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STATE EDUCATION AT HOME AND ABROAD.

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STATE EDUCATION AT HOME AND ABROAD.*

A DEMOCRATIC system of education gives every child free access to a school under public control ; it links the primary to the secondary and technical schools, and these in turn to the Universities ; to a talented boy or girl it offers an open course from Kindergarten to College. England possesses no such ordered scheme. Even her primary schools, the sole class to which she has given tardy and grumbling attention, are not adapted to form the base of a national system.

Before 1870 the efforts of statesmen to establish rate-supported schools under public control were perversely foiled by the Established Church. Lord Melbourne's Government was well-nigh overthrown by a proposal to found a State Training College ; and Sir Robert Peel was compelled to withdraw an innocent proposal to give rate-aid to day schools. The ecclesiastics claimed the right to license all teachers under some musty old canon, and the Dissenters practically declared they would rather die than allow the Church any extension of power. Far-seeing citizens, who cried "A plague on both your houses," were too sparse to avail anything. Ministers, therefore, had a sorry choice. They might leave the country in dismal ignorance and dare the horrors of barbarians in revolt, or they could enable voluntary societies to establish schools and training colleges with public funds. They chose the latter as the smaller evil. Thousands of pounds were granted by Parliament to the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society to empower Churchmen and Nonconformists respectively to attempt feebly what they would not allow the Government to perform fitly. Both parties were appeased by this device, because it enabled each to teach their children that their own was the true religion received direct from heaven, and to hint that the creed of their opponents had a less desirable origin.

But, in spite of this stimulus to both sides to multiply schools, it was apparent by 1870 that the voluntary system was ludicrously inadequate. The extension of the franchise had transferred the dominating political power to the working classes. Statesmen who dreaded the advent of Democracy angrily exclaimed that "we must educate our masters" ; while those who hoped for continuous progress under the changed conditions were eager to enlighten the new ruler, to fit him for his high duties. Therefore, after bitter fighting,

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the School Board system was at length established. However, the Church was too powerful and too narrow-minded to permit the Boards to be universally adopted. She had received State grants for her schools during many years, and steadfastly refused to relinquish her patronage. Increased sums might be spent on education by the nation, but the clergy must be the bursars. The idea of admitting elected citizens to share the management of the schools was too shocking to be entertained; for what would become of religious teaching if the clergymen were deposed? Consequently, it was enacted that School Boards should not be created unless voluntary effort (assisted by public funds) failed to supply the requisite school places.

Voluntary Schools.

Under that law our school system still labors, with the result that 14,684 day schools, attended by 2,300,000 children, are yet under private management. In many towns and districts not a single school under public control exists; and, even in big towns, where School Boards are energetically at work, their denominational rivals stubbornly survive. If these privately-managed institutions were entirely supported by their pious patrons there would be little ground for agitation. But the British taxpayer is compelled to find nearly four-fifths of their funds, though, like the stupid, easy-going fellow he is, he permits the so-called "voluntary" subscribers of the one-fifth to control the schools.

In the majority of instances the clergyman of the parish is practically the manager of the State-supported voluntary school. He appoints the teachers and fixes their salaries, regulates the supply of school materials, superintends the religious instruction, and kindly supervises the teachers' manners. Sometimes he is neither a gentleman nor an educationist. Then woe betide the unlucky pedagogues and youngsters under his dominion. He has been heard to declare in loud unclerical tones that the schoolmaster is as much his servant as his groom or gardener. No wonder he harbors this delusion. He can and does order the teacher to play the church organ, train the choir, superintend the Sunday School, and clean the out-offices. If these extraneous duties are neglected, dismissal is swift and sure, though the teacher be a paragon in his profession. The taxpayer, who provides four-fifths of the teacher's salary, is much too mindful of ecclesiastical dignity to venture to interfere.

Complaints against the management of Wesleyan and British schools are less numerous. But grievances naturally result from the private management. The teachers at the British School in which I served a dreary apprenticeship had frequently to wait two or three weeks for their month's salary, and nine or ten months for their share of the Government Grant. Their professional knowledge of domestic economy enabled them to keep the brokers out of their homes, but, at times, they must have needed the scheming powers of Becky Sharp to succeed. Such delays are far too common. They are samples of the difficulties which occur when no dignity accom-

panies a position on the School Committee, and when members of the chapel to which the school is attached, who alone are practically eligible to serve, must have the honor thrust upon them, and will take no vitalizing interest in the work.

Of course, the voluntary schools, while staggering under such burdens, are notoriously ineffective. Both in London and the provinces their Government Grant, estimated on efficiency, is lower than that earned by their rate-aided rivals. The private subscriptions they collect may be more hallowed, but they are distinctly less productive than rates; while the irresponsible one-man rule diminishes the utility of the scanty funds obtained. Both evils would be removed by the universal establishment of School Boards, with a minimum population under each Board sufficiently numerous to ensure the representation of all interests and to prevent secret misgovernment by an individual or clique. Encouraged by their past success in securing public money, fattened into rebellion by State grants, the managers of voluntary schools are now clamoring for a share of the rates in addition to the taxes. They long ago secured a judicial separation of Taxation and Representation; the new demand is for a divorce absolute. To grant it would be the perfection of political quackery and immorality.

Foreign nations would not tolerate this inadequate, absurd, undemocratic Voluntary System. But it is a compromise, illogical and ridiculous, and therefore in harmony with British institutions. The canny Scot never adopted it. In 1872 the Scotch Education Act established universal School Boards and vested in them the existing Parish and Burgh schools with their endowments. Though Scotchmen are known to be more pious than Englishmen, they were too worldly-wise to sacrifice the national education to sectarian jealousies. They realized that their sons must be liberally educated to enable them to oust the richer Southron from his own fat appointments. Hence it comes that wherever in England a good post is vacant, there are the Scotchmen gathered together.

No voluntary schools exist in America. France provides primary schools, free to all the children and controlled by elected representatives. She permits Roman Catholics to build and maintain schools, but entirely at their own cost, on which condition they educate one-third of the children in Paris. In Zürich, on the other hand, the Evangelical Protestants, considering the Protestantism of the public schools too broad and lax, have founded by private subscription a strictly Evangelical school. But they pay the full price for their convictions. They are free from public control, except that their teachers must be fully certified and their curriculum the same as in the public schools; but the public purse is tightly closed against them. With this trifling exception the primary schools of Switzerland are controlled by the citizens. Holland *allows* private schools, but that is quite a different matter from supporting them. In Prussia, Saxony, and Bavaria also the popular school is supplied and maintained by the municipal unit or commune. In fact, I can discover no other country which entrusts the State schools to private management.

School Buildings.

So soon as a public system of primary education is established we shall demolish many of our school buildings and erect substitutes on Continental patterns. Most of the voluntary schools provided before 1870 were dark, ill-ventilated, cramped, and ill-equipped. Yet they are the sole provision in many small towns and villages. Cases occur in which the school floor is three to four feet below the level of the ground outside, the children sit with their backs to the damp walls, offices open direct from the main room, the drains give practical instruction on noxious gases, and the roof provides against the lessons becoming dry. Board School buildings are, in the main, an encouraging advance upon their rickety predecessors. In the northern towns the school buildings are generally airy and handsome. In Scotland they are often palatial. In London, ground values forbid a liberal allowance of space, and as Matthew Arnold said: "It seems impossible to an architect not to pinch his staircases and corridors." Men accustomed to Scotch schools express surprise at the dark low passages and staircases which disfigure the metropolitan buildings. At a school of 400 boys in which I taught, there is a new stairway about five feet wide, which at first appeared quite spacious compared with its gloomy, superannuated forerunner. But, lest we should be over-elated with its breadth, the architect arranged that half way down it should be suddenly narrowed to barely three feet by a projection of the girls' school. If ever a panic occurs, that narrow spot will inevitably be a death-trap. We will hope that the doctrinal religious teaching the children are now to receive will prepare them for a sudden and early death.

Our best English primary school buildings are inferior to many on the Continent. Matthew Arnold reported that "the school buildings at Hamburg, as in general everywhere in towns in Germany, Switzerland and France, are spacious and handsome." As to Switzerland, I can testify from observation. The Congress at Zürich last year became very tedious towards the end of the week, and a few of the less-devoted delegates played truant occasionally. To lull our uneasy consciences we inspected some of the educational buildings which distinguish the town. First we were taken to a stately stone structure facing a principal square, which, to our astonishment, we were informed was a popular school. The wide entrance hall was surrounded by airy, well-lighted class-rooms, separated from each other by solid walls, so that any noise in one would not reach its neighbor. At the side of the playground was a large gymnasium abundantly furnished with apparatus. A spacious staircase led to the second floor, which contained another set of handsome class-rooms; and on the top storey was a commodious hall. It was beautifully decorated; good pictures hung on the walls; the columns and their capitals were elegantly colored; the lofty ceiling was painted; and at one end was a large, decorated platform. Altogether, it reminded me of the Drapers' Hall in Throgmorton Street. Oh! I thought, the grandeur below is plainly intended to support

this hall, and here the City Fathers meet. So the building is not dedicated exclusively to education. "I suppose a city guild or some municipal body meets here," I remarked. "Oh, dear, no! this is simply the music-room, which is used by all the classes in succession." Then I remembered London's refusal to supply a piano to its schools, and I wept for my country. Our guide, a teacher in the school, did not appear to think this building at all extraordinary. He assured us that a handsomer edifice was in course of erection in another part of the town.

At Basle, where I called at the official enquiry office for ignorant foreigners, I was astounded to find that the school buildings were the main official attractions. To be sure, the city possesses an interesting old cathedral and a valuable picture gallery; but the citizens seemed to set little store by these. The schools were their pride and delight. Photographs of the chief of them were reverently exhibited to us, and directions given for visiting them; but no mention was made of cathedral or museum.

Is any imagination strong enough to conceive of Londoners becoming so proud of their elementary schools as to forget St. Paul's and the National Gallery?

Compulsory Attendance.

When the buildings are in order we require to turn our thoughts to the problem of getting all children inside them. The provisions of the Act of 1870 were very lax as to compulsory attendance. Six years later a law stated distinctly that the parent should be bound under penalties to cause his child to receive elementary education, and empowered School Boards and School Attendance Committees to make bye-laws and to enforce the compulsory clauses; but not until 1880 were these bodies left without choice, and compelled to make and to profess to administer local rules for getting the youngsters to school. As it stands the law is very complicated, and varies from district to district. A child may work half-time either inside or outside a factory at eleven years of age. In both cases he must pass the Standard for partial exemption (usually the Third) fixed by the local bye-laws. In 1,200 districts a proficiency-qualification is practically not enforced, "the hole is so big that it will admit almost everybody except an idiot." In a few places full-time employment outside a factory or workshop may also commence at eleven, though the little industrial recruit be unable to write his name or read the shop-notices. He is not admitted to the factory for two years longer, the certificate for the Fourth or a higher Standard serving as a ticket of admission. At fourteen he may bid defiance to teachers and School Attendance officers, and work at any employment.

Even these low-pitched obligations are too high for the British public. Parents, managers, School Boards and magistrates unite in reducing the compulsory laws to a farce. Where small pettifoggish School Boards are in power it sometimes happens that the farmer who is entrusted with the administration of the law is himself the delinquent employer. Some magistrates bluntly refuse to administer

the law at all, and assure offending parents of their sympathy. There are schools in London at which not more than half the scholars are ever present at one time; and throughout the country one school-seat out of every five is always empty. Hundreds of children are now freely running the streets of London and graduating as criminals, because the attendance officers are tired of haling their cases into court to be condoned and dismissed by magistrates whose misplaced sentiment forbids them to inflict the slender lawful fine.

Compare these shameful facts with the conditions in foreign countries. In the United States the requirements are hardly higher than in England. Dakota, Illinois, Minnesota and Montana compel twelve weeks of school attendance each year up to the age of fourteen. In New Hampshire and Rhode Island the law is more severe. Six of the compulsory weeks must actually be consecutive. But New York State is the true home of spurious freedom, the flattering copy of England. Officially and unblushingly it declares that its compulsory law is a dead letter. For a good example we must go to the Continent. The attendance law of France enacts that "primary instruction is obligatory for children of both sexes between the ages of six years complete and thirteen years complete." The parent is summoned if the child is absent four half-days in a month. For repeated absences he may be fined fifteen francs or sent to gaol for five days. However, the local authorities have power to grant individual children long holidays, and in practice the law is softened. Wurtemberg children must attend school daily between the ages of seven and fourteen. Parents can be warned, fined and imprisoned for breaking the law. In Neuchâtel attendance is compulsory up to sixteen years of age; but after thirteen only ten hours a week are enforced. Berne demands five-sixths of the possible attendances to be made between six and fifteen. The school law of Saxony declares that "every child has to attend, for eight years uninterruptedly, the common popular school in the school district where he resides," as a rule, from the completion of the sixth year of its age to the completion of its fourteenth. Even eight years are not sufficient in all instances. "Children who, by the end of their eighth school year, do not attain due proficiency in the principal matters of instruction—that is to say, in religion, the German language, reading, writing, and arithmetic, have to attend school a year longer."

At Zürich, the paradise of education, the law is equally stringent. Children must attend the primary school between six and thirteen, and the secondary school between thirteen and sixteen, unless exempted for special reasons. But out of a population of 105,000 only 200 children who are less than sixteen years old have left school. Attendance is required every day, and penalties are inflicted for ten absences.

However, both in Saxony and Zürich there is little need for punishment. Parents send their children to school as a matter of course. Matthew Arnold reported in 1887: "Wherever I enquired, in Germany or Switzerland, inspectors and teachers assured me that they had not to complain of the parents that the children

were sent to school regularly. By looking at the registers I was able to assure myself how few of the absences were entered as contumacious. A contumacious absence, I was told, was never passed over. In general the children have the habit of coming to school as a matter of course, and the parents have the habit of acquiescing, as a matter of course, in their children's going. That is the great matter." Yes, that *is* the great matter. The English democracy has yet to learn this lesson from the despised and spectacled Germans. Until we recognise that education is a boon, not a penalty, we may expect to slip behind in the race of nations.

The Training of Teachers.

Having brought the children to school we require to look at the supply and training of their teachers. Here again we are woefully behind other countries on account of the haphazard way our scheme has been put together.

Education as a national system was first conceived in England at the end of the eighteenth century by Bell and Lancaster, two enthusiasts, who founded numerous schools which they conducted on original principles. They instituted the monitorial system, under which the master instructed the elder scholars and set them to pass on the knowledge to their younger fellows, because knowledge, like mercy, it was assumed, "is twice blessed, it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." This great discovery naturally recommended itself by its cheapness to an ignorant nation which was enduring the throes of the industrial revolution and had little thought or cash to spare for the education of the future "hands." It was widely adopted until a Committee of Council examined into the state of Education in 1845, and found the schools were no exception to the rule that nastiness accompanies cheapness. How shall we get teachers? was the question. They must be inexpensive, but, in heaven's name, a little more efficient than these monitors. The answer was the establishment of the

Pupil Teacher System

which still disgraces our country.

My own experience of this unholy career is typical. I was first put in occasional charge of a class at the unripe age of ten. It may be, this infantile promotion was a tribute either to my genius for teaching or to an archiepiscopal solemnity of manner still hardly shaken off. Probably the fact that my services were gratuitous was the settling factor. At twelve I was established as a permanent monitor, with full charge of forty innocents, whom I was supposed to educate. At thirteen I scraped through the entrance examination and became a full-blown pupil teacher, sanctioned by the "Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education." At that time my own education was more backward than a Fourth Standard boy's in a London Board School. I did not understand Square Measure, my handwriting was clumsy and irregular, and not till some time after could I compose a letter which

would bear the scrutiny of Lindley Murray. No word of any language except Lincolnshire English had ever passed my lips. I had never seen a scientific experiment nor read a Waverley Novel. In fact, a narrow-souled Puritanism had taught me that Sir Walter Scott's works were wicked; and I well remember the priggish horror with which I viewed a more enlightened fellow-teacher reading *Rob Roy*. But with all these defects (which I blush to enumerate) I was considered competent to do the hardest, dreariest work in a British School, to teach the lowest Standards.

I have said my case was typical. Nowadays, the age for apprenticeship is fourteen, and monitors therefore must be thirteen; but in villages and small towns many boys and girls little better equipped than I was are still set to some of the most important and exacting work in the State. Probably the majority of them have more redeeming devilry in their composition than I had, but intellectually they are no more fit.

To continue this page of autobiography. For five years I was in charge of a class at school every day. No hour of leisure for study could be allowed me because the school staff was too small to carry on the work in my absence. All my self-culture had to be done at night or in the early morning. The schoolmaster gave me tuition for three-quarters of an hour each day before or after school, when he did not feel indisposed; unguided, lonely effort had to do the rest. Truly the name pupil-teacher is well chosen. It denotes an unfortunate youngster who is a teacher by day and a pupil by night. What wonder the health breaks down, the temper becomes irritable, and the pitiable, helpless scholars are made miserable? Under the best conditions, a lad or lass of fourteen could not have the self-control, the tact, the sympathy necessary for just, kind dealing with younger children. But when the immature pedagogue is over-driven day and night, when he has no time for open-air exercise, when he is oppressed with the anxiety to get through his own examinations and drag his fellow-victims through theirs, what wonder if he become harsh and cruel, and make school-life a torture to the wee scholars? My own dreams are still haunted with visions of the young Britons whose seventh and eighth years were blighted by my untutored zeal. And to-day hundreds of boys and girls are being dragged through the three R's by unhappy apprentices under precisely similar circumstances. The large towns have inaugurated a reform, and here, for once, London leads. It is quite refreshing to be able to congratulate the provincial-spirited Board that meets on the Embankment upon this piece of pioneer work. For two years London pupil-teachers are not counted on the staff of their schools, and attend excellent centres for special instruction one part of each day and on Saturday mornings. Afterwards they count for thirty scholars in the staffing, but they still attend classes for instruction on five half-days in each fortnight and on Saturday mornings. Other towns have adopted modifications of this system. The objection to it is that it does not throw the would-be pedagogue among young people destined for other trades or profes-

sions. By confining teachers to the company of teachers, a certain narrowness of mind is induced, a crotchety and provincial habit of thought which mars their influence in school and prejudices the public against them.

Training Colleges.

The course at one of the training colleges rubs off some of the corners; but they, again, are privately controlled and calculated to keep the student in a professional groove. I mentioned earlier that Lord Melbourne's Government was shaken almost to its fall by a statesmanlike attempt to found a National Training College. The opposition of the Churches was too strong for the Ministry. Successive Governments, warned by this failure, were compelled to assist private societies to found colleges. Gradually the State support has grown and the private contributions have dwindled, until, out of a total income of £180,000, the colleges receive only £16,000 from private purses. But the private committees still rule. They appoint the professors, settle the hours for study, decide the diet (a most important function), fix the fees, and determine the creed which the candidates shall profess. Of 3,409 places in the residential colleges the Church of England monopolizes 2,223 (65 per cent.), the Wesleyans 232, and the Roman Catholics 255. About 700 places are undenominational. In one or two cases the principals wink at the admission of clever Agnostics, Atheists, or Unitarians, who will be discreetly reticent about their ideas upon religion; but an Atheist or Agnostic who frankly avowed his unbelief would find all the college portals closed against him. Four-fifths of the accommodation is strictly preserved for men and women who will repeat glib formulas and give assent to the principal's theology. The canting hypocrisy engendered in consequence would stagger the nation if it could be faithfully revealed.

One of the most earnest, sympathetic, and successful teachers I ever met was refused admission to a Wesleyan college because he declined to inform the principal whether his soul was "saved." Being honest as well as devout, he respectfully asked his questioner what he meant by salvation, and firmly declined to allege an exact time and place at which "his soul had undergone a change." That sincerity excluded him from the State-supported institution and compelled him to mark time in his profession for twelve months. Thorough-paced hypocrites, who would drop on their knees and pretend to pray when disturbed by a tutor at a game of cards in the dormitory, were eagerly welcomed by the officials, because they could cheerfully repeat the cant patter; but the sincere Christian, who has since become a zealous Congregational Minister, was sternly rejected by them, because he would not pretend to emotions he was too healthy to experience, nor expose his most sacred feelings to the vulgar gaze of a prying parson.

At the Day Training Colleges recently established in connection with the Universities and University Colleges no religious test is demanded. But they can receive only 564 students and have still to win a reputation.

Our system of training teachers is thus seen to be topsy-turvy, tail in front, head behind, worthy of the grotesque fancy of Mr. Gilbert. Raw and callow boys and girls are set to teach and to find the snares and pitfalls by the barbarous method of falling into them. After four years' torture the pick of them go to a training college, where they receive instruction that should have come several years earlier, and study the scientific principles of those snares with which they are so painfully familiar.

The United Kingdom can appropriate all the glory belonging to this system. America and the Continental countries allow her to monopolize it. In France no man may teach in a primary school before the age of eighteen; in Saxony and Berne before nineteen; and in Zürich (ahead again) before twenty. All the teachers are adults in Sweden, Geneva, Cape Colony, Maine, Massachusetts, Washington, Alabama, California, and even Manitoba. New Zealand and some Australian colonies have copied the pupil-teacher system; and New York again runs us close in unwisdom. Boys of sixteen may there profess to teach.

In France a lad who wishes to become a teacher must pass from the primary to the higher grade school at eleven or twelve. At fourteen or fifteen, having obtained the lower certificate of capacity for teaching, he may be admitted to a training college, where he spends three years in the study of science and literature with special reference to pedagogy. A practising school is attached to each college, where the prentice hand is tried under the supervision of experts, without danger of damaging the pupils. In Saxony the training school course for men lasts six years. Women, being cleverer than men and naturally better teachers, need only five years. Similar arrangements obtain throughout Germany and Switzerland. Everywhere the teacher must display practical skill and sound knowledge before undertaking responsible work in the schools. The sooner we adopt an analogous system in Great Britain the better for our national credit.

Size of Classes.

When the masters and mistresses are fully equipped, how many scholars shall they be set to teach? The English Code now answers seventy; but Mr. Acland threatens to reduce the number to sixty in 1896. It is possible that he may not be in power so long; in which event the supporters of the voluntary schools will probably check-mate this move of their dreaded foe. At the best, sixty will be the official limit for some years. But a school cannot be cut up like a cheese, into parts of equal size. Some classes are inevitably larger than others. Therefore, in practice, where one trained teacher is allowed for sixty children in average attendance, some classes are inevitably seventy or eighty strong.

Prussia is in this respect as backward as we. In France, several German States, and all Switzerland, the maximum number of scholars in a room is at most fifty, and often fewer. In Saxony, for instance, there are forty in each class of children between eight

and ten, and thirty in the upper classes. Washington and Cape Colony allow one adult teacher for thirty children, and New Zealand for thirty-two. In these countries the democracy established the educational system for its own improvement. It therefore naturally adopted the numbers which prevail in the English schools maintained by the aristocracy for their children. Primary schools in England were founded by the middle and upper classes largely for political purposes. Many opponents were appeased by the assurance that the education given in the Board Schools would be of the rudest, barely sufficient to enable the young citizens to count their wages or sign the marriage register, and not calculated to make them discontented with their station or reduce the supply of domestic servants. Circumstances have been too strong for the malcontents, and the curriculum under the many Boards is laudably comprehensive and ambitious. It remains for the electors, whose children occupy the schools to insist that they shall be administered frankly on the conviction that education is a good thing in itself, desirable for the lowliest citizen, essential for every person who is to lead a full, human life.

Religious Teaching.

Of the subjects in the school curriculum I will mention only two—religious teaching and gymnastics. The religious difficulty has been solved in many States by the honest, logical plan of leaving the teachers free to give instruction in secular subjects and simple ethics. No religious teaching is given in the day-schools throughout France, Geneva, British Columbia, New Brunswick, New Zealand, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Queensland, South Australia, and practically the whole of the United States. In a few States the teachers voluntarily give lessons in religion, but nowhere are they compulsory.

Some provision is usually made for Moral Education. The French curriculum includes "conversations, readings, &c., bearing on character, practical duties towards school-fellows, teachers, parents, country, mankind, and God." I confess my inability to explain how duty towards God can be taught without embracing the religious ideas which are forbidden.

The State of Maine exemplifies the wide sphere for moral influence open to the teacher when direct religious instruction is excluded. Its school code contains this inclusive paragraph :

"The presidents, professors, and tutors of colleges, the preceptors and teachers of academies and all other instructors of youth in public and private institutions shall use their best endeavors to impress on the minds of the children and youth committed to their care and instruction, the principles of morality and justice and a sacred regard for truth, love of country, humanity and a universal benevolence; sobriety, industry, and frugality; chastity, moderation, and temperance; and [lest this awe-inspiring catalogue prove inadequate] *all other virtues which ornament human society.*" There is surely sufficient scope here for the most saintly among teachers. An ordinary

sinful mortal would hardly complain of cramped opportunities with that syllabus to guide him.

Throughout Switzerland and Germany definite instruction in the religion of the majority is given in the popular schools. An article in the Swiss Constitution commands that "the public schools shall be capable of being attended by adherents of all confessions without injury to their freedom of faith and conscience." No difficulty has arisen. Catholic instruction is given in Catholic cantons like Lucerne; Protestant in cantons like Zürich; but less time is devoted to the subject than in London.

Physical Training.

About gymnastics few words need be said, since the Code just issued ordains that physical exercises shall be taught in English schools before 1895. In London some provision is already made for this work. Indeed, teachers are bewildered by the diversity of systems favored by the Board in successive years. However, I believe that no apparatus is yet provided. The children are encouraged to swing their arms, bend their bodies and march to their own unaccompanied singing. That is a quite inexpensive performance. But dumb-bells, clubs or bar-bells to aid the muscular development would cost a few pence each, and are therefore not to be considered. Any suggestion that London schools should be furnished with big gymnasiums like the one at Zürich would send some members of the Board into hysterics.

France prescribes that gymnastics shall be taken every day by both boys and girls; as also do Saxony, Geneva and Zürich. Queensland, despite its name, appears to consider that girls need not be physically strong; but she provides for the boys. In Sweden every boy and girl must practise gymnastics for half an hour on four days a week. By a recent regulation the children in the schools of Paris spend one morning or afternoon a week at organized out-door games. Prussia has lately been instructing her teachers in open-air sports that they may show the little Germans how to win battles on playing fields. But England, the home of football and cricket, gives scant opportunity to children in the primary schools to secure that training in self-control and co-operation which these sports afford. Space, apparatus and encouragement are wanting. I never heard of an elementary school which possessed a playing field. But in the enlightened days to come every group of schools will own a meadow; cricket, football and tennis will be zealously organized; school matches will be great events; every child will be taught to swim; old boys' and girls' clubs will own rowing boats; all the best parts of the physical education in the great public schools will be available to every young Britisher.

Inspectors.

To ensure that the schools are conducted on approved principles, that the public money is wisely expended, numerous inspectors are needed. How shall they be appointed, and what shall be their

qualifications? The principle adopted in England in the past has been very simple. One chief condition has the Inspector been required to satisfy, that he should know nothing about the schools he would examine. The ideal appears to have been that he should never have entered an elementary school, degraded himself by conversation with an elementary teacher, nor sacrificed his class pride by studying with sympathy a plebeian scholar. By residence at Oxford or Cambridge, he must gain a proper contempt for enthusiasm and energy, a scorn for men and women who speak without a drawl, for the children of "these people who live in small houses." Above all, he must have a fine, satirical, literary style, that his reports may combine the maximum of irritation with the minimum of useful criticism. Against these peculiarly undemocratic conditions the teachers are in revolt. They ask that some of the Inspectorships shall be given to the most distinguished primary teachers. They argue that a man who has risen to the top of his profession, who has shewn exceptional talent by his work in the National Union of Teachers, by articles in educational journals or by service on educational commissions, is likely to be a more acute and useful inspector than a stripling from Oxford or Cambridge, who has never faced a class. So far, not a single inspector has been taken direct from the schoolmaster's desk. Mr. Acland has recently appointed two men who were once teachers; but even in these cases the favored ones had been out of touch with the work sufficiently long to prevent them being hampered by practical knowledge, and to put them in harmony with the traditions of the Department. Is it not time that the Socialistic maxim of the career open to talent, the promotion of the best, should be adopted in our State education?

These matters are managed better abroad. In France and Sweden the inspectors are drawn as a rule from the ranks of elementary teachers. In Saxony and Geneva all inspectors have been distinguished teachers, but not necessarily in the elementary schools. In Zürich the members of the communal school committee and of the district school committee inspect the schools. They are elected by universal suffrage. Inspectors in the United States are politicians. Nominally, they are elected by the people, but pedagogic knowledge is less requisite than business shrewdness, and, I fear, corrupt wire-pulling. Their duties are administrative, not educational.

In view of the probable candidature of teachers at the forthcoming election of the London Board, it is useful to notice that in France the curriculum of the schools is fixed by a Council consisting of teachers of all grades. On the District School Committees of Canton Zürich there must be three teachers' representatives out of nine to thirteen members; and one-third of the Education Council (a higher and more authoritative body) is elected by the masters and mistresses. The teachers in each district form a school chapter which reports to the Education Council and has a right to be heard before any change in the work, plan or regulation of the popular schools is adopted. If such a rule operated in London, the notorious

circular on religious instruction would never have been issued. For want of a better method for securing expert guidance of the Board, we can leaven it with a few members practically acquainted with school work.

Organize Secondary Education.

The chief blot on English education I have left till last—that is, the chaos which prevails above the primary schools. On each of the three occasions when Matthew Arnold examined and reported upon Continental systems of education, he implored the English Government to organize Secondary and Higher Education. That was always the burden of his educational song. His case could not be refuted. The facts are so conclusive and damning that the dullest country squire must acknowledge their force if he can be induced to examine them. Secondary education is the Arcadia of private unregulated enterprise. Men who have been driven out of other callings imagine that Heaven intended them to manage a private school. Their entrance to the trade (it is not recognised as a profession) is charmingly easy. No apprenticeship, experience, certificate or proof of aptitude is required. They put mysterious letters after their names to which no educational body can attach a meaning; they issue delusive prospectuses; they lure shabby-genteel people into their parlors; and the thing is done. For the parents I have no sympathy; but for the sake of the unoffending youngsters, the helpless victims sacrificed on the mean altar of gentility, reform should be speedy and exhaustive. The education given in “academies,” “establishments for young gentlemen,” and “private colleges,” is often incomparably worse than is provided in a Board School. No State teaching diploma exists which would enable the public to test the pretensions of the men who issue showy announcements. No authority visits or examines their schools. It is nobody’s business to see that the assistants are abundant, properly qualified or fitly paid, the buildings suitable and sanitary, the apparatus sufficient, or the curriculum rational. Chaos holds depotic sway. Another Commission upon the subject has been appointed. Perhaps their recommendations will be incarnated in a working scheme. Who knows? There may be a limit to British tolerance of disorder and inefficiency.

Germany, France, Switzerland and America set us a good example long ago. They possess complete, graduated series of schools, co-ordinated, efficient, State-endowed; they insist that every teacher shall be a competent workman; they liberally encourage the highest branches of study; they help the poor and talented scholar to climb to the University. Not until England copies and improves on their example may reformers cease complaining, or Fabians be at rest.

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