

The Canada School Journal.

VOL. IV.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1879.

No. 21.

REV. W. CYPRIAN PINKHAM,

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT OF PROTESTANT SCHOOLS, MANITOBA.

The schools of Manitoba are in a condition of surprising excellence, considering the very short time that has elapsed since the province was opened up for settlement by the Dominion Government. So far as a Public School education is concerned, the residents of Manitoba can obtain in the towns and villages, and in many of the rural districts, quite as good advantages for their children as in any of the older provinces. At first thought, this seems to be almost impossible. One is disposed to ask, how can it be, that with so many difficulties in the way the young province has in ten years reached a state of advancement which was only reached in the other provinces after a struggle of half a century? How did the system of free Public Schools fight and win so great a battle in so short a time? The answer is simple. The battle had been fought and won in the sister provinces. The settlers in Manitoba came mainly from these provinces, and they carried with them the deep love for the Public Schools which they had formed in early days. There were none of the prejudices and antagonisms which had to be removed in Ontario and the parts of the Dominion where the free Public School was introduced as a "new idea." Yet there were difficulties in the way of the establishment of an educational system on a proper basis. Chief among these was the fact that the residents of the province were nearly equally divided in both religion and language. These difficulties have been overcome. Two Boards of Education, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic, have been formed. The boards work separately as regards their own schools, and jointly in the management of the school matters of the province as a whole. This united action is continued through the higher departments of education. University consolidation is in Manitoba an established fact.

Each of the Boards of Education has a Chief Superintendent. The Superintendent of the Protestant schools is the gentleman whose career forms the subject of the present sketch.

Rev. Mr. Pinkham was born at St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1844. He received a good part of his early education at the Church of England Academy there, and was a pupil teacher in that institution for two years, under the direction of the Rev. G. P. Harris, a distinguished graduate of Cambridge. He next

taught in the Public School in Brookfield, and was highly commended by the Rev. Moses Harvey, at that time Secretary of the Protestant Board of Education for St. John's. He afterwards proceeded to St. Augustine's College, Canterbury; and having taken the usual course, received his diploma in 1868. During the summer vacation of 1867 he acted as private tutor to two sons of Sir Frederick Fowkes.

He left England for the Red River settlement in 1868, almost immediately after receiving his diploma. He was appointed a member of the Protestant Board of Education in Manitoba, in 1871, after the passage of the new School Act. His colleagues were, the Bishop of Rupert's Land, Rev. John Black, Rev. George Young, C. J. Bird, M.D., Mr. John Norquay, and Mr. St. John,

the first Superintendent. During the absence of Mr. St. John from the Province, Mr. Pinkham performed the duties of Chief Superintendent, and in September, 1871, he was regularly appointed to the position by Lieutenant Governor Archibald. Since that time he has continued to perform the arduous duties of his office in a manner that has given much satisfaction. He took a very active interest in drafting the Amended School Acts of 1873 and 1876. He is a member of the Council of St. John's College, and of the Theological Faculty for the degrees of B.D. and D.D., being examiner in Ecclesiastical History and Liturgiology. During the present year he was unanimously chosen by the Protestant section of the Board of Education to represent that body on the Senate of the University of Manitoba.

Mr. Pinkham has peculiar qualifications for the position he so ably fills. It is no small matter to adapt a system of

education to the tastes and requirements of a people of such a varied character as the people of Manitoba at present. Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotchmen, Germans, Mennonites, Icelanders, and "Half-breeds" form the population. Each race has some peculiar views which must be respected. How great an amount of wisdom was necessary to prepare and administer a School Law in such circumstances! The present Chief Superintendent was just the man for the situation. Young, vigorous, considerate for others, possessed of rare tact and judgment, he is specially adapted to the work he has had to perform. It must not be supposed that he has formed a heterogeneous system consisting of the peculiar views of the different races of the province. The system is based on the fundamental principles of sound education, as wrought out in all enlightened countries; and in the standard required for teachers, and in other important features, it is deserving of high commendation.

