

"UNION IS STRENGTH."

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IT is not improbable that most readers of *THE MONTHLY* have, more than once, stumbled over the old saw that forms the title of this article; it is even quite likely that they have expatiated before their classes on the beauty of the moral truth which is thus tersely expressed. On all sides we find apposite examples of its application. In politics, in matters relating to churches, to ministers, to physicians, to lawyers, and to labour generally, there is union, a union too which very materially affects the welfare of those who form the "charmed circles." But of all persons in this Province who most require union, *i.e.*, whose interests might be most beneficially affected thereby, it is nearly a certainty that teachers stand in the front rank. To those of the profession who hold situations in populous centres, this may not seem to strike with much force; but from the nature of the case it must ever be that the majority of teachers shall be in rural situations, and for them more especially, although in a large measure for all, it is claimed that fraternal union is calculated to produce good results. The country teacher is, as a rule, isolated from the great bulk of the Province, except in so far as he may be able to form or renew acquaintances at local meetings, or to glean information from the professional journals. There is utterly wanting anything like a bond even among the teachers of a county, to say nothing of the Province. The fact appears to be that the pedagogues of this country are exceedingly unselfish. At meetings of county and provincial associations the whole time

is devoted to purely professional consideration—how to teach this or that; how to maintain discipline; and generally, how best to manage the school in the interests of the pupils and their parents. This is all very well, but it does not amount to bread and butter for the teacher, except in an indirect and exceedingly slow way.

Teachers of to-day are capable of doing fifty per cent. more (and better) work in the school-room than was possible fifteen or twenty years ago; but there has been nothing like a corresponding increase in their remuneration. Scarcely more than ten years ago the model (!) form of school return issued annually by the Education Department, supposed a school of sixty pupils taught by a teacher at a salary of \$280! It was only after the writer, and perhaps others also, remonstrated with the Department, that this *model* sum was considerably increased. But will anyone say that salaries paid to-day are anything like so proportionately high as is the teachers' present efficiency compared with that of the last ten, fifteen, or twenty years?

It now costs hundreds of dollars to prepare for a certificate, where formerly a premium was actually paid to successful candidates. The cost of living is greatly in excess of what it was within a comparatively recent period, and teachers now-a-days have to spend more in books and appliances than was formerly necessary, yet salaries are but little higher than they were under the old order.

This condition of things is mainly owing to the action or inaction of teachers themselves. There has been