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JOHN BURGESS CALKIN, M. A.,

PRINCIPAL OF THE PROVINCIAL NORMAL SCHOOL, TRURO, NOVA SCOTIA.

Our portrait this month is that of a gentleman whose life has been devoted to the cause of public education in his native province, and who has left the impress of his scholarship and professional skill on the mental habits and teaching aptitudes of many of her teachers. Both as an Educationist and as an Author, the learned Principal of the Normal School of Nova Scotia has well won the right of honorable recognition and mention, and we are sure that a brief sketch of his history will be acceptable not merely to his provincial friends and fellow-laborers, but to all throughout the Dominion to whom his valuable and widely-circulated educational treatises have made his name familiar.

Mr. Calkin's record is that of faithful and efficient service in all the posts which he has occupied in connection with the cause of education. As teacher of an "old time" Grammar School, as Head Master of the Provincial Model School, as Inspector of Schools for the County of King's, as Professor of Language in the Normal School, and as (for the last nine years) Principal of the latter institution, he has influentially contributed both to the practical spread of Education and to the creation of an improved and enlarged public sentiment in relation thereto.

Mr. Calkin was born in Cornwallis, N.S., in the year 1829. During early life, in addition to such opportunities of obtaining knowledge as were afforded by the district school, he enjoyed the advantages of several years' study under the direction of Rev. Mr. Somerville, widely known throughout the Lower Provinces as an exceedingly full and accurate scholar. Undoubtedly the impulse received from this ripe and enthusiastic educator to a large extent determined his future career. The year 1851-2 was spent in attendance at the Free Church College, Halifax, whence he returned for a short time to the institution conducted by Mr. Somerville, and where he had previously made good progress in both mathematical and classical studies. From 1852 to 1856 he was engaged in teaching in the schools of his native county, having charge during the years 1853-6 of one of the county "Grammar Schools." Anxious to fit himself for the most efficient discharge of his professional duties, he then spent a year at the newly-opened Normal School at Truro. After a brief return to teaching in the public schools, he was summoned, by the urgent solicitation of the

late lamented Dr. Forrester, to assume the Head Mastership of the Model School in connection with the Provincial Normal Institute. On the adoption of the Free School Act, he was induced by Superintendent Rand to undertake the duties of the Inspectorship of Schools for the County of King's, where for two years he rendered laborious service in laying the foundations of the new system. He returned to Truro as Professor of the English Department of the Normal School, and on Doctor Forrester's death, in 1869, he was appointed his successor in the Principalship, the position which he still holds.

In accordance with the prevailing usage, the Principal delivers to the student-teachers the regular lectures on School Management, the Philosophy of Method, and the general Proprieties of the Profession. Principal Calkin's prelections are inspired by a strong

conviction of the soundness of the scientific basis on which the theory of Normal Institutions is based. To quote from the very eloquent address delivered at the opening of the new Normal School Building in November last, he believes that "Teaching is a communicable art, and its methods are either derived from scientific principles, or they have been so verified by experience as to form unquestionable rules of action."

We need only refer to the equal success which characterized his discharge of the duties of his previous position, that of Professor of the Department of English. The experience gained while occupying this chair enabled him to enrich our educational literature with several works, all of value, and some of very wide circulation and repute. Among these we may mention the *General Geography of the World* and the *Introductory Geography* (both acknowledged



text books in Ontario and New Brunswick as well as Nova Scotia), the *History and Geography of Nova Scotia*, and a treatise on *Elementary Book-Keeping*. He has also edited a special edition of *Swinton's English Grammar*. In 1870 the University of Acadia College fittingly recognized Principal Calkin's attainments by bestowing upon him the degree of Master of Arts.

The new Normal School building is an ornament to Truro and an honor to the Province of Nova Scotia. It can accommodate two hundred students. Ample provision has been made for the Library, Museum and Apparatus. Convenient lavatories are situated on the basement floor, and the health of the students is further attended to by furnishing large rooms for physical exercise. The Government and people were glad to spend a large sum of money in erecting and fitting up the institution, knowing that it was to be conducted by a man so able and experienced as the subject of our sketch.