a want of facility in doing it properly) to keep a proper record of business transactions. Let every young person be made familiar with arithmetic and the elements of book-keeping, and taught to keep an accurate account of his dealings with others, and one half or two thirds of all the petty law suits which are constantly disturbing the peace of neighborhoods would never occur.

It can be demonstrated that those who are respectably educated can earn for themselves, or others, from twenty five to fifty or one hundred per cent, more than those without education: and that, too, in employments were physical labor and manual skill are mainly concerned; to say nothing of other occupations, where mental culture and a profound acquaintance with science are required. Every thinking man knows that it is far cheaper to hire a man who is intelligent, than to employ an ignorant, stupid one, who needs an overseer to prevent him from slighting his work or destroying the material on which he operates. It costs no more to board a good workman than a bad one.

It can be proved by the best of testimony that without that intelligence and virtue which is the aim of the friends of universal education to secure, so far as human agency is concerned, to every youth in the land, a Constitutional government and our free institutions can not be perpetuated.

It can be shown with equal clearness that without general intelligence, piety can not be expected to prevail; since, without it, religion is ever in danger of degenerating into superstition or fanaticism.

The facts establishing these conclusions may not be familiar to all, but they have been frequently presented in the reports of School officers and those in charge of alms houses, and other public institutions; and both the truths and the facts which sustain them are familiar, to all who have sought for such information, as household words.—*Ohio Journal of Education.*

Co-operate with the Teacher.

After having engaged your teacher or teachers, and provided a comfortable place for the school to assemble, and plenty of good dry wood prepared and placed under cover, you have yet more to do or else your school will not answer the end for which it was opened. No teacher, however well qualified, can sustain himself and keep a good school, without the sympathy and co-operation of the parents and friends of education within the district. Every parent and every friend of sound, popular education, should, therefore, do all in their power to render the school as efficient for good as it is possible to make it.

It is true the teacher, if skilful and experienced, will most probably be the leader of the little host under his command, but unless his hands be staid up by the prayers and labours of those for whom he works, he can accomplish but little—and that little will cost him far more anxiety, toil, and vexation of mind, than keeping a good school would do, under favorable circumstances—such as when parents faithfully co-operate with and emphatically sustain the teacher—one whom they have employed to help them in doing the most important work that parents can employ aid in doing, to wit, the right education and training of their children for an honorable place in the world that now is, and so to do this, as not to jeopard their happiness in that future state of being, for which this whole probation is but a preparation.

The first thing to be done in this work of co-operation is to see that your children are well furnished with suitable books, that is to say, such as are deemed the best to aid them in doing the work in which they are about to engage. Never scold nor complain, nor find fault when you are requested to procure such books as are really necessary, for every farmer and mechanic knows that without suitable implements or tools to work with, he cannot accomplish the labour that he otherwise might. So in school, precisely—good books aid in doing more and doing it better—therefore, do not urge the objection mis-named economy, as a reason for not providing for your children all necessary school-books—and the teacher is, or should be the best judge in this matter.—Ergo, if you would co-operate with the teacher provide such books as are needed, asking no further question for conscience's sake.

In the second place, if you would co-operate with your teacher you must see every morning of a school-day that your children are made ready and sent to school in good season—so as not to be tardy one minute—see also, that they take their books, pencils, &c., so that when they arrive at the school-room, the master's ears are not filled with I have forgotten this, or I have forgotten that, or something else—things which the child needs, and which the teacher cannot provide for the day. Children are forgetful and careless, and it is a part of the work of education to correct these habits by steady attention on the part of both parents and teachers.

No parents should permit their children to leave home until the mother or some one else sees that everything is in readiness.

In the third place, every parent should understand that it is expected of him that, in sending his children to school, he tacitly delegates to the teacher power to govern them while in school, unless he expressly reserves it, and requests the teacher to

send the children home to be corrected when disobedient. And when this power is delegated, it is reasonably supposed on the part of the teacher that he may use such means to restrain or constrain the children under his charge as are employed by parents. The teacher must establish his authority by bringing all to line in obedience to his will. Unless this be done, the first requisite of a good school will be wanting. When the teacher finds it necessary, as he sometimes will, to use force, in order to secure submission and obedience, the parent should not interfere, unless the teacher has abused the trust committed to him, or, in other words, the parent should no sooner meddle here, then he would with the neighbourhood government of parents over their children. If the child or children be abused, protect the injured, and see that justice is administered, and the weaker party protected from further injury of this kind. Do not by interfering, undermine the teacher's authority to govern his school, for where disorder prevails, the school cannot prosper, the children cannot grow in knowledge, wisdom, and virtue. Never take sides with your children against the teacher, but rather sustain him, and never listen to charges made against him until you ascertain from other sources that there is good cause for complaint.

Fourthly, makes it a rule to enquire of the children at the close of every day, What have you learned to-day? What lesson, if any, you have failed to recite? &c., &c.; thus showing the children that you feel a deep interest in knowing what they are doing, and thus manifest it by daily watching their progress.

These are some of the ways by which parents may greatly aid teachers in their arduous labours. Without some such aid and sympathy, there is scarcely a more forbidding vocation in which a man or woman of conscience can be engaged—with sympathy and faithful co-operation from parents, there is hardly a more pleasant employment than that of teaching the young.—*Rural New Yorker.*

Free Schools.

The Free School system provides the means for the education of all—all contributing to its support. It puts it in the power of destitute children to have a good common school education; widows, and guardians of children may, from self respect, or necessity, feed and clothe such destitute children; but they may be unwilling, or unable to purchase books, or pay a rate bill for them. The free School removes this obstacle. Let the sectional school be the sanctuary, open to all, where every child will receive a thorough common school education. Let the school-room, the teacher, the furniture, and the apparatus be common to all. Let no such children be entered, or educated as pau-

pers; but as it is their right and privilege. Let us have teachers of high attainments, and teaching of the best description. Let equal privileges be given to all, whether rich, or poor; and all will be induced to attend the school. Thus will these orphans, and destitute ones, have placed before them an open door, where they will be trained as others, to become useful members of society. The ratebill, however, either closes the door against them, or they must be degraded by the epithet, *pauper*. Under the ratebill system, these, the most destitute, and most to be sympathized with, among our race, would be deprived of this important privilege. Ye who are parents yourselves, and would wish to see your children wise and honorable; and your whole neighbourhood also, rising in intelligence, and moral character, fling open the school-house door to all. Let the whole be invited, and pressed to come without money, and without price. It is your great wisdom, to get the entire neighbourhood educated. That thereby peace, and industry, and prosperity may be the lot of all. And by this universal training, crime will be greatly prevented and much thereby gained.—[*Armour's Second Lecture.*]

The Teaching Power.

It is a most fallacious notion, that if a man be a good scholar he will necessarily make a good teacher. We continually find men who possess plenty of knowledge, without having the slightest power of communicating it to others, especially to classes of children. To make a good elementary schoolmaster demands, above all things, a natural aptitude for teaching. A man who has such an aptitude will make a far better teacher, though he should possess the knowledge that he requires to convey and no more, than another with great attainments, but who has not this special qualification for the work. It is thus that we sometimes hear it paradoxically but truly observed of a man, that "he teaches more than he knows." He may not himself impart a great amount of actual information, but he so thoroughly trains the minds of his pupils, that they soon become accustomed to independent action, which is the ultimate object of all education. That man, of course, will make the best teacher who combines technical knowledge with teaching power; but we think most experienced instructors will agree with us, that the latter is far more necessary than the former. We are also of opinion that the knowledge is far more easily acquired than the special qualification, however rough this may be despised. In fact, it appears to us that teaching power cannot be acquired at all. It may be much improved by training; but if a man does not possess it naturally, as a part of his original endowment, he will never possess it in any great degree.

Technical knowledge may be acquired more or less by all; superior teaching power is the gift of nature, and is only possessed by few.

The term *teaching power* affords in itself a confirmation of the fact, that the talent spoken of is a real natural faculty, peculiar to certain individuals. The Germans still more emphatically call it *Lehrgabe*, or *teaching gift*. We make these remarks, because the truth which we assert has not yet been sufficiently understood or acted upon in this country, and because this ignorance or disregard of it has been proved, and may still prove, an obstacle to the progress of popular education.—*English Journal of Education for September.*

Question of Religious Instruction, in connection with Public Instruction.

[From the Annual Report of the Chief Superintendent, Upper Canada, 1852.]

The question of religious instruction has been a topic of earnest and voluminous and discussion among statesmen and educationists in both Europe and America—has agitated more than one country on the continent of Europe—has hitherto deprived England of a national system of education, permitting to it nothing but a series of petty expedients in varying forms of government grants to certain religious denominations, while the great mass of the laboring population is unreached by a ray of intellectual light, and is “perishing for lack of knowledge” amidst the din of sectarian war about “religious education,” and under the very shadows of the cathedral and the chapel.

As some prominence has been given to this question during the year by individual writers, and some vague statements and notions put forth, I will offer a few remarks on it in concluding this report.

1. My first remark is, that the system of common school instruction should, like the legislature which has established, and the government that administers it, be non-sectarian and national. It should be considered in a provincial, rather than in a denominational point of view—in reference to its bearing upon the condition and interests of the country at large, and not upon those of particular religious persuasions as distinct from public interests, or upon the interests of one persuasion more than those of another. And thus may be observed the difference between a mere sectarian and a patriot—between one who considers the institutions and legislation and government of his country in a sectarian spirit, and another who regards them in a patriotic spirit. The one places his sect above his country, and supports or opposes every public law or measure of government, just as it may or may not promote the interests of his own sect irrespective of the public interests and in rivalry with those of other sects; the

other views the well being of his country as the great end to be proposed and pursued, and the sects as among the instrumentalities tributary to that end. Some indeed have gone to the extreme of viewing all religious persuasions as evils to be dreaded, and as far as possible proscribed, but an enlightened and patriotic spirit rather views them as holding and propagating in common the great principles of virtue and morality, which form the basis of the safety and happiness of society; and therefore, as agencies more or less promotive of its interests—their very rivalships tending to stimulate greater activity, and therefore, as a whole, more beneficial than injurious. I think a national system of public instruction should be in harmony with this national spirit.

2. I remark again, that a system of public instruction should be in harmony with the views and feelings of the great body of the people, especially of the better educated classes. I believe the number of people in Upper Canada who would theoretically or practically exclude Christianity in all its forms as an essential element in the education of the country, is exceedingly small, and that more than nine tenths of the people regard religious instruction as an essential and vital part of the education of their offspring.—On this, as well as on higher grounds, I lay it down as a fundamental principle that religious instruction must form a part of the education of the youth of our country, and that that religious instruction must be given by the several religious persuasions to their youth respectively. There would be no Christianity among us were it not for the religious persuasions, since they, collectively, constitute the Christianity of the country, and, separately, the several agencies by which Christian doctrines and worship and morals are maintained throughout the length and breadth of the land. If in the much that certain writers have said about and against “sectarian teaching,” and against “sectarian bias” in the education of youth, it is meant to prescribe or ignore the religious teaching of youth by sects or religious persuasions; then is it the theory, if not the design of such writers to preclude religious truth altogether from the minds of the youths of the land, and thus prepare the way for raising up a nation of infidels? But if on the other hand, it be insisted, as it has been by some, that as each religious persuasion is the proper religious instructor of its own youth, therefore each religious persuasion should have its own elementary schools, and thus denominational common schools should supersede our present public common schools, and the school fund be appropriated to the denominations instead of to the municipalities; I remark that this theory is equally fallacious with the former, and is fraught with consequences no less fatal to the interests of

universal education than is the former theory to the interests of all Christianity. The history of modern Europe generally, and of England in particular, teaches us that when the elementary schools were in the hands of the Church, and the State performed no other office in regard to schools than that of tax-assessor and tax gatherer to the Church, the mass of the people were deplorably ignorant, and, therefore deplorably enslaved. In Upper Canada, the establishment and support of denominational schools to meet the circumstances of each religious persuasion would not only cost the people more than five-fold what they have now to pay for school purposes, but would leave the youth of minor religious persuasions, and a large portion of the poorer youth of the country, without any means of education upon terms within the pecuniary resources of their parents, unless as paupers, or at the expense of their religious faith.

3. But the establishment of denominational common schools for the purpose of denominational religious instruction itself is inexpedient. The common schools are not boarding, but day schools. The children attending them reside with their own parents, and are within the charge of their own pastors; and therefore the oversight and duties of the parents and pastors of children attending the common schools are not in the least suspended or interfered with. The children attending such schools can be with the teacher only from 9 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon of five or six days in the week, while during the morning and night of each week-day and the whole of Sunday, they are with their parents or pastors; and the mornings, and evenings, and Sabbath of each week, are the very portions of time which convenience and usage and ecclesiastical laws prescribe for religious studies and instruction—portions of time during which pupils are not and cannot be with the teacher, but are and must be under the oversight of their parents or pastors. And the constitution or order of discipline of each religious persuasion enjoins upon its pastors and members to teach the summary of religious faith and practice required to be taught to the children of the members of each such persuasion.

To require, therefore, the teacher in any common day school to teach the catechism of any religious persuasion, is not only a work of supererogation, but a direct interference with the disciplinary order of each religious persuasion; and instead of providing by law for the extension of religious instruction and the promotion of Christian morality, it is providing by law for the neglect of pastoral and parental duty, by transferring to the common school teacher the duties which their church enjoins upon them, and thus sanctioning immoralities in pastors and parents,

—which must, in a high degree, be injurious to the interests of public morals no less than to the interests of children and of the common schools.

4. But, it may be asked, ought not religious instruction to be given in day schools, and ought not government to require this in every school? I answer, what may or ought to be done in regard to religious instruction, and what the government ought to require, are two different things. Who doubts that public worship should be attended and family duties performed? But does it therefore follow that government is to compel attendance upon the one, or the performance of the other? If our government were a despotism, and if there were no law or no liability, civil or religious, but the absolute will of the Sovereign, then government would, of course compel such religious and other instruction as it pleased,—as it is the case under despotisms in Europe. But as our government is a constitutional and a popular government, it is to compel no farther in matters of religious instruction than it is itself the expression of the mind of the country, and than it is organized by law to do. If with us, as in despotic countries, the people were nothing politically or civilly but slaves and machines, commanded and moved by the will of one man, and all the local school authorities were appointed by him, then the schools might be the religious teachers of his will; but with us the people in each municipality share as largely in the management of the schools, as they do in making the school law itself. They erect the school-houses; they employ the teachers; they provide the greater part of the means for the support of the schools; they are the parties immediately concerned—the parents and pastors of the children taught in the schools. Who then are to be the judges of the nature and extent of religious instruction to be given to the pupils in the schools—these parents and pastors, or the Executive Government, counselled and administered by means of heads of departments, who are changed from time to time at the pleasure of the popular mind, and who are not understood to be invested with any religious authority over the children of their constituents?

Extracts from Speeches at the Opening of the new Normal School building in Toronto U. C.

Chief Justice Robinson.—With everything to urge and to tempt them to the acquisition of knowledge, and everything to aid them in obtaining it, it will be impossible that the people of Canada can do otherwise than feel, that in their case emphatically “*poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction.*” It must take time, no doubt, before the prevailing influence of education can be

so fully felt. The dispersion through so large a country, of a sufficient number of qualified teachers by the instrumentality of this Normal School, cannot be instantaneous. Various circumstances concur to limit the number pressing forward in each year to avail themselves of its advantages—but the advance will still be rapid. It will be a quickly multiplying process.—every well-informed and well-trained teacher will impart what he has learned to many, who in their turn, though they will not be all teachers, will all contribute in some degree, by what they have acquired, to raise the general standard of intelligence—crimes and vices, no doubt there will be, while there are men born with impetuous passions and with weak understandings; but the number of offences must be diminished, for there will be fewer to countenance, and more to reprove them. But I have already detained you too long. We shall have, I hope, from the Rev. Superintendent, and from other gentlemen, some interesting details of the system and progress of the Normal and Model Schools, which have been founded by the Legislature on so liberal a scale, and are to be henceforth so admirably accommodated. And I am sure you will heartily and sincerely unite with me in the wish that they may become powerful instruments in the hands of Providence for advancing the welfare of this Province, and promoting the temporal and eternal happiness of its people. (Great applause.)

Hon. Mr. Hincks.—I feel that it is the duty of members of the Government to endeavor to be present upon occasions like this, and I only regret that since I have been so seldom able to avail myself of meetings of a similar character to the present. The responsibility of my want of preparation must rest with the Rev. Superintendent, but I have not the slightest doubt that he will be able to give a full explanation of the system which will be pursued here, and I am sure no one is more capable than he to give such an explanation. My own remarks will be brief indeed, for since my arrival in town it has been impossible for me to arrange my thoughts upon the subject. As my worthy friend the chairman has said, I have taken an interest in the various bills which have been introduced upon the subject of Education. I may say with regard to our Municipal and our assessment laws, and other great measures, I am one of those who think that we cannot arrive at perfection at first. It requires the practical experience of the people themselves in the working out these systems before we can reach anything like perfection. All the various measures introduced upon the subject of Common School Education, have been improvements upon the measures that have preceded them (Applause) and I certainly think that the friends of

the system of Education which has prevailed in this Province must feel proud upon the present occasion, for this is a great triumph to their principles this evening.”

“I can speak from my own experience as to the difficulties experienced in obtaining the co-operation of Parliament, to have the necessary funds provided for the purpose of erecting this building. I will say, however, that there never was an institution in which the people have more confidence that the funds were well applied than in this institution. There is but one feeling that prevades the minds of all those who have seen the manner in which this scheme has been worked out. In regard to the school itself, the site has been well chosen, the buildings have been erected in a most permanent manner, and without any thing like extravagance, and I have no doubt there will be no difficulty in obtaining the additional Parliamentary aid necessary to finish them.”

Dr. Ryerson.—“This institution stands forth as in some respects the personification, or the mainspring of that system of public instruction, which has extended its ramifications throughout every part of the Province, and he thought the results at which they had arrived would justify the delay which has occurred in the commencement of these buildings. Though he had given as much attention to this subject as ordinary persons, yet when this task was assigned him, he felt most entirely unprepared to incur the responsibility without further observations, further enquiries, and further investigations, and he was satisfied that but for these previous enquiries, they would never have arrived at their present position. The erection of this building alone is a sufficient justification of the course which has been pursued. Had he not visited the various Normal Schools both in Europe and America, he could not have formed a proper conception of the adjustment of the various parts, and the proper arrangements in a structure of this kind.

“Allusion has been made by the chairman to the establishment of a system of public instruction. The first bill was introduced by the chairman himself. Another bill was introduced two years afterwards by the Inspector General, and subsequently another prepared in 1846 was merely a perfection of that, and the present law is an improved conception of all the previous. He had been assisted in every way and to the utmost extent, that each successive government was able to assist him. He had seen it referred to in a paper of this city that the Normal School has not accomplished the object aimed at. That remark has been made in the absence of information, and in contradiction of fact. The Dr. here referred to the appendix of the last annual report, and to the great demand for teachers from the Normal School.

THE NEW SCHOOL-HOUSE.

Dedicatory Ode.

Father of Wisdom, bless the dome
The liberal hands have made
So beautiful, for those who seek
Instruction's fostering aid;
And grant them here such wealth to gain,
From learning's priceless lore,
As fits the mind e'en here below,
On angel wings to soar,

In groups they come; the earnest boy
Fast by his sister's side;
And toiling on, with wondering joy,
The nursery's youngest pride;
From hill and cot they freely come,
A glad and studious band
The hope of many a parent's heart
The jewels of our land

Father of Mercies, bless the band
That here, in youthful bloom,
Shall Lamb-like by their teachers stand,
When we are in our tomb;
And may they, through thy spirit's aid,
That holy knowledge prize
Which wins the soul a glorious home
When this frail body dies.

The Period of a Child's Education.

Various opinions prevail as to the most proper time to commence the education of children—some claiming that it should be begun earlier than is usual, while others maintain that it is already entered upon at too early an age. Experience, in discussing this subject, is met by experience, and observation by observation, and the question—When shall the education of the child commence?—remains unsettled, in the minds of many earnest inquirers.

It is generally admitted, that the earliest impressions are the most enduring—this being so, then it would seem to be a fair deduction—that as soon as the child is susceptible of comprehending impressions made upon the mind by words and by observation, should his systematic training and education be begun. The capacity of children like that of adults, differs, and so of necessity will the most suitable time to begin educating, be earlier or later according to the ability to understand and know.

The arts of reading and spelling are not generally easily acquired. Yet there are examples where boys and girls read and spell well at the age of four and five years; it has been remarked by a teacher of great observation, that if a child who has attained the age of six years, cannot read easy lessons fluently, the difficulty of doing so increases with increasing years. It is very disheartening to a child who has attained the age of seven or eight, to be still unable to read easy lessons with fluency. He feels keenly the odium that seems quietly to distil upon him who is denominated a bad reader—it is worse than being a bad speller. Early inferiority when one is fully conscious of it, is almost sure to prevent future progress, because it gets hatred for books and literary society.

Education then, as we have often urged, should be commenced in the home circle, and the mother should be the first teacher—for education of some sort is sure to be given and received by the child while at home, whether it be systematic or accidental—such as surrounding circumstances are calculated to impart. Every child should be taught to read the letters of the alphabet at home. This should not be required of a public teacher except under the most extraordinary circumstances. No one is so well adapted to do this as the mother, in our favored country—and not only should she teach the child its letters, but she should also teach it how to put them together so as to form words, and afterwards to put the words together so as to form sentences, which constitute the first steps in learning the art of reading. An old English teacher remarked many years since, that he always found those boys to be the best readers that had been taught by their mothers. Further, he remarked that boys thus instructed seldom had vulgar tones, but generally have read with unusual ease and elegance. This teacher says:

"Let then, the child be taught to read as soon as the infant faculties begin to exhibit symptoms of improvable expansion; his attention active in the extreme, must fix on a variety of objects, though by no means the only one. Let no long confinement, and no severity of reprimand or correction attend the lesson. A little will be learned at the earliest age, and with the easiest discipline. That little will infallibly lead to further improvement and the boy will soon, and with little pains to himself, or others, learn to read; an acquisition considered in its difficulty and in its consequences, truly great.

He, on the other hand, who is retarded by the theoretical wisdom of his friends, till he is seven or eight years of age, has this burdensome task to begin, when habits of idleness have been contracted, and when he ought to be laying the foundation of classical knowledge.—*Rur N. Y.*

The Classification, Recitations, and Government of Schools.

Many teachers are now entering their schools for the winter term, and at this season a few suggestions will be appropriate, relative to the general arrangements of schools, and plans for instruction.

The first object of the teacher, on commencing a school term, should be to classify the pupils. The usual time for school instruction is about six hours daily, hence, generally, not more than *three hundred minutes* can be spent in actual instruction, after deducting time for recess, changes of classes, &c. Now, if a school contains thirty pupils (which is a less number than most schools average), it leaves about *ten minutes* of instruction for each pupil, if not classified.

By arranging these thirty pupils into

ten classes, each class might receive *thirty minutes*; and as many of the pupils would be in four or five classes, as spelling, reading, geography, arithmetic, and grammar, they would receive from two to two and a half hours' instruction each day. Here, then, is a great gain of time to the scholars from classification. Besides, the older pupils would receive much benefit by contact with the minds of other pupils in the class, which would otherwise be lost to them.

Intimately connected with classification are recitations. For these there should be regular and stated times, and the scholars should understand that when the time came for any recitation it must take place, and that no excuse of the pupil could delay it. It would be well to adopt some plan by which all the lessons may be learned by each pupil in the class.

In recitations teachers should endeavour by all possible means to draw out the mind of the scholars, to teach them how to learn, and how to use what they learn. In all school instruction it is the teacher's duty to develop those faculties and teach those principles which will make useful citizens and good neighbours. Probably the future conduct and usefulness of many may be determined for life by the influences of the very term of school which they are now attending. How important, then, that the influence of that school be such as shall conduct to paths of usefulness.

The government of a school is of vital importance to its usefulness. Let it then receive much careful attention. Have but few rules, and those of a simple and universal character. Do RIGHT, is the all-important one, and it will apply to all the multitudinous cases of discipline which may come before the teacher. Impress the importance of a just and strict observance of this rule upon the minds of every pupil. Make them feel they have a personal interest in all that relates to good conduct, order and improvement in the whole school.

By remarks upon general conduct, and by applying admitted principles of right and wrong to individual action, create a public sentiment in your school, which will frown upon everything bad, and approve of what is right in the conduct of the pupils. This accomplished, you will have a moral governor to regulate your school, whose influence will be tenfold more potent than any physical government which could be devised.—*The Student.*

NOTICE.**TO CLERKS OF COMMISSIONERS.**

These clerks who have not yet forwarded to the Superintendent acknowledgements of the receipt of their supplies of School and Library books for 1852, are requested to do so as soon as possible. If not received up to the present date, information to that effect is requested. Invoices have been forwarded by mail to the clerks of all the districts.

January 20th, 1853. J. W. DAWSON.