

sister in his too great devotion to whiskey, profanity and tobacco. The other was conducted by Tom Kelly—a large-hearted little cripple from “across the way,” who was a cobbler by trade and a teacher by profession, and who carried on both occupations simultaneously in the schoolroom. He would half-sole a pair of boots while hearing a class read, and would put a neat patch on a shoe while giving out a column of spelling. Poor Kelly was afflicted with some “trouble in his vitals,” for which he had to “sely take “doctor’s stuff,” which he procured from a little brown jug locked up in his desk. Every now and then, when his vitals were unusually bad, he had to unlock the desk so frequently and take so much of the “doctor’s stuff” that the little brown jug would give out, and then our teacher would become “spachless and all sthruck of a hape,” and in that state we would have to carry him home and put him to bed. Such were not unfrequently the school experiences of fifty years ago. Teachers and schools of higher repute were to be found, but they were exceptions to the rule. Indeed, no words of mine can convey a more vivid portraiture of the literary and social status of the Public School teachers of that day than is incidentally and very unintentionally afforded by a single paragraph of the formal protest then made by the Gore District Council against the Chief Superintendent’s project for establishing a Normal School for the training and better education of teachers. That important public body protested against the expenditure of public moneys for the support of a Normal School, on the ground that the scheme would prove inoperative, since (giving the words as nearly as I can recollect them), “For its supply of Common School teachers Upper Canada will have to depend in the future, as it has done in the past, upon discharged soldiers, and those who from physical or other disability are unable to gain a livelihood by any other means.”

Beginnings of Revolution.

It belongs not to me to dwell upon the revolution in educational affairs which followed the opening of the Normal School, or upon the admirable work done by its early as well as by its later graduates. Myself, an ex-Normalite of that period, and otherwise intimately related to our graduates as a body, I can scarcely hope to be accepted as an impartial witness in their behalf. That they did grand mission work is, however, conceded by all. They were the zealous and faithful apostles of the newer educational regime. Wherever they secured a foothold in the land they became the exemplars of higher educational aims and of better