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THE PAST SUCCESS OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.*

When we speak of the "past success" of Sunday Schools, I think it would scarcely satisfy earnest workers in that department of Christian labour, to be simply told (as an evidence of "success,") of the origin, growth and progress of Sunday Schools which have been established throughout the world, since Raikes first gathered his little flock together, to tell them the simple and touching story of the cross.

WHAT WE SHOULD REGARD AS EVIDENCES OF "SUCCESS."

The "success" of which we would like to hear, and which would encourage us in our work, and animate our hopes for the future, would be rather a knowledge of the potent influences which Sunday Schools exert; and of the successes which they have achieved, not only in multiplying the springs of individual usefulness, but in developing the sources of Christian effort and enlightenment.

When a great and decisive battle has been fought, and a successful campaign terminated, statesmen and military leaders deal less with the individual facts of the battle-field;—of prisoners taken and guns captured from the enemy—than with the triumph of national policy of which they are the evidence, and of the principles of international law which have been placed in the ascendant. They also watch with interest the springs and internal forces of national life which have been developed and strengthened,—the theory of military science which has been demon-

* A paper read at the recent Convention of the Diocesan Sunday School Association at Toronto, by Dr. Hodgins, Deputy Superintendent of Education for Ontario, and one of the Vice-Presidents of the Association.

strated, and the dormant powers of national endurance and skill that have been awakened and brought into active play in the contest.

And so it is in the great work of Sunday School effort. Our inquiries, therefore, into its "success" should be rather; what has it achieved in the great scheme of national evangelization?—What springs and resources of Christian life has it developed and strengthened? What theory of popular enlightenment has it demonstrated?—And what dormant powers of Christian endurance and individual effort, has it awakened and brought into activity?

In this brief paper, therefore, we propose to glance at a few of the principal facts which we think are at once evidence of the "success" of Sunday Schools, and a demonstration of their immense power for good.

STATISTICAL FACTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE GROWTH AND PROGRESS OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

I think it desirable, however, as a preliminary, to gratify the desire of those who would like to know what are the direct practical results of Sunday School effort,—(so far as they can be demonstrated by statistical facts.) Such evidence, supported by other collateral facts, irresistibly proves how great have been the achievements of the gigantic enterprise itself, and how rapid has been its growth since the time when Sunday Schools were first established by Robert Raikes in 1781.

Upon consulting the best authorities on the subject, we gather the following interesting facts:—

In England, the number of Sunday Schools in connection with the various evangelical bodies is at present about 25,000. The number of teachers engaged in these schools is nearly 300,000; and the number of scholars not far from 3,000,000. In Wales the number of Sunday Schools is 4,500; teachers, 38,000; and scholars, 420,000. In Ireland the number of Sunday Schools is 3,300; teachers, 25,000; scholars, 240,000. In Scotland the number of Sunday Schools is 4,100; teachers, 40,000; scholars, 400,000. In the two Provinces of Ontario and Quebec the number of Sunday Schools is 2,800; teachers, 25,000; scholars, 200,000. In the United States the number of Sunday Schools reported is 55,000; teachers, 500,000; scholars, 4,000,000. In other countries not enumerated, the number of Protestant Sunday Schools has been estimated at 5,300; teachers, 52,000; scholars, 540,000;—making a grand