

# Ontario Normal College Monthly.

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## Ontario Normal College Monthly

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WHAT is the *status* of the teacher in Ontario at the dawn of the twentieth century? Does he rank socially and officially as one of the learned professions? In other words, how does he fit into the great complex fabric of society?

Society is being divided up more and more into classes which are gradually becoming, at least apparently, incapable of coalescing because of lack of community of purpose or interest. Such broad classes as laborers, mechanics, merchants and the learned professions are themselves subdivided into many well-known distinct groups.

Clergymen, physicians and lawyers have for centuries been recognized as members of the learned professions. Historically they have obtained their dignity and influence through the inestimable services which they have rendered to their fellow-men. The clergyman comforted the broken-hearted, relieved his physical necessities and explained the Providences of God so that life became "real and earnest." The physician relieved by his skilful treatment physical pain and in another way made life worth living. The lawyer assisted the man falsely accused in vindicating his integrity. All honor to such men! Noble professions!

The teacher, as that term is now understood, has not had quite the same history. In a certain sense clergymen were for ages not only ecclesiastical but secular teachers but this consideration for present purposes may be neglected. The teacher strictly so-called and speaking in a general way has not always enjoyed the dignity assigned to the noble professions. For ages the masses were very ignorant and incapable of appreciating the services of a teacher. Think for a moment how the great religious and educational reformers, who were really teachers, were at first received. A survival of this spirit is still to be seen when attempts are made to bring our educational system nearer to the ideal.

With the revival of learning, the invention of the printing press and the revival of religion, the position of the teacher has gradually undergone a great change. To-day the teacher is really, if not nominally, on an equality with any or all of the so-called learned professions. His services to society are similar to the combined services of the clergyman, the physician and the lawyer. He ministers to the spiritual, intellectual and physical necessities of his pupils in a very real and effective manner. Many a pupil has ascended high the ladder of fame through the advice and encouragement and sometimes pecuniary aid of his teacher. Many a pupil has developed a strong constitution through the observance of