

For the REVIEW.]

NEWFOUNDLAND SCHOOL SYSTEM ONCE MORE.

As was to be expected, Dr. Milligan, one of the "well paid Superintendents" of schools, has, after three months' hesitation, stepped out in defence of the system which we briefly criticised in the first issue of your admirable journal. Modesty might have suggested the propriety of leaving this work to other hands; but when trumpet-blowing is desired perhaps no one can do it so effectually as oneself.

I am sorry to observe that Dr. Milligan has largely mistaken personalities for argument. My article, he kindly says, is "a caricature," my "charges are misleading," "smack (?) of prejudice"—I am guilty of "glaring omissions" and "exaggerated assertions," of "extravagant deductions" and "unwarranted reflections;" the article is "a tirade," its terms "studiously vague," "fancy serves for fact;" "with light duties" I received "\$2,000 a year, with manse and perquisites," and yet have the unparalleled audacity to "speak flippantly," to utter "grandiloquent sentences," and to show myself "exalted in my own judgment by my obvious prejudice."

I have no reply to make to these personalities, except to say that I should have expected a more gentlemanly style from the Reverend Doctor Milligan when writing for an educational review, and less angry passion in an aged minister in referring to an article which attacked a *system*, not a *person*.

There is no better evidence of the truth of my strictures than the fact that they have so roused the ire and disturbed the equanimity of one who, as I was credibly informed, had much to do in fastening the present sectarian school system on Newfoundland.

Your space will not permit me to refer at length to the many charges in the Doctor's prolix epistle, nor is there necessity. It will only be necessary to strip his charges of their superfluous verbiage to discover their weakness. Our article charged the Newfoundland school system with promoting bigotry and checking the growth of patriotism. What is the Doctor's answer? "The Education Act has a conscience clause and I never saw it violated." (Did it never occur to him that some things might happen in schools without his knowledge?) "The R. R. series of books are used." But let the reader bear in mind it was not said by us that the school teachers taught sectarian doctrines, or that the school books were sectarian in their character. What was asserted, and what we still affirm, is that the children of one sect are taught from infancy to look with jealous and unfriendly eye upon those of another sect. How are they so taught? By the very names of the schools which they attend, by the fact that those of one sect are separated from

those of another. I myself have witnessed many an angry encounter between children attending these schools, in which the church names of the combatants were freely bandied back and forth with angry epithets; that of two children about seven years of age fighting on the public street, and saying, "you're a Wesleyan"—"you're a Catholic;" such a scene I have witnessed between two school children on their way from their separate schools. You say it might have occurred in a common school system. Yes, but the system which sends two playmates to two schools, simply and only because their parents go to two churches, is responsible for much of the denominational bitterness which confessedly exists, not only among children, but among adults, in the outports of Newfoundland. I charge the system with being the parent, or at least the promoter, of the spirit which leads every sect in the country to demand its proportion of the public offices, its quota of representatives in the government, its due share of members on every public committee, and which even boycotts merchants and mechanics of another ecclesiastical stripe. What should we think here in Canada of Wesleyans, or Episcopalians, or Catholics, getting up opposition to a government because there was one too many of the other sect in the cabinet, or of a public protest against a native governor whom the Queen had appointed because of his belonging to the religion of the minority? These are examples of narrowness of view that you cannot find in the land of common schools. In regard to the Doctor's other replies, I fail to see how the fact that some children of one denomination attend the schools of another (many do so from necessity, because their own people are unable to support a school at all, or unable to support an efficient school) or the other fact that a teacher of one denomination is sometimes employed by another (a very rare thing), I fail to see how these exceptional occurrences disprove the statement that the system propagates sectarianism.

Even the Rev. Mr. Harvey, whom Dr. M. quotes, who has very suddenly and unexpectedly become the apologist of a system, the introduction of which no one more strenuously opposed, admits that "society is in the theological stage of development—by which we mean that *sectarian considerations and feelings are paramount, and patriotic sentiments weak and powerless in comparison.*" He fails, however, to admit what no man knows more certainly, that the separate school system is largely responsible for the perpetuation and aggravation of this type of social life.

We charged that the system was expensive. Our words were that "it involved at least three times the