

INTRODUCTION

SOME apology is perhaps needed for the title of this essay. 'Associations' is not yet recognized as a separate subdivision of English Law. We have a law of corporations, the interest of which is now becoming largely antiquarian. Our modern corporations are mostly limited companies, governed by a special code which it takes bulky volumes to expound. Then we have books dealing with partnerships, trade unions, friendly societies, and so on, while some of the matters upon which this essay touches fall, according to the orthodox classification, under the law of trusts.

Now to the Continental lawyer, trained, let us say, upon the German Civil Code or the Code civil, the title would not seem strange. To him the 'Law of Associations' is a well-established subdivision of the law; and this is equivalent to saying that in Continental jurisprudence there are certain general principles upon which the State can recognize and regulate the collective action of men acting lawfully together.

It remains to ask whether, as English law now stands, any such general principles underlie the apparently chaotic mass of rules governing the different forms of association, corporate and