

initiative of combination has proceeded. By the formation of their National Union, by the creation of their own organ, and by their co-operation with Scotch and Irish teachers, they have taken the lead in professional action, and have evidenced an enthusiasm and a cohesiveness not shown by their superior brethren. We may safely say of them, in reply to the questions in our opening paragraph, that their branch of the profession has fared well during the year that is gone; that they are more closely knit together by brotherly bonds than heretofore; that they are less mistrustful of their fellows and more confident in their own cause than once they were; and that by their action during the past year, professional unity has been rendered possible. What we now require is, the bringing together, for professional purposes, the teachers of all grades. Out of the mutual respect for each other's opinions thus engendered would spring the germs of future success. Let us hope that, before the close of the present year, we shall have to chronicle many of these meetings.

The difficulties in the way are not to be underrated; they can be overcome only by the forces of common interest and public devotion. The first aim of every teacher must be the advancement of public education; the next, to sustain the honour, well-being, and dignity of his profession. As an example of these difficulties, we need only cite the many divisions existing among the teachers of second grade schools. There are the *endowed* schools, with vested rights and ancient benefactions; the *private* schools, an odd mixture of excellence and enterprise with incompetency and roguery; and the *proprietary* schools, which are generally well managed and officered. It will be no easy task to weld into one mighty force their various interests, traditions, and prejudices. Again, the very terms applied to different classes of teachers are false and misleading. The *elementary* teacher properly so called, is one who teaches the elements, and is to be found in every school—from Eton and Harrow to the poorest ragged school of the Metropolis. The term is not therefore, synonymous with "certificated teacher, nor are the qualifications of the certificated teacher necessarily of a lower order than those of the unregistered and unstamped private schoolmaster. Other difficulties abound with which we may deal at a future time. For the present it must be sufficient for us to state our full confidence that the unification of the whole scholastic body will gradually become a reality, and that public policy demands it. The profession must be purged of incompetent and dishonest pretenders, and for this purpose nothing would be so effectual as a general union, which could by examination, put a mark on a teacher's worth. That this power would be more safely wielded by a professional body than by the Government few will doubt. With such a union pension schemes would be superfluous, promotion by merit would be secured, and the whole of our schools would ultimately be officered by properly qualified teachers. The social status problem then would solve itself, and the whole education of the country would be placed in the hands of those best fitted by social graces and scholarly acquirements to hold so sacred a trust. Space will not permit us to say more now, but on other occasions we hope to examine fully the various proposals for the attainment of "professional unity."—*The Schoolmaster*.

The Right Man in the Right Place.

Three important reforms tending directly to the elevation of the whole body of National Teachers of Ireland have

been effected during the short time that the present Resident Commissioner, P. J. Keenan, Esq., C. B., (formerly a Pupil of the Central Model Schools, Dublin, and afterwards Head-Master of the same) has held the reins of office. First in order came the opening up of the Head and Assistant Masterships of Model Schools to the competition of all teachers who discharge their duties satisfactorily, and who have the ambition to fight their way to higher positions and brighter prospects. The Regulations have been some time before the public; and in a former number of our Journal we drew attention to the scheme, and analysed its provisions. This was no empty concession; for examinations have already been held, and many eager candidates have come forward to contest these valuable prizes. To our certain knowledge a great number of young persons—hopeful and promising teachers—are now studying most assiduously for the next and future examinations; and independently of the inherent justice of the measure, and the feeling of contentment it is calculated to diffuse among the teachers, it will do much good by stimulating young teachers to study.

Soon afterwards the Resident Commissioner's plan for throwing open the Inspectorships to teachers of Ordinary National Schools, was laid before the Board and passed; and now the case stands this way:—That while all other classes of Her Majesty's subjects require to be nominated—and a nomination is sometimes a thing not easy to procure—the National Schoolmasters are entitled to claim examination without any nomination at all.

It is not easy to estimate the effect of this wise measure on a very large and increasing body of teachers. Many, who are within the age and who have attained the highest class, are already bestirring themselves. We have received a great number of letters evincing extraordinary interest in the matter; anxiously asking for information regarding the nature of the examinations to which the Civil Service Commissioners subject the candidates. So numerous and pressing are these communications, that we have resolved to print the whole of several sets of questions of which we give the first instalment in this issue of the Journal. We expect that this will be productive of much good; for while the questions will deter the incompetent from wasting their time in useless exertions, they will fully enlighten those scholarly men who may fairly hope for success, as to the exact extent and depth of the preparatory study.

But it is the young men who are just entering the service who will be most visibly affected by these openings to high promotion; for they have now an all absorbing motive for study. To use a well-known French phrase, every young teacher may now be said to carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack. Let it not be said that this will make teachers too ambitious. We have heard a great deal of foolish talk about ambition. For our own part we openly assert that we never yet met a really first-rate man who was not ambitious. An ambition to rise—that is, a healthy, well-regulated ambition—is not a reprehensible quality in a young man; but on the contrary, is commendable—a thing to be admired and encouraged. It would be well for the public service and for the country in general, if we had many more men than we have, penetrated with that sort of ambition that constantly stimulates a man to advance himself by means of self-improvement and a conscientious discharge of duty. The greatest benefactors of the human race were urged on to their labours by a noble ambition; and the very men who hold in their hands the destinies of this great empire, would never have reached their present position, or given the country the benefit of their talents, if they did not possess this much-abused quality of ambition,