

ion on educational matters, especially as affecting the colony, which may have weight with educational authorities, or with other Institutes of a similar kind.

These and such like advantages are patent to all. We know that we gain much benefit and much refreshment from meeting together and hearing each other's voices. Whether the words spoken be wise or feeble, the actual human contact, the sense that others are here who share the burden, which in our solitary labours seems almost insupportable — these things carry strength with them quite apart from the question whether we actually receive any new enlightenment or practical guidance in the difficulties of our profession. But there cannot be the slightest doubt that these latter benefits will come, too. No man is so completely master of his profession that he cannot learn from others, and the man who thinks that he is, is a coxcomb. Nay more, experience tells us that those who are greatest in their own calling are most willing and eager to grasp at suggestions from without, are most receptive to new impressions, and are most ready to sacrifice a cherished notion, if any fresh light, from however humble a source, has shown it to be untenable. We should, therefore, deal with each other with perfect honesty and candour. Whoever has an opinion should express it. For if it be right he knows not what fruitful effect it may have in the minds of others; and if it be wrong, the sooner he is aided by a little wholesome criticism in eradicating it from his own mind the better.

But besides these obvious advantages arising from an organization such as this there are others which must not be lost sight of. In the practical details of teaching we are in danger of forgetting the fact that teaching is an art, based on facts of

human nature, and resting, like every other art, ultimately on first principles. We may think that we have nothing to do with these things, that our business is with the practical work of education, and that theories and first principles may be left to dreamers and philosophers. But if this belief be deliberately taken up and acted on, it will have the effect of producing charlatans and sciolists, not teachers. For let us consider—We are operating on an organism of marvellous delicacy and complexity, the human mind. We are leading it into untried paths, we are training it to perform ever fresh and new processes. We are moulding a character made up of innumerable lights and shades, of mysterious potentialities for good or evil. Can it be said that it is of no consequence to us to study the nature of this organism, to know something of the laws and conditions of its development, to understand the nature of the nourishment which it requires, and why one kind of nourishment is good and wholesome, and another kind deleterious? No, we cannot for a moment pretend that we are teachers while we shut our minds to these things. There is a theory as well as a practice of teaching, and it may be safely asserted that the more the theory is understood, the more efficacious will be the practice. But in the ordinary daily drudgery of our profession it is hard to keep these things in view; nay, more, to be constantly falling back on first principles would seriously impair our practical work. But at meetings such as these the want may be, partially at least, supplied. We can here bring ourselves into occasional contact with the deeper meanings of our profession, and thus exalt our view of it at the same time that we gain a fuller insight into its principles. Real progress in any art or profession requires that we should occasionally tear up