

EDUCATION IN CANADA WEST.

No. III.

NORMAL AND GRAMMAR SCHOOLS.

There is perhaps nothing in Toronto which better deserves attention, or has elicited more generally the admiration of visitors, than the Normal and Model Schools. Without any pretensions to superb architecture, they have a substantial, neat, and pleasing appearance. They are situated in a beautiful open square of considerable size. The grounds have been laid out with no little taste, and, although the trees are still young, present a very agreeable contrast to the dusty places of business and thoroughfares which surround them on every hand. The Normal School consists of a centre building and two wings, with the theatre or public hall jutting out behind in a semi-circular form. Behind it stands the Model School, too low perhaps, especially when viewed from behind, to attract attention on account of its architectural appearance. When, however, we enter the premises, a closer inspection produces that satisfaction which is wanting when we look from a distance. On each side of the school, for boys and girls separately, there is a yard, with sheds provided with gymnastic machines of every kind, well fitted to exercise and develop the physical energies of the pupils. Within the schools, we find the whole "system of organization, government and teaching, together with the maps, charts, and other apparatus, such as exemplifies what a common school should be." The furniture also is of the most approved kind, and, though now in constant use for nearly five years, without blots or marks, and scarcely at all defaced. But leaving the Model School, and entering the other building, we are even better pleased. The rooms and halls are airy and commodious, and excellently arranged for usefulness and comfort. Within this building are the rooms of the Chief Superintendent, the Education Office, &c. Here the Council of Public Instruction meets, and matters of business connected with the education of the Province are transacted. Altogether, the Normal and Model Schools are a credit to the city and to the Province, and their efficiency and good order reflect credit on those who manage them.

But it is with the instruction given in the Normal School that we have chiefly to do. The design of the Institution is to train teachers for the Common Schools; and the Model School, affording a good education to 420 pupils, is intended as a place of exercise, in which the students may reduce to practice the instructions they receive in the lectures of the Normal School, and thus learn the art as well as the theory of teaching. Male students must be eighteen years of age, and females must be sixteen, before they are admitted. They must be able to read and write intelligibly, and must be acquainted with the elements of arithmetic, geography, and English grammar. They are required to sign a declaration of their intention to devote themselves to teaching, and must be certified by some clergyman to be persons of good moral character. When admitted, they are under the care of the authorities of the school, and can board only in houses approved of by them. There is no charge for tuition, use of library, or even for class books which may be required; and as a further inducement, aid is afforded after the first session, to all who are entitled to a Provincial certificate, of five shillings per week to each. During the year 1855, the amount of aid thus afforded was £519 5s.

The year is divided into two sessions of five months each, commencing on the 15th of May and the 15th of November; and the course of study is so arranged, that a diligent student who enters well prepared can accomplish it in two sessions. Instruction is communicated principally by lectures and examination on them. The subjects of study are English, grammar and composition,