

ledge, some of them to save their lives could not take a second-class certificate under the new law. On the whole, however, the present system of examining teachers is a decided improvement on the old one; properly qualified teachers have nothing to fear, and those who are not properly qualified must either become so, or abandon the profession. Under the old law, almost any one was permitted to teach. The young farmer or mechanic, to whom the winter afforded a few months of leisure; the young man who was desirous of making a little money, which he might spend in amusement, or at college; the broken-down lawyer, doctor, or preacher, the halt, the lame, I had almost said the blind—the indolent, and sometimes those partly deaf, or nearly blind, found employment in teaching. In this state of things, teaching could not be called a profession,—it was not even a regular or respectable business.

But while what I have said is true, of teaching as it *was*, it is not true of teaching as it *is*. Ontario has at length a competent authority for testing the qualifications of her first-class teachers, in the persons of the gentlemen comprising the Board at Toronto. Already some hundreds of incompetent persons have been driven from the teachers' ranks—others have been reduced to their proper level, much dead matter has been sloughed off, and a young but vigorous, distinct and independent profession is being organized. The success of this work, in a great measure depends upon the teachers themselves. If those who have been lowered in rank will only work themselves up to the standard, every teacher in Ontario will have the satisfaction of seeing combined with him, in the noble work of mental and moral improvement, a body of men at once courteous, honorable, and intelligent. What has been done, however, is quite sufficient to establish the profession as a matter of teaching, so far as it can be done by a provision for testing the

qualification of those who desire to become teachers.

The principal conditions that seem to be necessary to secure for any avocation the rank of a profession have been stated, and, I think, it has been shown that teaching answers these conditions. If so, an impartial public will award that rank to teaching which it justly merits, if teachers are only true to their profession and to themselves.

I might pause here, and conclude that the claims of teaching to rank as a profession have been established, were it not for certain objections which are sometimes urged against this conclusion. Among those are: 1. That teachers do not make the business of teaching permanent. It is granted that this is lamentably true, and that no other cause does so much to destroy the professional character of teaching. The members of the other professions, however, do not always follow that in which they engage. Changes, indeed, are quite frequent, and, if these changes do not affect the standing of the professions in which they take place, similar changes, even though they be more numerous, ought not to affect that of teaching.

The chief cause of these changes heretofore, has been the insufficiency of the salary paid teachers. Young men qualifying themselves for law, medicine, and Divinity, were glad to avail themselves of the business of teaching as a means of procuring the necessary funds for prosecuting their studies, and very good teachers they sometimes were; but now that none but properly qualified persons can engage in the profession, it is to be hoped that the remuneration will be proportionably increased; and that the changes will diminish in an inverse ratio. Besides, this practice of allowing others to make a stepping stone of teaching, is absolutely unjust to the few who are qualified, and who love their profession, and remain faithful to it. It is believed that this number is rapidly increasing, and