

# PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE TOWNSHIPS.

## PART I.

WHATEVER may be said of the comparative importance of Superior and Primary Education, it cannot be doubted that a good Common School System is of incalculable value to a community, and such a system we have. It doubtless has defects, there is unquestionably room for improvement in its administration, and in the character and standing of our primary schools; but whoever denies that this system and these schools are doing a great work for the present and future of the country, must have given the subject a very imperfect or a very prejudicial examination. A New England clergyman, who has had a pretty thorough acquaintance with the Common Schools of the Townships, writes thus:—“One cannot be familiar with the working of the Public School System of Canada, and that of almost any of the New England States, and not be impressed with the great superiority of the former.—Canada has a good Common School law. The redeeming feature of the Canadian Government, as I retain impressions of it, is the School system. It is ample, thorough and vigorous. It is, of all secular success, Canada’s hope.”

It appears from official reports that there are now about two hundred and seventy-five English primary or “Common” Schools in this (St. Francis) District, nearly all of them public schools, *i. e.*, under the control of the School Authorities, and sustained by public funds. These are so distributed in the different townships that there are but few, it is believed, even of the poorest inhabitants, who cannot secure for their children the advantages of a Common School education,—in most cases, for eight months in the year, and that within a distance of two miles. If it is objected that a large proportion of these schools are taught by female teachers—many of them young and inexperienced—it may be replied that a large proportion of these female teachers are competent, faithful and efficient—many of them to their praise, be it said—labouring with a zeal, and accomplishing an amount of intellectual and moral good, which eternity alone can fully show. Let no one speak sneeringly of our female Common School teachers; some are, doubtless, incompetent, many are comparatively inexperienced, but few are wholly inefficient or unfit for their work; and many may justly be called “burning and shining lights.” Some of these teachers have enjoyed the advantages of Normal School training, and we are glad to know that the number is increasing. Many others have enjoyed good facilities for improvement in the High Schools