

finding they are not alone in the work, but that though more or less widely scattered, there are laborers enough to form a goodly band; that they are in reality surrounded by a host of fellow workers. They will no longer regard themselves as mere units but as members of a wide-extended, far-reaching brotherhood. One can easily imagine how a teacher, from some far off spot, on the bounds of civilization—a pioneer in some settlement recently effected amid our dense forests, would be refreshed and reanimated by a few days intercourse with such an assemblage as this; how, after the meeting, he would wend his way homeward cheered and encouraged, and thus prepared more vigorously and successfully to prosecute the important duties of his vocation.

By means, too, of such associations, opportunity is afforded for diffusing information of vital importance to teachers; not such information, only, as may be obtained from books, for beyond this, much may be learned by intercourse with others, especially those who are engaged in similar duties, but possessed, it may be, of more mature experience, more extended observations, or superior natural ability. "Iron sharpeneth iron so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

Another advantage resulting from these conventions, to the members individually, is the counteraction of that tendency, which no doubt exists, though by misinformed or ill disposed people greatly exaggerated—the tendency, I mean, to egotism, arrogance and dogmatism induced in the teacher by daily intercourse with those who from their tender age are his inferiors in knowledge, experience and judgment, and over whom he wields almost uncontrolled authority. In addition, many teachers, in communities newly formed or otherwise peculiarly circumstanced, acquire by the amount of learning they may possess, their access to books, their fluency in utterance, a degree of importance sufficient to exert a baneful influence on any mind not fortified by an unusual amount of sense and sound judgment. Such an one brought into contact with so large and influential an assemblage of his *confreres* as this Convention brings together, will quickly discover that there are many men as wise and as clever as himself, and that, though, in his own contracted sphere, his judgment was looked upon as little less than oracular, when he emerges into a wider arena he is furnished with a test of his abilities very different from any to which he has been accustomed.

But, again, there are men of quite an opposite character—