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Teachers Among Themselves.

(Paper read by Mr. F. Hicks before the Teachers' Association.)

The subjects which have principally occupied the attention of this Association during the present session have been almost, if not entirely, connected with the direct work of the teacher as an instructor. Such peculiar attention must necessarily be the case in all associations of men—whatever their occupation. Even when men in some particular line of life band themselves together for any purpose, whether of amusement or otherwise, one may safely estimate that at least one-half of their intercourse and conversation will have reference to their daily work in life.

This being the case, it would be no matter of wonder if our Association confined itself exclusively to the consideration of modes of teaching and other matters bearing directly upon the school-room.

But there exist, for the teacher, other relations than these technical ones and it will be my endeavour, this evening, to shew that these latter relations are not few nor unimportant—that their cultivation or neglect has, in many ways, a powerful effect on us teachers, and, indirectly, through us, on our schools. Nor, this alone, but, also, that the direct influence of such action on our schools cannot be lightly reckoned.

The most careless reader of the history of our present civilization cannot fail to have remarked the tendency of men engaged in some common pursuit to unite them-

selves into associations. These associations have, naturally for their object, the preservation of the interests and the furtherance of the projects of the members, individually, and as a class. The immense influence that these associations have exerted on the governments of the countries in which they exist, and the share they have contributed to the bringing about of our present condition of enlightenment and civilization, appear from the mere mention of the names of a few of these combinations and their results.

The association which was formed expressly to gain and did gain the Englishman's charter of liberty.

The immense associations of the various churches now existing. (Of course I do not mean to ascribe the power of these all to the combination—but the associations are, at any rate, the means:)

The association of merchants which founded the vast Eastern Empire of Great Britain.

To come closer to ourselves—the English Educational League and the various teachers' associations in England. No country in the world is, probably, just now making greater progress in primary education than England, and any one who has read the recent educational periodicals of that country cannot fail to perceive the influence exerted by the teachers' associations—from the college of Preceptors downwards.

Examples of this nature might be multiplied, but I will conclude with the statement that this is an age of associations—ours is a civilization of associations.

This, then, being the case, and we, having formed ourselves into an association, the questions naturally arise—“Have we secured such results to the community and to ourselves as might be expected? Are we securing such results as may be expected from an association of men like us, who from our education should know our power and how to use it? Do our schools feel a fresh impulse after the second Friday in each month? Are we rising, as a body and individually?”

The first of the last two questions may, I think be safely answered in the affirmative. And this I reckon a proudly distinctive feature of our association. We are not bound together like commercial guilds merely to advance our personal interests, but we almost ignore them to consult