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## GEORGE PAXTON YOUNG, M.A.

Professor Young, besides being himself a teacher of great eminence, holds a high position amongst those who have made our system of education in Ontario what it is—an object of pride to ourselves and a model for other countries to imitate. He was born at Berwick-on-Tweed in 1818, and received his early training in his native place. His education was continued in the Edinburgh High School, and completed, in so far as scholastic instruction is concerned, in Edinburgh University, at which he took the degree of Master of Arts without having given any striking evidence of the possession of that keen intellectual power which has raised him to the front rank of living metaphysicians. During his Edinburgh career he enjoyed the questionable benefit of Professor John Wilson's lectures on Moral Philosophy, and just missed the unquestionable advantage of attending those of Sir William Hamilton on Logic and Mental Philosophy. It is quite possible that the *penchant* he has since manifested for the study of Philosophy might have been developed at an earlier period had Sir William's appointment taken place a few years before it did, but it may well be doubted whether, after all, his position in the philosophical world would have been as thoroughly independent as it is had it been his lot to come in his youth under the influence of one whose impress on the mental character of his disciples has proved so enduring. After leaving the University Mr. Young spent some time as a teacher of Mathematics, a branch of study of which he was very fond, and in which he subsequently became singularly proficient. After the disruption in the Established Church of Scotland in 1843, he entered the ministry of the Free Church, having attended during his theological course the instructive and highly suggestive lectures of Dr. Chalmers. After a brief pastorate in the Martyrs' Church, Paisley, he came to Canada in 1848, and settled in Hamilton, Ontario, as the pastor of Knox Church. His acquaintance with philosophical literature and his devotion to that branch of study led to his appointment to one of the chairs of Knox College, Toronto, the subjects assigned to him as a Professor being Mental and Moral Philosophy and Logic, besides one or two departments of Theology. This position he resigned after a few years, and shortly afterwards accepted that of Inspector of Grammar Schools, which he held for

four years and a half with great benefit to the cause of middle-class education and credit to himself. His reports on the condition of the Grammar Schools of the Province threw a flood of light on their internal condition and management, and made the wrong tendency of the system so apparent that the necessity for remedial legislation was at once admitted. To attempt to account for the existence of the evil thus described would be to give the history of the Provincial Grammar Schools with more of detail than our space will allow. Suffice it to say, that it was due mainly to the want of adequate inspection during the earlier years of their existence, and to unsuitable methods of distributing the Government grant during almost the whole period of distribution. The Grammar School system in this Province, singular to say, came into

existence ten years at least before any attempt was made to establish a system of Common Schools. For nearly half a century the schools were allowed to spring up and develop with little State aid and equally little interference in the shape of inspection or supervisory control. In 1858 they became the recipients of Government aid, which was distributed on a plan admirably calculated to increase the number of the schools, but little calculated to enhance their efficiency. In 1865 a change was effected in the mode of distribution, the principal effect of which was to put an additional premium on the study of Latin to at least a nominal extent. The schools became in consequence crowded with pupils who were acquiring neither a good classical nor a good English education. The defects of the training imparted under this system were laid bare in Professor Young's reports of 1866 and 1867, which contained also many valuable suggestions as

to the best method of remedying them. These were subsequently to a great extent embodied in the School Acts of 1871, 1874 and 1877, and in the Regulations drawn up between the two latter years by the Central Committee, which was at that time composed of Professor Young and the High School Inspectors. The principle of "payment by results," which was prominently put forward in the reports above mentioned, was fully recognized in the mode of distributing the grant which came into operation in 1876 in connection with the Intermediate High School Examination. Whatever defects may in the light of experience have been discerned in this scheme, they are in all probability capable of being successfully dealt with, but even at this stage it is safe to say that with all its defects it is by far the most complete and effective system



(From a photograph by Hunter & Co.)