

Egerton Ryerson,) was born in the Township of Charlotteville, near Lake Erie, London (afterwards the Talbot District, (now the County of Norfolk) on the 24th of march, 1803. His father, Colonel Joseph Ryerson, a United Empire Loyalist in the British service at the time of the American Revolution, was born in New Jersey. He first joined as a cadet, and was one of the five hundred and fifty loyal volunteers who went to Charleston, South Carolina. For his good conduct in bearing despatches one hundred and ninety six miles into the interior, he was promoted to a lieutenancy in the Prince of Wales' Volunteers by Sir Guy Carleton, (Lord Dorchester). Subsequently he was engaged in six battles, and was once wounded. At the peace of 1783 he was exiled, and went to New Brunswick, thence to Canada—he and his family enduring very great hardship in penetrating into the interior of the then unbroken wilderness of Canada. He settled in Charlotteville, and lived there about seventy years. In the war of 1812, he and three sons again joined the British standard, and acquitted themselves bravely. During his life he held various appointments under the crown. He died, in 1854, at the venerable age of ninety-four years, after having enjoyed his half-pay as a British officer for the unprecedented period of seventy years. Dr. Ryerson was the fourth son of Colonel Ryerson, and was named after two British officers who were intimate friends of his father. His youth was passed in his native country and at its Grammar School he received the rudiments of his early education. With Mr. Law, the Master of the Gore District Grammar School at Hamilton, (at the head of Lake Ontario) he studied his classics. As the Grammar Schools were the only public schools at that time in existence in the country (and they had just then been established; they were, in the rural counties, very elementary in their character, and did not profess to teach more than the mere rudiments of an English education. The young and ardent student, as Doctor Ryerson then was, (and his ardency continued during his life time) not content with the superficial knowledge of grammar which he obtained at school, prevailed upon his father to allow him to go home for six months to attend a grammar class which had been established in the county town on that specific subject.

Doctor Ryerson's habits of study at this time were characteristic of his practice in after life. When at school he had entirely mastered the theory and principles of English Grammar, and had learned all the rules and explanations, and in fact nearly the whole book by rote, but he had no one to explain the theory or to apply the principles of the text-book, flexibility and power of the language. He also at the time prepared and wrote out a digest of Murray's English Grammar, in two volumes, Kame's Elements of Criticism, and Blair's Rhetoric and a Latin Grammar. He was an indefatigable student; and so thoroughly did he ground himself in these and kindred subjects thus early in life and under most adverse circumstances, that in his subsequently active career as a writer and controversialist he ever evinced a power and readiness with his tongue and pen which has often astonished those who were unacquainted with the laborious thoroughness of his previous preparation.

Doctor Ryerson's experience as a teacher did not extend beyond the Grammar School of his native county. At the age of sixteen he was appointed usher, or assistant teacher, to his eldest brother George, (who had received his training at Union College, Schenectady) and who had succeeded his brother-in-law, Mr. Mitchell, on his appointment by the Governor to the judgeship of the county. During the absence of his brother George, the charge of the school devolved upon the youthful usher. Having thus the management of boys and girls who were his companions, and many of them several years his senior, his firmness, tact, and decision were frequently put to the test, but he acquitted himself well, and the experience thus gained was afterwards turned to higher account.

On his twenty-second birthday (24th March, 1825) Dr. Ryerson was ordained deacon in the M. E. Church, by Bishop Hedding. His diary during the first year of his ministerial life shows how devotedly he applied himself to the culture of his mind, although his valise often contained the chief part of his library, and the back of his horse frequently afforded him the only place of study. His first literary effort was put forth in 1826—being the review of Ven. Archdeacon Strachan's sermon on the death of Bishop Mountain, and it at once established his reputation as an able controversialist. In 1828, he again wrote a series of letters criticising Dr. Strachan's famous chart of the various religious bodies. Both series were published in pamphlet form. In 1829, the *Christian Guardian* was established and he was appointed its joint editor. In 1833 he went to England, and again in 1835. In the latter year he went to obtain a Royal Charter and subscriptions for "U. C. Academy," now Victoria College, Cobourg. He also induced the Home Government to recommend the Upper Canada Legislature to grant \$16,000 to the Academy, which it did against the wishes of Sir F. B. Head, the Governor.

In 1840 an Act of Incorporation was obtained from the then recently united Canadian Legislature, erecting Upper Canada Academy into a University under the name and style of the "University of Victoria College, at Cobourg." Doctor Ryerson (who then received the title of D.D. from the Wesleyan University, Middleton,) was unanimously chosen its first President. In 1844, Doctor Ryerson was appointed Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, by His Excellency the Governor General with an understanding that he would re-lay the entire foundation of the system, and establish it on a wider and more enduring basis. The instructions which he received on his formal appointment were contained in the following words: "His Excellency has no doubt that you will lose no time in devoting yourself to devising such measures as may be necessary to provide proper school books; to establish the most efficient system of instruction; to elevate the character of both teacher and schools: and to encourage every plan and effort to educate and improve the youthful mind of the country; and His Excellency feels assured that your endeavours in matters so important to Western Canada will be alike satisfactory to the public and creditable to yourself." In 1846, he submitted an elaborate report on his projected system of public schools for Upper Canada. In the first part he stated and illustrated its general principles, the concluding fifty pages are devoted to the subject of the machinery of the system under the heads of "Kinds of Schools," "Text-Books," "Control and Inspection," and "Individual Efforts."

Notwithstanding the zeal and ability with which Doctor Ryerson had collected and arranged his facts, analyzed the various systems of education in Europe (chiefly in Germany), and America, and fortified himself with the opinions of all the most eminent educationists in those countries, yet his projected system for this province was fiercely assailed, and was vehemently denounced as embodying in it the very essence of "Prussian despotism." Still with indomitable courage he persevered in his plans and at length succeeded, in 1846, in inducing the legislature to pass a School Act which he had drafted. In 1849 the Provincial administration favourable to Doctor Ryerson's views went out of office, and one unfavorable to him came in. The Hon. Malcolm Cameron, a hostile member of the cabinet, having concocted a singularly crude and *un-brows school bill*, aimed to oust Doctor Ryerson from office, it was without examination or discussion passed into a law. Doctor Ryerson at once called the attention of the government (at the head of which was the late lamented Lord Elgin) to the impracticable and unchristian character of the bill, as it had formally excluded the Bible from the schools. The late Honorable Robert