

half-pay as a British officer for the unprecedented period of seventy years. Dr. Ryerson was the fourth son of Colonel Ryerson, and was named after two British officers who were intimate friends of his father. His youth was passed in his native country; and at its Grammar School he received the rudiments of his early education. With Mr. Law, the Master of the Gore District Grammar School at Hamilton, (at the head of Lake Ontario) he studied his classics. As the Grammar Schools were the only public schools at that time in existence in the country (and they had just then been established) they were in the rural counties very elementary in their character, and did not profess to teach more than the mere rudiments of an English education. The young and ardent student, as Doctor Ryerson then was, (and has so continued during his life time) not content with the superficial knowledge of grammar which he obtained at school, prevailed upon his father to allow him to go home for six months to attend a grammar class which had been established in the county town on that specific subject.

Doctor Ryerson's habits of study at this time were characteristic of his practice in after life. When at school he had entirely mastered the theory and principles of English Grammar, and had learned all the rules and explanations, and in fact nearly the whole book by rote, yet having no one to explain the theory or to apply the principles of the text-book, flexibility and power of the language. He also at the time prepared and wrote out a digest of Murray's English Grammar, in two volumes, Kame's Elements of Criticism, and Blair's Rhetoric and a Latin Grammar. He was an indefatigable student; and so thoroughly did he ground himself in these and kindred subjects thus early in life and under most adverse circumstances, that in his subsequently active career as a writer and controversialist he ever evinced a power and readiness with his tongue and pen which has often astonished those who were unacquainted with the laborious thoroughness of his previous preparation.

Doctor Ryerson's experience as a teacher did not extend beyond the Grammar School of his native county. At the age of sixteen he was appointed usher, or assistant teacher, to his eldest brother George, (who had received his training at Union College, Schenectady) and who had succeeded his brother-in-law, Mr. Mitchell, on his appointment by the Governor to the judgeship of the county. During the absence of his brother George, the charge of the school devolved upon the youthful usher. Having thus the management of boys and girls who were his companions, and many of them several years his senior, his firmness, tact, and decision were frequently put to the test, but he acquitted himself well, and the experience thus gained was afterwards turned to higher account.

On his twenty-second birthday (24th March, 1825) Dr. Ryerson was ordained deacon in the M. E. Church by Bishop Hedding. His diary during the first year of his ministerial life shows how devotedly he applied himself to the culture of his mind, although his valise often contained the chief part of his library, and the back of his horse frequently afforded him the only place of study. His first literary effort was put forth in 1826—being the review of Ven. Archdeacon Strachan's sermon on the death of Bishop Mountain, and it at once established his reputation as an able controversialist. In 1828 he again wrote a series of letters criticising Dr. Strachan's famous chart of the various religious bodies. Both series were republished in pamphlet form. In 1829, the *Christian Guardian* was established and he was appointed its joint editor. In 1833 he went to England, and again in 1835. In the latter year he went to obtain a Royal Charter and subscriptions for "U. C. Academy," now Victoria College, Cobourg. He also induced the Home Government to recommend the Upper Canada Legislature to grant \$16,000 to the Academy, which it did against the wishes of Sir F. B. Head, the Governor.

In 1840 an Act of Incorporation was obtained from the then recently united Canadian Legislature, erecting Upper Canada Academy into a University under the name and style of the "University of Victoria College at Cobourg." Doctor Ryerson (who then received the title of D.D. from the Wesleyan University, Middleton,) was unanimously chosen its first President. In 1844, Doctor Ryerson was appointed Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, by His Excellency the Governor General, with an understanding that he would re-lay the entire foundation of the system, and establish it on a wider and more enduring basis. The instructions which he received on his formal appointment were contained in the following words: "His Excellency has no doubt that you will lose no time in devoting yourself to devising such measures as may be necessary to provide proper school books;

to establish the most efficient system of instruction; to elevate the character of both teacher and schools; and to encourage every plan and effort to educate and improve the youthful mind of the country; and His Excellency feels assured that your endeavours in matters so important to Western Canada will be alike satisfactory to the public and creditable to yourself." In 1846, he submitted an elaborate report on his projected system of public schools for Upper Canada. In the first part he stated and illustrated its general principles, the concluding fifty pages are devoted to the subject of the machinery of the system under the heads of "Kinds of Schools," "Text-Books," "Control and Inspection," and "Individual Efforts."

Notwithstanding the zeal and ability with which Doctor Ryerson had collected and arranged his facts, analyzed the various systems of education in Europe, (chiefly in Germany) and America, and fortified himself with the opinions of all the most eminent educationists in those countries, yet his projected system for this province was fiercely assailed, and was vehemently denounced as embodying in it the very essence of "Prussian despotism." Still with indomitable courage he persevered in his plans and at length succeeded in 1846 in inducing the legislature to pass a School Act, which he had drafted. In 1849 the Provincial administration favourable to Doctor Ryerson's views went out of office, and one unfavorable to him came in. The Hon. Malcolm Cameron, a hostile member of the cabinet, having concocted a singularly crude and cumbersome school bill, aimed to oust Doctor Ryerson from office, it was without examination or discussion passed into a law. Doctor Ryerson at once called the attention of the government (at the head of which was the late lamented Lord Elgin) to the impracticable and unchristian character of the bill, as it had formally excluded the Bible from the schools. The late Honorable Robert Baldwin, C.B., Attorney General (the Nestor of Canadian politicians, and a truly Christian man) was so convinced of the justness of Doctor Ryerson's views and remonstrance, that he took the unusual course of advising His Excellency to suspend the operation of the new act until Doctor Ryerson could prepare a draft of bill on the basis of the repealed law, embodying in it, additional to the old bill, the result of his own experience of the working of the system up to that time. The result was that a law passed in 1850 admirably adapted to the excellent municipal system of Canada, so popular in its character and comprehensive in its provisions and details, that it is still (in a consolidated form) the statute under which the Public Schools of Ontario are maintained.

There was one question, the agitation of which had for many years caused a good deal of disturbance to the school system, but which was set at rest in 1863. This question was the right of Roman Catholics to establish schools of their own, separate from the Public Schools, but nevertheless aided from the parliamentary grant for education, according to the average attendance of pupils at the schools. The principle of these schools was fully conceded in the first Canadian School Bill which was passed in 1841, the year of the legislative union of the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. It was subsequently modified in 1843, 1847, and 1850, and (after much bitter agitation) in 1853, 1855, and finally in 1863. In the resolutions for the confederation of the British North American provinces, agreed to at Quebec by representatives from all of these provinces, and adopted by the Canadian Legislature in 1865, the right of the Roman Catholics in regard to these Separate Schools were confirmed as follows: "The local legislature of each province shall have the power to make laws respecting education; saving the rights and privileges which the Protestant or Catholic minority in both Canadas may possess as to their denominational schools, at the time when the confederated union goes into operation."

In 1853, after a good deal of delay and discussion, Doctor Ryerson prevailed upon the legislature to revise the Grammar School Law of the province, which had remained in the statute book accomplishing comparatively little good since 1807-1839. From then (in 1853) the principle of local taxation for these schools, as applied to the public schools, was not adopted by the legislature in regard to the Grammar Schools. For twelve years longer these schools continued to languish. In 1865 the Grammar School Law was still further improved, and a higher standard of education adopted; but as yet the principle of local taxation for the support of these schools had been but partially concurred in by the legislature, and embodied in the amended Act. It provided, however, that a sum equal to one-half of the legislative grant (independent of school fees) should, as a condition of receiving the grant, be