

day schools had taught them. Leaving religion out of the question, this ignorance was evidence of a national want.

Prof. Hicks thought religion should be taught and that largely.

Rev. Mr. Duff was amazed at the idea that this question should breed disquietude. In reply to Prof. Robins he thought that scripture was well taught in Sunday-schools, where the Professor might ask almost any scripture question without failing to get an answer. The Bible was the secret of Britain's greatness. Religion was not taught in our district schools; as, what one would think the vital principles of Christianity, another would conscientiously oppose. A teacher who was religious would however, teach in a religious spirit. Religious tests had all been abolished in the Scotch Universities, but, happily, those institutions had lost nothing in the piety of their instructors. The state had nothing to do with religion.

The Hon. L. S. Huntington thought the question very difficult. We must look at the facts as they are. The question can only be applied to the Protestant population. Even in this the difficulty was great. All Christians agreed on some points, but how very few—and how was the teacher who should go the first step beyond simple reading of the Bible, to answer the questions of the inquiring mind? He had written and suffered much for the principle of non-sectarian education but it could not yet be generally carried out. Whatever was done, the question of education should be thrown much more directly on the shoulders of the people.

Rev. Mr. Fessenden, of Bolton, was in favor of religious education. Sundays were, to a great extent, devoted to purely devotional training. There were union Sunday-schools and union question-books. This showed we could combine. If we could carry this out we might do much to heal the breaches of the Churches. Rev. Mr. Constable said there was a wide difference between elementary schools and higher seminaries. Those at the common school were under the parental eye, but in the higher schools they were separated from their homes.

Rev. Mr. Montgomery, of Philipsburgh, recommended teaching the scriptures in every way, except doctrinally, where the school commissioners found it agreeable, and that, left in this way, the question would regulate itself.

J. G. Robertson, M. P., spoke affirmatively, after which the Chairman summed up with much ability. No one would say religious instruction should be banished, but all would agree that no standard could be established for all. All would teach religion as largely as they could but that would go no further than the divided opinions of communities would allow. It would be equally wrong to require an irreligious teacher to teach religion, and to deny the right to one who felt constrained to do so.

The usual votes of thanks were then passed; the final minutes were read, and the meeting closed with the doxology and benediction.

School Picnic—Shefford.

We take the following from the "Waterloo Advertiser" of the 2nd September.

The Fourth annual Picnic of the Common Schools of the Township of Shefford, was held here on Saturday last. Notwithstanding the unfavorable appearance of the weather, there was a large attendance of pupils as well as spectators. The proceedings opened in the grove by some introductory remarks by the Rev. Messrs. Lindsay and Phaneuf, and J. B. Lay, Esq. On account of the rain, the Picnic and examination were transferred to the new school house—the first being the disposal of dinner,—the examiners being provided for by Mr. O. Lincoln the indefatigable manager of the Village schools. After dinner, Dr. Erskine addressed the pupils dwelling upon the advantages of education and pointing out some who have risen to eminence both here and in the U. S. who received their education in the Common Schools of the Townships. Mr. J. Dougal of the *Witness* followed congratulating the School Commissioners of Shefford for their zeal in the cause of education in introducing gatherings of the kind before him as part of their system. He had before him men, women and children of different nationalities, and creeds as well as ministers of different denominations. Such a sight he never had the pleasure of witnessing before and he had no doubt that the example set by the people of Shefford would have a good effect on the surrounding country. This gathering showed that before all they loved their country and he hoped that their example would be followed throughout the Dominion. Prof. Duff followed in an able and eloquent speech encouraging parents, teachers and pupils in the work of education. The examination was then proceeded with, concluding with the distribution of prizes at about 5 P. M.

The prizes awarded were for English Reading, Spelling and Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, Writing, French Reading, Spelling and Grammar; History and Geography, and Punctuality.

After the distribution of the prizes, the Chairman called upon the Hon. L. S. Huntington to address the pupils.

Mr. Huntington, who was greeted with applause, addressed some words of advice and encouragement to the children and their teachers; and proceeded to call attention to the peculiar character of the meeting that day. He doubted if a similar gathering had ever occurred outside the good old Township of Shefford. It pointed a moral which ought to be proclaimed throughout the broad Dominion. The Township of Shefford lived up to the letter of the law. She had Commissioners to represent her Protestant majority; and yet a large body of her citizens were represented by Dissident Trustees. But they took no account of sects or denominations in their schools. The Chairman of the Protestant Board was his friend, Mr. Mahedy, an earnest and consistent member of the Roman Catholic Church. He had been for many years a popular officer, indefatigable in the discharge of his onerous duties—and having held office before the French inhabitants dissented—nominally on account of faith to meet the law, but really because their language was different—Mr. Mahedy had been, year after year, elected by his Protestant constituents—and the Roman Catholics who spoke English had patronized the schools. Nobody thought of asking any questions about religion as a qualification for the choice, and nobody's religion had been interfered with; and every body felt that public gratitude was due to the worthy chairman for the intelligent interest he had manifested in the management of our Common Schools. Who did they think was the efficient Secretary-Treasurer of the Protestant Board? Why, that excellent Notary and staunch French Canadian Roman Catholic, Thomas Brassard, Esquire! Nobody had suffered; good Protestants were as plenty as ever! The test that the people applied to their choice was good citizenship; and all races and creeds within their confidence. But the Protestants were not alone in this noble rebuke which they had thus quietly and unconsciously administered to religious bigotry and intolerance. Their Roman Catholic fellow citizens were equally disposed towards toleration and good fellowship. There was a gathering of all the schools in the Municipality—French and English—Protestant and Catholic—under one roof—the large and commodious rooms of the French Catholic Model School. Parents of all religions were there with their children, encouraging them while they emulated to love and respect each other, no divided citizenship was cultivated there; nor were the seeds of bitterness and estrangement sown there. The clergy of all creeds—the Catholics and Protestants were there, like neighbors and christians, to assist and cheer on the good work—to show how pleasant it was for brethren to dwell together in unity. They were laboring together, on common ground, leaving to other fields the work in which duty and opinion divided them. And the children within those walls, under an influence so benignant and harmonious, would grow up to respect and tolerate and love each other. Here was the practical christian solution of the great question which all over the world was puzzling priests and statesmen. This was the way to educate the children of our mixed populations. While others were building high partition walls and cultivating divisions and estrangements among the youth of the land—they were affording the example of a wise and noble people, yielding none of their peculiar views, but training their children to occupy the common ground of citizenship in harmony and good will. The spectacle was rare but it was magnificent. He wished the whole country could see it as he saw it that day. He did not doubt but other communities, if the way were made plain to them, would follow the worthy example; and he ventured to hope the noble spirit they were displaying would permeate our old educational system, and that an era of peace and brotherhood, among all our religious communions, would, for all time, reign over the land.

Books and Current Exchanges Received.

- The National Normal*, for October, 1869.
- Hearth and Home*, for November 27, 1869.
- Journal of Education*, N. S., for October, 1869.
- The Minnesota Teacher and Journal of Education*, for November, 1869.
- The Michigan Teacher*, a Monthly Journal devoted to Educational Intelligence, to the Practical Work of the School-room, and to the Philosophy of Education, for October, 1869.
- The Pennsylvania School Journal*, Organ of the State Teachers' Association, and of the Department of Common Schools, for November, 1869.
- Ohio Educational Monthly*, a Western School Journal, for November, 1869.
- New Dominion Monthly*, for December, 1869.
- The Illinois Teacher*, Devoted to Education, Science, and Free Schools for October, 1869.
- The Massachusetts Teacher*, a Journal of School and Home Education, for November, 1869.