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THE REVEREND
DOCTOR RYERSON,

AS A

PUBLIC MAN AND AN EDUCATIONIST:

1825 - 1882

BY

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A Paper prepared by Dr. Hodgins for the unveiling of the Bust of the
Rev. Dr. Ryerson, (and that of the Rev. Dr. Nelles,) at
Victoria University, and read by the Rev.
Chancellor Burwash, on the 15th
of November, 1901.

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THOMAS WATSON
1791-1857



A RECORD
AND
AN ENDURING MEMORIAL
OF THE PERSONAL WORTH AND THE GREAT PUBLIC SERVICES OF THE
REV. EGERTON RYERSON, D.D., LL.D.
SON OF COLONEL JOSEPH RYERSON,
A BRITISH OFFICER DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, AND ONE OF
THE UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS,
WHO SETTLED IN THIS PROVINCE.
HE WAS AN HISTORIAN OF THE HEROISM AND SELF-
SACRIFICE OF THESE EXILED UPHOLDERS ON THIS CONTI-
NENT OF THE UNITY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

A PIONEER MISSIONARY TO THE INDIANS
AND A
DISTINGUISHED MINISTER OF THE METHODIST CHURCH,
1825—1882,
HE OBTAINED FOR THAT CHURCH A ROYAL CHARTER IN ENGLAND
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE UPPER CANADA ACADEMY AT COBOURG,
1828—1841,
AFTERWARDS
THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA COLLEGE,
OF WHICH HE WAS THE FIRST PRESIDENT.

IN FOUNDING
THE SCHOOL SYSTEM OF HIS NATIVE PROVINCE,
AND IN PROMOTING
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FREE SCHOOLS,
HE DISPLAYED THE RARE GIFTS OF A
FAR-SEEING AND ENLIGHTENED STATESMAN,
AND WAS THE
ABLE ADMINISTRATOR OF THAT SYSTEM FOR
THIRTY-TWO YEARS,
1844—1876.

"It is my earnest desire . . . to provide for my native country a System of Education and facilities for intellectual improvement not second to those of any country in the world."—DR. RYERSON'S LETTER, ACCEPTING OFFICE, 1844.

"In the great work of providing for the education of the young . . . let us endeavour to stamp upon the whole rising and coming generations of Upper Canada the principles and spirit of an active, a practical, a generous and Christian intelligence."—OFFICIAL CIRCULAR, 1850.

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.

efforts, in their practical comprehensiveness, reflected both honour and credit on the men of those early days, who were, even then, noted for their zeal and devotion to the cause of education.

Dr. Ryerson himself, with others of his brethren, entered largely into the educational spirit of the times ; and, by his and their unceasing efforts, succeeded in establishing, on a satisfactory footing, the Upper Canada Academy at Cobourg, in 1830-1832. He also went to England on its behalf in 1835, to collect funds for the Academy, and to obtain a Royal Charter for that Institution. In both of these efforts he was highly successful.

It was not, however, until his appointment in 1844, that he set himself vigorously to work to acquire full and accurate information as to the principles and character of a sound System of Education, such as he would wish to establish in his native Province. That he did fully accomplish this purpose, the history of his plans and administration, as embodied in his successive annual Reports from 1845 to 1875 amply testify. I have, therefore, only to point out—as I have done—in the accompanying pages, what were the salient features of his scheme of education, of which the comprehensive basis was laid in the School Act of 1850, and which afterwards was amplified and expanded in the more important School Act of 1871,—practically the last appeal which was made by Dr. Ryerson to the Legislature to systematize and consolidate his work.

I have noticed from time to time in the public press, and in letters by writers in the newspapers on educational topics, that some things were attributed to Dr. Ryerson, which he never did ; and in which, also, views and opinions were attributed to him, which he never uttered, nor advocated. Some of his alleged omissions were also mentioned,—such as County Model Schools, which were fully provided for, even as early as in 1843, and subsequently in the School Act of 1846, etc. As another example of his alleged oversight, I may mention the subject of a Central Bureau of Education for the Dominion, which, as I pointed out in the "Ryerson Memorial Volume" of 1889, had been a matter of discussion between him and Sir John Macdonald at the time of the Confederation of the Provinces in 1867 ; but which was then deemed impracticable, owing to the fear that such a Bureau might interfere with Provincial educational rights.

J. GEORGE HODGINS.

92 Pembroke Street,
Toronto, 26th of June, 1902.

REV. DR. RYERSON AS A PUBLIC MAN AND AN EDUCATIONIST.

(PERSONAL NOTE.)

The sketch of the Rev. Dr. Ryerson and his labours, which I had prepared to be read at the unveiling of his Bust, (and that of the Rev. Dr. Nelles), at Victoria University in November, 1901, forms the basis of the following paper.

In it I have embraced the substance of various remarks on the career and character of the able Founder of the System of Popular Education in Ontario, which I had embodied in the "*Story of My Life*," in the "Ryerson Memorial Volume," and in other publications, dealing with the subject of our School System and its Founder. In this enlarged form, the following paper presents, with greater symmetry and fulness, the chief points in the active and most useful life of one of Canada's most gifted sons.

I regret very much that I shall not be with you at the pleasant gathering to-night, to do honour to the two, of all others, who held aloft the banner of hope in the days of doubt and discouragement for Victoria College—the first University which was put into operation in Upper Canada.

I use no mere figure of speech when I speak of the "doubt and discouragement" of the early days of the Upper Canada Academy and of Victoria College. No wonder that the self-devotion of the first promoters of that Academy, (who, in the early thirties, taxed their scanty incomes to keep in active operation that Institution,)—called forth the just eulogium of a Committee of the House of Assembly in February, 1837. In its Report to the House, the Committee said that:—

"The erection of this Seminary is the greatest undertaking hitherto successfully prosecuted in Upper Canada upon the plan of contributions alone."

No man did more, (or could have done more,) both in England and Canada, to accomplish what had called forth this generous and spontaneous tribute from the House of Assembly, than did that gifted son of this Province, to whose memory you have asked me to do honour, by unveiling his Bust to-night.

My dear and ever-beloved friend, Nelles, in his memorable Sermon on the death of his venerated and distinguished predecessor, in one of the striking passages of that Sermon, truly said that good men and great men were among the choicest gifts of God to mankind. So it was in this case; for few of the sons of Canada have been enabled to render so many and so valu-

able services to this country as did our dear and venerated friend, Dr. Ryerson.

In the preface to the *Story of My Life*, I thus referred to the character of these services of Dr. Ryerson : " Public men of the present day look upon Dr. Ryerson as practically one of their own contemporaries—noted for his zeal and energy in the successful management of the great Public Department, and as the Founder of a System of Popular Education. . . . In this estimate of Dr. Ryerson's labours they were quite correct. And in their appreciation of the statesmanlike qualities of mind, which devised and developed such a system, in the midst of great difficulties which would have appalled a less resolute heart, they were equally correct in their opinion and judgment.

"But, after all, how immeasurably does this partial historical view of his character and labours fall short of a true estimate of that character and of those labours !

" In point of fact, Dr. Ryerson's great struggle for the civil and religious freedom which we now enjoy, was almost over when he assumed the position of Chief Director of our Educational System. No one can read the record of his labours from 1825 to 1845, as detailed in the *Story of My Life*, without being impressed with the fact that, had he done no more for his native Country than that which is therein recorded, he would have accomplished a great work, and have earned the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen."

No one could have had a better opportunity of studying the character and watching the later career of Dr. Ryerson than I had. Both his character and his career profoundly impressed me. They were an inspiration to me ; and they were no less so to my ever dear friends, Drs. Nelles and Ormiston. In one of the last Letters which I received from Dr. Ormiston, in California, he said :

" It is now about half a century since we first met in old Victoria, then under the guidance of that grand old man, who soon became dear to my heart, and continued dearer every day 'till the close of his noble, useful and most influential life ; he did more for me than any other man."

In the System of Popular Education which Dr. Ryerson founded, there was, so far as he could secure it, a symmetry and completeness, and a natural and practical adjustment of its several parts—the result of a careful comparison with other systems of popular education. From the experience thus gained, he embodied in his proposed educational scheme, the following principles, which he held to be absolutely necessary to insure its after success :—

1. That the local machinery of education should be, in the hands of the people themselves, and should be managed exclusively through their agency.

2. That the ratepayers should be consulted beforehand in re-

gard to all school legislation. This he did himself every few years, by means of Public Meetings and County conferences.

3. That the interference of the Education Department, by aid, or otherwise, should take place only when it could most effectively be used to stimulate, regulate and assist local effort in the work of education.

4. That a thorough and systematic inspection of Schools by competent Officers, was essential to their vitality and efficiency.

5. That the rateable property of the Country should be held responsible for, and should contribute towards the education of the entire youth of the Country ; and that, as a complement to this legally imposed rate upon property, "compulsory education should necessarily be enforced."

Such were the practical principles of School Legislation which Dr. Ryerson had embodied in the School Bills of 1846 and 1847, and especially in the more complete School Bill of 1850, which has always been regarded as the Charter of our School System.

Under the operation of the School Act of 1850, public opinion, in favour of widening the scope and broadening the foundation of our School System had, so far matured in 1871, that he prepared the comprehensive School Act of that year, which was then passed. It happily put an end to the yearly contests in the rural School Sections in favour of Free Schools, for, under that School Act, they became the law of the land.

This Act of 1871 introduced into our School Code for the first time, some important principles, which, as yet, had not received Legislative sanction. They were chiefly those which related, among other things, to the following matters :—

1. Governmental, combined with improved local, Inspection of Schools.

2. A high and fixed standard of qualifications for Inspectors of Public Schools.

3. The abolition of non-certificated Township Superintendents of Schools, and the substitution thereof of duly licensed County Inspectors.

4. The institution of Simultaneous and Uniform Examinations in the several Counties for Teachers desiring Certificates of Qualification. This principle was soon extended to other Examinations, including Competitive Examinations in Counties, etc.

5. The fixing and rendering uniform of a higher standard of qualification for Public and High School Teachers.

6. Giving the Profession of Teaching a fixed legal status, and providing more fully and equitably for the retirement and united support, by the profession and the Legislature, of worn out, or disabled, Teachers.

7. The establishment by law of a National System of Free Schools.

8. Declaring the right by law, as well as the necessity, of every child attending some School, thus recognizing the principle of, and providing for, "Compulsory Education," under the Free School System.

9. Requiring by law, that adequate School Accommodation, in regard to School House, Playground and Site, be provided by the Trustees, for all the resident children of School age in their localities.

10. Providing for the establishment and support of Collegiate Institutes, or local Colleges.

11. Requiring Municipalities to maintain High Schools and Collegiate Institutes, equally with the Public Schools, and as part of the General School System.

12. Providing, at the option of the ratepayers, for the substitution of Township Boards of Education, in place of local School Section Trustee Boards.

13. Authorizing the establishment of Industrial Schools.

14. Prescribing a more systematic and practical Course of Study for each of the Classes in the Public Schools.

15. Discriminating, by a clearly defined line, the Course of Study in Public and High Schools respectively.

16. In addition to a carefully revised Programme of Studies, a comprehensive "Limit Table" of these Studies was prescribed—appended to which was a three-fold series of lessons, (1) on "Common Things," (2), on "Natural History," and (3), "Moral Lessons," on "Truth and Honesty," "Respect to Superiors" and "Obedience," together with twenty other similar specified subjects relating to Moral Duties, designed for "Friday Afternoon Talks" by the Teachers with the children of the Schools. This series of lessons and the subjects of the "Friday Afternoon Talks" were omitted from the Programme by the new Minister after Dr. Ryerson's retirement.

Such were the main features of the comprehensive and progressive School Act passed in 1871. In many respects it revolutionized the existing state of things. It gave a wonderful impetus to the Schools, and to every department of the School System—the effects of which has been felt ever since.

I recall with pleasure the great services which Lord Elgin rendered in 1848-1855 to the cause of education, at the then critical period of its history in this Province. His speeches and addresses on the subject at that time had a wonderful effect in moderating the opposition which Dr. Ryerson received while laying the foundations of our System of Education. They had also the potent effect of popularizing that System in the estimation of the people which it was designed to benefit. That popularity happily continued for long after, thanks to the

dignity imparted to the subject by the persuasive eloquence of Lord Elgin. His eminence as a distinguished Graduate of Oxford, and his general knowledge of European Systems of Education, enabled him to speak with a precision and certainty which few could gainsay. It was a gratifying fact that he identified himself personally, as well as officially, throughout the whole of his seven years' administration, with the general education and intellectual improvement of the people of Canada. The first Bill, to which His Excellency assented in the Queen's name, was the School Act of 1850, to which I have referred.

Being in England in 1853, on Library and Depository business, Dr. Ryerson wrote to me there as follows :—

"I was glad to learn that Lord Elgin was to go in the same Steamship with you from Boston. I have no doubt it will have proved interesting to him, as well as to you, and perhaps useful to you. I miss you very much from the Office, but I do not like to employ any more aid without the sanction of the Government, though I could get no one to take your place. I would wish you to write me as to what Lord Elgin may have thought, or have said, as to our doings and plans of proceeding. If the Library plan succeeds, it will achieve noble results.* I feel that our success and happiness in the Department are inseparably united."

It was indeed fortunate for my mission that I was on the same Steamship with His Excellency, Lord Elgin, who was very kind and courteous, and to whom I entered into full detail in regard to the objects of that mission. Before leaving the Steamer, Lord Elgin most kindly promised to aid me in every way he could while in England, and gave me, in writing, his address as "Broom Hall, Dumfermline," in case I should have occasion to refer to him. He also added the following paragraph to the Letter of Instructions and authority which I had received, and which, in more than one instance, I found to be of essential service to me :

"I believe the object of Mr. Hodgins's mission to be most important to Canada, and I trust that he will meet with all support and encouragement.

"ELGIN AND KINCARDINE, Governor-General.

"September, 1853."

In 1848, Dr. Ryerson commenced the publication of the "Journal of Education for Upper Canada," and, for some years, continued it at his own expense. Subsequently it was made the official organ of the Education Department ; but, in 1877, after an existence of thirty years, it was discontinued by Order-in-Council. As an estimate of its value, as an educational agency, I here quote the following expression of opinion

* Lord Elgin always referred, in his educational addresses, to Dr. Ryerson's General Library Scheme as "the Crown and Glory of the Institutions of the Province."

on the subject by the Hon. Henry Barnard, the first United States Commissioner of Education at Washington. In a Letter to the Chief Superintendent of Education, he asked :—

“Why do you not have a minute topical Index prepared to your ‘Journal of Education’? It is so full of the history, the principles, the methodology, the biography, and literature generally of schools and education. Such an Index will make your sets valuable, not only to your own Scholars, Teachers and Statesmen, but to Educationists everywhere. It is a monument of intelligent and practical editorship.”

When the Baldwin Government were in power in the early fifties, the Members of that Government were urged to remove Dr. Ryerson from office. The Hon. Francis Hincks, who had charge of the School Bill of 1850, on behalf of the Government, refused to do so. In giving his reasons for this refusal, he said :—

He could not find that the reverend gentleman, since his appointment, had entered, in the slightest degree, into the field of politics; and, as he discharged his duties with great zeal and ability, they had no reason to interfere with him. . . . His (Mr. Hincks’) determination was to give him the most cordial support; as a Member of the Government he considered it his duty to do so. . . .

“There were two or three ways,” he said, “of removing the Chief Superintendent. One was to make the office a political one; but, after the best consideration being given to the question, it was not considered advisable to do so. The proposition to abolish the office, he was satisfied, that to do so would have the worst possible effect on the educational interests of the country. The third mode was to remove the Incumbent altogether. Then the question would come up: ‘Had he acted in a manner to justify his dismissal,’ etc., etc.

Mr. Hincks fully performed his promise “to cordially support” the Chief Superintendent, and, in that year (1850) he put in the “Estimates” the sum of \$60,000, to enable him to erect Normal and Model Schools, and the Education Offices. That sum, not being sufficient, Mr. Hincks subsequently placed a second vote of \$40,000 in the Estimates to enable the Chief Superintendent to complete his plans.

It was while Dr. Ryerson was in England in 1850-51, that he made arrangements for establishing a general Library, Prize Book, and Apparatus and Map Depository, in connection with his Department. His reasons for doing so may be thus briefly stated :—

1. He felt it to be practically useless to train Teachers in the best methods of imparting instruction, and in the use of Apparatus and other School Appliances in the Normal School and not then provide for them, when in charge of Schools, a constant and abundant supply of those necessary appliances, at the very cheapest rates.

2. He held it to be equally necessary that the pupils, who had acquired a taste for Reading and knowledge in the Schools, should have an equally abundant and perennial supply of the best and purest literature, as it issued from the press; otherwise they

would be sure to procure reading matter, (often pernicious, of which he had painful proof), for themselves.

3. He could see no distinction, and, therefore, could not admit of any, in the principle of providing such a two-fold supply of School Material and Reading matter, and in that of providing Trained Teachers and skilled Inspectors at the expense of the Province, as well as a money bonus to aid in maintaining the Schools in a state of efficiency.

4. He further felt that it was immaterial whether the money voted by Parliament was expended in one direction, or in the other, so long as, in each department of the system, the best interests and necessities of the Schools were consulted, and the symmetry and efficiency of the School System, as a whole, were preserved and promoted.

5. He projected this plan of supply on a purely commercial basis, and so arranged and successfully carried out his scheme that while there was distributed nearly a million dollars' worth of School Material and Books, up to the time when the Depository was closed by Order-in-Council, in 1877, it did not cost the country one dollar for the expenses of its management, as it far more than paid its way, notwithstanding the vehement self-interested statements to the contrary. An elaborate Report, which fully proved this fact, was prepared by Mr. James Brown, an experienced accountant, under the direction of Hon. Adam Crooks, the first Minister of Education. It more than sustained the statements here made. In submitting his Report to the Minister, Mr. Brown said:—

"I have examined all the Books, Accounts and Papers necessary for obtaining complete information, and my work has been aided by the willing co-operation of Dr. Hodgins, Mr. Marling, and other Officers of the Department. I have thus been enabled to investigate with facility a large amount of work, involving the operations of the Depository from its origin in 1850, through twenty-five years of constantly increasing business, down to the end of the year 1875, and I am now enabled to present in the following (abstract) statement, the actual result of these operations."

"ABSTRACT OF THE EDUCATIONAL DEPOSITORY ACCOUNTS FROM
1850 TO 1875.

"Total amount of legislative grants to the Depository for all purposes, viz.: (1) Purchase of stock, and (2) Salaries and the entire cost of management, etc., 1850 to 1875 inclusive	\$811,523 72
"Total value of Books, Maps and Apparatus despatched from the Depository, 1850 to 1875 inclusive	803,067 86
"Difference of Stock to be accounted for	8,455 86
"Net value of the Stock on hand at the end of 1875, after paying all expenses of management, etc.....	79,509 41
"Deduct the difference of Stock to be accounted for(as above)	8,455 86
<hr/>	
"Grand Total of Profits made by the Depository, after paying all charges, as above, during the years 1850-1875.....	\$71,054 55"

During the time that the Educational Depository was in operation—from 1853 to the end of 1876—the following is a summary of the number of Maps, Charts, Globes, and other Apparatus, which was sent out from it to the Schools, etc.:

Number of Maps and Charts of various kinds sent out:—Fifty-four thousand, Four hundred and fifteen (54,415).

Number of Globes and Pieces of Apparatus:—Thirty thousand, One hundred and fifty-eight (30,158).

Number of sets of Historical and other Lessons in sheets:—Two hundred and Ninety-three thousand, three hundred and eight (293,308).

Total number of Library and Prize Books sent out to the Schools and Mechanics' Institutes, and also to Sunday Schools:—One million, Two hundred and Fourteen thousand, Four hundred and Seventy-one volumes (1,214,471).

After his return to Canada, and as a Member of the Legislature, Mr. W. L. Mackenzie frequently made attacks on the Educational Depository. At my request, however, he came to the Depository and spent some hours in going over such invoices, papers and other documents, which he called for, connected with its operation and management; and, at the end of his examination and enquiries, he expressed himself to me as perfectly satisfied. At a later period, (as I have stated in the "*Story of My Life*," page 187), when the Rev. John C. Geikie, then a Book-seller in Toronto, commenced his attacks on the Depository, Mr. Mackenzie, in his *Weekly Message* newspaper, thus referred to these attacks:—

"At one time we thought with the redoubtable Geikie, that Dr. Ryerson's Book Concern was a monopoly, but a more thorough enquiry induced us to change that opinion. We found that great benefits were obtained for the Townships, the County Schools and general education through Dr. Ryerson's plan, which could in no other way be conferred upon them."

In 1868, at the request of the Chief Superintendent, a Select Committee of twenty-three Members of the House of Assembly, (selected from both sides of the House), was appointed by the Legislature to make a thorough investigation into the working—especially of the financial operations—of the Education Department. A sub-committee, under the chairmanship of the Hon. John McMurrich, was appointed to inquire into this matter. In their report they say:

"Your Committee find, that the system adopted by the Department is of so thorough and complete a character, that no funds can by any possibility be received without being checked by proper Officers, whose several duties require them to make entries in various books, through which every item can readily be traced.

"Your Committee have also made a thorough investigation of the Depository department, and find that the existing arrangements for purchasing stock are satisfactory and well fitted for securing the same on the most favorable terms. The mode of disposing of the Books, etc., is equally satisfactory."

In 1855, twelve Meteorological Stations were established by the Chief Superintendent; in 1857, he selected Paintings, Statues, etc., for the Educational Museum; and, in 1873, he gave seventeen prizes, (in sums varying from five to forty dollars), for Plans of School Houses, etc.—out of thirty-one designs offered for competition.

There are one or two features of Dr. Ryerson's character to which I desire to refer. The lessons which they teach may inspire the younger men of to-day with a desire to profit by them.

Dr. Ryerson was, in his early days, an indefatigable and diligent student; and as, in his after life, he proved that he had thoroughly mastered the principles of the somewhat abstruse subjects, in those days, of "Locke on the Human Understanding," Paley's "Moral and Political Philosophy" and those sections of Blackstone's Commentaries relating to the "Prerogatives of the Crown," "The Rights of the Subject," and the "Province of Parliament."

It was the practical knowledge thus gained which enabled Dr. Ryerson so ably to discuss with Lord Sydenham and later Governors, questions effecting systems of government and administration, and also to deal with important matters in the press, relating to public polity and Constitutional Government.

Those of us who can so vividly recall Dr. Ryerson's after career can well remember how trenchant a writer he was in matters of controversy, and how skilfully he defended, when attacked, the various features of the popular system of education which he had founded; and, in doing so, he never failed to "carry the war into Africa," by showing how ill-informed his assailants were as to matters of fact, and how superficial they were in their criticisms of his practical schemes.

As to the light in which Dr. Ryerson's labours,—as the Founder of the System of Popular Education in the Province—were regarded by a very noted English Educationist, I here quote from the Official Report of the Rev. James Fraser, (afterwards the highly gifted Bishop of Manchester), who, as an Imperial Commissioner, was deputed to inquire into the systems of education in the United States and Canada. After describing the system of education in this Province, he said:—

"Such, in all its main features, is the School System of Upper Canada. A system not perfect, but yet far in advance, as a system of national education, of anything we can show at home. It is indeed very remarkable to me that in a Country, occupied in the greater part of its area by a sparse, and anything but wealthy, population, whose predominant characteristic is, as far as possible, removed from the spirit of enterprise, an educational system so complete in its theory and so capable of adaption in practice, should have been originally organized, and have been maintained in what, with all allowances, must still be called successful operation for so long a period as twenty-five years. It shows what can be accomplished by the energy, determination, and devotion of a single earnest man. What national education in England owes to Sir J. K. Shuttleworth, what educa-

tion in New England owes to Horace Mann, that debt education in Canada owes to Egerton Ryerson.

"He has been the object of bitter abuse, of not a little misrepresentation ; but he has not swerved from his policy or from his fixed ideas. Through evil report and good report he has resolved, and he has found others to support him in the resolution, that free education shall be placed within the reach of every Canadian parent for every Canadian child."

With such of his contemporaries as had, more or less, intimate relations with him, he was regarded with very great esteem, and, in many cases, with the warmest feelings of personal friendship. In a letter written to me by the late Very Rev. Dean Grasett—so long associated with him as Member and Chairman of the Educational Council of the Province,—he said :—

" I shall carry to the end of life the liveliest feelings of respect for the public character, and regard for the private worth of one who has rendered to his Country services which entitle him to her lasting gratitude. . . . I esteem it an honour that I should have been associated with him in his Council for so many (30) years, and a privilege if I have been of the least assistance in upholding his hands in performing a work—the credit of which is exclusively his own."

RIGHT REV. BISHOP STRACHAN :—" One new feature of the School System which I consider of great value, and for which I believe we are altogether indebted to the able Chief Superintendent, it is the introduction of daily prayers in the schools. . . . As far as [Dr. Ryerson] is concerned, I am one of those who appreciate very highly his exertions, his unwearyed assiduity, and his administrative capacity."

RIGHT REV. BISHOP BETHUNE :—" I have to express my gratification that I have had the opportunity to bear my humble testimony to your zealous and righteous efforts to provide the sound education of the youth of this Province. I believe that, in the endeavour to give this a moral and religious direction, you have done all that, in the circumstances of the Country, it was in your power to accomplish."

In addition to the foregoing semi-official tributes to the character and labours of the Chief Superintendent of Education, I insert the following more private and personal expressions of the kindly appreciation of his work by persons who knew him more or less intimately, and, who therefore, felt less hesitation in placing on record their high opinion of the great services which were rendered to his native Country by Dr. Ryerson.

THE HON. ISAAC BUCHANAN :—" In the fall of 1831, I came to York to establish a business Branch. From that time, I knew Dr. Ryerson, and formed that high opinion, both of his abilities and of his character, which went on increasing more and more, so that for the last forty years of his life, I regarded him as Canada's Greatest Son."

THE HON. SIR FRANCIS HINCKS :—" Prior to the Union of the Provinces I differed in opinion with Dr. Ryerson on some important public questions. After his appointment as Chief Superintendent of Education, I soon discovered that he was peculiarly fitted to carry out a most important work, and I felt it my duty to aid him to the utmost of my power ; and it was very gratifying to me to know that he acknowledged, on many occasions, that I had rendered him valuable aid. For more than thirty years our friendship was unbroken ; and you will, therefore, readily under-

stand how desirous I am to obtain the "Story of My Life,"—the preparation of which has fallen into the hands of one who had the best opportunity of appreciating its author."

THE HON. SIR ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, (who unveiled Dr. Ryerson's Statue in 1889), in recounting the incident of his having copied, for the Kingston *Herald*, Dr. Ryerson's Defence of the Hon. M. S. Bidwell in 1839, as it was not safe or prudent for him to suffer his own hand writing to go to the press, said: "The incident made a great impression on me at the time, and was the beginning of a friendship with which Dr. Ryerson honoured me, and which ended only with his life."

THE HON. GEORGE W. ROSS:—"With a patriotism which no man ever questioned, with talents which no man could fail to appreciate, with a tenacity of purpose which no difficulty could daunt, he devoted his life to one purpose, the establishment of a school system which would fully meet the wants of a free, strong and progressive people. It is said of Augustus that he found Rome brick and left it marble. It may be said of Dr. Ryerson that he found our school system without any definite organization, he left it highly organized. He found it weak in influence and poor in circumstances, he left it endowed with houses and land and millions of treasure. He found it tolerated as traditionally respectable, he left it enthroned in the affections of a free people."

THE HON. JOHN MACDONALD:—"Egerton Ryerson has deserved well of his country. His best days and his best energies were given to the up-building of its grandest institution. His country guards and cherishes his memory; and let the young people of this country learn the lesson, that he, who devotes his life for his Country's good, his Country, will hold his memory not in fragrant only, but in perpetual, remembrance."

SIR SANFORD FLEMING:—"I have but to look back over a period of forty years to recall the living form of the sculptured figure before us, and to remember the time when, in the zenith of his strength and intellectual power, he brought to bear on the great work of his life that wisdom and foresight, that indomitable perseverance and patriotism, that zeal and devotion with which he was gifted . . . I thought then, and I think now, that the people . . . of the whole of Canada, of all ages, of all classes, of all colours and of all creeds, owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Ryerson, and . . . that we all do well to revere and perpetuate his memory."

THEODORE H. RAND, ESQ., LL.D.:—"While Ontario was not the first of our Canadian Provinces to organize a free system of public schools, the grandeur of the outline of its School System and the general completeness of its details are, I believe, unsurpassed by those of any other System on this Continent, or throughout the Empire. This is especially true of the completeness of the provision made for passing from the Elementary Schools into the work of the higher education. Ontario occupies this advanced position to-day, with all its immeasurable advantages, largely because of Egerton Ryerson. . . . Believing that our civic institutions should afford social conditions inferior to those of no Country in the world, he poured all the energy of his great heart and mind into the effort to make available, even to the remotest hamlets of the Province, the blessings of knowledge. Intelligence, industry and morality were felt to be inseparably bound up with the progress of education. A system good enough for the rich and poor alike, and supported at the public expense, was his aim and his final achievement."

THE REV. DR. WILLIAM CLARK:—"It seemed to me that Dr. Ryerson's conception of the work of education was singularly simple, earnest, deep and comprehensive, free from affectation and one-sidedness. We

were in danger of forgetting some of these elements, of making education showy, instead of solid,—of forgetting that it was the education and discipline of the man, and of the mind, that we had to accomplish, and not the outward adornment of him, or the mere imparting of knowledge. . . . But more enduring than building, or effigy, was the intellectual and moral work which Dr. Ryerson had accomplished in our educational institutions, for that work was eternal. Its effects and influences would never pass away, but would go on leavening generations yet unborn. Whatever changes, or revolutions, might occur, his work and its consequences would still live on.

THE REV. WILLIAM ARTHUR, OF ENGLAND:—"Dr. Ryerson . . . was the servant of his country, and his country delighted to honour him, and will hold him in permanent and honourable remembrance."

THE REV. DR. DOUGLAS:—"Egerton Ryerson's patriotic service to the State in resisting the introduction of . . . ecclesiastical monopolies will ensure to him enduring recognition as one of Canada's noblest benefactors. . . . The academies and schools, which his organizing genius brought into existence, lifting up successive generations to the dignity which education ever confers, will make that name immortal."

THE REV. DR. POTTS:—"His greatness was a many-sided greatness. He would have been great in any walk in life. In law he would have been a Chief Justice. In statesmanship he would have been a Prime Minister. He was a born leader of his fellows. He was kingly in carriage and in character. The stamp of royal manhood was impressed upon him physically, mentally, morally."

THE REV. DR. BURWASH:—"The early schools of this Country were very varied in their type. Prepossession and usage rule imperiously in education. Each little colony, or settlement, as it was called, had its national prepossessions. . . . To-day we have everywhere the Canadian School, unique in its character and well-known in its results all over this Continent. The skilful mind that took possession of these materials, that carefully separated the good from the bad, that patiently and wisely removed, or overcame, prejudices, that calmly waited till the public mind was ready for each progressive movement, and then with vigour pushed it forward to speedy completion—this was the noble gift which Dr. Ryerson devoted to his Country's service. Gathering his materials for building up a perfect Educational System from all lands, and from the wisdom and experience of all ages, this great man wrought out his life-task in the face of political prejudices, of national prejudices and of sectarian prejudices. I know of no man of his day who rose more fully than did he above the narrowness of all these. From the elevation of a broad catholicity he grasped the great outlines of a comprehensive and National System of Education for the Upper Canadian people, and patiently did he work toward that as his ideal. It would be too much to say that he completed the ideal. Such is not often given to mortal man. There are problems in this work still unsolved. There is still something for us to do. But, in the solution of these problems, we may well thank God for the broad, strong foundations and structures planned and so nearly completed by this Master Workman."

THE REV. DR. DEWART:—"The vigorous personality of Dr. Ryerson lifted the office of Chief Superintendent of Education into a prominence and importance in public estimation that it never had before. . . . He discharged the duties of this high office with a broad intelligence and with rare executive ability which have for all time stamped his name and influence on the educational system of his country."

THE REV. DR. BLACKSTOCK:—"As the fearless and powerful champion of civil and religious liberty. . . . Dr. Ryerson is associated in

our memory with the patriotic and Christian struggles of a past generation.

. . . In respect to the incorporate system of Public Instruction. . . . we feel that with it his name must ever be associated."

THE REV. DR. WITHROW :—" No man has ever passed away from among us in Canada whose true greatness was so universally recognized as was that of Dr. Ryerson. He lived in the hearts of his countrymen. We quote from the *N. W. Christian Advocate*, of Chicago :— ' Men like Wellington and Washington save their country, but men like Ryerson make their countries worth saving.' "

THE REV. DR. G. R. SANDERSON :—" The obligations under which this land is placed by Dr. Ryerson—by his heroic and successful advocacy of ' Equal Rights '—has never been overestimated. Men of a later generation, who personally knew nothing of the condition of religious, or political, life, when, practically, as a stripling, Egerton Ryerson entered upon his chivalric career against clerical exclusiveness, can form but an imperfect idea of the heroism displayed, or of the apparently hopelessness of the struggles, or of the priceless advantages secured to all the Churches of this country by Egerton Ryerson. To no man who ever lived in Upper Canada are we so much indebted for the religious equality, now happily enjoyed by all, as to him."

THE REV. WILLIAM SCOTT :—" In no part of Dr. Ryerson's career does his character shine forth more brilliantly than when contending for public rights against special and exclusive claims."

Although the Methodist General Conference of 1882 passed a very comprehensive and sympathetic resolution in regard to Dr. Ryerson, yet the foregoing tributes to his memory and to his work by such of his brethren as knew him the more intimately, are touching and beautiful in their spontaneous expression of love and reverence for the man, and for his character and labours.

Many other tributes were paid to the public services of Dr. Ryerson by various persons, but I am not in possession of them and cannot, therefore, refer to them.

As the Head of a Department, Dr. Ryerson had the rare gift of attaching to himself all of those who served under him. He differed also from many other Heads of Departments in that (metaphorically speaking) he never assumed to be such a Colossus in power and strength, or such a Solon in wisdom and foresight, as to have achieved all the success which marked his administration. He regarded those under him—each in his sphere—as co-workers, and took pride in "rendering to all their dues," and especially "honour to whom honour."

As to myself, he never failed in kindness and courtesy, and in hearty appreciation of my services in the Department. As an illustration, I may here quote the following extract from a letter which he wrote to me on the day that he retired from the Department. In that Letter, written as soon as he reached home, and which he signed "Your old life-long friend and fellow-labourer," he said :—

"I felt too deeply to-day when parting from you at the Office to be able to say a word. I was quite overcome with the thought of severing our

official connection, which has existed between us for thirty-two years, during the whole of which time, without interruption, we have laboured as one heart and one mind in two bodies."

In the administration of the School System of the Province Dr. Ryerson was not so much a man for details as for comprehensive measures. He was ever on the "Watch-tower of Observation," making himself, by means of repeated tours in England and the United States, acquainted with the educational movements and progress of these Countries. He thus familiarized himself with the peculiar features and characteristics of the systems of education outside of Canada. He was especially careful, however, not to recommend any of the features of these systems of education until he had satisfied himself of their practical adaptability to this Country, and that they were suited in every respect to the circumstances and wants of the people.

Such was the official atmosphere and practical school in which it was my privilege to labour as "Chief of the Staff," under an able Administrator and a warm personal friend, for thirty-two years; and although it is now twenty-six years since Dr. Ryerson retired from his active work, yet I look back to those years of association with him as the very pleasantest of my now (1902) fifty-eight years of continuous service in the Education Department of this Province.

It has been so often, and so persistently stated, that Dr. Ryerson's retirement in 1876 was wholly spontaneous, and entirely voluntary; and that he gave it as a free expression of his opinion, that a Parliamentary Head of the Education Department was desirable. To my personal knowledge this is not a correct statement of fact, but only a popular inference, from various circumstances of the case.

In "*The Story of My Life*," I gave the following reasons, amongst others, which induced Dr. Ryerson to propose a change in the headship of the Education Department. I said:—

"For many years after the Confederation of the Provinces, Dr. Ryerson felt that the new political condition of this Province, which localized, as well as circumscribed, its civil administration of affairs, suggested a change in the management of the Education Department. He, therefore, (as early as in 1868-9, and again in 1872,) urged upon the Government the desirability of relieving him from the anomalous position in which he found himself placed under the new system. The reasons which he urged for his retirement are given in a pamphlet devoted to a 'Defence' of the System of Education, which he published in 1872, and are as follows:—

"When political men have made attacks upon the School Law, or the School System and myself, and I have answered them, then the cry has been raised by my assailants that I was interfering in politics. They would assail me without stint, in hopes of crushing me, and then gag me against all defence or reply!

"So deeply did I feel the disadvantage and growing evil of this state of things to the Education Department and School System itself, that I proposed, four years ago last December, (i.e., 1868) to retire from the Department, and recommended the creation and appointment of a Minister of Public Instruction."

In addition to the official correspondence which took place on this subject, quite a number of private Letters were exchanged between him and a Member of the Government at the time. These Letters Dr. Ryerson intrusted to me, with the desire of having them published, (which I intend to do), at a future day.

In his Letter to me of the 21st of February, 1876—the day of his leaving the Department, he said :—

“Although I know that you have been opposed to the change, yet, could I have believed that I might have been of any service to you, or to others, with whom I have laboured so cordially, or that I could have advanced the School System, I would not have voluntarily retired from office.”

In my “Sketch of Rev. Dr. Ryerson,” read at the unveiling of his Portrait, and that of Rev. Dr. Nelles, in Victoria College, in 1894, I quoted the following passage from a Letter written to me by Dr. Ryerson, while in London, near the close of 1876, in which he said :—

“Had the Government allowed us to work, as we had done in former years, and sustained us, we would have done great things for our Country . . . and I could have died in harness with you. But it was not to be. . . I have no doubt it will be seen that the hand of God is in this, as it has been in all of our work for more than thirty years.”

The last important official act of Dr. Ryerson was to arrange for the Educational Exhibit of the Department at the Centennial Exhibition in 1876. That was most successfully carried out; and, at the close of that Exhibition, the following highly gratifying “Award” was communicated to the then venerable ex-chief, after he had retired from office. The Award was made by the American Centennial Commission, and was to the following effect :—

For a quite complete and admirably arranged Exhibition, illustrating the Ontario system of Education and its excellent results; also for the efficiency of an Administration which has gained for the Ontario Department a most honourable distinction among Government Educational agencies.

This Award was quite a gratification to the retired Chief of the Department, then in his seventy-third year, and amply repaid him, as he said, for many years of anxious toil and solicitude, while it was a gratifying and unlooked-for compensation for all of the undeserved opposition which he had encountered while laying the foundations of our Educational System.

Having so long enjoyed the warm personal friendship of such a man, it is no wonder that I cherish his memory with sincerest affection. I am delighted that Victoria College does honour to his noble character, and thus recognizes his services in its behalf, and, in a wider and more extended sense, his active labours for the benefit of his native Country, which he served so long, so faithfully, and so well.

APPENDIX.

I have inserted on page 7 a warm-hearted expression of feeling in regard to Dr. Ryerson from Dr. Ormiston, my beloved friend of many years; (for he and Dr. Nelles and I were undergraduates together). Yet the following beautiful and touching tribute to the great worth and sterling nobility of Dr. Ryerson's character is so eloquently expressed, by Dr. Ormiston, that I cannot forbear from inserting it here.

MY DEAR DR. HODGINS,—It affords me the sincerest pleasure, tinged with sadness, to record, at your request, the strong feelings of devoted personal affection which I long cherished for our mutual *father* and friend, Rev. Dr. Ryerson; and the high estimate, which, during an intimacy of nearly forty years, I had been led to form of his lofty intellectual endowments, his great moral worth, and his pervading spiritual power. He was very dear to me while he lived, and now his memory is to me a precious, peculiar treasure.

In the autumn of 1843 I went to Victoria College, doubting much whether I was prepared to matriculate as a freshman. . . . Dr. Ryerson, who at that time was Principal of the College, visited me in my room. I shall never forget that interview. He took me by the hand; and few men could express as much by a mere hand-shake as he. It was a welcome, an encouragement, an inspiration. . . .

Many times in after years, have I been instructed, and guided, and delighted with his conversation, always replete with interest and information; but that first interview I can never forget. It is as fresh and clear to me to-day as it was on the morning after it took place. It has exerted a profound, enduring, moulding influence on my whole life. . . .

Dr. Ryerson was, at that time, in the prime of a magnificent manhood. His well-developed, finely-proportioned, firmly-knit frame; his broad, lofty brow; his keen, penetrating eye, and his genial, benignant face, all proclaimed him every inch a man. His mental powers vigorous and well disciplined, his attainments in literature varied and extensive, his experience extended and diversified, his fame as a preacher of great pathos and power widely-spread, his claims as a doughty, dauntless champion of the rights of the people to civil and religious liberty generally acknowledged, his powers of expression marvellous in readiness, richness, and beauty, his manners affable and winning, his presence magnetic and impressive, he stood in the eye of the youthful, ardent, aspiring student, a tower of strength, a centre of healthy, helpful influences—a man to be admired and honoured, loved and feared, imitated and followed. And, I may add, frequent intercourse for nearly forty years, and close official relations for more than ten, only deepened and confirmed the impressions first made. A more familiar acquaintance with his domestic, social, and religious life, a more thorough knowledge of his mind and heart, constantly increased my appreciation of his worth, my esteem for his character, and my affection for his person. . . .

His acceptance of the office of Chief Superintendent of Education, while offering to him the sphere of his life's work, and giving to the country the very service it needed—*the man for the place*—was a severe trial to the still struggling College. . . . Into this new arena he entered with a

resolute determination to succeed, and he spared no pains, effort, or sacrifice to fit himself thoroughly for the onerous duties of the office to which he had been appointed. Of its nature, importance, and far reaching results, he had a distinct, vivid perception, and clearly realized and fully felt the responsibilities it imposed. He steadfastly prosecuted his work with a firm, inflexible will, unrelaxing tenacity of purpose, an amazing fertility of expedient, an exhaustless amount of information, a most wonderful skill in adaptation, a matchless ability in unfolding and vindicating his plans, a rare adroitness in meeting and removing difficulties—great moderation in success, and indomitable perseverance under discouragement, calm patience when misapprehended, unflinching courage when opposed, —until he achieved the consummation of his wishes, the establishment of A System of Public Education second to none in its efficiency and adaptation to the condition and circumstances of the people. The system is a noble monument to the singleness of purpose, the unwavering devotion, the tireless energy, the eminent ability, and the administrative powers of Dr. Ryerson, and it will render his name a familiar word for many generations in Canadian Schools and homes; and place him high in the list of great men of other lands, distinguished in the same field of labour. His entire administration of the Department of Public Instruction was patient and prudent, vigorous and vigilant, sagacious and successful.

A prominent figure in Canadian history for three score years, actively and ceaselessly engaged in almost every department of patriotic and philanthropic, Christian and literary, enterprise, Dr. Ryerson was a strong tower in support or defence of every good cause, and no such cause failed to secure the powerful aid of his advocacy by voice and pen. He was truly a catholic and charitable spirit. Nothing human was alien to him. A friend of all good men, he enjoyed the confidence and esteem of all, even of those whose opinions or policy on public questions he felt constrained to refute or oppose. He commanded the respect, and secured the friendship of men of every rank, and creed, and party. None could better appreciate his ability and magnanimity than those who encountered him as an opponent, or were compelled to acknowledge him as victor. His convictions were strong, his principles firm, his purposes resolute, and he could, and did maintain them, with chivalrous daring, against any and every assault.

His intellectual powers, of a high order, admirably balanced, and invigorated by a long and severe discipline, found their expression in word and work, by pulpit, press, and platform, in the achievements of self-denying, indefatigable industry, and in wise and lofty statesmanship.

His moral nature was elevated and pure. He was generous, sympathetic, benevolent, faithful, trusting, and trustworthy. He rejoiced sincerely in the weal, and deeply felt the woes of others, and his ready hand obeyed the dictates of his loving, liberal heart.

His religious life was marked by humility, consistency, and cheerfulness. The simplicity of his faith in advanced life was childlike, and sublime. His trust in God never faltered, and, at the end of his course, his hopes of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, were radiant and triumphant.

Dr. Ryerson was truly a great man, endowed with grand qualities of mind and heart, which he consecrated to high and holy aims; and though, in early life, and in his public career, beset with many difficulties, he heroically achieved for himself, among his own people, a most enviable renown. His work and his worth universally appreciated, his influence widely acknowledged, his services highly valued, his name a household word throughout the Dominion, and his memory a legacy and an inspiration to future generations.

There can be but one opinion as to the eminent and valuable services he has rendered to his Country, as a laborious, celebrated pioneer preacher,

an able ecclesiastical leader, a valiant and veteran advocate of civil and religious liberty—as the founder and administrator of a system of public education second to that of no other land—as the President and life-long patron of Victoria University, *whose oldest living Alumnus* will hold his memory dear to life's close, when severed friends will be reunited; and whose successive classes will revere as the first President and firm friend of their Alma Mater, as the promoter of popular education, the ally of all Teachers, and an example to all young men.

I lay this simple wreath on the memorial of one whom I found able and helpful as a *teacher* in my youth—wise and prudent as an *adviser* in after life—generous and considerate as a *superior officer*—tender and true as a *friend*. He loved me, and was loved by me. He doubtless had his faults, but I cannot recall them; and very few, I venture to think, will ever seek to mention them. The green turf which rests on his grave covers them. His memory will live as one of the purest, kindest, best of men. A patriot, a scholar, a Christian—the servant of God, the friend of man. . . .

Yours, very faithfully, in bonds of truest friendship,

W. ORMISTON.

NEW YORK, Oct. 6, 1882.

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- Dr. Ryerson: A review of "The Story of My Life," and a study based upon it. By Rev. J. Antisell Allen, of Alwington House, Kingston, Ont. 10 pages. 40 cents. Toronto, 1884
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