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I. ONTARIO TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

REV. PRESIDENT NELLES' ADDRESS.

At the recent Teachers' Convention in this city, Rev. Dr. Nelles, the President, delivered the following eloquent and forcible address.\*

IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER'S PROFESSION.

I shall occupy the time allotted me this evening in offering some observations for our encouragement and guidance as teachers. And, first of all, let me say, it is of importance that we think well of our calling. We cannot be too deeply impressed with the beauty, dignity and value of the teacher's work. In every profession the great secret of success is an enthusiastic concentration of effort. Nor has any one but an apostle, or at least the successor of an apostle, stronger reasons than the teacher for magnifying his office. No doubt teaching has its less attractive side, and the quiet simplicity of the employment disguises from common view its real grandeur. The school-house is often badly built, badly ventilated, and badly kept; the entire premises reminding one of Whittier's picture of the old Puritan graveyard,

"With scanty grace from nature's hand,  
And none from that of art."

It seems from a paragraph which appeared lately in the newspapers that in the townships of Ops and Mariposa (I purposely mention the names) the school houses are not fit for stables, and I heard a Trustee in the School Convention of Northumberland, held a few months since, give a similar character to some schoolhouses in that county.† Again, the schoolmaster

is poorly paid; but though poorly paid, is none the less expected to render efficient service. An American deacon once apologised to a friend of mine for his pastor's sermon on the ground that he was "only a seven hundred dollar preacher!" We commend this theory of indulgences to those other deacons who manage the temporalities of our Common Schools. The children of the school are sometimes untidy in their persons, coarse in their manners, and either dull at learning or quick at mischief, or perhaps both the one and the other. The results of an evil parentage and a bad home come out in the school-room; and while the iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children, the iniquities of both fathers and children are visited upon the teacher. On the most favourable supposition, the teacher's life is one of hard work for body and mind, and second to none in that other element which, according to Dr. Arnold, kills sooner than work—the element of *worry*. And yet despite all these things, and more that might be said, let us be proud of our profession. The ruder the materials on which we work, and the more repulsive the surroundings, the greater our praise. In our hands alone is the wand of the enchanter by which savages are transformed into men. Mechanics, and farmers, and lawyers, and doctors, and clergymen, and editors, and legislators—all are very useful members of society; but only when they have passed under the quickening touch of the schoolmaster. In a new country, especially, the great necessity is that of culture. The husbandman stands on the borders of a wilderness; before him are trees, stumps, rotten logs, rocks, briars, bogs, wild beasts and vermin. He brings to bear his labour and skill, and in a short time the whole landscape is changed; the air is filled with fragrance of new-mown hay; the harvests wave in the wind; the orchards are laden with fruit; the flocks and herds graze in the meadows; and the ships traverse the ocean bearing the produce of that husbandman's toil to feed the starving millions of other lands. Not less abundant and of a still higher order is the return from that other tillage, so aptly termed by Bacon "the Georgics of the Mind." And though in this agricultural land the wealth

\* An account of the proceedings of the Convention will be found at the close of this address.

† In regard to Ops, the Local Superintendent thus writes to the *Globe*:—"I beg to call attention to a paragraph quoted by Dr. Nelles, in his learned and eloquent opening address to the Teachers' Association, in your city, in which the school-houses of Ops are said to be unfit for stables. The statement in that paragraph is much too general, as there are but three out of the eleven school-houses of Ops which are of a very inferior quality, all the others being of the best description—of brick—large and commodious, and well finished. Even those three inferior ones will not stand long under the enlight-

ened offer from the municipal Council, of twenty-five per cent. to each section, to aid in providing suitable school accomodation. By referring to the last annual School Report, you will find that Ops is not far behind any of the older townships in its efforts for education. Its competitive examinations, at which \$60 worth of books obtained from the department are annually distributed; its high salaries offered to Normal and first-class teachers; and the general interest manifested in the quarterly examinations by parents, clergymen and other friends of education, place it—and deservedly place it—amongst the most advanced townships in the Province.