

ancient hymn, as distinguishing it from the hymns in general use in our day. It is eminently scriptural and devotional. Almost every sentence is a quotation from God's word. Whether in adoration or supplication—and every line is either praise or prayer—it derives its inspiration from the Bible.

COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATION IN CANADA WEST.

No. I.

The system of National Education in Canada West is deservedly attracting attention both at home and abroad. It is as yet in comparatively an imperfect state, but when we look at its present position, and the firm hold which it is gradually taking on the affections of an approving public, and compare them with the past, and when we remember the difficulties which have been successfully overcome, we may confidently hope for great things, even though now and then a little cloud may pass over the horizon. To Dr. Ryerson, the Chief Superintendent of Education, Upper Canada owes much. His practical sagacity is evident in the very frame-work of the system, and his patience and energy in carrying that system into effect, as well as defending it against unfriendly attacks, deserve no stinted praise.

Only ten years have elapsed since the *Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada* was laid before the country. That was the first step taken towards the present common school system. In glancing over the Chief Superintendent's Report for 1855, we find that now there are 3525 school sections, with 3325 schools in operation, affording education (apart from grammar and private schools) to 227,864 children. The number of teachers employed is 2568 male and 997 female, while on common schools alone there was expended last year the sum of £224,818. This result is very gratifying, but it is even more so when we notice the rapid progress that common school education is making. During the last year 124 new schools were established, and there can be no doubt that this year will show an equal if not a greater increase. There is also a marked increase in the attendance at the schools. The community is evidently becoming more and more deeply interested in them. The attainments of teachers are gradually advancing, their salaries are improving, and the course of instruction is becoming more liberal. These are encouraging features, and even the violent attacks made by the popish priests and newspapers on the common school system may ultimately prove beneficial, by arousing Protestants and making them more watchful against the shameless demands and unscrupulous devices of the Church of Rome.

We shall endeavour now to place before our readers some of the most noticeable features of this system of education.

The instruction given in the schools is strictly elementary. In some city, and in a few country schools, Mathematics, Latin, and the elements of natural Science may be taught to a limited number of more advanced pupils, but these are exceptions. Arithmetic, English reading, spelling, writing, history, geography, and grammar, may be said to constitute a common school education. In Hamilton, needle work has been very properly introduced into the female department, and in several schools, singing and linear drawing have been introduced with happy results. In cities, also, evening schools have been successfully established for young people whose education is imperfect, and yet who cannot attend school during the day. The books most generally in use are those of the Irish National Board. In many respects they are the best that can be obtained, and particularly are not liable to objections on sectarian grounds, while they