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EDUCATIONAL PAPERS READ BEFORE THE SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION, AT DUBLIN.

The Fifth Congress of the Social Science Association, held at Dublin, terminated on Wednesday, the 21st August. The following is an abstract of some of the more important papers read in the educational department of the Association.

MIDDLE CLASS EDUCATION.

Mr. Joseph Bentley read a paper entitled "The strong claims of the Middle Classes for justice in the matter of Education." The author observed that the educational improvements of late years had been confined to the upper and the lower, without having been partaken in by the middle classes, although the latter contributed, in taxes and subscriptions, upwards of a million a year in aid of improved education. Good teachers constituted the key to all improvement of the kind. Teaching required special qualifications independent of intellectual acquirements; it was susceptible of being developed as an art itself. Traditional forms and customs too much prevailed in the universities, which had not cultivated the *art* of teaching. Colleges for training and certifying teachers for the schools of the poor had already been established, and had produced satisfactory results. He contended for an extension of the principle to all schools. Four years ago a deputation of the Society for Promoting National Education called the attention of the Privy Council Board of Education to the subject. Two years ago Lord Brougham, in the House of Lords, presented a largely signed petition in favour of the establishment of a Government test of the qualification and fitness of middle-

class school teachers as well as those for the humbler classes. The government promised to give the matter their consideration. Nothing had since been done. The plan recommended by Mr. Bentley, to overcome the defect indicated, was the establishment of colleges for the training of teachers for middle-class schools, which would be under Privy Council regulations, but should be supported by private contribution.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

The Rev. John Hall read a paper on "Intermediate Education in Ireland." As a member of the executive committee, Mr. Hall had undertaken, on behalf of the Rev. Dr. M'Cosh, to bring before the section the subject with which Dr. M'Cosh's name had so long been identified.

In the year 1854, Dr. M'Cosh, in a series of letters addressed by permission to the Earl of St. Germans, then Lord Lieutenant, exhibited the condition of the country in such a light as to leave no doubt on the minds of many candid and influential persons that there was urgent need for public interference. Some steps were taken towards it in parliament, but the question became complicated by the introduction of new elements, and changes in the government took place, postponing, let us hope, only till our time, the completion of the educational machinery of the country, so that the boy from the primary school may be helped onward, by a judicious outlay of public money, to the highest advantages the University can furnish. For let it be borne in mind that there is a class of schools, once numerous throughout this country, now almost disappearing before the national system. In the schools of this class a few boys learned classics and mathematics. They were not sufficiently numerous to sustain a school, but the teacher supplemented his income by the instruction of non-classical pupils. The latter, however, have gone to the national schools, and it has ceased to be remunerative to the teacher to keep up his school for the sake of the few classical scholars. Very many Irish towns and villages had formerly such adventure schools, which have entirely disappeared. That the loss is practically great, is proved by the fact that no inconsiderable number of distinguished men at the bar, and in the various churches, have been indebted to these for their preparation for the Universities of Dublin or Glasgow. Many Irish towns, as Dr. M'Cosh showed, with a population of three, four, five, or six thousand, have no classical school; and many populous neighbourhoods, thriving villages, and rising towns, are five, ten, or even fifteen miles from any classical school; while in Scotland a classical