

Society, and Societies formed among the other professions of the Province, each conserving and advancing its own special interests, the title of "The College of Preceptors for Ontario" will, perhaps, be appropriate, considering the objects we have in view. Some suggested the title, an "Education Society" for our projected union: the aptness of the former, and the vagueness of the latter, are obvious, and will, doubtless, decide the matter as to the name by which the union shall be known. As an art, education is very old; old, I presume, as the human race; but as a science it is among the last born, scarcely yet named in the English language; and although it concerns itself with every other science, and is surpassed by none in its promise of ever-widening benefit to mankind, the followers of the art scarcely take rank as a recognized profession. The State in its desire to provide an education for youth takes charge of the teacher as well as of the school. His position is that of a sort of civil servant, "cribbed and confined" by regulations and by-laws; bound to serve, not one, but many masters; scarcely consulted in matters pertaining to his work; his part is to carry out a prescribed curriculum in a prescribed way; he is left limited room for development in his calling; and little opportunity for making his individuality felt.

It is the aim of the contemplated union to provide a remedy for these defects, and, it is fitting that this movement, which has been long talked of and discussed, should be taken up by the Ontario Teachers' Association—the only organization of the kind amongst us that is provincial in its character. We must have, as a representative body, a brotherhood of teachers; our aims and sympathies are in harmony; there is, or should be, a feeling of loyalty to the profession, and a professional *esprit de corps*, which is above mere personal matters. I feel, therefore, that whatever conclusion this Association comes to in regard to this very important question, it will meet with the hearty approval of all the teachers of the Province.

We need more organization and less isolation; we should know each other better than we do; we want a fuller recognition of the necessity of good professional training, and a more adequate appreciation of our work on the part of the public. I have no doubt that these objects may be pursued successfully, because the whole complexion and temper of the times are favorable to their present discussion. Not only is there a wide interest taken generally in education, but there is abroad a spirit of robust and intelligent criticism, not, of course, perfectly instructed, nor always based on profound study, but on the whole intelligent criticism; and it is assuredly a sign of a healthy condition when our work attracts such criticism.

Any effort at forming a union having in view merely our pecuniary gain will certainly fail, as savoring too much of trade unionism, and placing us in a position of antagonism to the other professions, and to a very important and influential class of sympathizers in our national system of education. There are defects in our educational system which our scheme should seek to remedy, if we cannot show that the projected scheme will benefit the public as well as the teaching profession, we need not hope to succeed. We want a fuller recognition as a profession; teaching is something more than a trade—a means of getting money; it is, or should be, a real vocation or mission—a something for which a man has certain talents to be turned to right account; it is not only a service but a ministry. It requires a professional training—the direct training in the art of teaching, and an indirect training which comes from our own devotion to thought and research into truth. We claim for those entering the teaching profession a professional training secured by the influence of spirit—the power of full conviction and of moral influence—and the influence of law.

The first and most important essential in teachers themselves is a conviction of duty—a something like enthusiasm for the work. The public can stimulate these influences for us; they can look upon our work in the same light, and from a point of view as high as that from which we ourselves regard it, but unless we have these higher influences, unless there is a feeling of duty, and that enthusiasm in the profession which is begotten of self respect, as well as an earnest regard for the good name of every member of the profession; and unless these are taken for granted by the public, we will never maintain the teaching profession in its true and fully accredited position.

But there is a decided function of law in this matter—its directing and stimulating function. The public have surely as good a right to be secured by proper qualification in this as in the medical or legal profession. So far as the patrons of the schools under government control are concerned, the protection is ample; but what of other schools? The injury done by an inexperienced or ill-trained teacher is infinitely greater than a mistake made in the other professions. The child is committed to the teacher's hands in the very morning of life, when the character, still more than the young limbs, is, so to speak, in the gristle. Both limbs and character have acquired some of their proper consistency and powers of resistance; but too low much of the intellectual and moral frame are not the first impress and shaping given at school? Is this a matter to be disregarded? Mistakes that lie on the surface, and are easily seen, are soon remedied, and the best means are employed to prevent their recurrence; but mistakes that affect the proper care and culture of the intellect and character—"that unspeakable mystery on earth, a thinking, reasoning, discoursing, immortal creature"—are so subtle and the consequences so remote that they often pass unheeded. No one now questions the value of the professional training of teachers, or the right of the State to impose a rigorous supervision of the teacher's work; but this supervision does not go far enough. Any scheme proposed will but half meet the necessities of the case that does not concern itself with teachers of all grades, and with teachers not at present under the control of the Department of Education; our organization must extend from the highest rung in the educational ladder to the lowest—from the highest chair in the university system to the humblest private school in the land. The inefficient teacher should not be permitted to practice privately in educational work any more than the sciolist should in medicine or in law. Teaching is not a mere piece of job-work to which any one may turn his hand, but a professional calling which requires knowledge, judgment, and experience.

Holding these views with regard to the value and character of the teacher's work, and of the necessity for some sort of organization, a review of the operations of the College of Preceptors London, England, will, I dare say, aid us in working out the problem before us. The English College of Preceptors was established in 1846, and incorporated by royal charter in the year 1849. It was founded, we are told, "for the purpose of promoting sound learning and of advancing the interests of education, especially among the middle classes, by affording facilities to the teacher for acquiring a knowledge of his profession, and by providing for the periodical sessions of a competent Board of Examiners, to ascertain and give certificates of the acquirements, and fitness for their office, of persons engaged or desiring to be engaged in the education of youth."

With these aims in view the charter empowered the College to hold examinations of teachers and schools, and to grant diplomas and certificates to such persons as pass these examinations satisfactorily.