PRICEVILLE SCHOOL!

The Teacher's Defence.

To the Editor of The Advance.

Dear Sir:—I have been somewhat amused during the past few weeks over the correspondence in your paper by which one or two unprincipled adventurers have endeavored to spew out their spleen against me as teacher in Priceville P. S. Hitherto I have said nothing but now that the matter seems to be about closed up and I am wholly indifferent as to the opinions of such correspondents I respectfully ask for space in your journal to refute the charges that have been trumped up against me.

In the first place to go back to the time of my re-engagement, I may say, that the great grievance of Mr. Reiley, the opposing trustee, was in consequence of the failure of his son to pass the Entrance Examination and he has since alluded to his son's failure through your columns where he also said, "I consider a teacher deserves very little credit who passes the above number (5) when all the lessons examined have been laid down in the Educational Weekly for months previous to the Examination. This gives the teacher a chance for loading pupils &c." Is it not strange Mr. Editor that Mr. Reileys wonderful boy did not take the additional 39 marks and thus save himself from the disgrace of getting 'plucked' at so easy an Examination as Mr. Reiley claims this to have been. We have Mr. Reiley's own words that the most ferocious animal, the lion, can be educated. This is perfectly true and herein he and I agree; but sir, you know, and so does Mr. Reiley that there are several animals in and out of the forest that are not so capable of being so successfully educated.

Mr. Reiley and his friend the Prowler have also seen fit to make charges against the manner in which my pupils passed the Entrance Exam. having said that only 3 passed successfully and two others by appeal. Now, sir, this is not true as five passed successfully three appearing in the first list published and the other two having been recommended to the Education Department by the Board of Examiners received their certificates independent of the appeal that was made by us in accordance with the School Law, the money being refunded by the Education Department. Mr. Reiley's boy was not even recommended. The School Law provides that in case of an appeal accompanied by $2.00 the papers of the Entrance candidate, will be re-read by the highest examining body in the Province who will thus revise and correct, if neccessary, the work of the Local Board of Examiners, and hence any one passes successfully, who receives his certificate in consequence of an appeal. Prowler's statements show that he thinks he knows better than the Education Department when pupils are fit for the High School. When he says that the other scholars were neglected to cram those going to examination he is guilty of a wilful lie. I have always attended to my duties faithfully and steadily and have never been late during the three years now nearly completed. Notwithstanding Mr. Reiley's statement that I did not send for the marks obtained by his boy I may say that I sent for the marks of all my pupils who wrote and Mr. Reiley knew this before he made that false statement in his letter, as I told him myself, and even showed him the marks in the presence of the other trustees.

Regarding the petition for our removal that was circulated throughout the section, I may say that it is quite true that 35 signatures appeared, some however, never read the petition and signed it under base misrepresentation, one man having told me that he signed it thinking that the object was to remove Mr. Reiley from the office of trustee. Several others regretted having signed said petition when they knew the true state of affairs.

The petitioners failed to put in their grievances in writing to the Trustee Board when requested to do so by the Secretary, and the two trustees who at the previous meeting agreed to retain my services still expressed their willingness to stand by the decision of that meeting. However not wishing to remain where a few malicious individuals were trying to impair my usefulness I resigned.

As to the children of this section going to other schools the Priceville Prowler bases his statements upon the fact that the children of two families in the outskirts of the section go to the school in an adjoining section as a matter of convenience, the parents owning property in both sections, and they have stated that they have nothing against either of the teachers of this section. The Prowler however neglected to state that there are children attending this school from another section whose parents have no property in this section and others come three miles to this school who are nearer another school.

It will also be admitted by any reasonable person that the two teachers in Priceville School have a sufficient amount of work to do as the attendance is and has been between 100 and 120, the average for past few months being about 110. This is not a bad attendance Mr. Editor in a section in which your correspondent says the majority is dissatisfied.

Moreover I may add that the percentage of average attendance to the total number on the register is 15 per cent. higher in this section than the average in the Co. of Grey and 10 per cent. higher than in the Counties of this Province taken as a whole. This may be seen by referring to the statistics published in the latest Report of the Minister of Education, and to the latest returns of this school to the I. P. S.

Prowler's attack on my religious belief is altogether false and in the opinion—not of Prowler's but of respectable Christian gentlemen does not emanate from any Christian motive or display Christian charity but is prompted by petty spite. I am not a materialist or sceptic and I think I have proper respect for sacred things, and would be sorry to practice the teachings of Scripture as he does. It seems to me the following verse from his favorite poet Burns would apply to him,—

"Grunt up a solemn lengthened groan
And damn all parties, but your own,
I'll warrant then ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer."

However after all is said and done Prowler and all anonymous scribblers are scarcely worthy of notice, and in this respect I give Mr. Reiley credit as he is not ashamed of either his name or his nationality.

In conclusion, Mr. Editor, I rejoice with Mr. Reiley in the fact that this is a free country, and also that a teacher as well as an Irishman may spend his money where he pleases. When I engaged "to teach the young idea how to shoot" I expected to get my salary in cash and not in such trade as some Priceville shop-keepers can supply and at such prices as they choose to ask. Now, Mr. Editor, though I have been treated with so much abuse by the clique and their servant, yet I have no doubt if I had made all my purchases from some, caroused and drank with others, and used some blarney with the rest, I would have been "the best fellow out" so much interested are they in Education. This being their only real cause of complaint I recommend them to the sympathy of the public who I trust will deal leniently and considerately with those poor, pigmy-souled little growlers, prowlers, and howlers. Thanking you for your valuable space I am

Yours &c.
W. L. DIXON.

Priceville, 11th Dec. 1886.

Mr. McGowan's Letter.

To the Editor of The Advance.

Sir,—No one dislikes a newspaper controversy more than myself, and I had not the slightest intention of taking part in one—especially when other persons are made the targets. My sole object was to do justice to two Teachers, whom, I consider were unfairly treated. I had no personal object to serve whatever; neither had I the slightest malice or illfeeling towards the Trustees. In fact Mr. Reiley acted like a gentleman in signing his own name, but that miserable *Prowler* is ashamed to do that; but, shielding himself under a name, which should be his right one, he distorts facts and deliberately lies. He also depreciates the offorts of the Teachers in passing children at the entrance examination, and says they were crammed. How does he know, and what better test is there of scholarship than examination?

He also betrays his ignorance when he says pupils had lost so much time in their common school education. Prowler ought to know that the subjects they are examined in are the fundamental ones are of a common school education. Neither were the other scholors neglected, for they got their full share of time according to the time table, as I am well informed.

Prowler further insinuates that certain fees and manipulations were necessary to pass two of the scholars. This is false. The usual fee was sent down with a request for a re-examination of their papers. *The money was returned* by the Educational Department, as they had been passed before any request was made. One of the pupils who passed had only been ten months in the fourth class.

It seems strange to me that if in the case of the Durham school the inability of the Principal to pass scholars was the most powerful argument against him, and yet in Priceville—according to Prowler—the opposite is the case! And he would like the Teacher to be kicked out because he has turned out good scholars and beat all the other schools in the riding!

The strictures on the Teacher's religion are shameful, and could only be used by a prevaricator. They are spitefully calculated to do an injustice and no sneak should be allowed to make such cowardly attacks *unless he would sign his own name.*

In conclusion I wish to say that I have presumed to write to you to enter my earnest protest against Prowler's mean treatment of two hardworking, well-conducted Teachers, by a man ashamed of his name,

Yours very truly,
R. McGOWAN.

Letter from Mr. Reiley.

To the Editor of The Advance.

Sir,—I noticed a very intelligent letter in your last issue re educational matters—at least such was it expected to be; but, instead the ghost of Crusoe's goat is trotted out and made to do justice as a substitute! Old age, or loss of memory, or something else caused him to forget his name, or—which is most likely—he was so much ashamed of his correspondence that he did not even want to let the Editor know his name. This man would undertake to lay out the Bible selections for the educational Department, and no doubt wonders why he was not called upon to select them! Balaam, the Prophet of old, had a very intelligent donkey, who addressed his master in a more edifying manner than the ass brays in our day. Only that the Editor smote him for his name, we would not have heard his bray at all!

I will not comment further upon "Anti Clique's" letter, which is beneath my notice. Let him face the music over his own name like a man, and he will find me ready to answer him every time he can "screw his courage up to the sticking point." Otherwise he can bray away like Balaam's ass as much as he likes.

M. REILEY.

Education and Politics.

To the Editor of The Advance.

Dear Sir:—It is really too bad that the subject of education should be dragged by our politicians through so many shiny partizan mud-puddles. You know this militates very strongly against teachers, when the truth is not told. When a child is asked to get a certain book, there is many a complaint raised, caused to a good extent by those inflammatory speeches often heard.

Let me quote a few prices from official regulations. For readers, old series, four books, $1.05; new, $1.35. Gage's prices for the old are higher than these, and still I heard a speaker say they cost only 65 cents! Grammars, 7 books authorized, prices 25, 20, 25, 25, 25, 60, 45 cents. Two of the 25 cent. ones are used almost exclusively while the 60 cent one is scarcely used at all. And still that speaker said we used to pay a shilling for Lennie's Grammar while now we have to pay 75 cents!

For Geographies, 6 books authorized, 4 with maps, 2 physical. Their prices are 65, 75, 50, 25, 75 cents, and $1.50. The $1.50 one is far advanced and unsuitable for common schools. And still, that speaker said now we have to pay $1.50, while the 65 cent and 75 cent one, especially the latter, are almost exclusively used.

For Historys, the new one—comprising both English and Canadian—costs 35 cts. This displaces a Canadian history at 30 cents, and two English histories at 65 and 30 cents. This was not touched on by that gentleman.

Now, I don't say some of these books are not rather high, but it is really too bad to make them out worse than they are. If any one disputes these figures, I would ask him to get his teacher to shew him the list on the register cover, or send for a list for himself to the Department.

TEACHER.

Dec. 13, 1886.

Manitoba Letter,

From our own Correspondent.

Readers of the ADVANCE will recollect that in my last correspondence I mentioned the pleasant fall weather here, but soon after—about the last week in November—it gradually became colder, some what windy, snow began to fall, and now, Dec. 1st, we may exclaim with Dr. Thomson in the old "English Reader"—

"'Tis done! dread winter spreads his latest glooms,
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquer'd year.
How dead the vegetable kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful! Horror wide extends
His desolate domain. Behold, fond man!
See here thy pictured life; pass some few years
Thy flowering spring, Thy summer's ardent strength,
Thy sober autumn fading into age,
And pale concluding winter comes at last
And shuts the scene."

Yes, we are beginning to enjoy (?) a *Manitoba winter*, which thus far, is more enjoyable, so to speak, than the damp, chilling, freezing atmosphere of the South when it is winter there. Now it is winter here, and—

The broad prairie's surface is cover'd with snow,
Already jack frost is quite two feet below.
The music of sleigh-bells are heard in the street
But, take care of your ears, nose, fingers & feet,

I must not omit mentioning the fact that men, women and children here, all, as a general rule, appear as healthy and happy as in Ontario, altho'

STORM DOORS AND WINDOWS

are in "full blast," or demand, because "King Winter's icy breath" is searching around, and entering at every crack and crevis; yes, and through solid walls. However, we have suffered as much "up to date," with cold, in year's past, in Ontario. Allow me to advise all dwellers in a Northern climate to provide "storm doors" and "storm windows" for their houses. They are just the thing, and will pay cost the first winter, by saving of fuel; double doors, double windows, and *double comfort!* Comfort? of course there is a species of winter comfort, as well as

"A joy in being mad,
Which none but mad men know."

A short letter this time, Mr. Editor, as I have other letters to write, but can write only a little each day on account of my bodily suffering.

Have you, or your readers, seen the—*our*, "*Nor West Farmer*?" published in this city. It is well worth perusing by every farmer in Canada. Now, let me brag a little. The Secretary having seen some of my newspaper correspondence, wrote me, expressing a wish that I would become a contributor to its columns! I have commenced doing so—just a little—but promised something larger for the January number. I am and have been regularly supplied with this excellent magazine *free*, almost from the time of arriving in Winnipeg; am also promised "pay" for my correspondence. Now, have I not a right to call it OUR "Nor' West Farmer?"

Still wishing to see the ADVANCE advancing, I am Yours truly,

WM. PURDY.

Winnipeg, Dec. 4, 1886.

LOCAL SKETCHES.

(Specially Contributed for The Advance.)

At the Schools.

TORONTO GRAVEL.—Mr. C. J. Sproule was diligently engaged with the duties of his important calling, but there was such excellent order, that we paused a while at the door, thinking surely there is no school to-day. On entering we found—quietly pursuing their studies—about 40 bright, intelligent children, ranging from 7 to 14 years of age—a good attendance for such a stormy day. Grammar, geography, music, etc. outlined on the walls spoke of the conscientious interest which Mr. Sproule takes in his work. A very creditable exercise in orthography and geography being gone through by an advanced class, we proceeded, by the Teacher's permission, to have a friendly talk with the scholars. They paid close attention, answered questions correctly, and impressed us very favorably with all we saw of them.

FLESHERTON,—On Friday, near Boyne bridge, we overtook Mr. G. Keefer, who was going to school, and enjoying his company—and feeling that a little more schooling would not come amiss to us, we went along with him, as did several others of our townspeople. We found Mr. Irwin at his post, looking somewhat worn with his day's work, but in an excellent mood. He is quite the master of his work, and in a natural, easy way, throws an abundance of energy into it. An atmosphere of cheerfulness pervades the company and all seem to enjoy the process of acquiring knowledge by which Mr. Irwin leads them on. An exercise in Geography and another in History having been gone thro' with great credit, a visitor takes the place and directs the pupils to ask questions, which they do to the satisfaction of all. The bell rings, a brief stand-at-ease occurs and then we are called to order for the programme. Mr. E. Richardson was now called to the chair and made his presidential debut with such perfect composure and good grace as to inspire very sanguine hopes for his future. The programme consisted of chairman's address, some 9 or 10 songs, 5 readings, 6 recitations and 1 caricature sermon, which beautifully illustrated the evil of pious sentimental emptiness. The several performers acquitted themselves well and proved to us their growth, not only in the education which points mainly to commerce, but also in loyalty and patriotism. If they will only guard against that *flattery* which destroys its thousands, and that *conceit* which destroys its tens of thousands, these Flesherton children & youths have a glorious future before them. Rev. W. Ayers gave a brief, appropriate address. Mr. Keefer spoke words of good sense. What Pastor Watson said we are not at liberty to tell. The National Anthem, three cheers for Principal Irwin and his worthy assistant, Miss Hopkins, and three cheers for the visitors, brought the pleasant evening to a close.

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