

PREFATORY NOTE.

It will soon be sixty years (58) since the Rev. Dr. Ryerson was appointed to take charge of the educational interests of Upper Canada. More than one-half of those years he devoted to the arduous duty of devising and carrying into effect a System of Schools adapted to the wants and circumstances of the Country.

It is now more than twenty-six years since the Chief Superintendent of Education relinquished the distinguished post which he had so ably filled ; and over twenty years have passed away since his death.

Many of the younger men, who are now in the active educational field at the present day, have but a very indistinct idea of what Dr. Ryerson really did, more than fifty years ago, in laying the foundations of our Educational System, and also as to what were the distinctive principles which he then embodied in the frame-work of that System, and which he regarded as essential to its ultimate success.

The reminiscences of these now by-gone days of Dr. Ryerson's administration of our School System have frequently been vividly brought home to me by reason of letters which I often receive—sometimes from parties outside the Province—asking for specific information in regard to certain features of the School System, as planned long since by the Chief Superintendent, and also as to the facilities which he had provided for its future growth and expansion.

It is not necessary for me to go into these particulars, or to refer to the several characteristic features of the School System, as projected by Dr. Ryerson. It is sufficient for me to speak in the following pages, as I have done, of his work as a whole, and only to mention some details of it, by which good and efficient service was rendered in the consolidation and up-building of the superstructure which he had reared.

In the successive (eight) Volumes of the "Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, from 1791," etc., on which I have been engaged, I have not failed to do full justice to the pioneers of the Colborne era, who led the van in educational efforts of the Province in the early thirties,* which efforts, although, not wholly successful at the time, yet bore good fruit, which was turned to useful account later on, and which

* I was enabled more satisfactorily to point out the special services of these pioneers in a Series of Papers on the "*Noted Educational Auxiliaries of Upper Canada*," which I published in the "*Educational Weekly*" of 1885.