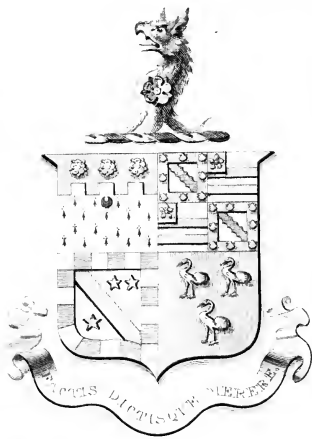


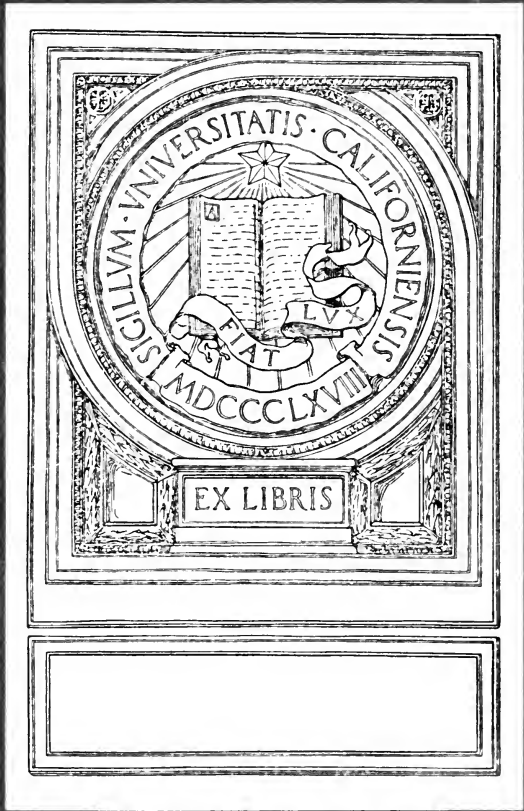
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LETTER

TO

A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

ON

National Education.

BY THE

REV. JOHN SINCLAIR, M.A. OXFORD, F.R.S.E.

SECRETARY TO THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING THE EDUCATION
OF THE POOR IN THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR J., G., F., AND J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD AND WATERLOO PLACE;

HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY; AND BELL AND BRADFUTE,
EDINBURGH.

1842.

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L E T T E R, &c.

SIR,

THE very moderate degree of interest you appear to take in the most momentous question which can occupy the thoughts of a statesman or of a man—the question how the great body of the people is to be trained in early years to usefulness here and happiness hereafter—must have arisen from imperfect acquaintance with the peculiar and critical circumstances in which that great question stands at present throughout England and Wales. You seem to overlook the fact, that this country, as regards Education, is now in a transition state. The gross ignorance which formerly prevailed among the mass of our population is now beginning partially to be dispelled. The example of other nations, in which great progress in elementary instruction has been made, though not always in a right direction, invites our imitation. A general impression prevails that the people must be educated; and the only point still undecided is, how that education shall be given. It is to the

considerations which ought to influence the Church and the Government on this subject, that I now propose soliciting your attention.

National Education, as it has hitherto been carried on, may be comprised under three systems, each admitting various modifications, but all essentially distinct from one another—the Scotch, the Continental, and the English. Permit me to make a few remarks on each.

According to the Scotch system, the Church is assisted by the State in the work of educating the people. In every parish a school-room, with a dwelling-house and glebe, or garden, is provided and maintained at the cost of the heritors, or landed proprietors. A salary also, amounting to from 25*l.* to 30*l.*, is secured to the schoolmaster by assessment. These advantages would not suffice for his comfortable subsistence, without the further resource of school-fees, by which his income is usually doubled. The circumstance that his support arises partly from assessment and partly from fees, is considered eminently conducive to his efficiency. The assessment secures him from actual want, and raises him to his proper station in society, while his dependence upon fees is a salutary stimulus to exertion, and prevents him from giving way to negligence, as is so frequently the case where the teacher depends wholly on endowment for his support, and

has no pecuniary loss to apprehend from desertion by his scholars. In Scotland the parochial school-master is in all cases a member of the Establishment, frequently a candidate for the sacred office of a minister. His school is superintended and controlled by the authorities of the Kirk; and although children of all sects and denominations are capable of admission, and no inquiry is made what place of worship they attend on Sundays, they are all taught the authorised formularies of faith: the Bible is expounded according to Kirk-principles; the lesson-books are all imbued with them; the daily prayers of the master with his scholars always imply, and generally express, belief of them; and his exhortations are all intended to enforce them. Such a system could only have been introduced by an all-powerful establishment; and can only be maintained under the peculiar circumstances of Scotland, where the great mass of the Dissenters differ only upon minor points from the Kirk, adopt the same catechism, and do not object to have their children instructed in the national faith.

The chief defects of the Scotch system are, that only one school is by law provided in each parish, however numerous or widely scattered the population; and that no provision whatever is made for infants, and none for girls separately from boys. The latter defect is a very serious

evil, not only because girls educated along with boys under a master to the age of 13 or 14 must unavoidably become rough and unfeminine in their habits, but because they are not taught works of industry; and sometimes, however well versed in arithmetic and etymology, are utterly unskilled in sewing, knitting, and other works of housewifery. These imperfections do not necessarily belong to the Scotch system, and might be remedied in case the system were introduced into England. But the English Church has no prospect of so desirable a consummation. The imposition of such a burden upon parishes would be opposed by various parties, and especially by Dissenters, who would plausibly allege that they ought not to be assessed or taxed for the support of schools to which they could not conscientiously send their children, and in which their children would be catechised according to principles which they themselves disapprove and disallow.

Entirely opposite to the system prevailing in Scotland is the *Continental*, by which the State, instead of assisting the Church, supersedes it more or less in the work of National Education. The design of this system is, to obviate the objections of Dissenters, and enable them to send their children to schools supported by the State. Without expatiating upon the various schemes

devised or executed on the Continent for this purpose, I may advert to some of those which it has been proposed to introduce into this country. Most of these are in imitation of foreign methods; and all of them involve, more or less, a sacrifice of Church-principle. Some theorists would banish religion altogether from the school-room, which they would set apart entirely for secular instruction; some insist on an eclectic plan, requiring that the doctrines, however miscellaneous and mutually repulsive, maintained by all the sects calling themselves Christian, should be fused and amalgamated into one general compound; and that a generalised and liberal, in contradistinction to what they term sectarian, Christianity, shall alone be taught in schools for the poor. Others, again, would confine Christian instruction to the mechanical performance of reading the text of Scripture without note or comment, or any attempt to give the sense. To all these schemes of compromise and accommodation the Church of England is necessarily and constitutionally opposed. They would all of them withdraw Education from the hands of the clergy; they are all subversive of the pastoral influence; some of them are vitally dangerous to Christianity itself; and none of them can ever be introduced into this country until some party hostile to our ecclesiastical institutions has gained

such complete ascendancy in the State, that the overthrow of the Church, as an establishment, is at hand.

It appears, then, that neither the Scotch nor the Continental, the parochial nor the latitudinarian system; can be established in England. The introduction of the one would be opposed by Dissenters, that of the other by Churchmen; and it has never yet been shewn how the objections urged by both parties can be removed; how schools can be erected and maintained at the public expense in which the whole Christian system, so far as children are capable of understanding it, including doctrine, morals, discipline, and worship, as embodied in the Articles and formularies of the Church, shall be inculcated, under the superintendence of the clergy, upon all the children of Churchmen, and yet, at the same time, nothing taught to the children of Dissenters which the parents allege that they conscientiously disapprove.

In England the Church has always claimed to be the instructor of the people, and in that character has always been recognised by the State: but until recently the State gave no assistance in the work, and the Church left it to be performed by the clergy,* either acting singly;

* By the word "Church," some ill-informed persons understand merely the clergy, or commissioned Church-officers, — a

or assisted by local committees. The means thus provided by voluntary efforts for the Education of the poor, notwithstanding a few endowments, were, as might have been expected, miserably inadequate! At length, in 1811, the heads of the Church instituted a society under the name of National, which in 1817 was incorporated by the Sovereign, for the express purpose of giving unity and vigour to the exertions of individuals animated by Christian patriotism. This society, in conjunction with a number of affiliated associations, carried on the good work for some years without assistance from the State; and in 1832 had in union with itself 4,624 schools, attended by 400,830 scholars. In the following year (1833) the sum of 30,000*l.* was voted by parliament for the advancement of Education, in the proportion of 20,000*l.* for England and Wales, and 10,000*l.* for Scotland. Grants ever since to the same amount have been annually voted. The distribution of these grants was entrusted to the Lords of the Treasury, who availed themselves for that purpose of the services of the National Society and of the British and Foreign School

mistake as absurd as in military affairs to regard the commissioned officers as constituting the army, to the exclusion of the non-commissioned officers and common soldiers. *Ecclesia*, a Church, meaning a congregation or society, must of necessity include all the members, laical as well as clerical.

Society. Through each society aids were given towards the erection of school-rooms, to be legally secured under trustees for carrying on the work of Education. National schools were necessarily established on Church-principles, while British and Foreign schools, though not professedly dissenting, were so conducted as to be open to all denominations alike. The Lords of the Treasury at first contributed one-half the sum necessary for the completion of the school-room, even in cases where the cost was not less than forty or fifty shillings for each scholar; but afterwards, in the case of England and Wales, though not of Scotland, they limited their bounty to an allowance of ten shillings for each scholar accommodated with an area of six square feet upon the floor. The encouragement thus given to the extension of Education by public grants proportioned to local efforts was so far effectual, that in 1838 the National Society had 6,778 schools in union, attended by 597,911 scholars; while the whole number trained in Church-schools was 1,003,087. In 1838, a strenuous effort was made by the admirers of the Continental system to transplant it, under some one of its numerous modifications, into England. This attempt was opposed by the Church;* much discussion followed both in and

* See note, p. 8.

out of parliament ; and the result was at length an arrangement now generally acquiesced in by all parties. The parliamentary vote is no longer entrusted to the management of the Lords of the Treasury, but to a committee of her Majesty's Privy Council appointed for that especial purpose. This Board, instead of distributing its funds through the National and British and Foreign Societies, collects information for itself, and exacts such conditions as it deems expedient from school-managers applying for aid. One of these conditions is, that an inspector, appointed on the joint recommendation of the Committee of Council and of the Archbishop of the Province in which the school is situated, shall be entitled to visit and report from time to time upon the state of the buildings, and on the instruction given.

A question here arises, as to the mode in which the present educational system throughout England and Wales may be extended and improved, and a larger parliamentary grant be so applied as to call forth, instead of lessening or superseding, the bounty of individuals, or of voluntary associations. This question is not so easily answered as might at first appear. Public grants and voluntary contributions are seldom found existing long together. In proportion as the public donor comes forward, the private sub-

scriber retires. Every man is glad to throw his personal burdens, of whatsoever kind, upon the broad shoulders of the community. It may be useful, therefore, to ascertain, as far as possible, what rules a wise government might be led to adopt in distributing funds for education; what mode of operation would best accord with English habits and feelings, would most effectually elicit, instead of damping and extinguishing, the ardour of private liberality; and, by shewing due regard to the claims of property, would be, on the whole, just, equitable, and satisfactory to all the parties concerned.

One obvious rule is, that the public bounty should be so administered as, if not to strengthen, at least not to injure or weaken the Established Church. Any measure taken by the State with the latter tendency would undermine its own authority, and be a self-inflicted injury.

Another material point is, that public grants, as has hitherto been the case, should be in proportion to private contributions. This rule has the recommendation of economy. The State procures for less money a greater quantity of Education—the article to be purchased. Other circumstances being equal, it is preferable to expend ten shillings for each scholar than fifteen or twenty. This rule is also recommended by its fairness. If the owners of property are com-

pelled to contribute through the taxes towards educational purposes, it is but fair, unless strong reasons to the contrary be produced, that they should contribute towards the kind of Education which they most approve; and the best criterion for ascertaining what kind they most approve, is to discover what kind they voluntarily support of themselves. I may add, that the kind of Education which they support of themselves is most likely to be permanently upheld.

The next rule to be considered is, that public grants ought to be given without unnecessary restrictions; not in a dictatorial spirit; not so as to excite jealousy and apprehension. I need hardly remind you of the alarm excited last year throughout the country, in consequence of the educational measures projected by the late Administration, and still more in consequence of the various theories recommended every where in the form of speeches, pamphlets, lectures, and evidence before parliamentary committees by the advocates of what was termed the liberal system. It was feared that any school aided by a public grant, and visited by a public inspector, would be liable to have the instruction already established by the school-managers altered, or even subverted, by State-authority. Hence great reluctance to accept public money, and great anxiety in the minds of those who had accepted

it. In some cases landowners refused to give sites for schools, and in others, rich men found a reason or a pretence for withholding their subscriptions. They alleged that it would be hard if land which they had given, or money which they had subscribed, towards one system of Education should afterwards be transferred to another, of which they conscientiously disapproved. "I only wish," said one of these parties in confidence to myself, "that we could recover our independence by returning the money." Happily these apprehensions were soon to a great extent allayed, and have been gradually subsiding ever since the order in Council of the 10th of August, 1840. We may rest assured that nothing will be done, at all events by the present Government, to revive them.

As the administrators of the public fund for Education should abstain from dictation with regard to the subjects taught in schools, so also should they use equal delicacy with regard to methods of teaching. It is highly desirable that the best information as to the methods practised both at home and abroad should be as widely diffused as possible; and the friends of Education, I may here observe, are greatly indebted to the Committee of Council for its labours and inquiries in this department. But it is at the same time necessary, that while school-managers have

every opportunity of knowledge, they be left at liberty to choose for themselves, unless it can be shewn that one method only will secure the object aimed at by the parliamentary vote. The monitorial may be preferable to the simultaneous method, and the circulating may possibly have advantages over both; but under particular circumstances, of which the managers should be the best judges, any one may be preferable to the other two. And, at any rate, the managers and subscribers will naturally come forward with greater zeal and liberality when they find their own wishes respected, and their own views carried into effect.

The same remark applies to school-buildings. Such things are often as much matters of taste as of utility. Local feelings and associations, and local suitableness, are in some degree to be consulted. A plan, however excellent in itself, however adapted to one situation, may be inappropriate in another. It is important, therefore, that a great variety of excellent models prepared by architects of reputation, should be widely circulated, in order that promoters of school-building may have every where as much assistance as possible in maturing their plans, and may either adopt wholly or in part any one out of the collection, or may derive hints from it for

improving a diagram of their own. The Committee of Council has printed a very useful series of plates, containing plans of school-rooms and residences for teachers. The National Society, also, by the aid of Dr. Reid, whose services it has engaged, is preparing some additional plans and specifications, with peculiar reference to ventilation and acoustics. But while, with reference to things comparatively indifferent, the most perfect freedom should be allowed, there are, in connexion with the health of the children, the tenure of the site, and the substantiality of the buildings, certain points regarding which the promoters of schools cannot expect, and cannot reasonably desire, the same latitude. The necessity of rules with respect to health is sufficiently obvious. On the subject of tenure, the unskilfulness of country conveyancers is remedied by the regulation of the Committee of Council, that all trust-deeds for schools must be submitted to their legal adviser. To secure substantiality in the buildings is a further public object evidently deserving attention from the administrators of the educational fund. But while many local committees, from a miserable lack of means, might be satisfied with slight and temporary edifices, there is an extreme on the other side equally to be avoided,

that of insisting upon needless expense with a view to solidity.*

From what has been observed, you will per-

* It may here be noticed, that a dictatorial spirit in private individuals may be as injurious to the progress of elementary education as it would be in Government itself; and is on this account the more dangerous, that occasionally it is found in persons who would perhaps be the very last to tolerate it in others, or to suspect it in themselves. Dialogues like the following have not seldom been reported to me; even the concluding threat in *italics* is not borrowed from imagination:—

Landlord. I will have nothing to do with the National Society; I exceedingly dislike its dictatorial spirit.

Clergyman. Permit me to inquire what particular dictation you complain of.

L. The Society ties us down to a prescribed list of books, some of which, to say the least of them, are not the best.

C. Far from it. The prescribed list has been given up; it never extended farther than religious books; and even with regard to them, the restriction has for years been removed.

L. But the Society interferes impertinently with regard to methods of instruction. Why should a board meet together in London, and pretend to settle among themselves how my schools in —shire are to be regulated?

C. You have no such interference to apprehend; the Society leaves the methods of instruction in every school to be settled by the school-managers.

L. But I don't choose that the children of dissenters should be compelled to attend church on Sunday.

C. That is a point which the Society leaves the managers of schools to determine. They decide in each case whether the reason alleged for the non-attendance of a child on Sundays be sufficient.

ceive that public grants should rather be made towards establishing, than maintaining schools. Grants for the latter object, for increasing a teacher's salary, or providing books, fuel, &c. would at once supersede the local subscriptions. As soon as it became known that Government would at all hazards support the school, and that in proportion as private funds were withdrawn, public liberality would supply its place, the private subscription-list would speedily present a blank. Even in the case of partially endowed schools, where some deficiency is to be made up by private contributions, it has been generally

L. From your account, it would appear that the Society is a mere humbug ; it leaves the whole affair in the hands of the school-managers, and does nothing itself at all.

C. The object of the Society is to afford *facilities* for building schools and for improving school-discipline ; in these two departments it labours actively and effectively ; but the Society, as you have now the fairness to acknowledge, is not animated by a spirit of dictation.

L. What I particularly object to is the Catechism.

C. Not, I hope, to its doctrine ?

L. Of course not ; but to the teaching of it by compulsion.

C. I am persuaded that you would hardly find so much as one parent in the parish who would object to it.

L. But I would not do violence to the conscience of even one parent ; it is against my principles to do so.

C. But the great majority of subscribers regard the Catechism as a necessary part of Christian instruction, and cannot conscientiously agree to omit it. Would you do violence to *their* consciences ?

found, that there is greater difficulty in doing so than there would have been in raising subscriptions to defray the whole expense of the institution. Every person applied to for assistance points to the endowment, and claims exemption.

There are, however, some measures for the improvement of Education not liable to this objection. Grants towards the establishment of training-institutions are of this description, and are peculiarly necessary, from the difficulty of raising funds for so expensive an object. It would be exceedingly desirable that aid should be given towards placing upon a more efficient

L. You seem to think that no child can be saved unless it gets the Catechism by heart.

C. I do not think the *words* are necessary, but the *doctrine* is; and the objection of dissenters, where they do object, is to the doctrine, and not the words. My wish is to include in our system of instruction all that is indispensable to the usefulness of children here, and to their happiness hereafter; and to offer full instruction upon that system to all who will accept it. This is the object of the National Society, and I cannot conscientiously agree to sacrifice that object, merely to avoid the imputation of exclusiveness.

L. Well, Mr. B., it is of no use arguing; my mind has long been made up; you and I must agree to differ upon this point; I will have nothing to do with the National Society. If you choose to make your school an exclusive school, I will neither give nor sell you the proposed site; I will not subscribe myself, *and I will send my bailiff round to warn my tenantry against subscribing.* I will have no exclusiveness upon my estate.

footing a few of the training-colleges instituted throughout the country by the Diocesan Boards ; and that the establishment of the National Society in the metropolis should be upon an enlarged scale. The expenses of such institutions do not increase in proportion to the augmented number of their pupils, and therefore it is important that they should be conducted upon a scale of sufficient magnitude. An expensive machinery to train a comparatively small number is not to be thought of. Government, therefore, will naturally inquire in each case, on the one hand, into the amount of the original outlay, and of the subsequent annual expenditure ; and, on the other, into the probable return anticipated, or, in other words, the number of efficient teachers supplied to the country.

The friends of popular Education, in proportion to the warmth of their enthusiasm in the cause, require to be more frequently reminded that the task which the Church has undertaken is, to educate the body of the people by means of voluntary contributions from her members ; and that unless in our use of those means we do our utmost to unite economy with efficiency, we may frustrate the very object which we are labouring to secure.*

Another mode in which Government may

* See Appendix.

contribute towards improving Education is, by a well-devised system of general inspection. The details of such a measure might be variously arranged. For example; when any Bishop is desirous that the schools in his diocese should be examined, he might apply directly to the Committee of Council for an inspector; or, to prevent conflicting applications from different Bishops, it might be settled that each should apply through the Committee of the National Society. The Committee of Council intimate their consent to his request. The Bishop sends a circular to the clergy and other managers of Church-schools, informing them of the inspector's intended visit, and requesting those whose schools have not been aided by public grants to open them for examination. In the case of schools aided by public grants no such request will be necessary, as the managers have already pledged themselves to admit an inspector. Upon receiving answers to his circular, the Bishop transmits to the Committee of Council a list of schools prepared for inspection; and the tour of the inspector, which, of course, is limited to Church-schools, is arranged accordingly. At each school, as he proceeds, this officer makes such suggestions and recommendations, both verbally and in writing, as he considers likely to be useful: in the case of schools aided by

public grants, he draws up a report, one copy of which he sends to the Committee of Council, and the other to the Bishop; in the case of schools not aided by public grants, he sends a copy to the Bishop only. On the completion of his tour, he submits to the Committee of Council and to the Bishop a general report on the state of Education in the diocese, to be published or not, as their lordships may deem expedient. In all probability the publication of such reports will gradually become less frequent. A few might from time to time be printed with advantage; but a very large number, consisting frequently of similar materials, would be only so much waste paper.

A question here arises, whether an inspection of the above sort would accomplish the object in view; whether it would be so effectual as to be worth the expense incurred, and, at the same time, so acceptable to the managers of Church-schools, as to afford a likelihood of being generally extended and applied.

As regards efficiency, it must be obvious that the proposed inspection secures all the practical advantages which mere inspection, as distinguished from dictation, can be supposed to produce. These advantages consist in the preparations made by the school-managers, the teachers, and the children, for the important day of exa-

mination ; in the general attention drawn to the subject of Education throughout the parish and neighbourhood ; in the advice given by the inspector to the local authorities ; and in his suggestions and recommendations to the Church and to the State, to the Bishop and to the Privy Council. By the proposed arrangement all these benefits are combined ; and the only conceivable deficiency would be, that in the case of schools voluntarily opened to examination no particular report would be printed. For my own part, I regard this deficiency as of no importance ; I see no practical purpose which the accumulation of such reports to the extent of large volumes is likely to answer.

As regards the other branch of the question, whether inspection upon the above plan would be acceptable to school-managers, and could be generally extended, let us consider what would be their feelings when they received the Bishop's circular requesting them to admit the inspector. They would naturally reflect, " This public officer comes to us, upon our own invitation, for the friendly purpose of assisting in an object which we are ourselves in earnest to advance. He is a man of talent and experience, and, moreover, of sound religious principles ; for he was recommended to his office by the Committee of Council and the Archbishop of the Province,

and he is sent to us with a further recommendation from our own Diocesan. His instructions have the sanction of the Archbishop, and emanate, as respects religious Education, from the Archbishop himself. We have the most solemn assurances—and without such assurances we should still close our doors against him—that inspection never will be made a prelude to State-interference or dictation; and since no report upon our school is to be printed, we need not fear that any imperfections, which want of funds compels us to tolerate, will be the subject of public criticism and remark. A general report upon the diocese is of no immediate consequence to us as managers; there is no reason, therefore, why we should not cheerfully comply with the wishes of our Diocesan, and avail ourselves of the ability and experience of the inspector to carry on more effectually our good work.”

A third measure by which the State might materially advance the cause of National Education is, by contributing to ascertain statistically to what extent the children of the poor receive instruction in each parish throughout the country. The National Society has recently engaged in an inquiry of this nature; and has produced, by way of specimen, an accurate and complete digest, shewing the state of Education in the diocese of Rochester. The returns in every

instance have been furnished by the parochial clergy; they have been sent from every parish; as a security for their correctness, they have in every instance been submitted in a printed form for revision to the clergyman who sent them; and they embrace all the particulars most important in a statistical point of view, and best capable of tabular arrangement. This is a kind of information which an enlightened Government must be desirous to procure, but cannot procure directly through agency of its own without a vast expense. The National Society can procure, as the case of Rochester shews, this desirable information at a comparatively small cost, but cannot be expected to do so without assistance. A grant of 500*l.* would probably be sufficient for the purpose. The question, therefore, is, whether a general view of the statistics of Education throughout all the dioceses of England and Wales is not worth incomparably more; whether much larger sums have not frequently been voted by Parliament to obtain returns of infinitely less value.

The only other method by which, as it occurs to me, the Government might improve Education without interfering with local efforts, is by grants in aid of school-residences. It is understood that their Lordships have resolved on giving additional assistance towards the comple-

tion of school-buildings where a teacher's residence is included in the plan. The resolution, however, applies only to schools about to be established. Its utility would be greatly increased, if special grants for that purpose were made to schools already in existence; local contributions would be called forth, and the respectability and comfort of the teacher increased in a degree out of all proportion to the sum expended. According to the former school-site act, half an acre only could be granted for school-purposes; but the recent act allows a whole acre. An additional half acre, therefore, either adjoining the other half, or situated elsewhere in the same parish, might in many cases be obtained, and would suffice, not merely for a teacher's residence, but for a garden. Nothing could contribute more towards giving permanency to a school.

The remarks in this Letter will have sufficed to shew you, that although the Government may in some respects extend its operations for the advancement of popular Education, it cannot perform much more than it has already undertaken, without superseding individual exertion. The burden cannot be thrown in any greatly increased degree upon the public funds, without eventually resting upon them altogether. The State is willing to assist the Church in this great work, so far as it can do so without interrupting

the benevolent exertions of her members. The State, under present circumstances, cannot establish a parochial system of education, such as exists in Scotland; although it would gladly aid the Church in establishing a parochial system not depending upon assessment, but upon voluntary contribution. The question is, *can* the Church do this? Can the Church, with such co-operation as the State is ready to afford, perform the task? No doubt of it; if laity and clergy unite in their endeavours. But *will* the Church do this? Will clergy and laity combine their efforts with proper zeal? Hitherto, it must be acknowledged, with shame and regret, that they have not. There are some splendid exceptions, both laical and clerical; but the contributions for National Education from this wealthiest of nations, have as yet been lamentably small. Towards distant objects, at the poles or the antipodes, or towards objects in which our vanity, our ambition, or private interests are concerned, we can afford any sum; to civilise, for example, an untameable continent, or discover a useless archipelago; to rear a monument, or contest a borough. But, behold! when a Queen's Letter is issued, exhorting all Churchmen to contribute in aid of Church-education,—a letter solemnly introduced by each minister to his congregation, with a full statement to shew the exigency of

the case,—what is the result? Not 30,000*l.* from the 12,000 parishes and ecclesiastical districts of England!!! Appeals also for the same noble purpose, whether from local committees or from Diocesan and District Boards, or from the National Society, have in general met with the same reception—cold, tardy, and parsimonious!

The reasons, or I might rather say the pretences, for this apathy are various and contradictory. One man alleges, that “he leaves the children of the poor to be educated by their *parents*, to whom the duty naturally belongs;” and will not pause to inquire, whether the parents have time, or inclination, or capacity for the task. Another affirms, that he “leaves the children of the poor to be educated by the *clergy*, with whose sacred office no inferior teacher should be allowed to intermeddle.” He will not consider that it is the clergy themselves who desire the aid of the schoolmaster; that it is not their proper duty to teach reading, writing, and the words of the Catechism, but to explain the meaning of it; and that in proportion to the strength and solidity of the foundation laid by the more humble workman, will be the height and solidity of the superstructure reared by his superior. A third objector declares, that he “leaves the children of the poor to be educated by their fellow-parishioners; he subscribes to a

church-school within his own parish, and may therefore be excused from contributing to Societies and Boards of Education." He is of opinion that every parish should establish an educational machinery for itself: not reflecting that the poorest parishes are incapable of doing so; that the richest are in many respects dependent upon the rest of the community; and that, if Education is to be efficiently conducted, not only school-rooms and teachers' salaries must be provided, but model-schools and training-institutions. Now, what line of policy could be worse, or more erroneous or unchristian, than for the several parishes throughout the kingdom to act as separate and disconnected fraternities, each relying upon its own resources, and neither granting nor expecting aid from the rest? All must remember that they belong to the same Church, and are "members one of another." There must be no jarring, no mutual repulsion, no false pride of independence; in short, no *schism* in the body. One parish must not say to another, "I have no need of thee;" nor one diocese to another, "I have no need of thee;" but all must be animated by one spirit, and be prepared cordially to interchange good offices, and to work together for the common good.

One further pretence for apathy is, that National Education is not always effectual; that in

some cases it does not permanently attach to the Church the children of parents alienated from her communion; and that, perhaps, even infidels and chartists may have received the elements of knowledge in our Church-schools. Be it so;— and what then? No reasonable man imagines the result of the most perfect education to be infallible. No reasonable man supposes that every child admitted into our Church-schools must of necessity remain a member of the Church, or even a professor of Christianity. If occasional failure be a sound objection to the Education of the poor, it must be an equally substantial argument against the Education of all classes, and must silence the parent equally with the schoolmaster. The real question is, whether, upon the whole, and in the great majority of cases, the effect of popular Education be not decidedly beneficial? This is a question to be determined by the experience of intelligent observers, and more especially by the testimony of the clergy. And I may here be permitted to remark, that very few individuals have had more abundant opportunities than myself of ascertaining the impression made upon the minds of the clergy by intercourse with their parishioners. I have now been more or less connected officially with the erection of above seven hundred schools, and have conversed or corresponded with several

thousand clergymen, including those who, in all parts of the kingdom, have given most attention to the subject of Education;—the result of my inquiries is a growing conviction, that the effect of educating the children of the poor has already been in a high degree beneficial, and is likely to be still more so. I do not refer merely to the acknowledged fact, that the preservation of our political institutions depends, under God, upon the stability of our Church Establishment; and that the poison of anti-social and anarchical corruption is sure to spread most rapidly and most fearfully where the people are abandoned to their own devices, and left to wander as sheep having no shepherd. But what I especially advert to is an important truth, too frequently overlooked, and yet universally granted by the most competent authorities, that to build churches and establish ministers is not enough, unless Church-schools be added. Hence it is that so many of the parochial clergy are such liberal contributors towards building and maintaining schools; *for, to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they are willing of themselves* to sacrifice their private means for the advancement of this great object. In some cases I have remonstrated with curates and district ministers on the imprudence of incurring liabilities that might involve themselves and their

families in serious embarrassment, or, perhaps, even expose them to utter ruin. The answer always was, that without a school every effort to reclaim the people was unavailing.

If the lay members of the Church would only profit by the experience of parochial and district ministers living in daily intercourse with the people, and thoroughly acquainted with their sentiments and habits, they would see how absolutely necessary it is, not only to the well-being and good order, but to the safety of the country, that the Education of the poor upon sound principles should be maintained and extended. But I repeat, the time of probation is short. If the Church delays much longer her duty to the young; if she much longer hesitates, by means of her influential, and wealthier, and more responsible members, to provide sound instruction for the people, and prefers every other interest to this primary object,—the adversaries of her system will avail themselves of the tempting opportunity. Either they will set up rival schools to ours, and in some places where we have none, or they will call upon the State to do its duty by establishing a State Education, rather than leave the people in ungovernable barbarism. Under these circumstances, we may easily anticipate what kind of Education must be given,—something which neither Churchmen nor sincere

Christians of any sect, even should they submit to it, would really approve; something which neither party would give their own children; something which both parties would pronounce inadequate. When these disastrous consequences have come upon us, we may repent; we may be ready to repurchase with millions the precious opportunity we wantonly suffered to escape us— an opportunity which a little common sense and prudence would have secured, and which a few thousands timely and wisely spent would have enabled us to improve.

Let me add, in conclusion, that this Letter has originated entirely with myself; and is given solely as the opinion of an individual no stranger to his subject, but acquainted intimately, officially and professionally, with an overwhelming mass of facts and circumstances, on which his opinion has been founded.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

JOHN SINCLAIR.

London, 7th Feb., 1842.

APPENDIX.

MANY friends of popular Education, in their zeal for the establishment and support of training-institutions, are led occasionally to use expressions which might cause the public to imagine that further efforts for building schools are not required, or may be at least suspended, till the population of the country has outgrown its present school-accommodations. But no man of feeling and reflection can read the following extracts, from actual communications made to me during the last few weeks, on unquestionable authority, without acknowledging, that to extend elementary instruction is still as necessary as to improve it; and that both objects must be carried on zealously and economically together.

“ ——— Population 1500. The whole design of erecting a new school, instead of the present dilapidated inconvenient building, is about to be relinquished. A school-site may be purchased, but will not be given.”

“ ——— Population 1500; local means, *nil*; the case at present desperate.”

“ ——— There are in this parish three townships, containing a population of nearly 12,000 souls, and no local means of erecting school-rooms; it may be even feared that the National and Infant-schools in the town itself will be abandoned, in consequence of the prevailing indifference to the subject of Education.”

“ ——— This is a mountainous poor district, containing a population of above 1700, principally colliers, quarrymen,

handloom weavers, and small farmers, proverbially ignorant and rude. The subject of Education is so little regarded, that not one of the proprietors can be prevailed upon to give a site. A liberal grant, however, from the Society, would insure this case."

" ——— The population of this district is about 6000, all operatives, very poor, and crowded closely together; no public school of any kind either on Sunday or workday; no place of worship, except a small room, over a cottage, for Baptists. The aid most desirable at present is a grant of 20*l.* towards fitting up a cottage, and an annual grant of 20*l.* for three years towards expenses."

" ——— Population 2800, rapidly increasing. A poor manufacturing district, with very limited resources; no school, and no place of worship."

" ——— Population 2000. A Sunday-school, numbering nearly 300 scholars, has been nine months in operation; it is taught in a house lately a beer-shop and Socialist dancing-room. There is general poverty, and much want of employment. Local means, owing to debt upon the new church, and the expense of renting a school-room, are very limited; and yet land for a school-site must be bought. The present arrangements cannot be tolerated. They are prejudicial to the health of teachers and taught, and other scholars (who can be found) have either been deterred from offering themselves, or are refused admission."

" ——— Population 5000. The church was lately purchased from Dissenters, and is several hundred pounds in debt. The congregation is poor; the neighbourhood of low character, distracted by Socialists, Swedenborgians, Quakers, &c. Of 1422 persons in a portion of the district, eighty-seven attend regularly a place of worship, ninety-five attend occasionally, and 1240 confess that they attend no where. The aid solicited is 20*l.* towards fitting up a large hired room."

" ——— Population 2300. Formerly there were not 300

Papists in this parish, now there are scarcely more than 300 Protestants. The incumbent of the new church teaches certain days in the week in his own parlour; but notwithstanding all his zeal and activity, he has almost insurmountable difficulties to contend with."

" ——— Population 1400. This is a district inhabited by colliers, handloom cotton-weavers, and factory operatives: a colony lately located; and, owing to the advantages of the situation, likely to increase. A school-site may be given, but subscriptions are almost hopeless. The Dissenters had a school in a cottage; but, after passing into the possession of various sects, it is now abandoned."

" ——— This is a melancholy case of destitution, both as to religious and educational privileges. The place is far from any church; and the plan of building a school-room in danger of being abandoned."

" A——, B——, C——, D——. Population of C——, 1500; of D——, 1200. These are poor destitute portions of that poorest of all poor parishes, E——. They have neither church nor school."

" ——— Population 7000. The operatives of this district are in great distress, and nearly destitute of the means of Education. A Sunday-school is taught in three or four cottages."

" ——— Population 1000. Here a school-room is much wanted. The children are drawn away to popish schools; yet it is doubtful whether the building of a Church school-room can be attempted with any prospect of success. No local funds can be expected."

" ——— Population 10,000. A most deplorable case, becoming worse every day: if we cannot raise churches and schools, we must have *barracks*. The respectable inhabitants are in positive fear of their lives."

" ——— Population 17,000. The only Church-of-England school is a small one of boys and girls on Sunday. The present curate is establishing one or two others in unoccupied

factories. It is impossible to describe the extent of misery, ignorance, and vice, amongst the mass of the population, both male and female."

" ——— Population 3000. A very poor district; existing provision for Education gratuitously, or at a very small charge, none at all."

" ——— Population 13,000. There is no daily schools for boys, girls, or infants, in connexion with the Church, throughout the whole of this populous district."

" ——— Population 3000. In this town, surrounded by a large agricultural district, the weekly attendance in Church-schools amounts to forty-five boys and girls, and in other schools to a somewhat smaller number; but, owing to local difficulties, the plan for building a large national school has been abandoned."

" ——— Population 18,000. This parish at the present time is without either an infant or Sunday-school; nor is there any prospect of sufficient funds being raised to build one, owing to the poverty of the parishioners, and the frequent calls upon them to assist in supporting the already-established charities of the parish."

To the above cases I shall add, out of many now before me, one strong representation by an intelligent layman well acquainted with the manufacturing districts. It was sent some months ago; but the circumstances have not since materially altered:—" I do not believe that there exists in the United Kingdom any spot which stands so much in need of the most extensive assistance which the Society can afford, as the district from which I now write. It is estimated that in the towns of Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge, and the adjoining township of Dukinfield, there is a population of nearly 60,000 within seven miles of Manchester. About ninety per cent of this population may belong to the working classes. Now there is not for this enormous mass at the present moment a single endowed day-school, no national school,

no Lancasterian school. At the eastern extremity of Staly-bridge a large school is now building connected with St. Paul's Church. In Dukinfield, with a population of 20,000, there has never been a church or chapel belonging to the Establishment. A new church, however, the first, is about to be consecrated. It is not irrelevant for me to state, that this district was the chief scene of the mischievous deeds of Stephens. But is it to be wondered at, that he should be able to delude people so neglected by those who ought to have taken care of them?"

THE END.

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