

## A VISIT TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF OSWEGO, N. Y.

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A desire to gather information on the most approved methods of instruction, led me, in September last, to spend a few days in visiting the schools of the city of Oswego. I chose this from other places, as I have a relative among its teachers, and especially as its Normal and Training School is regarded to be one of the most efficient in the State. The Principal of this institution is Prof. Sheldon, author of several excellent text books for teachers and pupils, and one of the earliest and ablest promoters of Object Teaching. The school over which he presides is accommodated in a very pleasant, convenient building, beautifully situated in the western part of the city. The grounds are quite small but tasteful, and very neatly kept. About three hundred students were in attendance at the Normal Department, which occupies the second story of the building. Fully five-sixths of the students are ladies. There are three courses of instruction offered. Elementary English, Advanced English, and Classical, on completion of which, and six months' successful practice in the Training School, Diplomas are awarded, which are available throughout the State. The method of instruction appears to be very thorough, so that ordinary students require from two to three years to proceed to graduation.

The Training School, which occupies the first story of the building, is composed of children from the city, taught by candidates for diplomas that have completed their course in the Normal, and that are required to practice for six months continuously under the supervision of critics who make weekly reports to the Principal. These reports are communicated to the candidates, who, in addition to this knowledge of their weak points, receive suggestions

from their superiors as to the best means of correcting their mistakes. How much preferable to the system adopted in our Toronto Normal and Model Schools, is this thorough system of training teachers! The long and close apprenticeship cannot fail to secure a very high degree of skill in a most difficult profession, unless indeed, it may result in proving the candidates unsuited to the teacher's vocation—a result which frequently occurs.

I was quite surprised at the large number of students in attendance, when I learned that the Oswego Normal School was one of eleven in the State of New York. Here again, I could not but make a comparison unfavorable to Ontario. If so large a portion of the aspirants to the teacher's profession there, avail themselves of the privileges of Normal instruction, it is certainly reasonable to conclude that abundant patronage for at least four or five such institutions may be found in Ontario. And that there is pressing need of them, every School Inspector's experience must clearly prove.

I attended only two recitations in the Normal Department—one in Reading and Elocution conducted by a lady, and one in Vocal Music under the direction of a professor. They were both animated and thorough, abounding in clear explanations and full of interest. The teacher's criticism of the reading of several students was very minute and explicit, and accompanied by ample suggestions to the learner. A portion of the recitation was devoted to voice culture. The time required to fill and empty the lungs, as slowly as possible, was noted by each student, and directions given the class in exercises calculated to expand the lungs and thereby improve the voice.