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THE TUNING FORK.\*

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THE slight sketch which I propose to present this evening will be drawn from the border-land between Science and Art. Chosen from such a quarter, any subject, I may safely assume, is sure to command attention from those who advocate a rational system of education. The chief boast of this Province is its admirable system of public schools, as fit for the richest as they are free to the poorest in the land. To the cause of elementary education especially do we contribute with open hand. This, too, is the age of the inspector and the superintendent; and here, if anywhere, we flatter ourselves, there is no longer a danger of "the innocents being slaughtered," as in days gone by. Notwithstanding our confessed superiority in all these respects to a former age, no one, I trust, is satisfied that we have reached the educational

millennium, or that the youthful mind receives at school precisely that training which best fits it for the battle of life. The Gradgrinds are not all dead yet, and many a father is still vexed in spirit because his children do not worship unceasingly at the shrine of the "hard grain'd Muses" and their kindred sisters. With the present condition of our schools I am not, I regret to say, personally familiar; but I accept as facts acknowledged on all hands the improvements which have taken place in the buildings, in the methods of discipline, and in the efficiency of the staff. In these respects the school of to-day is far superior to my old acquaintance of five and twenty years ago. How far the present general scheme of elementary education merits the praises so lavishly bestowed on it is quite another question, which ought not to be hastily decided in our own favour without inquiring if we

\* An address delivered before the Toronto Teachers' Association, on the 23rd January, 1880.