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## SEPARATE SCHOOLS.

TO those who remember the violent language, unfounded accusations and severe recriminations hurled hither and thither during the last Provincial election contest, it must be a pleasure to read the moderate tone of the debates last week on the proposed amendments to the Education Act affecting the status of Separate School supporters. Mr. Fraser very caustically remarked that Mr. Meredith roared "as gently as any sucking dove," but it must be remembered that Mr. Meredith's election address only committed to the safe and moderate principle of equal rights for all, and that it was the speeches of his followers and not his own that overstepped the bounds of prudence. No one seriously believes that Mr. Mowat has entered into a compact with Archbishop Lynch to sell the Protestant horse for the Roman Catholic vote, but the question is still debated whether he has given any undue advantage to the Separate Schools. That question appears to us to lie within very narrow limits. Before 1878 every ratepayer, Protestant or Catholic, was set down as a Public School supporter, and it was at his option to remain so or to give due notice that he was a supporter of a Separate School. The amendment passed in 1878, and to which neither Mr. Meredith nor his followers objected, allows the assessor to put down every Roman Catholic as a Separate School supporter until he chooses to exercise his option by giving notice that he wishes to pay his taxes into the Public School exchequer. This gives the Separate Schools an advantage they did not before possess, and the question under debate is whether this is an act of wise toleration or of injudicious encouragement. We do not think it can be judicious to encourage a rival to our excellent school system—a rival confessedly inferior, for it will never admit comparisons which might be odious by placing itself under one uniform system of inspection. To weaken the Public Schools is to lower the standard of education, for no Protestant community would tolerate for a year the Public School system of Quebec. Toleration is essentially a Protestant principle, but toleration is not approval. It is essentially concession, prompted by justice or generosity, made to something of which we do not entirely approve. Now, we do not approve of Separate Schools. They appear to us in the light of a necessary evil, and as such should be tolerated in the name of justice, for conscience sake, and with only that generosity which their weakness can claim. The other question, that of the pay-

ment of taxes, is so much simpler that little has been said about it since election time. We then held that the law on that point was perfectly clear, in spite of the frantic protests of newspaper correspondents and clergymen who professed to know as much about law as about divinity. Perhaps they did, but in that case we sympathize with their congregations. The law says distinctly that the tenant shall pay the taxes and determine by which school they shall be appropriated; and that no agreement between landlord and tenant can evade that rational and just rule. That is as it should be, for the tenant has children to send to school, and they need education and the freedom of choice as much as the children of the landlord.

H.

## Book Notice.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN PEOPLE. By George Bryce, M.A., LL.D. London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington. Toronto, W. J. Gage & Co. 1887.

UPON this volume Professor Bryce has evidently bestowed much hard and conscientious labour. In its pages he has brought together a great deal of valuable information not to be found in any other of the so-called histories of Canada, and by issuing it at a moderate price he has performed an essential service on behalf of the youth of this country. We should be glad to think that he is likely to reap a substantial pecuniary recompense for his labours, for he has produced a book which, in spite of its defects, is decidedly the best "short history" which has yet appeared. This latter clause, however, be it understood, involves no extravagant eulogy. It involves, indeed, but a very limited modicum of praise, for the previous attempts in the same direction have for the most part been altogether beneath criticism. Nothing but a regard for the feelings of still-living writers—writers towards whom we personally entertain nothing but good-will—prevents us from telling the plain, unvarnished truth about certain so-called "histories" which have been foisted upon the Canadian public, and which, not to mince the matter, are a crying disgrace to everybody concerned in their production. Professor Bryce speaks his own mind on this subject with tolerable plainness. He refers to writers who have made Canadian history "a mere means of gaining a livelihood without rendering value to unsuspecting book-buyers." "Some partisan purpose to serve," he writes—"the *cacoethes scribendi*, or the unworthy motive of receiving government patronage, have [has] induced a somewhat prolific crop of political biographies, local 'histories,'—mere uninteresting and unsympathetic collections of facts [the writer might here have added 'collections of fictions'], dry and raw manuals known as 'school histories,' all dishonouring to the name historian; and producing on the public a nauseating effect on the mention of the name of history." A Toronto contemporary, in commenting on these perfectly true and just remarks of Professor Bryce, characterizes them as being "not in the best taste, nor in the most Christian spirit." Taste, forsooth,—and Christian spirit! When one hears such remarks