

# THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

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## CANADIAN SCHOOLS FIFTY YEARS AGO.

OUR school system is one of the great and expensive institutions of our country; great results have followed its establishment, and greater still are expected to follow. To avoid in part the levied assessment attending the support of Common Schools, it would be well for Manitoba and the great Northwest, which are now being opened up, to copy the example of our neighboring States, and set apart a portion of the Government lands for the support of Common Schools.

To those who are basking in the intellectual blaze of our present schools, perhaps some account of one of our old schools may be of interest—by which they may be the better able to appreciate the many advantages that lie within their grasp.

Our schoolhouse stood in the corner of the graveyard connected with the old Methodist Chapel, on the Stoney Creek battle-ground. It was quite fresh and new when I first attended school there in 1824, the east gable bearing the date 1822 rudely cut in a stone. It was an expensive structure for its day, and reflects credit on the enterprise and the desire of those who

contributed to its erection, in order to educate, as far as lay in their power, not only the children growing up in the section, but also to assist the young men and the young women, who were already beginning to smart under the thought of being almost illiterate, to obtain, if they chose, the rudiments, at least, of an English education. The thick walls were of stone; three large square windows gave an abundance of light, one being placed in the east end, and one on each side, the west end being occupied by an enormous fireplace, the jambs of which were carried straight up to the height of a man's head, where a contraction of about two feet on each side gave the outside width of the massive chimney. In fact, the fireplace occupied more than half the width of the room, which was probably eighteen by twenty feet inside.

To supply this mammoth fireplace great quantities of wood were required; but as timber was of no value in those days, there was seldom any scarcity of fuel; the only difficulty lay in getting it cut up and in obtaining enough dry wood to make the green burn. "Drags,"