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ENDOWED SCHOOLS

OF

IRELAND.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

THESE chapters, which have appeared in the *Daily News* during the Parliamentary recess, are reprinted before the opening of the session, in the hope of awakening the attention of the friends of education in general, and of our legislators in particular, to the danger of the misapplication of Irish Endowments. It is understood that Government is likely to bring forward a measure opposed to the recommendations of the Report of the majority of the Commissioners. The passage of such a measure can scarcely happen if the Report does but obtain due and timely attention from the members of the Legislature, as it assuredly could not be proposed, under the guidance of Mr. Stephens, by any Ministers who had fairly collated the statements of his "Letter to Sir George Grey" with the evidence and the Report which is grounded upon it. Yet it is only too possible that the bigotry, cupidity, tyranny, and craft of a small section of Irish society may obtain an advantage over the better will, mind, and intent of the majority of the friends of Ireland—over the aims of the founders of trusts—and over the educational interests of the great middle classes, if instant care be not taken to do justice to the old Endowments. In such a crisis, the humblest friends of the rising middle class of Ireland should put forth their efforts: and mine have taken form in this free exposition of the case of Irish Intermediate Education, and of the Report in which it is thoroughly illustrated.

H. M.

Ambleside, December, 1858.

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ENDOWED SCHOOLS OF IRELAND.

CHAPTER I.

OPENING OF THE COMMISSION.

THERE has been popular interest enough about middle-class education in Ireland to compel an effectual inquiry into the Endowed Schools there, and to settle the point that there is to be some remedial legislation on them next session. Great energy, purpose, perseverance, and ability have been brought to bear in establishing the Queen's Colleges for the training of the educated classes of young men, and the National Schools, for the benefit of the children of the humbler ranks; but the interval between the two is not well filled. The middle-class in Ireland, though disproportionately small half a century ago, was richly supplied with educational resources (used or unused) in comparison with the aristocracy and the labouring classes. The higher orders sent their children abroad—to England, Scotland, France, Italy, or Spain, for the education which was insufficiently provided at home; and the children of the peasantry were taught in hedge-schools or nowhere; whereas the whole island was strewn with endowments, and with the names or traditions of schools provided by ancestors, Protestant and Catholic, Episcopalian and Presbyterian, for the children of future generations, on whom the destinies of their country would depend. When it became apparent, a

few years since, that the Queen's Colleges were doing much less good than they ought from the small number of middle-class lads qualified to benefit by them, attention was directed to the educational condition of the great class on whose intelligence and moral culture every free country mainly depends for its welfare; and it became at once apparent that, in regard to fair development of the faculties, and preparation for the business of life, the children of the peasantry, artisans, and labourers had greatly the advantage of those of the shop-keeping, manufacturing, and professional orders. It was out of the question to produce half a million of schoolboys and schoolgirls, by ransacking the whole middle-class department of society, who could compare in intelligence and conduct with the half-million comprehended in the National Schools. This was a portentous fact—discovered as it was in that critical season when society is taking a new form of growth in Ireland, by the elevation of the lower classes and the creation of a larger middle-class, as a sign of present, and a pledge of future, prosperity. The spectacle of a great development of the farming, manufacturing, and commercial orders, inevitably led to an inquiry into the means of educating the children of these valuable classes. Thence arose an exposure of the paucity of good schools of a suitable kind; thence an accession of information as to means unemployed, and schools degenerated, or wholly lapsed; thence a discussion in Parliament on the subject; thence the appointment of a Royal Commission, to inquire into the whole history and condition of the Endowed Schools of Ireland; thence the Report and Evidence, celebrated for bulk and costliness, which is, in many minds, the prominent association with the whole subject; and hence again, we hope to add after next session, an effectual act of legislation, by which the means of a good education will be recovered in abundance, and restored to that part of society which has been too long deprived of its due.

The object is thus stated in the text of the Commission. In pursuance of an address from the House of Commons, the

Commissioners were royally appointed "to inquire into the endowments, funds, and actual condition of all schools endowed for the purposes of education in Ireland, and the nature and extent of the instruction given in such schools, and to report their opinions thereon." The Commissioners were the Marquis of Kildare, the Rev. Charles Graves, D.D., and three barristers—Messrs. Andrews, Hughes, and Stephens—Professor Hancock being the secretary they were fortunate enough to secure. The Commission being issued on the 14th of November, 1854, the members met for business on the 25th of the same month.

The first object was to learn what Endowed Schools there actually were in Ireland. In order to obtain materials for a list of them, the Commissioners addressed circulars, and forms for reply, to all known schoolmasters and trustees of such institutions, and the secretaries and registrars of boards having charge of such schools, and also to the managers of charitable donations and bequests, who were likely to have schools in their charge. The results of this first obvious move were remarkable. Nothing could be done with an important class of schools—those founded by Erasmus Smith, the Presbyterian London alderman, who had obtained land in Ireland in Cromwell's time, and who acquired a good deal more after the Restoration under the Act of Settlement. Out of the proceeds of his estates he established Grammar Schools at Drogheda, Galway, and Tipperary, entrusting the management of them to a board of thirty-two governors. His aim—to favour and further the Protestant religion—was not successful in his lifetime. He declared that the reason why the schools were "so consumptive" was (and ever would be, unless the thing was prevented,) that Popish schools, "acting as suckers," did starve the tree; yet he entreated that all children who were not duly ready to hear "prayers, catechism, and exposition," should be expelled. Through all sectarian difficulties, the rents of the lands increased, so that the worthy alderman left a very fine property for the support of middle-class schools, and of scholarships in Trinity College,

for the reward of able schoolboys thence accruing. There are now, according to the Report, four Grammar Schools and one hundred and forty English schools under the governors of the trusts of Erasmus Smith. These governors took no notice of the Commissioners' circular, and when again applied to, refused to answer any questions, instructing their schoolmasters to the same effect, on the ground of a clause in their charter which exempted them from examination. This first check was got over by Act of Parliament. The powers of the Commissioners were duly augmented by an Act passed in July, 1855. Meantime, circulars were addressed to the Clergy of all denominations, and prominent members of the Society of Friends; to Deans and Chapters in Ireland, and to every kind of society which was likely to have cognisance of Endowed Schools. Replies were received from about half the divines addressed; and one of the remarkable incidents referred to occurred in this connection. By means of these restricted replies the Commissioners discovered above a hundred endowments which they would otherwise never have heard of. On the other hand, their correspondence with Trustees of Charities enabled them (through the researches made into bequests and the terms of old wills) to disclose to governors funds and trusts of which they were ignorant, and also to recover others which had been lost sight of. Several clergymen received good news of resources within their parishes of which they had never been informed. When the time arrived (early in 1856) for examining the leases of sites and schoolhouses, and fee-farm grants, a considerable amount of patronage was restored to the proper quarter, and several schools and many endowments changed hands. So complete had been the neglect, or other mode of abeyance in some instances, that the school lands had been sold in the Encumbered Estates Court, without a suspicion in any quarter that the property was not saleable.

Assistant Commissioners were appointed by the Lord Lieutenant, when they were found necessary, for visiting schools, and other researches; and the inquiry seems to

have been very thorough. By January, 1857, the Commissioners were ready to frame their Report: but it was not ready till January 1858—owing mainly to the illness of Dr. Graves, whose assistance in the work was indispensable. Mr. Hughes and Mr. Stephens dissented from the Report prepared by the three other Commissioners; Mr. Hughes presenting a statement of reasons, and Mr. Stephens excusing himself from doing so on the ground of an insufficient interval of time. The difference of opinion is on the old topic of “mixed” and “separate” education—the old theological trouble here involving the appropriation of a great mass of endowments and trust organization. The essential point of the insufficiency of the middle-class education, even after a due application of all existing resources, is agreed on by all the Commissioners, on evidence which is as interesting as it is irrecusable.

On the one hand, we hear much of the bulk of the Report and Evidence of this Commission—the paper and print of which cost 5,000*l*. On the other hand, it is necessary for all good citizens to know the leading facts of the case, in view of the legislation of next session. For the bulk and the cost the Commissioners are not responsible, as the nature and results of their inquiries rendered it imperative upon them to print the evidence entire: and no money was spent on them, as their services were gratuitous. They devoted four years to their laborious task without fee or reward. The Secretary and the Assistant Commissioners were, of course, salaried officers. It occurs to us that we may be rendering a useful service to individuals and to the cause of popular education, by exhibiting the case of the Irish Endowed Schools in comparison with the requirements which they are intended to meet; and we therefore propose to take a rapid survey of some of the most striking facts in the history and condition of the Endowed Schools of Ireland.

CHAPTER II.

ORIGIN OF THE SCHOOLS.

It will be no loss of time to glance at the social condition which suggested to the rulers and proprietors of Ireland the introduction of Free Schools, from time to time, and from place to place. It is only through such a view that the intention and aim of the founders can be understood, and the present condition of their bequests faithfully appreciated and dealt with. In the Report before us this knowledge is assumed to be either ready in the reader's mind, or out of the track of the Commissioners; but as we are not rendering an account to the Queen or Parliament, we may take humble ground, and refresh the popular memory and our own in regard to life in Ireland at the time when it struck some people that Free Schools would be very good things.

The first stir seems to have been made soon after the suppression of the Geraldine rebellion. The six Fitzgeralds were hanged at Tyburn in February, 1536. From that time Henry VIII. changed his title from "Lord" to "King" of Ireland; and both he and his advisers certainly took the case of the Irish into consideration, to see what could be done in so nearly desperate a case. When the English first possessed the eastern coast, south of Dundalk, they marked out such territory as they held by a complete English mode of living, which had the effect of clearing the land of the natives. At the time of the Geraldine rebellion, the English Pale, as this marked territory was called, was reduced to a mere patch, comprehending less than the present counties of Louth, Meath,

and Dublin. This was a small centre from which to govern such a country. The most disinterested benevolence would have been discouraged at the prospect on every side, if it had been set in high places, and bid to do its best; but disinterested benevolence had no chance of countenance, royal or other; and it could only plan, and wait for better days, unless it happened to fall in with independent wealth and authority. Thus it naturally happened that Free Schools were talked of some time before they were seen; and that they were originally permitted as the best apparatus for making the rising generation "submissive," "obedient," and willing to pay the King's taxes. Such a life was too strong a contrast to that of "the King's Irish enemies" of a preceding generation to be easily introduced; and this invests the earliest Endowed Schools with a strong interest.

The popular life in Ireland then, both within and without the Pale, was one of entire subjection to the law of force. On the native side great captains were the rulers; and their troops of followers were their ministers. The English nobles adopted the same method, as suited to the country. In the centre of the Pale, the people were oppressed by the King's deputies and lawyers. Further in they were harried by the marauding troops of the English nobles; while in the unconquered country there was no place where quiet folk could settle down, and till their fields in peace. "What common folk in all this world," said an eye-witness of their condition, "is so poor, so feeble, so evil-beseen in town and field, so bestial, so greatly oppressed and trodden under foot, and fared so evil, with so great misery, and with so wretched life, as the common folk of Ireland!" And he saw no hope. Nothing had done any good yet, though good men had striven to mend matters. "Folks were as wise that time as they be now; and since they could never find remedy, how should remedy be found by us?" One of the Butlers, Earls of Ormonde, tried to tempt his neighbours to industry by establishing manufactures in Kilkenny, and even in his own castle, to which he brought Flemish artisans; but the people

would no more work in that way than in taking fish out of the sea, and making the earth grow corn, for they were at the mercy of an underpaid soldiery, and only the more certainly doomed to pillage for having any comforts about them. They hid themselves in forests and bogs when the soldiers of any chief were coming: and when their dwellings were burnt, and their fields laid waste, they crept back to the ruins, or turned marauders themselves. They owed little to the Church, as mendicant friars were the only religious order that remained in the field. Such was life in Ireland when the decimation of the Fitzgerald faction opened a way for a fresh start in the government of the country. The execution of the six brothers happened, as we have said, in 1536. In 1538, King Henry's Council proposed to banish the gentlemen and martial men of the various districts, and to retain the "poor earth-tillers," unaware that nothing could be done with a destitute society of labourers without a middle-class to set them to work and sustain their industry. The peasants were "good inhabitants," the English officials said; that is, they were not rebels; but they could do nothing better than divide their scraps of land, and divide them again, till the swine in the woods had a better chance of a living than they.

The King seized the monasteries. Here was capital at once; but it struck the King's mind that it would be absurd to become "King" instead of "Lord" of Ireland, without securing to himself a revenue which should support his new title with due majesty; so he appropriated the conventual property to his own "use and profit," and desired the Irish authorities to consider what taxes should be imposed to compensate for the great expenditure incurred in bringing the country to such conformity as existed. The people of the Pale could pay no more. They were completely stripped. The King was advised, therefore, to lay taxes on the rest of the country, being shrewdly informed that the people nearest the Pale would assist the levy on the remoter parties, in fear of the consequences to themselves of any conspicuous failure of revenue.

All this appears to be wide apart from all our associations with Endowed Schools; and yet the sure evidence of dates points to this period as that in which this specific provision for middle-class education was thought of and proposed. The King himself, or his spokesman, when commanding the Galway townsmen to shave off their moustaches, and let their hair grow, and wear caps, and leave off long cloaks, added the precepts to speak and behave like Englishmen, and send their children to school to learn English. The Galway men went on wearing their own accustomed dress, and speaking their own tongue. What could be meant about the schools? What schools could there be, except within the Pale? Not Free Schools, in that case, but Parochial Schools imposed on the clergy, together with the care of the parish church, and destined to decay as rapidly and surely as every other parochial provision in Ireland intended to supersede the institutions of the old Church.

The religious houses had supplied the best education in the country; and when they were suppressed, after the Geraldine rebellion, there seemed to be no hope of filling the place of their dispersed schools. In 1539, the Royal Commissioners for the suppression of Abbeys recommended that six abbeys should be spared, on account of the good and costly English education they imparted—"the womankind of the whole Englishry of this land" in the nunnery, "and the mankind in the other said houses." The recommendation was rejected, and the houses were suppressed. Four years later, we find the Lord Deputy, Sir Anthony St. Leger, when urging the King to allow Christ Church to be converted into a Free School, declaring that there was not one such school in the whole land.

The consequence was a condition of popular ignorance described, a quarter of a century later, as truly fearful. Queen Elizabeth was informed by her Irish Parliament that the supreme wickedness of their country was caused by supreme ignorance, in which the people were living without

consciousness that their acts were heinous and offensive to God. The grand consideration of all was, that the Irish failed in submission and obedience to their rulers entirely through "their darkness in these so high points touching their damnation," and through their lack of opportunity to bring up their children "either in public or private schools, where, through good discipline, they might be taught to avoid these loathsome and horrible errors." An Act was passed in 1570 providing that a Free School should be founded in every diocese in Ireland; the school to be erected in the shire town (unless there was one already), at the cost of the diocese, the endowment being paid one-third by the ordinary, and the other two thirds by other ecclesiastical persons in each diocese. Such was the origin of the first set of Endowed Schools in Ireland. They were intended to supply the defects of the parochial school system imposed on the clergy by an Act which bears date thirty-three years earlier than that which instituted the Diocesan Schools; but they do not appear to have been even set about for many years. In 1584, they were reported by the Lord Deputy as non-existent; and a Commission was appointed to inquire into the causes. Whatever the inquiry might have been, it produced no effect which remains on record. The country was troubled, and the rising generation were left to take their chance, till a new set of schools was devised in the next reign, to meet with obstructions in their turn.

Inquiries have been instituted from time to time, by which it appears that at no period have the Diocesan Schools of Elizabeth's reign answered their intention. They were fewer than the dioceses: the schoolmasters' salaries did not share in the changes made in the value of money, and became wholly inadequate, or were held as a mere sinecure: and what the schools are now may be judged from the fact* that there are but twenty of them; that they are calculated to admit six hundred and ten pupils, who practically dwindle to

* Report, p. 45.

two hundred and forty; and that the state of instruction is recorded in the tabular form of the present report as "satisfactory" in only six instances, the rest being "unsatisfactory" or "very unsatisfactory," except where the mastership is vacant—which is another form of unsatisfactoriness. The Diocesan Schools have certainly done little for Ireland as yet.

CHAPTER III.

FAILURE OF THE SCHOOLS.

It is a blessing that some one good consequence should result from the curse of sectarian conflict in Ireland. The heartfelt enmity entertained, in the early days of Protestantism, against the Romanists stimulated the endeavour to educate as many children as possible, to save them from priestly control, and teach them how to reverence Protestant Sovereigns and their representatives. It seemed a matter of course to an Elizabeth, a James, and a Charles that a Protestant education would make all safe after the existing generation were in their graves. A new generation, trained in Protestant schools, must be good subjects, and must see Protestantism to be the true religion for enlightened people with such force that the priests, however backed from Rome, could never more have any power, except with old people, cherishing ancient traditions, and with the ignorant who hid themselves beyond the reach of the Sovereign's beneficence. Such was the theory on which one sort of schools after another was founded. For some reason or other they would not work. Difficulties of many kinds arose: but the chief impediment was one which no potentate has yet been strong enough, no benefactor has yet been winning enough, to get rid of—the repugnance of Catholic parents to send their children to a school where all the teachers were Protestants. The Romish religion did not die out in a generation or two; the Irish did not learn to revere their Sovereigns through a Protestant school training; new devices were perpetually tried, of excluding Catholic ushers from Grammar Schools, forbidding the practice of send-

ing children abroad for education, and precluding all Catholic education at home; and still the objects of the endowed schools remained unfulfilled; and still new efforts were made; every failure aiding the extension of schools. To a thoughtless reader of history it may appear wonderful and admirable that, amidst the cruel wars and stormy truces which chequer the Irish annals of several centuries, there should have been a perpetual recurrence to the subject of popular schools—an incessant watchfulness over these institutions on the part of Sovereigns and their Ministers, and the courtiers and aspirants whose business it was to please them. It was, in fact, a question of allegiance, of actual tenure of the country. The possession of Ireland was supposed to depend on its being Protestant: and the Protestantism of Ireland was to be secured by a popular education which should take successive generations out of the hands of the priests.

When the two great rebels, Tyrone and Tyrconnel, fled with their families, in 1607, leaving 500,000 acres of land at the mercy of King James, one of his first ideas, in decreeing "the plantation of Ulster," seems to have been the institution of a system of schools. The Diocesan Schools, as we have seen, were turning out a failure. They had dropped almost out of sight; so now there were to be Royal Free Schools everywhere. The King's adviser was Bacon, if tradition be true; and their scheme was a great improvement upon all preceding ones.

The first order was that there should be one Free School, at least, in every county in Ulster, for the education of youth in learning and religion. This was in 1608; but it appears by letters of the King, written in 1613 and 1614, that the work was not effected. The first of the Royal Schools was opened in May 1614, at Dungannon, "a perpetual Free School for the county of Tyrone;" the master being nominated by the Archbishop of Armagh, and appointed by the King. There were still troubles and delays about the conveyance of the lands, and provision of school-houses and masters; and the schools were, after all, only nine

in number. Seven are now in operation, of which six are Grammar Schools. It is interesting to glance at the present state of the Dungannon school,* as the earliest of its class. Seven years ago, a Memorial was addressed to the Lord Lieutenant, complaining that sufficient facilities were not afforded for the admission of free scholars; and that the instruction given, and the payment demanded for it, placed the school out of the reach of the middle-class—the manufacturing and shop-keeping classes—for whose benefit it ought to be conducted. At this school no Catholics are admitted as boarders; and there are none as day scholars. Of the sixty-five pupils on the roll, all but eight Protestant Dissenters are of the Established Church: so the school is as exclusive as King James could have desired. The instruction given is of a high order: and the master is endeavouring to expand it, to meet the needs of his middle-class neighbours. There were, at the date of this Report, thirteen free scholars, admitted at the pleasure of the master. The funds supply very liberal exhibitions in Trinity College, in connection with this school. Nine schools of this character could go but a little way in the days of James and Charles I.: but they were the objects of great care and solicitude.

King James gave substantial assistance to many other schools than those of his own founding, both in Ulster and elsewhere. At the end of the last century there was a school endowment at Longford, the origin of which was unknown. It is now discovered that King James was the benefactor, he having granted two hundred acres for a free school. As often as grants were made by him for corporate towns, he stipulated that some small portion of land—an acre or half an acre—should be reserved as the site of a public school. He strove to keep the Corporation of London to their agreement of seven hundred acres of land for the support of a free school, and twenty marks for the schoolmaster: but the correspondence, revived from time to time, and unsatisfactory on the side of the Corporation, seems to show that it was as

* Report, p. 59.

difficult in those days, when the assignments were fresh, as it is now, to enforce the due application of endowments. The Corporation did not know about the seven hundred acres—what or where they were; they would be glad to have it found, in order to be relieved of the payment of the twenty marks, which they declare to be a free gift of their own, and which they would be better pleased to apply to the building of a new church; and so forth. Of the forfeited lands (some estimating these at 400,000 and others at 500,000 acres) King James assigned 100,000 for church, school, and corporation lands.

His schools turned out to be, in several instances, inconveniently placed; “where there was no entertainment for scholars,” or where the scholars could not get at the entertainment. In some cases the funds were large where there was little duty to do, and the reverse; so that in the time of Charles II. the Irish Parliament gave power to the government and the bishops to shift the site of a school, within the bounds of the diocese; and also to divide the income where a more equal distribution was wanted. The latter power was not exercised; the other was. All the records of the time show the anxiety of Princes, Deputies, and Prelates to supply good training for the rising generation of Irish; but the whole enterprise was uphill work. There were no means, at that time, of bringing the schools and the people of Ireland together. Even the Diocesan Schools were almost entirely in and near the English Pale; and the Royal Schools were almost exclusively in Ulster; so that the broad regions of the south and west, where the population was Catholic, were nearly destitute of schools. A comparison of the representations of the two areas, within a short space of time, yields a sufficiently dreary impression.

Strafford complained, in a letter to Laud in 1633,* that the state of the Royal Schools was this. “The schools, which might be a means to season the youth in virtue and religion, either ill-provided, ill-governed in the most part, or which is

* Report, p. 10.

worse, applied sometimes underhand to the maintenance of Popish schoolmasters; lands given to these charitable uses, and that in a bountiful proportion, especially by King James, of ever-blessed memory, dissipated, leased forth for little or nothing, concealed contrary to all conscience, and the excellent purposes of its founders." "All the moneys raised for charitable uses converted to private benefits." Hence the creation of that jurisdiction by which charitable donations and bequests are superintended. In 1634 a bill was introduced into the Irish Parliament "to redress the misemployment of lands, goods, and stocks of money heretofore given to charitable uses." An early manifestation of corruption of endowment trusts!

Ten years later we find, among the negotiations proceeding at Oxford, a proposal from the Irish Confederates that the University and Schools should be made free to the Irish Catholics. They never had any chance, however. It was peremptorily required of them, by the century together, that the parents should send their children to the Protestant schools, whence they were to come forth loyal to the English, contemptuous to the Pope, and accustomed to read the Bible. Such was the education offered, and no other was permitted. First, any Popish usher who could be scented out was dismissed and punished; no driblet of the royal bounty was to reach the need of any Catholic. Before the end of the century, the effort to force an English education on the Irish became desperate. The Act to restrain foreign education recited the evils which arose from the propensity of the people to send their children to France, Spain, and other foreign parts, for education, whence they returned disloyal and discontented, and ill-disposed towards the religion and laws of their country; and then enacted that such pursuit of a Popish education, and all transmission of money in support of it, or of any objects connected with it, should be visited with outlawry. Furthermore, as a Popish education at home was found to keep the people ignorant of the Bible and of their duty, and disaffected to law and government, and unac-

customed to the English language and manners, no Catholic was allowed to educate or instruct, in public or in private, except the children of the household. In order to obviate any complaint of an insufficiency of schools when this Act should be in force, the Parochial Schools under the Act of Henry VIII., and the Diocesan Schools under that of Elizabeth (the "Latin Schools," as they are now called), were to be vigorously pushed, and their conditions stringently enforced. Measures for this end were taken; but they failed. Act after Act declared that all its predecessors had been ineffectual; and Catholic schoolmasters continued to exercise their vocation—even, in some cases, in partnership with Protestants. When Protestantism sets up for arbitrariness against Catholicism, the older authority is sure to carry the day; and this was never shown more clearly than in the early fate of the Diocesan and Royal Free Schools of Ireland.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY.

THE character of the ancient Irish schools, and the *animus* of their founders can be understood only by a perpetual collating in the observer's mind of these institutions and the political circumstances of their respective periods. After James I. had appropriated 100,000 acres in Ulster to school, church, and corporate purposes, and had stipulated for a school whenever he granted privileges to any town, he might easily suppose that he had provided for the future peace and loyalty of Ulster, and the security of the English settled there. A generation of Protestant Irish once grown up there, all would be well. Yet, in the next reign, the soil of that "plantation" was soaked with the blood of "forty or fifty thousand of the England Protestants," who were murdered before they were aware of their danger. So Clarendon tells us. The Puritan settlers who escaped the sword in the first onslaught died of cold and hunger in the bogs and hill retreats, where they could not sustain the rigour of the opening winter. The school policy was baffled by the mismanagement of the Parliament and the King together—the one refusing to allow a Catholic Irish army to be sent abroad, as the King desired; and the other disbanding that army in consequence, at a time when there were few Protestant troops in Ireland, and when laxity of government had followed upon Strafford's vigorous rule. The impression left by the insurrection and massacre of 1641 was deep, and fatal to every rational hope of reconciliation between the old and the new inhabitants of Ireland: and before ten years were over

Ireland was all but lost, though Charles II. talked of it as his kingdom, as against the Parliament. Only three garrisons remained—those of Dublin, Belfast, and Derry—when Cromwell resolved to go, and see what could be done. He proclaimed so much of liberty of conscience as he himself understood; and wisely permitted the Catholic soldiery to go abroad in any direction they pleased—thus rendering it impossible for the King to raise 5,000 men, while 45,000 entered the service of foreign princes.

The field was thus cleared, when Erasmus Smith, the London Alderman before mentioned, contributed his efforts towards rearing a generation of Protestant Irish. We have seen that his schools were “so consumptive” as to cause great discouragement, and anger at the Popish schools, which “acted as suckers,” and “did starve the tree” planted at so much cost. The income from the property increased; but the loyalty of the Irish did not grow in proportion; and in 1687, all once more seemed over for the English in Ireland. At the opening of that year, James II. removed Clarendon from the government of Ireland, and substituted Lord Tyrconnel, whose special work was to be depressing the English, and preparing a home for a Catholic sovereign, who would extirpate the Protestantism of Ireland. We see the reaction from this dread in the legislation of 1695, which forbade the sending of children abroad for education, and excluded Catholics from the office of teachers at home. As we have already stated, the attempt was unsuccessful. Not only did Catholic Irishmen teach, in public and in private, but it was found impossible to get Catholic children into the schools, except by admitting teachers of their own faith to the charge of them: and yet the Act of 1709, which avowed that the preceding effort had been ineffectual, menaced Catholic teachers with the same penalties of imprisonment and transportation which impended over the regular Popish clergy. It was at the date of this Act that the son of Erasmus Smith sought the sanction of Parliament for employing the surplus income of his father’s school property to found an

English mathematical school in Dublin. The thing was not done at the moment, but it probably suggested the establishment of English schools from those funds which took place some years afterwards.

The strength and prevalence of the anxiety to secure Ireland, and the possibility of living there, by educating the children, is shown by the large number of endowments by individuals which took place within a century after the Restoration. A bishop here, an alderman there, a nobleman, a great lady, half-a-dozen country gentlemen, provided Free Grammar Schools, or gifts of Protestant teachers to particular localities, or institutions in which children were to be reared altogether at the cost of the estate. In 1711, the Bishop of Killaloe obtained from the Irish House of Lords an expression of the importance of "teaching Irish children the English tongue." The Blue Coat Hospital was an asylum and free school founded by the Municipality of Dublin, under a Charter given by Charles II. The Foundling Hospital followed, to lay hold of stray children, and make good subjects of them. This was the avowed aim of the nobility and gentry who sought from George III., at the beginning of his reign, a Charter under which the children of deceased or absent soldiers were to be rescued from "Popery, beggary, and idleness." Thus originated the Royal Hibernian School in Dublin: and it was followed by the Hibernian Marine School, which offered the same salvation to the children of seamen. The funds provided for apprenticing children to Protestants, and for giving dowries to poor girls who married Protestants, all testify to the steady aim and purpose of the English endowments in Ireland.

The grandest combined effort made was in 1733, when the Protestant nobility, gentry, and clergy of Ireland obtained the establishment of the Protestant Charter Schools, under the title of the Incorporated Society for promoting English Protestant Schools. The children of Roman Catholics and the poor were the objects of the Society; and they were wholly separated from their parents and old connections by

being entirely provided for in large boarding-schools. The use of the English language was a primary aim, and instruction in the Scriptures and the Protestant faith; and beyond these, the training was mainly industrial. George II. gave 1,000*l.* a year to this institution, and hawkers and pedlars were taxed 1,100*l.* a year, in the form of licenses, in support of it. The Society was made the guardian of all begging children, being empowered, in 1749, to consign all such vagrants to their schools. These Charter Schools were in great favour in high places. The Viceroy and the Parliaments of Ireland gave them countenance and funds. They were publicly noticed at the beginning of every session; and in the course of it, the hawkers' and pedlars' tax was regularly renewed. More bishops and noblemen and gentry left rich bequests, consigning them to the Society, or to its objects—instruction of Roman Catholic children “in the Protestant religion, and in linen-weaving.” In 1769, there were fifty-two Charter Schools, and five nurseries; the number of inmates, clothed and maintained, being 2,100—a number so small, in comparison with the amount of effort and of celebrity, as to make the reader look twice at the figures. This was twenty years after the Society had undertaken the charge of young beggars—from which class alone there could have been little difficulty in filling up the whole establishment.

Midway in that period of twenty years, we find the first overt act of vigilance and protection on behalf of charitable bequests and donations. A Committee of Inquiry into this kind of property was appointed by the Irish House of Commons in 1759; and in consequence all such gifts were ordered to be reported to Parliament, and the terms of them to be published in the *Dublin Gazette*—a security which remains to this day. Methods of inquiry into endowments of land, and into the working of the Dublin charities, were discussed and adopted early in the reign of George III., with little practical effect at the time, it is true, but the precedent was a valuable one. Out of it grew a succession of Commissions of Inquiry into Education in Ireland, of which the

Report before us is the latest. Whether it will prove the most important, we shall know better after the next Session of Parliament.

A few years showed some great results from the new practice of investigation. In 1782 it was found necessary to remove some of the restrictions on Catholic education. An Act, passed in that Session, declared that the existing laws were too severe, and had failed on that account; and it repealed so much of the Act of William III. as prohibited the employment of Catholic teachers in schools, provided that the scholars were not Protestants, and that no Catholic ushers were employed by Protestant principals. A license, revocable at any time, was necessary in the case of exclusively Catholic schools. Such was the extent of the relaxation permitted in 1782. Two years later a pious dissenter saw, in his Irish travels, what induced him to labour in the cause of liberty of conscience till the actual repeal of the oppressive Statute of William III. was obtained, and Catholics and Protestants were made equally free of the endowed schools as far as the Statute Law was concerned. This true Protestant was John Howard, who went to Ireland to see the prisons, and came back the champion of liberty of conscience. His ordinary track of inquiry led him into such charities as involved the housing and maintenance of their beneficiaries. The Incorporated Society had told him that they supported 2,100 pupils; whereas he found only 1,400 in the houses. He discovered the reasons of the failure, and a good deal more; and, as usual, he published his discoveries, and caused thereby great trouble and consternation. The schools were examined by the Inspector-General of Prisons, and found to be just what Howard had described.

Then ensued Resolutions of the Irish House of Commons upon the need of some national foundations of public schools; an issue of precepts to furnish Returns of existing endowments; another fishing-up of the Diocesan and of the Royal Free Schools, and of the Erasmus Smith Schools, from their obscurity, and a renewed Report of their inefficiency;

the establishment of more industrial schools; the recommendation of a second University; a new Board of Education, further inquiries, &c.; but, above all, a Commission which reported the evil effects of distinctions made in school "between scholars of different religious persuasions," and which thus occasioned the repeal, in 1793, of all the legislation which had incapacitated Roman Catholics for educational functions.

CHAPTER V.

COMMISSIONS AND THEIR REPORTS.

THE great day for Ireland was that which opened the scheme of Commissions of Inquiry into popular education, the Commissioners being supplied with powers which gave a practical value to their investigations. Whatever amount of improvement may yet be in store may for ever be referred to that period—now seventy years ago—when the Irish Parliament, after declaring its aims in the matter of popular education, empowered the Lord Lieutenant to send out Commissioners to inquire into the actual operation of existing School Endowments. Seven noblemen and gentlemen of high character and capacity began the labour in 1788, and eventually supplied a Report of the deepest interest at the termination of their labour in 1791. A preceding Report, dated 1788, is lost, having been borrowed from the Secretary of State's office by the Commissioners of 1807, and never produced again. A similar fate was believed to have befallen the report of 1791; but the recent Commission discovered a copy of it, and have printed it among the documents before us.*

The investigators found the endowments available for education to amount to 30,000*l.* a year; 15,000*l.* more being granted by Parliament, and from other sources, to the Incorporated Society. There was really scarcely anything to show in return for such a provision. The Parochial Schools were only one-third in number what they ought legally to have been; none of them were kept by the clergy, as

* Vol. ii., p. 341.

required by the Act, though the incumbents paid the 40s. imposed for the purpose. In seventy-four cases the money was paid without any school being provided; and in four hundred and twelve Benefices there was neither school nor stipend. About eleven thousand children were taught more or less at the Parochial Schools, whereas there might as well have been eleven hundred schools, supported by 30,000*l.* a year, which would have left a surplus for Sunday Schools. The Commissioners earnestly recommended* that the children of Catholics and Protestants should be indiscriminately admitted, the clergy of the respective faiths charging themselves with the religious instruction, as in two specified cases, where the plan was found to succeed admirably. So much for King Harry's Schools.

As for Queen Elizabeth's—the Diocesan Schools—there were only twenty schoolmasters in the thirty-four dioceses. Six of these twenty received the salary (ranging from 20*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.* to 40*l.*) without keeping any school; “and of the remainder, very few kept such schools as in any respect answered the end of the institution.” The tables present a wretched list of houses in ruins, of schoolrooms without floor or ceiling, of dark rooms, damp rooms, and rooms not habitable; and in one case the school-house, when in repair, was let by the master for 30*l.* a year, while he kept school elsewhere. Fourteen of the thirty-four dioceses paid nothing, and the other twenty averaged less than 31*l.* a year. These were all Grammar Schools; and boarders paid twenty-four guineas, and day-scholars four guineas a year, besides entrance and other charges. So that the whole management was a perversion of the original scheme.

Next came the Royal Grammar Schools. The narrative is simply a disclosure of frauds and pretences, by which schoolmasters and lessees enriched themselves without rendering any corresponding service. The castle of Wicklow (in ruins) and seven or eight acres of land were granted by the Viceroy to a clergyman, who, instead of opening, or keeping open the

* Vol. ii., p. 343.

Grammar School in the town of Wicklow, let his grant for 10*l.* a year, and kept no school, on the plea that the parents did not want to send their children to a Grammar School. The revenue from this class of endowments was returned at somewhat less than 4,000*l.* a year, while the total number of scholars was two hundred and eleven, of whom seventy-five were day-scholars, and thirty-eight were free.

Erasmus Smith's schools were in better order in some instances, but unprosperous in others, from antagonisms between governors, masters, and ushers. There were few scholars where there should have been many, and large surplus amounts where the whole income should have been used; so that the Commissioners advised the establishment, out of the wealth of the foundation, of an Academy in which those branches of education should be taught which are excluded in Grammar Schools.

The Military and Marine Schools were going on fairly. While every day-scholar was costing 100*l.* a year for a nominal education under some of the ill-managed endowments, the children in the Hibernian Schools were supported, trained, taught, and apprenticed for 12*l.* a year, of which the public paid only 10*l.* A small augmentation of the funds would, it was shown, increase the supply of seamen—an object nearly as pressing in 1788 as in 1858.

The Protestant Charter School system, “long and justly the favourite of the public, and the object of great national encouragement,” was a sore disappointment now; and its condition was enough in itself to justify the issue of the Commission. Howard had loudly proclaimed, some time before, that the children in most of the Charter Schools were ill-fed, dirty, half-clothed, covered with skin diseases, in the very same establishments where the children of the officers were healthy and comfortable. The state of the scholars' minds might be inferred from that of their bodies. After a good deal of scolding and remonstrance, Mr. Howard was found to be right.* The Commissioners visited some of the schools,

* Vol. ii., p. 357.

and took evidence on oath where needful; and they finally reported that "of forty-four establishments, not more than five or six were properly taken care of." They were set up as a remedy against Catholic disaffection; but now, when no disaffection of that kind was manifest, the parents kept back their children, for want, as these honest reporters declare, of any inducement to send them. It being the Commissioners' duty to assign reasons for the failure, they alleged the allowance of 2*d.* a day per head, by which the children were half-starved; the method of contract with Dublin tradesmen, by which the scholars went half-naked; the charges on the master for the pupils' labour, through which they went half-taught, or wholly ignorant; and so on. Moreover, there were gross frauds, neglect, and ignorance imputable to the teachers, and carelessness and false representation to the local Committees; and a prevalent unhealthiness about the buildings, with a lack of infirmaries.

We might go on to the end of the list; but we have said enough to show the need of the Commission of 1788, and its spirit, and the small result, thus far, of the various and eager attempts to educate the Irish into good British subjects. The aim was political; and, not being sustained by a good political spirit and method in other departments, it failed in the educational. Nothing can be stronger than the language in which the Commissioners reported the failure; and they appended their recommendation that the unworthy masters should be ousted, as the first measure of redress, and careless and unscrupulous managers of all denominations called to account. They indicated various new methods and establishments by which existing or procurable funds might secure at length the purposes of the founders of all these schools; and they reiterated their most emphatic piece of advice, "that there should be no distinction made in any of the schools between scholars of different religious persuasions; without meaning, however, to interfere with the peculiar constitution of the Charter Schools, or with the intentions of the founders of any other schools, expressed by their wills, or other in-

struments directing such foundations.”* The Courts being difficult of access, dilatory and expensive, the Commissioners recommended the institution of an unpaid Board of Control, with all necessary powers for restoring all educational endowments to their original objects.

This last recommendation was not practically attended to: and the advice we have quoted seems to have been the only part of the Report which produced any immediate effect. We have before related the repeal in 1793 of the restrictions imposed in the reign of William III., and the complete relief afforded to the Irish Catholics in educational matters. The deepening interest of the French Revolution obscured everything else; and the Report of 1791 stands as a landmark, and is venerable as the first step in a new path of reform, and not as having wrought in any proportion to its merits. We may be thankful, however, that this interesting document was copied, and that a copy was recoverable. Its total loss would have left a wide gap in the history of Irish education.

In 1806 the Commission was renewed by an Act, not of the Irish, but now of the Imperial, Parliament—the Union having been inaugurated five years before. Thirteen Reports were supplied in the next six years; Parliament enlarged the leasing powers of trustees; the surplus funds from Erasmus Smith’s bequests were applied to the foundation of new English schools; the Kildare Street Society was formed on the basis of the educational union of different sects; several private endowments were made; and, finally, the great Academical Institution of Belfast was founded, as a school for the middle classes. By this time the Reports on Endowed Schools were becoming more favourable, though great abuses still required exposure.

In 1813, Sir Robert Peel carried into effect, in a modified way, the recommendation of the Commissioners of 1791, as to an Education Board; but the exemptions from their inquiry and control were large and important. The Schools of

* Vol. ii., p. 364.

Erasmus Smith and the Protestant Charter Schools were among the exempted. In 1818, however, Lord Glenelg (then Mr. Grant) required the Incorporated Society to lessen the number of their schools, while Parliament provided for new ones on a more liberal basis. These new provisions, confided in many cases as leases to Catholic clergymen and lay trustees, were among the resources discovered by the present Commissioners. They had lapsed out of sight after the withdrawal of grants twenty or thirty years ago, and would probably never have been heard of again but for the investigations of 1857.

We need only just mention that there was another Commission in 1824, in consequence of whose representations of the management of the Protestant Charter Schools, the annual grant was withdrawn, and the method wholly changed. The Kildare Street and other Societies were, some time after, left to their own resources. Parliament was now fairly interested in Irish Education; and Committees of the House of Commons inquired and discussed, till they became ripe for the great scheme of National Education which was instituted in 1832. Lord Stanley's letter to the Duke of Leinster is not forgotten, and never will be; and as scarcely any of the National Schools are so endowed as to pass under the examination of the existing Commission, we need only state here that in 1856, the number of pupils in the National Schools was 560,134—the Parliamentary grant being 227,641*l.*—and that the growth of this order of schools has occasioned, and the new Queen's Colleges have indicated, a deficiency of intermediate education, which the existing endowments ought to be made to supply, as far as they will go. The schoolmasters, and other means and appliances are more and more absorbed by the spread of education above and below; and the difficulty of obtaining sound instruction for their children is painfully felt by the growing commercial classes of a renovated society. Hence the importance of the last Commission, and the interest of its work, at a time of profound peace and growing plenty in Ireland.

CHAPTER VI.

PRESENT BAD STATE OF ENDOWMENTS.

THE impression left by a historical survey of Irish educational endowments is, that there has been abundant anxiety, from Henry the Eighth's time downwards, to win over the Irish, and render the possession of their country secure, by giving them, early in life, English ideas, desires, and associations. After the long series of efforts which has been detailed, what has been the result?

At a time when the new National Schools were sending forth their first generation of pupils, the population of Ireland exceeded eight millions; and at that time the number of persons who could neither read nor write rose from thirteen per cent. to eighty per cent. of the population above the age of infancy. In the six largest cities and their neighbourhoods the number was under thirty per cent. After them the proportion rose rapidly to fifty per cent.; and half the counties and towns exhibited the spectacle of more than half the population, besides the young children, being unable to read. Yet it was well understood that the Irish have a strong desire for education. The itinerant teacher was wont to find himself welcome in all towns and hamlets; and the hedge schoolmaster had usually as many ragged children on his hands as he could manage. Any man who professed to teach arithmetic and surveying especially, was extensively patronised; and many a household who could buy nothing else managed to obtain the requisites for schooling. Where such a passion penetrated to the poorest inhabitants of the remotest regions, it was not probable that the middle classes, such as they were,

would be indifferent. Their numbers were small—injuriously small in proportion to the poorer. Rapidly as Ireland is now filling with a sound agricultural class, and with the trading order which should accompany it, this natural growth is very recent, and even yet immature. But, small as was the proportion of society whose children were to live by their heads as well as their hands, the means of educating them were yet smaller. After all the bounty and care bestowed in the shape of endowments, a mere fraction of tradesmen's and farmers' sons and daughters obtained anything like sound instruction; and, amidst the considerable number of private schools opened to meet the desires of parents, very few gave, or do at this moment give, an education at all proportioned to the enlightenment of the times, even though the high quality of the National Schools affords at once an incitement and an example. In 1812, the Commissioners of that day were very emphatic as to the popular demand for education, declaring that nothing could check it, and that there was nothing to be done but to gratify it in a safe way. For this object they recommended more endowments—new institutions, as the old ones were proved inadequate or mere failures. At present, the wisest way appears to be, to see first what can be done with the old, in order to ascertain what more is wanted. To restore the institutions which have lapsed, to recover those which have disappeared, to extend such as have become reduced, to verify those which are traditional, and build up those which are insecure, adapting all to the needs of the time, as those needs would be regarded by the founders if they were living now—these are means of providing for a good deal, though not nearly all of that intermediate education which the middle classes of Ireland are in distressing need of.

The total number of Endowed Schools in operation is 2,828; and their permanent endowments amount to 76,463*l.* 1*s.* 1*d.**

Every reader will be struck at once with the small amount of funds in proportion to the number of Institutions. Besides

* Vol. iii., p. 734. Report, p. 188.

the obvious reasons for this—changes in the times and in the value of money, lapse of property, mismanagement and dereliction—there is one which tends to swell the number of institutions into something very like a false pretension. The largest class of endowments is that in which small bequests are helped by private donations and by grants of public money. Such schools never answer their purpose long. Sooner or later the grant is withdrawn; private donations drop off; the buildings deteriorate in condition; the masters decline in quality, and the scholars in number. There may be a school-house intended to hold fifty scholars, and once perhaps adequate to the needs of the place; but what can be done now, when the master's salary is 12*l.*, or 10*l.*, or 5*l.* a year, of which the resident clergyman pays half? How is the roof to be kept on, and the fire to be kept up? Much more—how is a master to be had on such terms? He is out at elbows or toes, as the school-room is at windows and walls; or he must attend to two or more things at a time; he is casting up other people's accounts in school, or sorting letters as postmaster; or he grudges the fine weather lost in school when he wants to be at work in his field. He discourages the admission of free pupils, where he has the power of taking those who will pay. If there is a girls' school too, he gets his wife or daughter appointed, to eke out the income, whether the woman may be able to teach or not. In a higher order of schools there are either too few teachers, or too few things are taught. There is only "grammar" in the sense of classical teaching, to comply with the terms of the foundation, and the capacity of the one master, with, perhaps, his one usher, while the boys are growing up with scarcely the ability to write a letter, and no knowledge beyond grammar and dictionary. A sound English education, such as is wanted for future farmers, tradesmen, and manufacturers, is not to be had at such schools.

Then there is the temptation to the Trustees to dispose of the principal of the trust fund to meet exigencies. If the school-house wants repairs, some of the original gift must be

parted with to raise the means; and the income is henceforth narrower than ever; and, as for change in the other direction, in increasing the efficiency of the school, the risks, responsibilities, and costs are too great for the courage of average Trustees. This is one class of difficult cases to be dealt with—that of institutions with inadequate endowments.

Next comes that of insecure endowments; and a very large class it is. Many school-houses are at this moment standing on ground which has never been secured. In other cases the securities are nowhere. In the county of Limerick alone four instances came under the notice of the present Commission. As for Boards, they have no credit to lose as guardians of troublesome trusts; and private Trustees need stimulus and supervision. Trusteeships in virtue of other offices are as bad as any. The undertaking is not voluntary, and where there is a pressure of business the school is the last object which compels attention. Here and there a sensible man may depute the guardianship to some one who can attend to it: but, as a matter of fact, between the irresponsibility, the disinclination, the ignorance, or the differences of Trustees, the property of endowments is usually more endangered than taken care of in the case of the old Public Schools in Ireland. The ignorance is a large separate item, not always imputable to the Trustee. If there is no registration of endowments, no provision for the custody of securities, no record of bequests, no easy access to wills and other documents, a Trustee may be very innocently ignorant of the resources which he is officially bound to administer. We have already related the fact that the existing Commission has disclosed to Trustees in hundreds of cases resources which they ought to have been administering, and which they would never otherwise have heard of. Such lapses may and will recur, if precautions are not taken before the interest of the occasion has passed away.

Bad investments are another peril. Nothing is more common, when banks fail and ruinous enterprises are closed, than to find Trust Funds among those which have suffered.

The free scholars are at the mercy of too many risks. We have referred to their small chance where the master is underpaid. Their rights are in perpetual danger of lapsing where the school is inconveniently placed, so as to deter paying pupils, or too conveniently placed, so as to attract as many paying pupils as the house will hold; and, conversely, the school may stand where boarders may easily go, but where the paying poor day-scholars cannot attend; so many are the former centres of society which have become retreats, and wild places which have become centres. There is further insecurity from the immunity of teachers and governors in regard to supervision, and from the difficulty of superannuating them, and of dismissing the faulty; and on the other hand, there is the discouragement of teachers from the quality of the children in rural and other districts, where the attendance is irregular and scanty, and where the scholars leave at too early an age. These impediments to the fulfilment of the designs of founders are abundantly serious; but a graver than all of them is the inadequate qualification of masters and governors. In too many schools the teachers know no more than they have gained under the same sort of education that they are giving; in the Asylums and Boarding Schools the mode of life is anything but what the founders contemplated; and nowhere is there any system by which, as in the National Schools, trained and well-informed masters and managers are sent forth to their work.

The unused endowments are no less than two hundred* and ninety-six; and the annual income thus lying by exceeds 7,000*l*. The cases of the diversion of small useless amounts to kindred objects are few, partly owing to the difficulty and expense of the transfer under the existing law. The greater number have been idle since the cessation of grants which swelled them to an available amount. Others, again, were unnecessary or unsuitable from the beginning. The melancholy monuments of such lapses and mistakes are the crumbling houses, the weed-grown nook of land, the hanging

* Report, p. 191.

door, the mouldy gable, and the broken fence, which disgust the traveller's eye. In answer to inquiries, all that can be told is, that people say there ought to be a school there, but that there is nobody to set about it; then follows the abuse of the property being let for somebody's private benefit, and too often actually sold—even through the Encumbered Estates Court, which never gave a reversible title.

Again, there have been endowments bequeathed, or otherwise bestowed, and never brought into action. The Trustees could not agree; or some accident put off the work till it was dropped. In these cases the absence of registration of endowments, and due custody of deeds, is particularly injurious. Without them, the difficulty of recovering such resources is too great to be very readily encountered. There is also a large class of losses from the carelessness of Trustees, or from their lack of powers, when the income of endowments is derived from some exhaustible source, as annuities, house rents, &c. Another class which needs attending to is that of contingent endowments; resources not only deferred till certain lives have run out, but dependent on certain events happening or not happening. The known number of these,* in connection with Irish education, is twenty-nine, and the amount involved is a little short of 900*l*.

Putting together, however cursorily, the facts of the case—the pressing need of a good system of intermediate education in Ireland, the number of endowments on record, the amount of funds in their present unimproved condition, the certain insecurity of many known funds, and the suspected value of many not at present substantiated—everything justifies the earnestness of the Commissioners in urging on the attention of Parliament the necessity for remedial measures for ensuring the safety of educational charities.

* Report, p. 193.

CHAPTER VII.

LAPSES AND DESIDERATA.

MUCH remains to be done, as we have seen, in recovering and renovating the means of middle-class education in Ireland. Still, there are a great many schools in actual operation; and the most interesting part in the whole inquiry is that which relates to the quality of the education afforded.

In the days when these schools were founded, the aim of enlightened educators was that which it is in the present, and will be in all future times; to *educate* the faculties of the human being. The subject of the process—the youthful pupil—was much the same in all former times, all over Europe, as the existing generation of Irish children, while the means of educating the faculties must vary from age to age. In Queen Elizabeth's time the aim was to awaken the mind, and train its faculties to use, just as the system of primary instruction in the National Schools of Ireland does now. There were fewer books than now, and less pen and paper; no maps for popular use, nor French and German exercise books. Nothing was heard of Political Economy, or of principles of Natural Philosophy, which could be made a topic of popular instruction. Yet there were schools in those days which sent out good thinkers, good reasoners, good linguists, and students devoted to learning. There was also a great deal of foreign travel three centuries ago; and there is reason to suppose that the merchants, and scholars, and soldiers, and youths completing their education, who represented us on the Continent, were better qualified to improve their opportunities of travel than the generality of British of the same class who issue now from our middle-class schools.

We are not entitled, as far as the evidence goes, to despise the educational aims and methods of the old times when the Irish Endowed Schools arose, while deciding what they may and ought now to be enabled to effect; and there is certainly a more painful contrast between what those schools were meant to be and what they are, than between what they might be and what they once were.

Setting out from the point that the object, through all times, is to do the best for the pupils that the means will permit—what is now most wanted from these Irish endowments?

Here is a population, now, after ages of depression, rising in prosperity, numbers, comfort, and type of character; and dividing more conveniently into classes of agriculturists, merchants, manufacturers, tradesmen, and so on. The intellectual training of the schools should, in the first place, arouse and discipline the mind generally; and, in the next, meet the objects and needs of the various employed classes of society. The old grammar and mathematics—the essentials of education for many centuries—are for ever admirable in enlarging and disciplining the mind, in exercising at once the observing and reasoning powers, and the intellectual taste; and there is every reason, therefore, why the ancient provision for these pursuits should be regarded and used with the primitive respect. But the proportion which these studies should bear to others must, in all reason, vary with the expansion of human knowledge. The most superstitious idolator of founders' wills would hardly dispute this; while it would be granted to him by the most zealous reformer that the expansion of modern knowledge ought to prove its value by lessening the labour of teaching and learning grammar and mathematics. What is the state of these Irish Endowed Schools in regard to either view? The public courts of the Commissioners were often attended by an eager auditory, listening to evidence and advocacy on behalf of now *an English education*, now *a classical education*, and again *a scientific education*, on these foundations; while there were occasional suggestions,

apparently rational, for combining all the three within the school-years of the generality of middle-class pupils. While this hopeful eagerness was seen on the one hand, on the other was the melancholy spectacle of a host of schools which give no education worthy of the name under any of the three denominations.

As to the English education contemplated by all the founders—the art of Reading, in the first place, is generally in a corrupt state. There *are* schools in which the pupils read so as to show that they know what they are about, and have gone through the processes which are indispensable to the good reading of a single page of any book : but the Commissioners rarely met with a pupil who understood what he was reading, and could convey it clearly and agreeably to others. We need not dwell on the intellectual deficiencies thus disclosed, but only add that the English education of these schools is “generally” consigned to under-masters, ill-qualified and underpaid. The superior masters are supposed to be engaged in the so-called higher branch of classical education ; so that the pupils are ostensibly made Greek and Latin scholars when they cannot intelligently read an English book or newspaper. It must be not a little instructive to pass from a well-conducted National School, where the children read as educated people talk, and with no less animation, into one of the old Grammar Schools, where at one end the boys are going through their English sing-song to the usher, without the least idea what it is about, and at the other the lads are making Latin verses, under the eye of the head-master, who would be as puzzled as themselves to say what good they are getting, and why they should not at least be writing Latin prose. Some of these masters declare their schools to have been “stationary from their foundation ;” but it is a serious question whether the founders had not more sense of the importance of instruction in the English language and literature than most who now teach in their schools.

The Writing cannot be good where there is no knowledge of what is to be written. There are too many slates, on the

plea of economy; and writing on a slate bears a very slight relation to writing a letter. The copy-books display a good deal of imitation of the masters' defects; and seldom any signs that the pupils are acquiring a hand which any merchant would admit to his counting-house. A worse incident is that, in some cases, the copy-books are sold for the masters' profit. The Christian Brothers' Schools* are excepted from censure under the head of instruction in writing. Their method is good; and at their school at Tralee, short-hand was taught so well that a boy of twelve reported for a newspaper the proceedings of the Commissioners' public court. It hardly needs explanation that the practice of writing from dictation scarcely exists among the Endowed Schools. Its importance in exercising various powers, and testing various acquisitions at the same time, is rarely appreciated there; and in consequence, any testing process applied to almost any group of scholars issues, as our recent examinations have too often done, in proving how few young people can write a letter, or a page of any book read to them, without mistakes in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, to say nothing of the badness of the writing. At the very time that this is happening, the manufacturers, shopkeepers, and merchants of the great towns cannot obtain, for any money, clerks who are qualified to conduct their correspondence under brief instructions. To fulfil the aims of the founders, the pupils ought to be qualified to make a *précis* of commercial correspondence, as one result of their "English Education," just as they should be able to converse in Latin with all comers, as the result of their Grammar School training.

In the Classical Department the Commissioners find the defects no less striking than in the English. There seems to be no notion of oral teaching, where books can be used. Conversation in the tongues learned seems to be a thing unknown, and grammatical analysis is not so studied as to preserve the pupils from blunders in English. For years

* Report, p. 199.

together the notes of commentators are pored over, while there is no evidence that the students have any deep and true understanding of the value of the text. The Commissioners, being themselves scholars, and professional or literary men, are not likely to undervalue classical learning: yet they emphatically condemn the amount of time devoted to the dead languages, and lament the imperfect return for labour out of all proportion to the object, even if pursued with success.

Modern languages do not thrive the more for the failure with the ancient. Here, again, the employers interpose with their complaints that they cannot find at home clerks or travellers who understand German, or even French, to any practical purpose. They want young men who can not only tell how many years they have been learning French, but read and reply to a French letter, or conduct purchases or sales in France. Till such young men appear in Ireland, they must be obtained from France or elsewhere. In most schools two lessons per week are all that (it is alleged) there is time for; as if it would not save time either to give up the thing or do it properly. Oral teaching is almost entirely neglected—for want of qualified instructors: and it need not be explained that nothing beyond the literary use of foreign tongues can be obtained from books. The Commissioners were favoured with testimony from opposite quarters, illustrative of what ought to be done. On the one hand, men of business showed them how commerce suffers from the barrier raised up by difficulty of communication with foreign nations in our days of keen competition; and on the other, the masters of superior classical schools informed them that the attainment of Greek and Latin was prodigiously facilitated by a contemporaneous study of modern languages.

This introduces the remaining department—that of Scientific Education, though the Commissioners have thought it most convenient to report of Geography and History under the earlier heads. The fact is, there is scarcely anything to report. It is no easy matter anywhere to teach History in large public schools; and nowhere can it be more difficult

than in Ireland, where the glorious progress of the world, up to and since the Reformation, is but the wrong side of the tapestry: but still there must be some possibility of conveying the main facts of Irish history, for instance; whereas there is nobody in the schools, from the ushers to the lowest class child, who knows anything whatever about it. And so also with the Geography—though there are a few cases in which disproportionate attention is given to mapping. We notice page after page on which “no maps” is a feature of the schools. Names learned by rote, and descriptions committed to memory from a book, without globe, maps, black-board, or any instruction as to the physical structure of the earth, and the distribution of countries and peoples, is all that most middle-class schools at present furnish, while in the National school-rooms there are classes of eager children enjoying their lessons at the black-board and the blank maps, and going over the grand scenery of the earth and its races with a glow of the imagination unknown to parrot geographers.

The Commissioners seem to have met with almost as little sympathy in their suggestion that some knowledge of the laws and constitution, and intercourse of society and nations, might be conveyed in the study of history, as in their inquiry whether some principles of logic might not be introduced in grammatical and mathematical studies. One master is of opinion that “something within” will protect his pupils from the mischiefs of false reasoning better than logical study; and most set it down either as amusement which would waste the time, or discipline which would crack the brains of their pupils. Yet the teachers in the Christian Brothers’ School at Tralee told the Commissioners that, from the time of their pupils making any progress in geometry, they got on with great rapidity in every other branch of study. Such discoveries will tell, in due time, on all schools in which perfection is desired, in whatever branch. Meantime, in Arithmetic, and even in Mathematics (to which the Irish are held to be constitutionally prone), in Astronomy, and

Natural Philosophy, the instruction given is little better than nought. "Doing sums," without knowledge of principles—without practice in numeration, and without any attempt at mental arithmetic, is what passes under the head of scientific instruction. Too often, the slow and puzzled are left unnoticed in the class, while the quickest have no idea how to apply their aptitude in doing sums. The French method of teaching the science and practice connected with weights and measures finds no place in England, and can hardly be looked for in neglected Endowed Schools: but Ireland is a fair field for preparation of the next generation for a decimal coinage and reformed measures and weights; and, as yet, the most indispensable arithmetic is almost as scanty among the race who should fill the counting-houses as ability to write German and French letters. Natural science, with all its expanding and illuminating influences, is yet hardly dreamed of in connection with these provided Schools. Not only must the pupils grow up ignorant of the facts of the heavens above and the earth beneath, but they know not how to preserve health and provide plenty. The farmer is not taught the chemistry of agriculture, nor the shopkeeper the laws of life and health, nor the manufacturer the secrets of the management of the products in which he deals. The time for these pursuits will come. Meanwhile, the very schemes laid down by the founders of schools are vitiated, without being worn out; because the minds of the pupils are not placed under the natural incitements of their time, and are as little likely to illustrate the true scholar of an old ideal as the well-educated man of a modern century.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW FULFILMENT OF OLD TRUSTS.

AMONG the difficulties which arise under old endowments, the most perplexing, perhaps, are those which relate to industrial establishments. Departments of industry change their character. The distaff, which we now seldom see except among the passes of the Alps, where the girls have to follow the goats, was once the appointed occupation of British charity girls; and Bishop Pococke's Weaving School for boys, at Kilkenny, cannot be carried on according to the founder's intention, now that hand-loom weaving is no longer an employment by which men can live. The venerable art of agriculture itself is no longer the simple affair it was when it was taken for granted that any man called a farmer could teach farming, and that every boy who had the implements put into his hands would learn it as a matter of course. Again, the progress of the arts of life incalculably increases the difficulty of finding instructors. It is a modern discovery that a certain provision of science is necessary to the practice of almost every art; and the education of artisans in all departments is so irregular as to render the supply of instructors confined and precarious to the last degree. The patrons of Ragged Schools in England know this only too well: and it now appears that various endowments in Ireland are paralysed for want of a supplementary institution which the founders never dreamt of—a training school for masters, where the future teachers should acquire not only the best recent practice of any branch of industry, but the art of teaching it. Till this need can be fully met one of two

things must often happen—either the industrial practice will cease, or it will degenerate into a means of turning the penny to somebody's advantage, but to the grievous injury of the children, who, in such cases, are made into mere unpaid labourers. Wherever the experiment has been tried in Normal Schools, at home and abroad, of practising the future teachers in experimental chemistry and in mechanics, with a view to various crafts, and in agricultural chemistry, with vegetable physiology, together with the culture of garden, orchard, or field, the results have been very encouraging. In manufacturing countries some study of art should be joined with these modern pursuits; or the products of the district, whether textile, metallic, ceramic, or other, will fail to meet the requirements of the time. Thus, in a country like Ireland, where little "Popish beggars" were intended by the old founders to be reared to support themselves by the spade, or the loom, or the knitting-needles, such a lot would be now a mere sentence of starvation, even if such a method were practicable; and the demand for the young farmers who issue from such institutions as the Glasnevin and Templemoyle schools, and the high rank taken by the Belfast manufactures, indicate the course that should be pursued by Endowed Schools in our day. The contrast between the old time and the present is something like that which we now witness between the wildest and the most advanced parts of the country. The old delving and spinning appear in comparison with the modern demand for refined tillage and manufacture as the heaps of stockings of the Connaught knitters, no two of which will make a pair, with the damask and muslin work of Belfast. No question in the whole field of the Commissioners' inquiry is more serious and more pressing than how to provide, out of the ancient resources, for the practical industrial training which was the aim of the founders, under their very different ideas of the requisite methods.

Oral instruction being necessary in these branches, the deficiencies of the teachers are exposed; and, on the other hand, all superior ability becomes immediately discovered

and valued. A master in a French school, who can teach the boys to prune and graft fruit trees, and manage a garden, is sure to meet with admirers enough to suggest what is wanted elsewhere. An instructor in an English school, who gave lessons in zoology, with illustrations, was stopped in the practice by the opinion of his employers* that there was not time for such unnecessary studies; but his pupils offered to come to school half an hour earlier if he would resume his lessons, which he was well pleased to do. The manufacturers of Belfast, like those of Manchester and Glasgow, can testify† to the importance of a familiarity with the forms of both animal and vegetable life in the training of operatives; and yet more of their employers. If the resources of the Irish endowments are misapplied, under industrial or "English" foundations, Irish workpeople will be excluded from broad fields of labour, and foreigners will be brought in before their eyes to beautify their damasks, muslins, laces, and poplins; a spectacle which it would have grieved the founders to conceive of.

In many instances it appears that the industrial training has been dropped. Elsewhere, there are the old objections that wholesale instruction in one branch—shoemaking, tailoring, &c.—brings up boys to a business which does not suit them. This cannot apply to the pursuits of tillage, in field or garden; for there is no class of lads who would not be the better for both the knowledge and the bodily training acquired by farming and gardening. Anyone who happened to pass the Irish workhouses from two to five years after the famine, when the unions were yet full of orphans and pauperised families, must have been struck with the pleasant spectacle of the boys at work on the land. Healthy and happy, strong and dexterous, they were in training for a higher mode of life than the domestic potato-eating, or the American canal-digging of their fathers. They were destined for a higher life than that of the mud hovel at home, or the stick-shanty in exile; and those lads are now among the

* Vol. i., p. 555.

† Ibid. p. 554.

rising peasantry, and likely to be the yeomanry of Ireland. It seems rational that the sons of the present yeomanry and trading classes should have at least the advantages allotted to the paupers of seven or ten years ago, and be early trained to an intelligent practice of whatever is to be the occupation of their lives. Yet there is scarcely any provision of this kind made where obsolete forms of industry have become a mere name. There are schools, however, where the boys are employed by the master in doing the work of the house or garden, not as industrial training, but for the master's convenience or profit. He has been "led astray" by spades being provided for the boys, who have been turned into labourers. Elsewhere, they have spent much of their days in sweeping and cleaning, feeding pigs, and going errands; not very instructive processes of education. The case of the girls is worse. They should be taught needlework, no doubt; but it is one thing to learn thoroughly the art of cutting out and making garments, and quite another to spend half, or two-thirds, of the school hours in making lace or working muslin, so that the pupils are as far from being qualified at last for domestic needlework as for scholarship. Worse still is the abuse which seems to have flourished in too many endowed schools—of the children being employed mainly for the mistress's advantage—the inferior needlewomen for two or three hours per day, the abler for six or eight. The worst case imaginable of this kind seems to be that of the borough of Swords,* where the endowment fund consisted of 15,000*l.*, and was to be applied to the instruction of "the children of the inhabitants of the borough in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and in such branches of manufactures as should be most likely to promote their future means of livelihood." They were to have one meal per day at the school; and the surplus of the income was to be spent in apprenticing the pupils "to useful trades and occupations." Any further surplus was to be applied to the encouragement of agriculture and manufacture. In the Report it may be seen, under the

* Vol. i., pp. 801-808.

name of the borough, how the mistress used the facilities for needlework by appropriating the labour of (among other girls) Kate Walsh, in sewing for her from four till nine daily for two years—threatening vengeance when the girl refused to sew, because she could not do both that and her lessons for the morning school. “She has stated,” said the Commissioner, when mistress and pupil were confronted, “that she was two years sewing for you, in 1851 and 1852, from four till nine o’clock at night: is that true or false?” —“That is true.”

The Commissioners do not lean to the promotion of industrial education, in the lowest sense, at schools, properly so called; because the time of the pupils is too precious to be expended unnecessarily on mechanical employments. The grievance exists in Ireland which we are always complaining of in England—children being taken from school at the earliest moment that they can do anything useful—their attendance being meantime fitful and irregular; and this leaves only too short a space for intellectual exercise and development. But when the foundation is for industrial objects, the aim must be to render the handiwork an actual preparation for the business of life: and such abuses as those of the Swords case leave no doubt as to how they should be treated, however embarrassing the general run of lapsed or perverted industrial Trusts may be.

There is a way, however, in which the intellectual development and industrial training may be reconciled; and on this the Commissioners are very emphatic. The principles and practice of book-keeping answer these conditions. They are of a scientific, no less than a practical, character. Yet is book-keeping sneered at in some of these schools as “a mechanical preparation for the shop or the counting-house,” as the classical schoolmaster is pleased to think. Such a master either makes it purely mechanical, or excludes it altogether, forgetting how valuable the knowledge is to the owner of landed estates and the professional man, as well as the tradesman. The Christian Brothers have found the

demand and liking for the study of mensuration so great that they had fifty-nine boys in their Cork establishment* pursuing the study. Its use is more extensive than is commonly supposed; and the scientific exercises involved in it are valuable in all directions. Navigation is in some demand in and near seaports, and among boys who may go to sea; but there is not much of it elsewhere. Drawing and Music are the other intermediate studies—the former being of the greater importance as a preparation for a useful life. Besides giving a free use of the hand, and an exactitude of observation which nothing else can impart, it is auxiliary to a very large variety of occupations—from the highest engineering to the humblest preparation of designs or copies for manufacturing purposes. Vocal music has been much less attended to; but the time for its extensive introduction seems to have arrived, if we may judge by the representations made to the Commissioners. The singing, in the few schools which admit it gratifies the pupils, refines their taste, affords a wholesome exercise, and is certain to bring out from the mass any who are qualified by nature for a special pursuit of music. On the Continent the organists of churches are thus ascertained and prepared for a due musical education. It does not appear that there is anything in the terms of foundation of these Irish schools which need create difficulty about any of these studies intermediate between the intellectual and the industrial. Nowhere can the demand for them be more pressing.

* Vol. i., p. 78.

CHAPTER IX.

NEGLECT AND ABUSES.

THE way to judge of the actual condition of old endowments is to regard them with the eyes of the founders—that is, as the founders would see them if they could rise from their graves to inspect them at the present time. There is no denying that the spectacle would, in too many instances, be one of deep mortification. That in such a town as Sligo,* for instance, there should be such a deficiency of means of middle-class education that young people who desire such training must go to a distance for it, would seem incredible to benefactors who thought they had made ample provision in that quarter. Yet they would see the greater number stopping short at what they could get from the primary school; some few going to distant towns for the most ordinary instruction that gentlemen and commercial men require; and some giving up the hope of accomplishment and distinction, and taking a clerkship as the dream of scholarship faded away. The aim of the founders is precisely that which is disappointed. One part of the rising generation shuffle on anyhow, getting through their school years more or less unprofitably till they enter on the business of life from a low point; while another, a very small proportion, aim high, and strive for the prizes of endowments, in order to pass through College, and make a good professional start. Between the two, according to the general testimony of witnesses before the Commissioners, the quality of middle-class education is much lowered. When we read the particulars in the Evidence we cannot

* Vol. i., pp. 316, 321, 322.

wonder at the testimony; but it is melancholy to think how far these large funds and elaborate provisions are from raising up an instructed, energetic, public-spirited, and trustworthy order of society; such an order as would grow and expand from day to day in Ireland, if appropriate means of education were provided.

One of the worst symptoms is that little attention is paid to the deficiency by those whose business it is to obviate it. Between bad inspection and no inspection at all, the schools have, for the most part, sunk far below their intention; and the discipline in them is of a kind which cannot send out fair scholars or good citizens.

Where the inspection is bad, the master or mistress knows when to expect the visit; lessons are gone through by rote, and faces and hands have an additional wash; and all is done. Where there is no supervision at all, the master feels no animation, and obtains no new ideas. He drops the free scholars by degrees, so that, in some instances, the word "free" is actually omitted from the title, and from advertisements. He simply holds his tongue when one place after another becomes vacant, till he either finds himself in the enjoyment of a paid sinecure, or takes pay from both pupils and the trust. Considerable numbers of the masters are parish clerks, or incapable men of business; or, at least, untrained to tuition; and, being secluded from all intercourse with brother educators, or with any enlightened persons who could sympathise with them, they are in blank ignorance of all the improvements which have taken place in their profession. If introduced into any museum or institute, they would be bewildered among the appliances exhibited there,—the implements, illustrations, and entire new branches of pursuit by which they would be surrounded. Some people doubt whether boys and girls are not better at home than at school under such masters; whether it is a misfortune that in 1855 there were only thirty free scholars in Erasmus Smith's schools, instead of the twenty (over and above the sons of tenants) to each of his schools for whom he left the means of

education; and it is conceivable that parents might refuse to send their children to spell over the Bible, without learning anything but to hate it, or to sit "idle and agape" in a dull room. But there are the funds, there are the children, and the trustees and inspectors ought to be somewhere; and the remaining task of bringing them together, to some good purpose, must be fulfilled.

Under the circumstances, the irregularity of the attendance on the part of pupils who pay little or nothing is not to be wondered at. In many cases the total attendance of boys who profess to be going through their school life barely amounts to three months in the year. Where it is desired, the Roman Catholic festivals and market-days cause an amazing reduction of school-days. Where the clergy of any or of all denominations make a practice of visiting the schools, the whole aspect of affairs changes, however faulty other arrangements may be. The master is stimulated by hope, fear, or sympathy; and it appears to be universally true that the regularity or irregularity of the attendance corresponds pretty accurately with the goodness or badness of the teaching. So we are told; and if it is true, the hint is encouraging in regard to Ireland, and admonitory to us in England. In the boarding schools this difficulty of irregularity of attendance is obviated; but some even more serious arise. The religious perplexity comes first.

We observe in the Evidence a large amount of very strong testimony on behalf of a secular training in day-schools, offered by witnesses of various occupations and circumstances, but all agreeing in grounding their advice on their reverence for religion, and desire for the highest interests of the pupils. They aver that parents are apt to relax in their duty as spiritual trainers of their children when the office is undertaken, more or less, by either the schoolmaster, or any other instructor in the school. These witnesses, some Protestant, some Catholic,* have seen enough of theological quarrelling to wish to keep it out of the day-schools: and some of them

* Vol. i., pp. 318, 322, 325.

have experienced the benefits of growing up in companionship with comrades of all religious denominations; so that they speak with strong energy of their hope that schools which are designed for direct instruction, and not for complete education and training, should be used according to their intent—leaving the most sacred topics to be treated by the most sacred authority.

But then comes in the boarding-school difficulty. The Commissioners and some of their best witnesses seem to consider the boarding-school education decisively and inevitably inferior to the combined training of home and day school, on this very account—that no religious training that can be afforded in a school can be so thorough, so heartfelt, and so effectual as that which proceeds from a natural source. After the most liberal estimate of what the visits of the clergy of the respective denominations may do, in the absence of home influences, the majority of the Commissioners would be glad to see the trustees enabled to apply the funds in domesticating the free pupils in homes* within reach of the day-school, which would then succeed the boarding establishment. Of this they have more to say afterwards, anxious meantime to express the strongest sense of the degree in which a secular teacher of a high order may and must influence the spiritual and moral condition of his pupils; so that a failure in animating and elevating their whole nature is a fair sign that a teacher is ill-qualified for his function.

As for the training and discipline, the state of many schools is exceedingly painful; and those which are satisfactory bear no computable proportion to the existing need. There is not much corporal punishment, we are glad to see—the penalties being more of the nature of disgrace and privation than violence. There are some instances in which the obligation to keep a “flogging-book”—a record of the strokes on the hand or other stripes—is neglected; but severity in punishing is not one of the features of the existing corruption of trusts.

* Report, p. 282.

The neglect is far worse. A long series of schools where there are few or no needful appliances appears in the Evidence. In one, the children (girls) all kneel at their forms, not in prayer, but in order to do their writing lesson, as they have nothing but the benches to write on. In some places there are no forms, and in many no sort of clock, though there is a pretence of time-tables. Time-tables, and no means of comparison with the hour! In one direction we see the pupils all using different books, picked up anywhere, or brought from home; and frequently only obsolete books are in use, bought for their cheapness. As for maps, globes, diagrams, models, and collections of natural objects, they are rarely to be seen: and indeed they seem to belong to a different scheme of being from that of whole groups of these schools. Who would look for maps and models when the school is held in "a miserable shed," or where the boys have for nearly a year, washed only their faces and hands (and feet when their shoes were mending), except on occasion of one dip in the Boyne; or where the floors of the kitchen and school-room were so foul that the visitors' boots stuck to the boards and bricks; and where the straw from the beds floated into the slops on the bedroom floor; and the counterpanes had not been washed for eleven years? We need not enlarge on abuses of this nature. We all know what were the habits which the founders meant the children to acquire in these educational establishments; and no one will dispute the difference between the future homes of children reared in dirt and squalor like this, and of thousands of orphans brought up in the well-managed workhouses which received so many after the famine. In proportion as we regard with pleasure the improvement in the homes of the labouring classes of Ireland we shall be anxious that the middle class shall enjoy the funds destined for their use, and be fitted for the highest order of domestic life—that which usually follows upon a sound and comprehensive intermediate education. A set of boys, all "idle and agape," except the class under examination, and condemned as hopeless as "Connemara

boys;" and a schoolful of girls, formerly accustomed to swear, and still rebellious, disrespectful, slatternly, and helpless, except in some special use of the needle—these are not the rising generation which stood in the mind's eye of the founders when they made their wills. The opportunity is present and pressing for restoring these young creatures to their proper rank, and making them the strongest link in the union of Ireland with England. We shall hereafter see what the Commissioners recommend in this view.

CHAPTER X.

DEFICIENCY OF INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION.

NONE but readers of the Report and Evidence before us can be expected to believe and understand what the deficiency of Middle-class Education in Ireland really is; but we earnestly hope that our readers, in and out of Parliament, will attend to whatever testimony does come before them, so as to have some sort of knowledge of what the question is—something like an opinion and feeling on it, when it is brought forward in the House, early in the Session. There are many books which we all read less interesting than the Report, and less entertaining than the Evidence; but they are Blue Books, and will meet the ordinary fate of the blue-literature of Parliament. Not the less for this should the portentous state of intermediate education in Ireland be attended to, when so much has been done for every other class. If our care is but extended over the middle, as it has been over the lower orders of children, the renovation of society in Ireland, which has already gone so far, may be complete; and our grandchildren may see that promising portion of the kingdom as regenerate in its wisdom, temper, and intellectual ability, as we witness it already in its material prosperity.

We have found that the Endowed Schools, by which the community was to be civilised, improved, and rendered happy and loyal as a part of the British nation, never duly answered the intention, in the first place; that, in the second place, they must at best have been inadequate to the needs of our time; and that, thirdly, a large proportion of them have lapsed

into a condition of poverty, neglect, and abuse, which may leave it doubtful whether, on the whole, they do most good or harm. Pillage and neglect have diminished the funds of many: yet those funds are, in many cases, paid away to sinecurists. In other instances the revenues have greatly increased without causing an increase in the means of education; and in more still it is understood that due energy and skill would render the property of trusts much more productive than it has ever yet been. In the face of such a state of things, the most intelligent, substantial, and valuable class of society in Ireland, and that order which it is all-important to sustain and do justice to, cannot get their children educated, but are compelled to admit that education is becoming lower in quality, scantier in amount, and in no respect adequate to maintain the intelligence and reputation of their order. Surely our representatives will consider this topic worthy of their earnest attention when it is brought before them in Parliament.

In England what do manufacturers, shopkeepers, farmers, and skilled artisans do with their children when they come out of the nursery? In our towns there is commonly some preparation for school by the governess—the daily governess, perhaps, or the resident governess, or the head of a preparatory school, in the case of boys; but the school is, for boys always, and very often for their sisters, expressly in view. We are fully aware that we have little to boast of in our middle-class schools; and the measures we are taking by the Oxford Examinations to test their quality show how far we are from being content with them. But schools there are within easy reach of almost all families of the order. Wherever there is a Grammar School, there throng the tradesmen's sons; and, however many may potter over their Latin hopelessly, and come away with little effectual learning, the way to a good education is open for those whose parents second, at home, the instruction of the master, and supply by additional aid the deficiencies of a Grammar School training. In large towns, the writing-master, who undertakes arithmetic,

geometry, and geography, is an established outwork of the great school. In the absence of a Grammar School, there are proprietary and private schools, of various merit, no doubt, but everywhere within easy hail; so that the boys grow up to fill their fathers' places, in theory, and we trust in fact, on the whole without degeneracy. The case is very different in Ireland.

“There are villages,” says Dr. McCosh,* “populous rural districts, and even market and borough towns, which are not within five, ten, or even twenty miles of any classical school;” and he, and a regiment of other good witnesses prove, in their evidence, a dearth which we never conceive of in England. Donaghadee, with a population of four thousand, has no classical school of any kind in it, nor within six miles of it. In Newtownards, with its ten thousand inhabitants, there is only one, and that in private hands. In Antrim twelve well-born boys attend a private school, and that is all! But some of the town boys go eighteen miles daily by railway to school in Belfast. Within twenty miles of Coleraine there are ten populous towns, Coleraine itself having six thousand inhabitants; and among them all they have not a school permanently established for the service of the middle classes. A tutor or two, coming to give lessons, and soon going away; a clergyman here and there receiving half a dozen or a dozen lucrative pupils; these are all throughout that great range of population. Ulster, however, is the most favoured part of the island. At the other extremity we find Dr. Bullen,† of Queen’s College, Cork, declaring his belief that those colleges cannot flourish till means exist of preparing middle-class students to enter them to better advantage than at present. Out of thirty who had presented themselves for admission, on one occasion, within his knowledge, eleven had been rejected as not qualified even to enter. At Clonmel no means exist of preparing youths for mercantile or agricultural pursuits, or for maintaining their place in educated society. At Limerick, it is difficult to obtain partners or assistants in business who

* Vol. i., p. 557.

† Vol. i., pp. 107—109.

know any language but their own, or are skilled in arithmetic, or in any way graced by knowledge. At Galway, Castlebar, and Sligo, the testimony is the same. A qualified land steward or mercantile agent is as difficult to procure as a good classic, or scientific workman. The witnesses believe that a good school in each of those neighbourhoods would be sustained by the residents; but it must open, and at first depend in part, on some amount of endowment. Here and there, in the course of the inquiry, a witness averred that a local tax for a good public school would not be objected to.

We have not space for the testimony from Roscommon, Longford, Londonderry, Enniskillen, Cavan, Wicklow, and Dublin, to the same effect. The witnesses had various remedial schemes to propose; but there was a striking agreement in their statements of the evil, and of its causes, and of the conduct of the class most concerned under the circumstances.

The National Schools have a good deal to do with the existing difficulty—not by any fault, but by the excellence of the instruction they give, as far as it goes. There were formerly schools in every town where more or less of the classics or of science might be attained; but the masters were chiefly supported by pupils who wanted less, and whose payments enabled the master to receive a small number for a superior course of instruction. The majority of pupils, who used to pay from 16s. to 26s. a year, now go to the National School for a penny a week; and the intermediate schoolmasters have disappeared. The manufacturer's or country gentleman's sons go to a costly Boarding School, in preparation for College, and the farmer's and tradesman's sons are satisfied perforce with what they get at the National Schools. Everywhere the story is the same: but we must not weary of it till the want is supplied. Even in Dublin* it is difficult to obtain clerks and other officers, public and private, who can write English well, or take rank among educated men; and Dublin tradesmen send their children over to England as the

* Vol. ii., pp. 250, 249.

only means of fitting them to sustain their calling and station in life. Among the Ulster Presbyterians* we observe the complaint that there is a diminution in the number of qualified candidates for the pulpit since the National Schools have reduced the supply of middle-class teachers.

Amidst such a state of things it is no wonder that the abuse and wasting of endowment funds excite disgust and indignation, and that some who are hungering and thirsting for the means of educating their children, and seeing their neighbours grow enlightened, are persuading themselves that a wise redistribution of those funds would meet the popular need. Few would agree that this would suffice at a period when the middle class of Irish society is growing rapidly, and beginning to occupy the place filled by their order in all prosperous and rising countries; but the old endowments must be made to go as far as they will, and be then assisted as may seem wisest and best. This is the question on which the Commissioners were desired to form and express an opinion, and on which Parliament will have to decide.

Ninety-one towns in Ireland, with a population exceeding two thousand at the last census, † are destitute of any endowed Grammar or superior English school: the whole number of such schools is fifty-two, of which thirty-five have an endowment below 250*l.* a year. After the fearful waste, pillage, and lapse of the property left by founders, the present annual value is computed at 68,500*l.*, with a probability that good management would double it in no long time. After reading of the numerous places in which a provision of 100*l.* or 200*l.* a year would open the sluices of knowledge, and bring its streams to almost every man's door, it does seem as if from 70,000*l.* to 150,000*l.* a year might go a long way in removing the chief hindrance to the complete welfare of Ireland. Whatever proportion the means may bear to the end, it is high time they were made the most of.

* Vol. i., p. 563.

† Report, p. 223.

CHAPTER XI.

CLAIMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

THE theory and practice—the rights and the present condition of the Irish Endowed Schools—having been fully ascertained, the Commissioners finally offer a statement of claims founded on the theory or original rights of the schools, and of recommendations suggested by actual failures, deficiencies, and abuses.

Such claims and recommendations naturally relate.

1st. To the Objects of the Trusts, the Pupils.

2nd. To the Teachers.

3rd. To the Property.

I. *a.* The first great claim on behalf of the Children whom the founders intended to benefit is, that some clear and public understanding shall be arrived at in regard to the qualifications and rights of pupils to free admission. The Evidence shows that the free admissions have, in many places, fallen away till the trust income has become a gift to the Master: that the Masters have consulted the vulgar notion of gentility by keeping the free quality of the school out of sight, even dropping the word “free” in the title and advertisement of the school: that in many localities the residents are unaware of their right to a free education for their children: and that it has been found impossible to rouse trustees and boards, and especially the Clare-street Board of Commissioners of Education in Ireland, to any effectual inquiry and administration in regard to the rights of free pupils. This will be a primary object in reforming the system.

b. Next comes the recommendation that powers shall be afforded by which certain schools, ill-placed, antiquated in character, and otherwise ineffective, shall be moved, modified, and reconstructed, so as to answer the views of the founders under the changed circumstances of the times.

c. Next, there must be visitation and inspection, adequate and public. This supervision is actually enjoined and provided for under various trusts; but the condition of a multitude of schools shows what the neglect has been. The Board of Commissioners have been unpardonable sinners in this respect. In the course of twenty years (between 1835 and 1856) it appears that applications for visitation* were made on behalf of nineteen schools: that in eleven of the nineteen cases no kind of visitation was ever made: that where visitation was granted the expenses were not charged, as provided by law, upon the Consolidated Fund, but upon the funds of the visited school, where such funds existed: that such charges are even now not all paid: and that one complainant of the mismanagement of a school was himself compelled to pay the cost of the inquiry he demanded—an infliction not likely to advance the interests of the pupils in endowed schools.

d. The present Commission unanimously adopt the proposal of Mr. Stephens, that they should recommend the holding in Dublin of competitive examinations for appointments in the public service, as the best means of improving the quality of intermediate education in Ireland. A large amount of evidence and testimony to the benefits of such a provision was offered to the Commissioners; and it appears likely to act both as cause and effect in improving education first, and the public service afterwards. Parents will leave their children longer at school with such prizes in view; poorer schools will be raised to a level with richer; scholars are furnished with an express aim and stimulus; new pursuits will be introduced; activity and enterprise will be awakened in private schools; and that general stir and improvement will spread

* Report, p. 244.

through the country which is exhibited by the witnesses as remarkable and conspicuous wherever the practice of examining as a test for employment has been introduced into colleges and schools.

II. *a.* On behalf of the Teachers, the Commissioners recommend that the patronage of Endowed Schools should be lodged* with the new Board, of which we shall have to speak presently, in order to provide for some fair estimate of the quality of teachers—some method of promotion according to merit. In order to such a result, there must be power lodged somewhere to remove incapable and worn-out masters and mistresses, so as to leave the field open to ability and activity. The Evidence exhibits a dreary array of schools sinking or sunk into insignificance or nuisance through the age, or infirmity, or discouragement of the teachers, or their lapse into even worse unfitness through the absence of supervision, or the laxity or perplexity of patrons. On the other hand, there are meritorious and able teachers toiling on in obscurity, without encouragement and without prospect, because no organization exists by which promotion through merit can be established and conducted.

b. Such a scheme must be accompanied by some provision for superannuating the aged and infirm members of the body. The trusts are generally entirely silent on this subject: and the Report discloses one case,† within the knowledge of a witness, in which a husband and wife, who had been diligent as teachers for thirty-one years, were dismissed by the Board of Erasmus Smith's schools without any provision or gift whatever. We need not enter on the modes by which it is suggested to create such a provision, as by a method of insurance, connected with the salaries, &c., &c. Under some such scheme, which is in full harmony with the objects of the trusts, the practice of timely retirement would become a matter of course; the families of teachers prematurely withdrawn by death or disease would be more or less provided for; the minds of the class would be set free for their busi-

* Report, p. 246.

† Report, p. 226.

ness ; and those of the Trustees from conflict between justice to the school and compassion to the master.

III. On behalf of the Property, the claims and recommendations of the Commissioners are urgent and various, as our readers will easily conceive, after the glimpses they have obtained of the waste and abuse of lands, houses, and other wealth.

a. A registration of deeds and other instruments of property is imperatively and immediately needed. One instance* may show the urgency of the case as well as several. The Secretary of the Clare Street Commissioners was applied to for a list of the foundation deeds of the schools under their charge, with the dates of such deeds, and a notice of where they were lodged. The secretary knew nothing of such deeds, doubted their existence, for the most part, and supposed that the solicitors to the Board could give an account of any that might survive. On application, the solicitors made "a careful search," the result of which was that they had no such deeds, and could not say who had. One of the firm afterwards produced some title-deeds of schools, which he had not seen for twenty years before ; and he supposed the Board had others. It was the business of the Board to hold them in safe custody, and to supply at all times when called on an accurate account of the property of the establishments consigned to their care : but the neglect of this part of their duty seems to have been total. The Report before us recommends† that an office for the registration of school endowments should be established, either by itself, or in conjunction with a similar custody of other securities : that the Courts of Probate in Ireland and elsewhere, and Succession and Legacy Duty offices, should communicate information of all bequests and donations on behalf of educational purposes in Ireland ; and that the Registrar should post up, and periodically produce, statements of the existing amount and condition of all trust property registered in his office. Our readers may remember that, in the absence of some such security as this,

* Report, p. 243.

† Report, pp. 269, 270.

many endowments are known to have lapsed, some school sites have been actually sold away in the Incumbered Estates Court, and various trusts and their instruments have been resuscitated by the inquiries of the new Commission. It would be a part of the Registrar's duty to supply copies of any documents in his charge, and to afford information and advice to parties interested on behalf of the objects of the trusts.

b. An effectual audit of accounts is eminently needed. The total disorder which prevails in some of the largest trusts would be incredible if it were not proved by abundant evidence, and by the admission of trustees, that they have omitted to keep accounts or neglected to balance them; that they have made illegal payments, and allowed rents to get into arrear till the very title to the property was lost; that they have paid their solicitors five per cent. of the gross rental of estates, without examining their bills, and so forth. In one direction we find there was no balance struck for eleven years; in another, no distinction has ever been made between capital and income; in one of Erasmus Smith's trusts,* the treasurer and auditor, the registrar and assistant registrar, and the solicitor, all charged upon each other the care of the accounts; and when at last the assistant registrar was brought to book, under the rule of the governors that the accounts should be kept by double entry, it came out that he did not know what was meant by double entry, and had no idea what "assets" were. Here a secretary has absconded; there a loss of many thousand pounds, the total income of several years, has been incurred by mere neglect in claiming the rents; in a long series of cases we find trustees selling the invested property, and appropriating fresh bequests, for the payment of current expenses; and, again, the prevalent notion of an audit of accounts seems to be merely comparing vouchers with the amounts set down in the account-book, whether the latter be a ruled ledger, or a memorandum-book, or a blotter. We do not observe any case in which the administrators of a trust

* Report, p. 229.

could supply a clear, sound, business-like statement of the amount of the property and the condition of the affairs under their charge. These items are a mere specimen, but they are enough to show the need of a good system of audit for the collective educational trusts of Ireland. The Report recommends* the establishment at Dublin of a board for the purpose, either separate or as a branch of the General Board of Audit, with sufficient powers over books and vouchers, over slovens and defaulters, and under the obligation to report to the Lord Lieutenant, for Parliamentary purposes, when required.

c. Next comes an agency for the inspection of estates. We have seen enough of the waste, dilapidation, and disappearance of houses and lands to be aware of the necessity of some such care of trust estates as every prudent landowner provides for his private property. The pages of the Report † which detail the observations of Mr. Murland, appointed by the Irish Government to examine the property of educational trusts and its management, are a mournful record of neglect of a great public duty, relieved by a very few pictures of well-principled and skilful management. The result is that a general system of supervision is highly necessary, to guard against not only fraud and dereliction of duty, but injurious methods of subletting the land, and ignorant practices in its cultivation. Ample leasing powers must be given to the Trustees, to whom a property so imbued with the principle of growth will be finally committed. If the proposed Board is established, power to lease land for twenty-one years, and to grant building leases for long terms will probably be accorded; ‡ and with a due provision of agents, properly qualified and rendered responsible, it may be hoped that the property of the various trusts may recover and increase in some proportion to the demand upon it contemplated by the founders.

It remains to be said in this connection that the Commissioners find themselves compelled to pass an almost unqualified condemnation on the Board of Education (the Clare Street) to whom the Irish schools were consigned, as far as the terms

* Report, p. 271. † Report, pp. 234-240. ‡ Report, p. 272.

of their respective trusts permitted. We shall have occasion to show, in a closing chapter, what schools are, and what are not, under the jurisdiction and administration of these Commissioners of Education; and these particulars are so closely implicated with the composition of the Board, its scope, and its powers, and also with the opposition of opinion between Mr. Stephens and the majority of the present Commission, that it will be better to say nothing more now than that the laches of the Board are proved* to be so many and so gross, the perverseness in its choice of action so extraordinary, and its admissions of default so clear, that there can be no dispute about its unfitness for its work. That unfitness may be accounted for, and the nature and extent of the work may bear discussion: but it does not appear that any defence of the Board, as qualified for its work, and meritorious in its achievements, is set up in any quarter. It has not fulfilled the aims of the founders, nor the objects of Parliament. What the present Commissioners propose in regard to it and its function, and what controversy Parliament will be called on to decide, in regard to the past and future of the Board, we shall see in our closing view of the whole topic. Parliament has seldom or never had to deliberate on any matter more vitally affecting the welfare of Ireland.

* Report, pp. 240-245.

CHAPTER XII.

ANTAGONIST RECOMMENDATIONS.

AFTER the survey taken by the Commissioners of the early days of these Irish endowments, and after ourselves looking back three centuries, to see what Ireland was like in English eyes when schools were instituted as a remedy for many troubles, it is not very difficult to anticipate what the main recommendations of the Report must be. It is much less easy to account for the opposition set up by one of the Commissioners, and for the support which that opposition seems likely to obtain, when the moment shall arrive, so pertinaciously deferred by the existing Government, and the whole subject be brought before Parliament for settlement.

We have seen that the fearful condition of the newly conquered Irish went to the hearts of humane men and women; and that the political state of the island alarmed the fears of the nation, from kings on the throne, and aldermen in the City of London, to the humblest dweller in the Pale. Those were days when men still hankered after the benefit to their souls to be gained by establishing charitable foundations. If the superstition of bribing Heaven by such means had become discredited, it was not altogether worn out; and several pious Christians joined on their own account with kings and rulers in endeavouring to make civilised beings and good subjects out of the "mere Irish." The object was the same amidst varieties of faith. In the earliest stage, the alternatives were simply between Romanism and Protestantism, as contemplated in the Acts of the Irish Parliament in the days of Elizabeth, before the Diocesan and Royal Schools

were in existence. Then arose the controversy which introduced the Puritans upon the stage. The first Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, were Presbyterians, and its provosts were so for nearly twenty years. Erasmus Smith, a Puritan alderman of London in Cromwell's time, certainly never could have intended to place his schools under exclusive Episcopalian management, though they have since undergone that change. His intentions are made clear by the prescription of a catechism to be used in his schools—"Ussher's Catechism,"* which is mainly a transcript of Cartwright's, in which that great Presbyterian leader sets forth the views of the "Westminster Catechism." Amidst the varying faiths of many founders, one primary aim was held in common, to train Irish children in the English language and learning, in the Protestant religion as an escape from Popery, and in English modes of life and industry. The schools were, in short, for civil and not theological objects; for political and social purposes, and not with sectarian views; and thus were their founders and promoters able to co-operate, and to countenance and assist each other, consciously or unconsciously. By sympathy in their views, and in a spirit of deference for their intention and their temper, we may now retrieve their noble charities, and do greater things for a happier Ireland than could be even imagined in their day. This is the desire of the majority of the Commissioners; and their recommendations have this aim in view. Strangely enough, their scheme meets with opposition, not only from the Romish quarter (represented by Mr. Hughes), which might be expected, but by a High Church and Tory usurpation of the authority of the founders, in the person of Mr. Stephens. In order to refute—we may add, to expose—Mr. Stephens, nothing more is necessary than to collate his "Letter to Sir George Grey" with the Report of the Commissioners. We may leave to the readers of both all description of the surprise occasioned by such an inquiry. All that we have to do here is to state the course recommended by the majority of the Commis-

* Vol. ii., p. 190.

sioners, and to indicate the worthlessness of Mr. Stephens's historical grounds of objection to it. Even this much would not be necessary but for the danger that a coalition of the Romish and High Church or Tory parties might pervert the great present opportunity of providing for intermediate education in Ireland, and draw nearly all the school endowments of the country into the hands of a sect. This could not be done if the public on both sides the Irish Channel were duly informed and interested on the question, and if it had been impartially set before them in earnestness and good faith; but it has unhappily been otherwise. After the signatures of the majority of the Commissioners we find, above Mr. Stephens's signature,* "I dissent from this Report." Mr. Stephens elsewhere declared † his reasons to be such as there was not time for him to impart—or, as he puts it in his "Letter," ‡ too extensive to appear in the form of a protest. He did not communicate them to his colleagues before the draft report was signed, but transmitted them to Sir George Grey, who, in presenting the document to Parliament, rebuked the method of proceeding as inconvenient, if not improper. Before Parliament legislates on the subject, Mr. Stephens's "Letter" will no doubt undergo a full and close examination, under the hand of his colleagues, who have still their reply to make. Our business is only to present the conclusions of the Report, with an indication of the weakness and unworthiness of the objections brought against them by the dissentient Commissioner.

We have seen something of the character of the Board of Commissioners of Education in Ireland (the Clare Street Board). It is proposed § to repeal the statutes constituting that Board, and to establish another, the members of which should be nominated by Government, with a due regard to the representation of the various religious persuasions concerned. By the appointment of one paid Commissioner, who should devote himself to the work, and especially to the

* Report, p. 284.

† Letter, p. 1.

‡ Ibid., p. 6.

§ Report, p. 246.

educational part of it, that fatal neglect which is usually generated by amateur boards is to be guarded against. Provision is to be made for the Board having sufficient powers for the care and inspection of the property, and the promotion of educational objects. The expenses of the whole establishment—the Board and its officers—are to be paid from the Consolidated Fund, according to the principle of the statute 53rd George III., c. 107.

The object of having a mixed Board is to give it the charge of the non-exclusive schools; the exclusive schools being, for the most part, already provided with guardians and superintendents. As everything that can be said about the scheme hangs upon a right understanding of the terms *exclusive* and *non-exclusive* schools, it is necessary to attend to the description given by the Commissioners of what they intend by the words. They repeatedly refer to their own descriptive clause. "Exclusive schools, under which term we mean to include those into which pupils of only one religious persuasion have a right of admission, or the Trustees of which, being of one religious persuasion, have power to compel all the pupils to receive religious instruction in their own tenets."* All schools thus circumstanced will of course remain exclusive, and are not subjects for the care of the new Board, which would consist chiefly of Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, and Presbyterians. Exclusive schools belonging to the Established Church are recommended to the charge of the Incorporated, or Protestant Charter School Trustees, whose management obtains the approbation of the Commissioners, except in a very few particulars. Other exclusive schools, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and others, are provided with Trustees by their constitution, and will be managed by them on their own principles. The critical question is, what schools are, and what are not, to be committed to the new Board as non-exclusive?

The present Board of Commissioners of Education (the Clare Street) has a large jurisdiction over non-exclusive

* Report, p. 273, par. 4.

schools, and ought therefore to have been always of a mixed character, as allowed by the statute, which assigns to the Lord-Lieutenant the choice of four, and again of two, "proper and discreet persons who should be usually resident in the city of Dublin." The Report before us declares* it to be an imperfection in the conduct of a Board so extensively concerned in the direction of non-exclusive schools that its *ex-officio* members are either dignitaries of the Church, or necessarily members; and, again, that the appointed Commissioners have been "nearly always"—Mr. Stephens says "always"—members of the Church.†

Under this practically exclusive Board have been placed all schools but the following, which are all exclusive at present. It may seem strange that the exclusive schools are those which are withdrawn by law or their own constitution from the charge of the Board; but this makes it only more clear that it is an abuse to have rendered the Board practically exclusive.

The Board has no control over Erasmus Smith's Schools, the Incorporated Society's, the Parochial Schools, Denominational Schools of private foundation, or those which are provided with guardians by their charters, or by Act of Parliament. "With these exceptions," says the Report, "the authority of the Board extended over all school endowments, both of public and private foundation, in Ireland."‡

The only exclusive schools left under the jurisdiction of the Board were some of those of private foundation designed for the education of members of the Church alone.

The non-exclusive schools under their charge are the Diocesan Schools, the Royal Free Schools, and all private foundations which are not Denominational (that is, restricted to one form of religion). These descriptions are not devised by the Commissioners, but set forth in the statute cited in the Evidence.§ It is difficult to conceive how there could be two opinions on the meaning of so plain a description: but

* Report, p. 245.

‡ Report, p. 240.

† Explained at p. 75.

§ Vol. ii. p. 94.

Mr. Stephens's movement is grounded on the supposition of the Commissioners having wrongly interpreted the specification. The disputed point is that of the Denominational Schools —“ all schools of private foundation for the education of persons professing any religion, or religious persuasion, other than that of the United Church of England and Ireland.”* These schools, those of Erasmus Smith, the Incorporated Society's, and the Parochial, being expressly excluded from a commission so general and comprehensive as that of the Board, it seems evident enough that the whole range of mixed schools is the natural province of the Board's management. Mr. Stephens, however, claims the exclusion of schools for the purpose of mixed education, by forcibly applying to them the description of Denominational schools. Because a Presbyterian or a Catholic endowment is rendered exclusive, and provided for accordingly by its foundation deed, and consigned to the charge of its own sect, Mr. Stephens would exclude from the care of the Board schools in which children of various denominations meet, according to the founder's will. He pleads that some of the pupils, if not all, must be of a religion “ other than that of the United Church.” By this twist of the terms of the Act, and by establishing his own description of non-exclusive schools, Mr. Stephens proposes to reduce to eleven † the schools to be placed under the proposed new Board ; whereas, he declares, ‡ the computation of the other Commissioners makes them 454. The method is by connecting with the new Board as non-exclusive schools “ only those schools into which, according to the intention of the founders, all religious persuasions (and not merely more than one) have a right to admission on their own terms.” §

Thus the majority of the Commissioners, proceeding on the specifications of the Acts under which the Board of Education in Clare Street was first founded, and then modified, conceive the object to be to superintend all schools not expressly excluded as above, computing the number at 454,

* Vol. ii., p. 94.

† Letter, p. 11.

‡ Letter, p. 12.

§ Ibid., p. 12.

which they would transfer to a new Board ; and, considering that in this number are comprehended the non-exclusive schools of the country, the Commissioners regard as an imperfection the number of *ex officio* dignitaries of the Church and other persons necessarily of the same Church ; while they consider it an abuse that the appointments at the Board have “ nearly always ” been filled up by Churchmen. They recommend that in the new Board which is, if their advice is taken, to supersede the Clare Street one, various denominations shall be represented, in correspondence with the variety of persuasions represented in the schools. All schools, at present exclusive in their character, will remain so, under their appropriate management.

The scheme of the opponents of mixed education for the middle classes exhibits the same spirit and temper which has always been in antagonism with the National Board, where the lower classes were their object. Again, we find Romish and High Church bigotry in temporary alliance, in order to divide Ireland between them, and to engross the endowments for the Church, rather than to permit mixed education. Mr. Hughes* is the spokesman of the Catholics, offering the old and familiar opposition. Mr. Stephens represents High Church and allied claims. He says the Board of Education was appointed with Church objects only ; that it has consisted, and ought to consist, of Church members only ; that if it is now changed into a Mixed Board, that Board ought to have the charge of eleven existing schools only ; and that all the rest, including mixed schools which invite pupils of any number of faiths but the whole range, shall be consigned to the Church Education Society—to the number of 436. This remarkable classification is effected by the device† of supposing the Denominational Schools, as described in the Act, to be what the rest of the world understands by Mixed Schools, or the converse.

It would be scarcely necessary to refer more or less to the opposition set up against this Report if the affair were to be

* Report, p. 284.

† Letter, pp. 5, 6.

judged according to the clearness, integrity, and reasonableness of the respective statements. Mr. Stephens's "Letter to Sir George Grey" would then be considered unworthy of a serious refutation. We have had occasion to notice only one of the relations between his commentary and the Report. In order to form some idea of the controversy to which it will give rise when Parliament meets, it is necessary to read his Letter side by side with the Commissioners' summary of suggestions on the case before them. This is the way to learn what the point of divergence between the dissentient Commissioner and his colleagues really is; and it affords the key to Government intentions, if we may judge by Lord Derby's speech on the 3rd of May last. Mr. Stephens's aim is to make out that the founders of these Irish Endowments had theological objects mainly in view in establishing their schools; and not only Protestant objects in opposition to Romanism, but Church-of-Englandism, as it is understood by Mr. Stephens and his party at present, in opposition to all denominational differences on the Protestant side. In this he is proved wrong; first, by the testimony of history, and next, by the evidence of the foundations themselves. Nobody who has followed the course of Irish history from the reign of Henry VIII. to that of William III. can have any doubt of the intention of the English benefactors of Ireland to render the Irish as English as possible, by the training of the whole mind in English ideas, habits, and employments. Further, the fact of the founders being themselves of both Protestant sects, as soon as there were two—the Episcopalian and Presbyterian—and the non-existence, at the time, of the sects, and then of the combinations of sects which Mr. Stephens assumes to have been parties to the case, are fatal to his interpretation of several of the trusts, and his assumptions of the intentions of their founders. This is a point of the utmost importance, as it affects the classification of the two orders of schools—the exclusive and the non-exclusive. The Commissioners have, as we have seen, clearly and sharply defined their own meaning of the terms.

By exclusive schools they mean to include "those into which pupils of only one religious persuasion have a right of admission, or the trustees of which, being of one religious persuasion, have power to compel all the pupils to receive religious instruction in their own tenets."* All such schools they desire to see managed by authorities of their respective persuasions. From the Quakers to the Bishops, let the professors of each faith superintend their own denominational establishments. But, as to the large extent of educational endowment which remains over—the wide range of "non-exclusive," "open," or "mixed" schools—they cannot, say the Commissioners, be placed at the disposal of any exclusive Board whatever, with any chance of preserving their open character, or of meeting with impartial justice.

While they, therefore, recommend a Mixed Board to administer the trusts of mixed schools, Mr. Stephens, on the contrary, aims at placing every school that can be laid hold of under exclusive Church management: and he is singularly unscrupulous as to the means for carrying this point. On the one hand he insists† on the exclusively Church character of the Board of Education, in the face of the terms of commission under which the last Viceroy appointed a Presbyterian, without objection from any of the Church dignitaries at the Board. On the other hand, Mr. Stephens claims as exclusive Church endowments the Diocesan and Royal Free Schools, which are under no such restrictions, as is proved by more positive evidence than the absence of limitation. The Commissioners of Education declared the Diocesan Schools‡ to be open; and as open schools they were supported by Grand Juries' levies of rates from persons of all religions, for the building and repair of the school-houses. The Royal Schools were declared to be open by the Clare Street Board, whose secretaries informed a Committee of the House of Commons that the masters might be of any religious persuasion. Mr. Stephens proposes cases which have no existence, as if for the purpose of creating embarrassment; as "schools

* Report, p. 273.

† Letter, p. 7.

‡ Report, pp. 45, 274.

for the joint education of Presbyterians, Methodists, Roman Catholics, and members of the United Church, each in his own religion.”* No such institutions existed at the time the Act by which he tests them was framed. The most remarkable, perhaps, of Mr. Stephens’s interpretations, and that which we see oftenest quoted in Irish newspapers, and elsewhere on his own side, is that which relates to the schools of Mr. Hevey and that of Rathvilly. Mr. Stephens calls his colleagues to account† for classing one of these foundations as exclusive and the other as non-exclusive, while the respective wills of the founders professed liberality as to the admission of children of any religion. The Rathvilly school is classed as non-exclusive, and Hevey’s schools as exclusive, under the Commissioners’ own description, just referred to; Hevey’s schools being consigned by the terms of the will ‡ to Trustees of the Roman Catholic faith, who are to institute the “theology” to be taught in the schools. Mr. Stephens’s citations§ from the will, given in evidence, stop short of this provision. In the Rathvilly case, another suppression is required to enable anything like a parallel to be established: and the suppression has been made accordingly. The trust is a modern one (1814), and the Charity Commissioners had to institute a suit to get it made effective. The decree which they obtained provided|| that the testator’s heir-at-law should be associated in the trust; and this at once constituted the school an open one. The testator’s name being Benjamin D’Israel, the natural remark all round is that one of the Trustees might at any time be a Jew. Of these two trusts, each professing liberality, the one is governed expressly in the matter of “theology” by Roman Catholics, while the other admits the heir-at-law as a trustee, without inquiry as to his religious opinions. These two keys to the cases are the facts which Mr. Stephens suppresses,¶ though they were brought before him in the Evidence and the Report.

* Letter, p. 6.

† Report, vol. i., p. 725.

|| Report, vol. iii., p. 4.

† Letter, p. 13.

§ Letter, p. 13.

¶ Letter, p. 13.

Objecting to the establishment of a new Mixed Board when one already exists, Mr. Stephens desires to hand over the Endowed Schools in bulk to the Church Education Society. We have just seen how he has, by his own account, reduced the number of schools under the proposed new Board to eleven. By making out Boards and Trustees to be Church on the one hand, and school trusts to be Church on the other, he prepares to transfer the property, the machinery, and the pupils to the keeping and care of the Church. His colleagues, on the contrary, recommend that every denomination should administer its own exclusive schools, while a Mixed Board should superintend open or mixed schools. It was no part of their commission to decide whether the existing National Board should be extended to embrace the endowed schools of the middle class. Their business was to recommend the best method of fulfilling the intention of founders under the circumstances of the present time. It is for Parliament to decide whether one extended Board, or two separate ones, will best answer the purposes to which the Commission itself is auxiliary. It is for Parliament also to see to it that the National School system is not broken up by means of the sectarian opposition which is preparing against a liberal scheme of intermediate education. It is perfectly true that the evidence on which the Report is based is so ample and so clear that no ground for argument would be left if our legislators would read it with ordinary attention. It is true that Mr. Stephens's "Letter" will not stand the examination of any impartial investigator, in any of its leading objections, narratives, and assumptions. It would be easy to show that the same spirit and method of treatment run through the whole letter: but his late colleagues may be trusted to do that. It is their business, and it is not ours. All that we are concerned with is the prospect for Ireland of a good education for her middle class, as far as a right administration of existing endowments can afford it. The Commissioners all agree as to the abuses which exist, and most of the reforms and new methods which are needed.

The majority show how the wealth and organisation of these trusts may be most faithfully administered to the largest number, according to the civilising and elevating intentions of the founders; while Mr. Stephens separates himself from them by claiming for these trusts, against all evidence, a theological object, and drawing from this unfounded assumption an inference that the bulk of the Endowed Schools of Ireland should be consigned to Church management, and their funds made available for Church purposes. Mr. Stephens's Letter* betrays the fact that the Church Education Society has possessed itself of two hundred and thirty-one schools which did not rightfully belong to the exclusive class; and all the four hundred and fifty-four which ought to belong to the public at large are placed in jeopardy by Mr. Stephens's opposition. Such an opposition has been thus far sustained—first, by Lord Derby's Government having done their best to cushion the Report; and next, by Mr. Stephens's "Letter" being allowed to enter Parliament—not as a part of the Report, but as a separate document which must remain unanswered till the next session. Lord Derby's speech of May 3rd shows how well disposed his Government is to cast overboard the principle of the National System, and to consign Ireland once more to the warfare of sects, and thus to cut off the new hope that the intentions of the founders of educational endowments would at length be fulfilled, and that the middle class of the Irish people would henceforth be afforded as fair a chance of enlightenment, good training, and accomplishment, as the classes below and above them. It is for us to say whether this Commission shall mark a period of advancement or of deliberate retrogression. If we are apathetic or careless, the Church and the Tories will give Ireland a start down hill again, after all that it has cost to bring her up to her present point of improved intelligence and social peace. But it is only our apathy or carelessness which could permit such a catastrophe. The Commissioners at large have done a great work, and done it well. Ireland has petitioned, and will petition again, on

* Letter, p. 11.

behalf of their recommendations. If Englishmen, in and out of Parliament, will speak their sense and declare their will, on behalf of the Middle Classes of Ireland, there is no Cabinet, and no Church clique which can ignore that sense, or oppose that will. We have to see that legislation grows out of this Report, and that that legislation secures and fulfils the aims which created the Commission. In order that every member in the two Houses may understand the case by the time it comes on, the constituents of members should begin to understand it themselves, without loss of time. It was for this purpose that we undertook to bring the subject forward in this series of chapters; and if our slight sketches have sent our readers to the Report itself, or prepared their attention for the approaching discussion, the Reform of the Endowed Schools of Ireland is secure.

(1) The President shall have the right to grant pardons and remissions of punishment and to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence.

(2) The power conferred on the President by clause (1) shall extend to all offences and punishments provided for by any law for the time being in force in India, but shall not extend to—

(a) offences against the State;

(b) offences against the public tranquility;

(c) offences against the public order;

(d) offences against the public morality;

(e) offences against the public safety;

(f) offences against the public health;

(g) offences against the public decency;

(h) offences against the public safety, health, decency, order, tranquility or morality;

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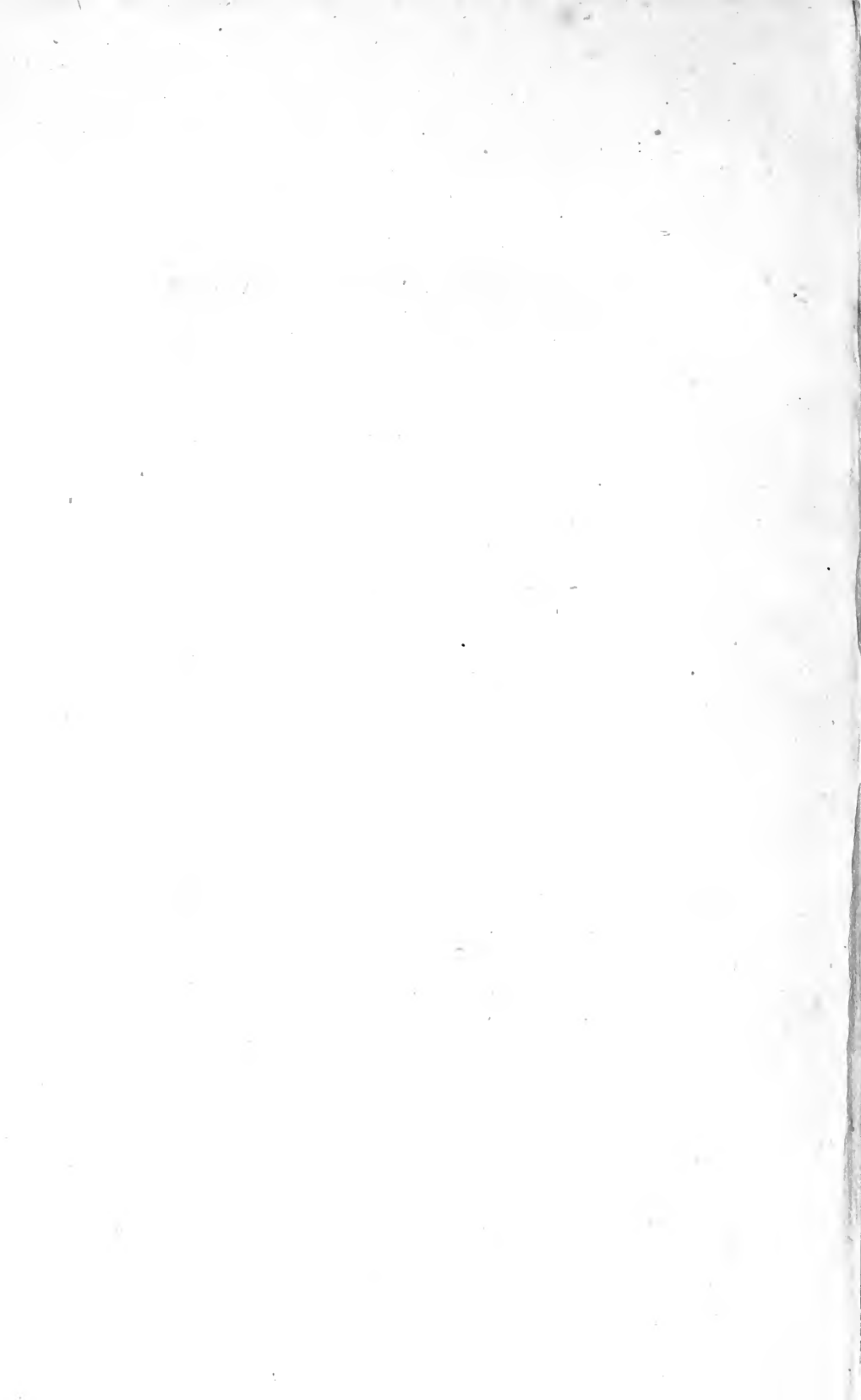
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