

plied, "Yes, sir, I know him." "Well, if he tell you a thing, can you believe what he says?" was the next inquiry. "Its this way," said Pat, "whin he spakes the truth ye can belave ivery word he tells ye, but whin he lies, I'd advise ye not to put any confidence in him at all." So it is with institutes. When they have good conductors and are properly managed, when they work towards right ends, when each member is intent on getting knowledge, then they are among the very best of educational agencies in present use; but when they are supplied with instructors of only fifth-rate talent, when poorly managed, when conducted with a view to the attainment of wrong ends, or when their members are incapable and indifferent, they do not pay.

The importance of institutes asserts itself when we remember that they afford the only direct means for professional culture to a great number of our teachers, a number sometime estimated as high as eighty per cent of those engaged in the work of teaching. Professional schools cannot supply the demand for teachers. So many beginners enter the ranks yearly, that some means must be constantly at hand to give them an insight into the requirements of their calling. The institute is the helper required in this work. Let us consider the benefits it confers.

First, the association of teachers. There is some good in merely becoming acquainted with one another, with the conditions under which they are working, with their successes and failures, their principles and methods, their motives and aspirations. Teachers, especially in the country districts, are very much isolated. They need the inspiration gained from association. They are engrossed with their daily labor, and are deprived of all chance of frequent consultation with others of their own vocation, so their work is in danger of becoming a monotonous task, lacking all incitement to that professional zeal which prompts to new exertion and sweetens every toil.

These meetings foster a professional feeling, and tend to form professional character, that is, so far as the transient service of so many teachers permits anything distinctly professional. As long, however, as present inadequate conditions prevail short terms, low salaries, transient service—teaching will not receive public recognition as on an equality with the other learned professions. Normal Schools and Institutes have done much, however, towards attaining this end. Teachers, especially in the isolation of country

schools, are but units; their coming together gives them the inspiration and power of an organized body.

Institutes serve to awaken public interest. This is shown by the increased attendance of citizens, and the greater public interest in educational matters. Though the addresses and lectures have special reference to school work, there is much in them of popular interest because it concerns the work of the "common" school. Parents and directors are brought face to face with the teachers, and their common interest gives them a common sympathy. The parents and directors see the work of the teacher in a fuller light, understand and appreciate it better, and are thus prepared to give increased sympathy and a more enthusiastic support to the people's schools.

As respects their organization and management, institutes are of three kinds. One is equivalent to a short term Normal school. The length of the session is from two to four weeks. It has regularly formed classes, a course of study, a teacher for each branch, and a conductor. Such an organization might be called an Normal Institute. There is another, less expensive, in which the greater part of the instruction is done by leading members of the body of teachers present. Such an assemblage of teachers might be called a convention of teachers. This also is valuable when well managed. It has a sort of potential energy, but the conditions for the development of its force are generally conspicuous by their absence. The third is the institute conducted on the lecture plan. It lasts three or four days. In the best of these institutes, the instruction is furnished by foreign talent of a very high order. Two or three lectures are part of the programme for daily work. Were all who attend ready for instruction of this kind, one of these four-day institutes would be of great value. Unfortunately this essential condition is generally wanting.

The purposes to be served by institutes are such as these: To make teachers systematic in everything they do, to lead them to adapt instruction to the ability and wants of their pupils, to instruct them in the philosophy underlying all methods of school management and instruction, to lead them to study profoundly the child mind, to fill them with a love for their work and a quenchless love for the immortal souls whose destenies, in a large degree, they shape, in short, to effect an inspiration for the noblest of all employments.