

RUSTIC ONTARIO SCHOOL LIFE.

There is a strongly marked disposition in the present age of scientific research, to discover the beginnings, and dig down to the foundations of all things ; in accord with this spirit, I shall endeavour in the present essay, to exhibit in embryo, some of the world's great philosophers, and the material out of which some of our great men and women are made.

"Rustic Ontario School Life" has been chosen as the subject of this essay, because many of the readers of our College Magazine have spent the days of their childhood in countries where a different educational system is in vogue, and have not had opportunities of gaining a knowledge of Ontario school life ; there are others who, although they have received their early education under the same system, yet have seen that system carried out amidst city rather than country scenes ; again, there are others who, like myself, have had practical experience as teachers, in the moulding and developing of the country youth committed to their care. To all of these classes I trust this subject may not prove uninteresting.

I shall begin by giving a brief outline of the Ontario school system, and afterwards, with the indulgence of the reader, illustrate its workings by reference to some of my own experiences in school sections where I have, as teacher, spent some of my happiest days.

The local government of each Canadian province has the control of its own educational interests. At the head of the system in Ontario is the Minister of Education, who has a seat in the cabinet at Toronto ; under him are county inspectors, whose duty it is to visit every school in the county over which each has jurisdiction, at least once during each half-year, and report regularly to the Minister of Education. He is also expected to furnish a report to the school-board of each school he visits, giving detailed accounts of the state of school premises, progress of pupils, success of teacher, etc.

The board of school trustees consists of at least three members, who are elected by popular vote for a term of three years, one-third of the members being replaced each year by new members, or re-elected for another term. The teachers, before receiving their certificates of qualification, are required to pass an examination, usually held in July, on examination papers emanating from the seat of authority at Toronto. Formerly, each county had its own board of examiners, and the examinations were much easier to pass than now. I once heard an old Scotchman say that the first examination he passed for teacher in Ontario was as follows : "How many acres of grass can a cow eat if tethered by the tail to a stake in the middle of a field ?" "I could tell ye that," was the answer, provided ye told me the lenth o' the coo an' the lenth o' her tail." So he was thought to be sufficiently well