

As a matter of fact, Dr. Ryerson's great struggle for the civil and religious freedom which we now enjoy, was almost over when he assumed the position of Chief Director of our Educational System. No one can read the record of his labours from 1825 to 1845, as detailed in the following pages, without being impressed with the fact that, had he done no more for his native country than that which is therein recorded, he would have accomplished a great work, and have earned the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen.

It was my good fortune to enjoy Dr. Ryerson's warm, personal friendship since 1841. It has also been my distinguished privilege to be associated with him in the accomplishment of his great educational work since 1844. I have been able, therefore, to turn my own personal knowledge of most of the events outlined in this volume to account in its preparation. In regard to what transpired before 1841, I have frequently heard many narratives in varied forms from Dr. Ryerson's lips.

My own intimate relations with Dr. Ryerson, and the character of our close personal friendship are sufficiently indicated in his private letters to me, published in various parts of the book, but especially in Chapter liii. And yet they fail to convey the depth and sincerity of his personal attachment, and the feeling of entire trust and confidence which existed between us.

I am glad to say that I was not alone in this respect. Dr. Ryerson had the faculty, so rare in official life, of attaching his assistants and subordinates of every grade to himself personally. He always had a pleasant word for them, and made them feel that their interests were safe in his hands. They therefore respected and trusted him fully, and he never failed to acknowledge their fidelity and devotion in the public service.

I had, for some time before he ceased to be the Head of the Education Department, looked forward with pain and anxiety to that inevitable event. Pain, that he and I were at length to be separated in the carrying forward of the great work of our lives, in which it had been my pride and pleasure to be his principal assistant. Anxiety at what, from my knowledge of him, I feared would be the effect of release from the work on fully accomplishing which he had so earnestly set his heart. Nor were my fears groundless. To a man of his application and