



JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

Volume VI.

Montreal (Lower Canada) January 1862.

No. 1.

SUMMARY.—EDUCATION: School-Days of Eminent Men in Great Britain, by J. F. Timbs, [continued].—Practical Grammar.—Simplicity of language.—OFFICIAL NOTICES: Appointment of School Commissioners.—Diplomas granted by Boards of Examiners.—Books approved by the Council of Public Instruction.—Donations to the Library of the Department.—Teacher wanted.—Situation wanted.—EDITORIAL: To our Subscribers.—The Grants to Common Schools, Superior Education, and Poor Municipalities.—The Census of the Province.—The War in America, [concluded from our last].—MONTHLY SUMMARY: Educational Intelligence.—Scientific Intelligence.—Statistical Intelligence.—ADVERTISEMENTS: The Lower Canada Journal of Education and Le Journal de l'Instruction Publique.—OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS: Table of the distribution of the grant for Superior Education in 1861.—Table of the distribution of the grant to poor Municipalities for 1861.

EDUCATION.

SCHOOL-DAYS OF EMINENT MEN IN GREAT BRITAIN.

BY JOHN TIMBS, F. S. A.

(Continued from our last.)

CLXVI.

SIR ROBERT PEEL AT HARROW AND OXFORD

This distinguished statesman, whose name is indissolubly associated with some of the most important events in the history of our time, was born in 1788, in a cottage adjoining Chamber Hall, his father's house, in the neighbourhood of Bury, in Lancashire, which happened at that time to be under repair. He descended from the ancient family of De Pele, established first in Yorkshire, and afterwards in Lancashire. His grandfather commenced, and his father completed, the acquisition of a large fortune as a cotton-spinner; and, as if "to marshal him the way that he was going," Mr. Peel, the father, two years after the birth of his son Robert, entered the House of Commons as a member, and as a zealous supporter of M. Pitt: in 1800 he received a baronetcy.

The son was sent early to Hipperholme School, in Yorkshire, where he cut upon a block of stone (now preserved at Halifax) the following inscription:

R. PEEL.

No hostile bands can antedate my doom.

He was removed to Harrow School, and appears in the Speech Bill of 1803, as Peel, sen., Upper-Fifth Form, No. 58. Lord Byron, his schoolfellow, (and born in the same year,) says of him:

"Peel, the orator and statesman, (that was, or is, or is to be,) was my form-fellow, and we were both at the top of our remove. We were on good terms, but his brother was my intimate friend. There were always great hopes of Peel amongst us all, masters and scholars—and he has not disappointed them. As a scholar, he was greatly my superior; as a declaimer and actor, I was reckoned at least his equal: as a schoolboy out of school, I was always in scrapes, and he never, and in

school he always knew his lesson, and I rarely,—but when I knew it, I knew it nearly as well. In general information, history, &c., I think I was his superior, as well as of most boys of my standing."

He was (says his biographer, Doubleday,) diligent, studious, and sagacious, if not quick, but never brilliant; preserving a high station among his school-mates by exertion and perseverance rather than genius; and being remarkable for prudent good sense rather than showy talent. (1) His memory is fondly cherished at Harrow, where the room which he occupied in a house in the town is kept in its original state, with a brick on which he cut his name, the genuineness of the inscription being verified by Peel's handwriting in a ciphering-book of the same date. His name is also cut in the panel of the old school-room, with those of his three sons, whom he placed in the school.

In 1804, Peel left Harrow, and entered Christchurch, Oxford, as a gentleman commoner. At the University, he was a diligent and laborious student; and in 1808, on taking his degree, obtained a double first-class, the highest honours, both in classics and mathematics. Amongst his competitors were Mr. Gilbert, afterwards Vice-Chancellor of the University; Mr. Hampden, Professor of Divinity; and Mr. Whately, the present Archbishop of Dublin.

A boy from Tunbridge School, writing to one of his former class-fellows an account of this examination, speaks with enthusiasm of the spirit of Peel's translations, especially of his beautiful rendering of the opening of the second book of Lucretius, beginning:

Suave mari magno turbantibus requora ventis
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;

and ending with the picture of the philosopher gazing from his calm oriental rest on the disturbed, self-wearing, ignorant, erring world. "Often of late," said one of those to whom this letter at the time was read, "have I been struck with the fitness of this passage to Peel himself, who, having achieved so much amidst all the strife of party, could, free from its entanglements, see men of all parties gathering the ripening fruit of his measures."

Mr. Doubleday describes Peel's college acquirements "of the solid kind, and such as a laborious student of good practical sagacity may always acquire. Of wit, or imagination, or of the inventive faculty in general, Mr. Peel had little; and to such men the absence of these more specious qualifications is a negative advantage. If they are unable to dazzle others, in the same ratio are they exempted from being dazzled by them; and hence it is that persons so qualified have a clearer view of the characters of those with whom they have to deal, and are better adapted to the ordinary business of life, than their more accomplished competitors."

In the course of the year 1808, Mr. Peel completed his studies at Oxford. From his very cradle, it may be said, he was destined by his father for a politician; and in 1809, being of age, he entered Parliament for the borough of Cashel.

It is not our province to record the political life of this distin-