

For the REVIEW.]

New Brunswick Schools of the Olden Time.

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(Continued.)

THE MADRAS SCHOOL SYSTEM.

We come now to the consideration of an extremely interesting feature in the early history of New Brunswick schools, namely the rise and decline of the Madras system of education. With its introduction the name of Lt. Governor Geo. Stracey Smyth* is inseparably connected. He was from the first its warm friend and devoted patron.

Before speaking of the Madras schools as established in this Province, a short account of their origin may be of interest. The system has been variously termed the Madras, the National, the Bell or the Lancaster system, and at one time much controversy prevailed as to the merits of the claims of its rival founders. The originator of the system however, appears to have been Dr. Andrew Bell, who was born at the town of St. Andrews, Scotland, in the year 1753. He graduated at the famous university of his native town, afterwards spending several years in America. Returning home he was ordained to the ministry of the Church of England, and went out to India where he was stationed in 1789 as chaplain of the garrison at Fort St. George, and minister of St. Mary's Church in the City of Madras. In connection with the duties incident to his position, he particularly interested himself in the education of the orphan children of the Military Asylum. By reason of a scarcity of teachers he was obliged to introduce the system of mutual tuition among the scholars. He found the plan to answer so well that he became convinced of its universal applicability and after his return to England, elaborated his ideas on the sub-

* In the south transept of the Cathedral at Fredericton is a marble tablet erected to the memory of Major General Smyth. A fine medallion at the top displays the strong features of the rugged old soldier and the sword in the back ground recalls memories of the field of Waterloo. The inscription below tells "This tablet was erected by the express desire of an orphan daughter and son to testify their grateful remembrance, and to record the virtues of their lamented father, Major Gen. George Stracey Smyth; who died on the 27th day of March, 1825, in the 56th year of his age, and whose remains are interred in the vault beneath." After referring to other public services the inscription goes on to record the efforts of the late Lt. Governor in "zealously promoting and liberally encouraging every institution that could benefit the Province and improve the rising generation. Nor did he slight the captive and oppressed Africans, evincing his humane attention to their welfare by establishing and upholding schools for their instruction and civilization."

In an eloquent sermon preached by the Rev. James Somerville, M. A., Principal of the College, at Fredericton, on the occasion of the death of Major General Symth, occurs the following passage, "The unwearied exertions which he made for the education of the youth of the country, particularly those of the lower orders, are known through the whole extent of this Province. Through his means, aided by the bounty of the Legislature, it is now the power of the poorest and meanest in the country to give their offspring a religious and a moral education."

ject in a small pamphlet which he published in 1797. The following year, Mr. Lancaster opened a school in London on the same lines and met with marked success.

Joseph Lancaster, who divides with Dr. Andrew Bell the honor of establishing the Madras or National system, was the son of an English soldier who served in the Revolutionary war. He was born in Southwark, London, in 1778. In the year 1801, he established a large school in Borough Road, London. Inability to hire assistants led him to employ older scholars to teach the younger. The school, comprising a thousand boys, was divided into small classes, each under the care of a monitor. A group of these classes was superintended by a head monitor, and the quasi-military system of discipline and gradation of ranks caused the whole establishment to assume an orderly, animated and very striking appearance.

Lancaster admitted that in the organization of his school, he was indebted in the first instance to Bell's pamphlet for the idea, but contended that the details subsequently worked out were his own. In a very interesting pamphlet which he published in 1803, he describes the manner in which his staff of monitors taught reading, writing and arithmetic by a method of drill and simultaneous exercise. Lancaster had the personal advantages of an especial aptitude for teaching and winning the confidence of children; but there were attending disadvantages which served in some measure as an offset. He was poor, and in consequence the equipment of his school was of the most meagre kind. The younger children used large flat desks covered with a thin layer of sand for exercise in writing. Sheets from a spelling book were pasted on boards, placed before a class and pointed to till every word was recognized and spelled. Passages from the Bible were printed on large sheets and sufficed for reading and Scripture lessons.

Lancaster devised an elaborate system of punishments, including the use of shackles, tying of bad boys to a pillar, etc.: in some cases offenders were slung up to the roof. He also employed divers marks of disgrace in the manner suggested by mediæval pictures of Saint Sebastian, together with emphatic appeals to the boys' sense of shame. For their encouragement he instituted degrees of rank, badges, offices and order of merit. Whilst these things undoubtedly made the school attractive to lads of ambition, it is questionable whether they did not tend to discourage the backward, as well as to render the clever boys vain and self-conscious.

It was an essential part of Lancaster's plan to enlist the most promising of his scholars as monitors or teachers, and prepare them to become school-