

are rather too apt to invest in speculative proposals, rather than too careful of incurring losses, owing to what Adam Smith has called "their absurd presumption in their own good fortune."

In conclusion, it may be said that the real grounds on which encouragement of Irish industries are advocated, are either transparent economic fallacies, such as the contention that Ireland is drained of "money" which should, it is stated, be "kept in the country," or the conception of this country as a distinct nation, in duty bound to do all the injury it can to the trade of other countries. At all events, we may console ourselves with the thought that economic ignorance and national prejudice are not in any way peculiar to ourselves; they exist and flourish among our neighbours, and therefore cannot ask for encouragement as being "Exclusively of Irish manufacture."

II.—*Primary Education : with a review of the German, Irish, and English Systems.* By W. F. Bailey, Esq., Barrister-at-Law.

[Read Tuesday, 18th December, 1883.]

In the paper which I would lay before the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society this evening, I have endeavoured to bring under consideration the more important questions which occupy the attention of statesmen and all interested in social reform with respect to the great problem of Primary Education. The urgent necessity of considering the whole subject in this country is evident from the important debate which arose in the last session of the House of Commons, on Mr. O'Shaughnessy's motion in favour of compulsory education. It seems to me that the best way of obtaining just ideas on the subject, and of improving our own system, is by viewing it in comparison with the systems of other countries, and thus judging of their relative advantages and disadvantages. I have here collected facts, and drawn attention to the more essential points which arise, in a way that may be of use to those who desire to discuss the subject with a view to reform. Owing to the length to which the subject unavoidably extended, I have thought better to omit many of my own views, and leave the matter to the consideration of those interested in the welfare of our rising population.

In considering the nature of primary education, there are two main points which should especially engage our attention, viz:—(1) What object is to be kept in view in instructing the masses? And (2) —What are the best means of attaining that object? Educational reformers have adopted very contradictory answers to the first question. Some think that it is the duty of the State to give each of its citizens an education that would enable him to fill adequately the part assigned to him by the exigencies of his position, and to utilise his faculties so as to acquire a good and useful knowledge of his particular trade or calling. In accordance with this theory, the chief object to be considered in teaching a tradesman the rudiments of learning is that he should be able to carry on his business so as to

further as much as possible his own interests and those of his customers.

Others are of opinion that education, to be of any value, should seek to draw forth the intellectual qualities of the pupil, and by encouraging and accustoming him to look around and observe the phenomena of history and of experience, teach him how to discharge satisfactorily all the duties of a citizen. It is plain, on a little consideration, that the latter aim, though clearly the correct one so far as general education is concerned, cannot be satisfactorily achieved in educating the masses. All that the best general system of elementary education can hope to accomplish, is to so prepare and train the pupil as to teach him how to make use of his faculties, and if he be so minded, to pursue the higher branches of knowledge at his own discretion. In a manufacturing country like England, it is plain that much time cannot be devoted to the continuous attendance at school of great numbers of the population. On the other hand, every child has a rightful claim to obtain such an education as will enable him to make the best use of his intellect and opportunities. Hence it is the business of the statesman to consider in what manner the difficulty may be overcome, and how everybody, without unduly intrenching on his liberty, can be so educated as to compete fairly in the battle of life.

Adopting such a view of the duties of primary education, three principal problems arise, the solution of which will, to a great extent, clear away the difficulties surrounding the subject :—

Firstly—We must consider what subjects are to be taught, and the most efficient manner of teaching them.

Secondly—What standard of completion should be adopted—time or efficiency ?

Thirdly—Should education be voluntary or compulsory ?

All these questions arise in the path of the educational reformer, and in their solution lies the principle of the system of national education adopted by each country for itself. Nor can any statesman attempt to establish a satisfactory system without a careful comparison of how these problems are decided in other countries, and how their decision one way or the other has worked. In England and Ireland the questions are to a certain extent still unsettled ; while in Germany little difficulty in regard to any of them now exists.

To complete a true education, that is so far as completion is possible in any school system, a knowledge not alone of the practical affairs of life and of the ordinary sources of information should be imparted, but also of our moral relations, and of the sanctions, religious or other, by which they are enforced. The cultivation also of the taste and of the imagination is necessary to enable the student to derive an intelligent and active pleasure from music, painting, sculpture, and literature. Owing to the necessary limitations of time and money, a course of primary instruction embraces only what is absolutely essential. Little more can be taught than those elements, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, by means of which more complete knowledge may be acquired. If the system adopted be

properly organised, some further information in geography and history can with ease be imparted.

The subject which presents the greatest difficulty in countries having populations of different denominations, is the teaching of religion. This difficulty has been the cause of much controversy in England during the past forty years. Some educational reformers would have a purely secular system, thinking that it is not the business of a state to teach religion. Others are of opinion that education, to be of any value, should be founded on religious teaching. This last class may be divided into two sections, some thinking (1) that it is sufficient for the state to inculcate the general principles of Christianity (as is the practice in Germany), while others (2) maintain that religious teaching to have any value must be dogmatic. Both in England and Ireland a middle course has been wisely adopted. Religious instruction even of a dogmatic character is not prohibited, but it must be given at such hours as will enable those of different religious persuasions to withdraw.

In those Continental states most noted for the excellence of their popular education, we find that undenominational religious instruction is generally adopted. Thus in Holland, the law of 1857 enacts that while a general religious instruction is to be given in the state schools, instruction on specific points is to be left to the different religious communities themselves. A somewhat similar principle is adopted in most of the Cantons of Switzerland. In France separate schools for different denominations are subsidised by the state.

For the more efficient teaching of the various subjects in primary schools, it is plain that the most important matter to be attended to is the training of teachers. As we shall see, this is brought to great perfection in Germany, but is very laxly carried out in England and Ireland. In Holland, no teacher is appointed without undergoing a competitive public examination, and a similar rule is in existence in the French Cantons of Switzerland. By French law, every department is compelled to maintain a normal school for the preparation of teachers, who have also to pass an examination before obtaining the necessary certificate.

The second great problem that arises in considering systems of primary education—what standard of efficiency should be adopted? is decided in Germany by the rule obliging all pupils to attain to a certain proficiency before leaving school. In England, the standard of time is adopted without very satisfactory results; while in Ireland there is no test at all.

The question of compulsory attendance has received much attention in England during the past ten years, and while adopted in principle by the Elementary Education Acts of 1870 and 1876, it is still permissive. In Ireland, attendance at school is not compulsory, with the result that in 1880, while there were 1,083,020 pupils on the rolls of the National schools, only 485,199 put in 100 attendances each during the year—that is about 45 per cent. In Scotland, on the other hand, the average attendance is upwards of 76 per cent, which shows conclusively that a compulsory system could with advantage be put into operation in Ireland. Compulsion, even

when adopted, has not been very successful in England, owing to the disinclination of magistrates to enforce the provisions of the Act. School attendance committees, especially when composed of farmers, often think that too much strictness in this respect would be opposed to their private interests. Parents also, owing to the smallness of the fine (which cannot exceed five shillings), often find it more advantageous to pay the amount, and keep their children at work.

Having thus called attention to the more important questions that arise in considering the subject of national education, I shall proceed to examine in detail the systems of primary education of Germany, Ireland, and England, commencing in each case with a short historical sketch.

GERMANY.

1.—*Historical Sketch.*

The history of education in Germany commences, as in many other European countries, with the efforts of the Church to retain in its own hands the power of superintending the instruction of the people. Although the leaders of the Reformation put forward freedom of opinion and emancipation from authority as their most distinctive principles, they still sought to retain the intellectual progress of the masses under their control. In Prussia, the Church itself was governed by the state, so the religious question did not give rise to much difficulty. In the period following the Reformation, educational matters were controlled by the consistory of the Church. Although a minister of the Crown was joined in the supreme management, the work was so badly done that many districts were left entirely destitute of the means of education. The schoolmasters were the sacristans or beadles of the parish churches, and these, in accordance with the law of 1722, were to be exclusively chosen from tailors, weavers, smiths, wheelmakers, or waiters. This system was even carried so far that in 1738 it was ordained that in landward parishes no tailors should be endured except the sacristan and schoolmaster. Even after improved regulations were introduced by Frederick the Great, he was compelled to a large extent to depend on invalided soldiers to do the work of teaching.

The Church had done its duty so badly as the guardian of education, that the state was at length obliged to step in and interfere. Frederick William commenced the system of state endowment. His son, Frederick the Great, took the management of education altogether out of the hands of the consistory, and established an *Oberschulcollegium*, or supreme council of education. The instrument by which this council was appointed (February, 1787) recited that, owing to the importance of having a people educated in accordance with their rank in the state, it had been decided to appoint a uniform system of inspection for the whole kingdom, which was to be under the management of the newly-appointed council. Frederick, however, did not attempt to take the business of education altogether out of the hands of the Church. On the contrary, he rendered it a necessity for each clergyman to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the subject, so that he could efficiently inspect the schools in

his parish. In some districts the clergyman had himself to teach a certain number of hours each week.

The *Allgemeines Landrecht*, which had been drawn up in the reign of Frederick the Great, though not published till 1794, still continues the law for education in Prussia. It distinctly affirmed that all schools and institutions for education are under the superintendence of the state. This principle of state interference received a further development in 1808, when a section of the Ministry of the Interior was assigned to religion, education, and medicine; and in 1817 a separate minister was assigned to these subjects—the celebrated Altenstein being the first appointed to the post. Altenstein ruled as minister of education from 1817 to 1840, and being a man of wide views permitted a great latitude of thought both in church and school. His successor, Eichhorn, who has been described as a narrow bigot, favoured reactionary principles, and by a system of petty persecutions sought to restrain the teachers within ecclesiastical limits. A bitter contest sprang up. The German teachers, all men of wide and well-digested ideas on matters of education, resented the attempt to cramp their efforts, and strongly opposed the designs of the minister and of the Church. It was broadly affirmed that the direction of the public people's schools and the choice of teachers belong to the parish, while religious instruction should be managed by the different religious communities. This principle was adopted by the National Assembly, and confirmed by the constitutions of 1848 and 1850. But a change soon came about. The advocates of religious interference were dissatisfied. Pietists and Ultramontanes joined with the supporters of arbitrary government in demanding a change. A despotic reaction took place, and the well-known Regulations of 1854 were issued. The intellectual system, which sought to draw forth the thought of the pupil, was replaced by a principle of routine that endeavoured to retain his intellect under the control of the Church and of the State.

This system was retained until after the Franco-Prussian war, though not without bitter controversy. Muhler, the Minister of Education at the time of the war, was compelled to retire owing to the preference he exhibited for ecclesiastical domination. The French war created a united Germany. The popular demands could no longer be overlooked—education must be divorced from ecclesiastical bondage. Bismarck watched the course of events, and resolved to fall in with them. Falk was chosen minister of education in January, 1872. He at once asserted that the state possessed the entire superintendence of popular education. The school he declared to be a state institution, and that it was for the state alone to decide how it was to be managed. Prince Bismarck strongly supported his minister, and in a well-known speech declared war against the principles of Ultramontanism. The Bill, which was introduced into and rapidly passed through the House of Representatives, decided that all inspectors of schools, whether clergymen or laymen, must act as servants of the state, not of the Church. A conference of persons having large experience of education was held, and a series of regulations drawn up by Dr. Schneider were adopted. The Regu-

lations of 1854 and all later additions were abrogated. A new system opposed to the narrow spirit of the old was introduced. The minds of the pupils were to be expanded by a judicious culture. The old routine system, which was intended to subordinate their intellect to those of their instructors, was swept away, and a new era in German education commenced with the promulgation of the Falk laws, of which the fruits are already becoming visible.

2.—The Present German System.

To explain the reasons that have made German schools so successful as educating mediums, we must understand the system on which they have been established. Four different classes of schools exist, each with a distinct purpose, yet each forming an essential part of the whole plan. First comes the *Volkschule*, to educate the masses of the people. The obligatory age for attendance is from seven to fourteen, though children of five are admissible. The object of the school is to guarantee "thorough instruction, practice, and education, the foundations of culture and moral fitness for life in the state and in the Church, as well as for their trades or callings." Instruction is given in religion, in reading, writing, arithmetic, music, and drawing, so far as is necessary for the life of a citizen, and in the history and geography of their native country. Gymnastic exercises are also practised.

Next in order comes the *Bürgerschule*, or citizens' school, in which more advanced instruction is given in history and geography, and the students may learn mathematics and foreign languages. Pupils who intend to seek a more ambitious future, and to follow pursuits not attempted by all, can next advance to the *Realschulen*, or practical schools, or to the *Gymnasien*, or culture schools. The former are intended for those who have resolved to devote themselves to the practical arts of life, and follow industrial or commercial pursuits. Accordingly their attention is chiefly directed to mathematics, modern languages, and natural sciences, and in fact they are specially prepared for the technical colleges which are intended to complete their education in special departments. The *Gymnasien* are preparatory to the universities, and are intended for the culture of those who wish to devote themselves to the more purely intellectual courses of study.

From this sketch we can see that each class of school in Germany has its special object, and that so planned as to suit persons belonging to every grade in society, and fit them for the part they are intended to play in after life.

The superintendence of this series of schools lies in the hands of the minister of education, who has the assistance of intermediate boards. The *Volkschule*, or people's school, is under the direct control of a committee of the parish where it is situated, and which is itself controlled by the larger board that regulates the affairs of the governmental district. Again, each province has a special school-board to which is entrusted a general superintendence over all classes of schools within it, while the board of the empire, presided over by the minister of education himself, is at the head of all.

A great secret of the success which has attended the Prussian system of education is the care which has always been devoted to its internal management. When Napoleon overran the kingdom, and deprived it of some of its fairest provinces, the King, Frederick William III., while acknowledging that much external power and glory had been lost, declared that it was now the business of the government to see that the loss was repaired, by drawing forth the internal force and energy of the country, and this he said could only be done by devoting the greatest attention to the education of the people. The same principle has since been uniformly followed.

The minister of instruction is always a man thoroughly versed in matters relating to education, and his council contains men who have made the subject a special study. To these the minister leaves the task of drawing up the regulations, which are looked upon by competent critics as models of their kind. While general principles are expounded in a manner that leaves nothing to be desired, and which gives a uniformity to the education of the whole Empire, no interference is made in matters of detail. These are left to be worked out by the various subordinate councils, which always have the assistance of a councillor possessing an exact knowledge of the subject of education.

3.—*The Educational Code.*

Considering the remarkable success which has always attended the working out of the Prussian system, it will be instructive to turn our attention for some time to the Educational Code as it exists at the present time. As we have seen, the late minister of education, Falk, by his regulation of October, 1872, entirely changed the ecclesiastical and routine system which had prevailed for the preceding twenty years. The new code, so far as it affects primary education, deals first with the pupils, the subjects they are to be taught, and the manner in which they are to be taught them; and secondly, with the teachers, the qualifications they are to possess, and the system by which they are to be chosen and trained. Special care is taken to prevent over-crowding of classes, so that every pupil may receive due attention. Schools under the management of a single teacher must not admit more than eighty pupils, and these must receive a certain fixed number of hours of instruction per week, in accordance with their comparative progress. The same system is further developed in the case of schools having two or more teachers. Not more than a certain number of students are allowed to each class, which must be given a stated number of hours of instruction weekly. Provision is next made for the health and comfort of the pupils. The school-room must contain a certain superficial area for each child, and the tables and benches be so constructed as not to cause any discomfort or injury to health.

Of the subjects of instruction in the people's schools, religious teaching is first mentioned. The object of this should be to lead the children to the right understanding of the Scriptures, and so prepare them that they may be able to take an intelligent interest in the public worship of the church to which they belong. It is, however,

added that "formal religious instruction should be carefully avoided." Next in the code comes instruction in German, which includes exercises in speaking, reading, and writing the language. In arithmetic, a certain standard is fixed for each of the three classes into which the school is divided. The first division is merely expected to perform simple operations on any numbers from one to a hundred, while the higher class must study practice, proportion, and vulgar and decimal fractions. The instructor is, above all, in teaching arithmetic, to impart a knowledge of those operations that will afterwards prove useful in commercial life.

All the pupils must practice drawing in the school simultaneously. They must all learn from the same models, and are expected to acquire such facility as to be able to copy any figures placed before them. Those who exhibit real talent are given an opportunity of extending their knowledge at a more advanced stage.

Mechanical methods of teaching history, geography, and natural history, which were much favoured under the Regulations of 1854, are now entirely abolished. The use of lists of dates, names, and tables, are therefore forbidden. The national history of Germany is to be consecutively studied only from the period of the Thirty Years' War. In the first division, the geography only of the province to which the children belong is studied. In the more advanced classes, a knowledge of the whole German Empire, and of the earth generally, is imparted.

Under the head of natural history, the pupil acquires a knowledge of the human body, its wants and requirements; of the animals, vegetables, and minerals of Germany; of the flora and fauna of foreign countries, and especially of such plants as yield articles in common use, as, for example, tea, coffee, sugar, and cotton. Singing is taught by the alternate practice of chorals and ballads. Two hours a week must be devoted to giving boys instruction in gymnastics, and girls must be taught needlework for a similar time.

The most noticeable feature in this code is that all the rules have special reference to the requirements of life. Everything is practical. Everything is so taught as to enable the pupil in after life to take his place as a responsible citizen of the empire.

4.—*The Training of Teachers.*

The other great point worthy of our attention in the German system, is the care devoted to the training and selection of teachers.

When a person seeks such a post, he is expected to devote his life to the work, and to consider himself a servant of the state. He must pass a severe examination, and submit himself to stringent rules. On the other hand, the state devotes considerable attention to his welfare. It gives him great opportunities of promotion, and provides a carefully-arranged pension system. In England and Ireland, the teacher can seldom expect to rise higher in his profession. In Germany, if intelligent and careful, he may aspire to the most responsible and honourable posts—even to the Ministry of Education itself.

Though not indispensable, it is usual for teachers to have been educated and trained in the art of teaching in one of the seminaries

maintained for the purpose. The regulations for the management of these institutions are extremely strict. Each training seminary must hold an annual entrance examination for persons between seventeen and twenty-four, who may desire to adopt the profession. Candidates must present certificates of blameless character and sound health, and must also show that they possess means of supporting themselves during the whole course of training. The examinations are both written and *viva voce*, and must include every branch of study taught in the seminary. The course of study at each training school extends over three years. The students, for purposes of instruction, are divided into three groups. The lowest of these is intended to bring all the newly-entered pupils to a stage of proficiency that will warrant their advancing to the second grade, in which they acquire an extended knowledge of all those subjects which it will be necessary for them to teach in after life. In the highest grade, the instruction of the student in the art of teaching is chiefly, if not entirely attended to. At the conclusion of this course a final examination is held in all the subjects taught, including the art of teaching. Candidates who succeed in passing, receive a certificate entitling them to a provisional appointment as teacher in an elementary school. To secure a certificate of fitness for a permanent appointment, the teacher must again present himself for examination at least two years, and at the furthest five years after having passed the first examination.

When we consider the strictness, the completeness, and the practical nature of the course of training for the post of teacher in primary schools, and compare it with the laxness of the English system, and the almost entire absence of a training system in Ireland, we shall not be surprised at the superiority of German education.

A carefully-managed system of school inspection is conducted by local committees, by deputations consisting of magistrates, state officials, etc., by directors of seminaries, and by district school inspectors.

5.—*Compulsion.*

A strict system of compulsory attendance is practised. All children must attend school between their sixth and fourteenth years. A list of children attaining the necessary age is annually prepared and given to the local teachers, who are required to mark off all cases of absence. Even temporary leave of absence can only be granted by the inspector, and that but for a limited period, unless in case of illness or other necessary cause. Parents failing to send their children to school are liable to fine and even imprisonment, and if the guardian pleads inability to procure the regular attendance of the child, it is the duty of the police to conduct him to school until he "acquires better habits, and goes thither of his own accord." The very great strictness and severity of this system on these points, though working well with the German character, would hardly be endurable in England and Ireland, where the stern discipline of militarism has not penetrated. In view, however, of the great laxity in school attendance in Ireland, and the vexed question of compulsion, it is well to note the parallel system in Germany.

IRELAND.

1.—*Historical Sketch.*

The history of education in Ireland* may be said to commence with the well-known Act of 28 Henry VIII., which was passed with the design of fostering and extending the "English order, habit and language among the Irish." For the better carrying out of this design, it was provided by the ninth section that everybody receiving holy orders should undertake to maintain in his parish a school for teaching English. The schools established in accordance with this act, for reasons not now necessary to examine, failed in their object, and in fact caused a strong feeling of revulsion which centuries failed to eradicate. In the reign of Elizabeth, the same policy of compulsory religious teaching led to the establishment of the Diocesan Free Schools in 1570. In 1608, the Royal Schools were founded, and later on in the same century (1669), the Erasmus Smith Primary and Grammar Schools. All these institutions had one and the same object—an object that had caused the total failure of the Act of Henry VIII. Instead of attempting to educate the people, they sought to convert them. Instead of being seminaries of learning, they were nurseries of a particular creed. Those however who now-a-days adopt the standpoint of extreme secularism, should not be too severe on the statesmanship that introduced and supported such methods of education. They should remember that the true principles of toleration, now so almost universally recognised, did not obtain recognition until a comparatively late period. In the 17th, and indeed the 18th centuries, men of liberal views held that it was the rightful duty of the state to compel all its subjects to join in the exercise of whatever religion was considered by the majority the orthodox one. This principle was carried to extremity in Ireland by the Act of 7 William III. c. 4, which absolutely prohibited all teaching by members of the Roman Catholic Church. As this act did not attempt to revive the parish schools, founded in accordance with the Act of Henry VIII., the mass of the Irish people was for some generations left without any means of obtaining primary education. In the reign of George II. another attempt was made to establish a system of schools, but though started under favourable auspices, and supported by Parliamentary grants, being infected with the prevailing vice of proselytism, it ended in total failure. In 1731, certain dignitaries of the Church drew up a petition to the King, praying him to grant a charter to certain individuals, empowering them to receive grants, donations, and subscriptions, for the maintenance of free primary schools in Ireland. The petition was granted, and in 1733, the celebrated Charter Schools were opened for the instruction of children in the English language, and in the "principles of true religion." Annual Parliamentary grants, sometimes amounting to £40,000, were given for their support. In 1769, fifty-two schools and five nurseries (for the support of children too junior to mix in the

* See Sir P. Keenan's "Address on Education," delivered before the Social Science Congress, 1881.

regular schools) undertook the education of 2,100 pupils. In 1775, the true purpose of the institution showed itself, and the Society resolved to admit only Roman Catholics, or such as were in danger of being bred up as Roman Catholics. The internal management of the schools at this time was wretched in the extreme, and continued to grow more so. In 1784, the philanthropist Howard visited Ireland, and devoted considerable attention to the condition of the occupants of the institutions. His account of the Charter Schools was so alarming, that a Committee of the Irish House of Commons was appointed in 1788, to examine into the matter. Howard gave evidence before it, and declared that all attempts at education were subordinated to the private gains of the masters. The children, haggard and dirty, had more the appearance of wretched criminals than free pupils. In some of the schools he found them huddled together in a cold and miserable room, under the superintendence of a master, rod in hand, whose business apparently was to see that they attended to the manual work given them, rather than to give them instruction in the elements of education. Indeed, the educational utility of the schools was a complete failure. Often pupils who had passed several years within their walls, did not acquire the art of reading and writing. Schools held in roadside cabins, and charging a fee of 3s. 6d. a year, gave a far superior instruction. In 1803, the avowedly proselytising character of the schools was modified. Children of Protestant parents were admitted. Still the internal abuses continued as bad as ever. The public mind became excited on the subject of education. An agitation sprung up. The monitorial system, invented or introduced by Bell and Lancaster, led to a great effort at educational reform in England, which also extended itself to Ireland. In 1811, a society for the education of the poor in Ireland, afterwards known as the Kildare-place Society, was established. It was founded on the Lancasterian principle—that religious instruction should be confined to the reading of the Bible without comment. Notwithstanding much adverse criticism, the principle was widely accepted by both Catholics and Protestants. A Parliamentary grant was obtained to erect a model and normal school for the training of teachers. But now opposition showed itself. It was openly asserted, and apparently on strong grounds, that the system acted upon led to proselytism, and that much unfairness and partiality occurred in the working of the society. The Duke of Leinster, original vice-patron of the society, in the House of Lords, in 1823, gave utterance to the popular distrust, and announced his retirement from all connection with the institution. Some years later, the opposition from the Catholic Bishops culminated in their requirement that all Catholic children should be withdrawn from the schools under the management of the society. The schools were still maintained nominally in accordance with the original principles, but all chances of their ever becoming a national system had altogether vanished.

About this time also fell the Charter Schools. In 1825, a Parliamentary commission of inquiry recommended that the Government grant should be withdrawn, owing to the abuses that existed in connection with the schools, and the recommendation was soon carried

into effect. In 1831, the centenary of the scheme for the foundation of the Charter Schools, another design had its origin, which was destined to at least settle the vexed problem of Irish primary education, and which with various modifications exists and flourishes at the present day. As was announced by Mr. Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby), the then Chief Secretary, the method adopted by the Kildare-place Society, of causing the Bible to be read in schools without comment, was opposed to the principles of the Roman Catholic Church, and in itself was sufficient to cause the failure of the system as a national one. Accordingly, a new scheme was devised to suit all parties, and it was resolved that a great national system of education should be established, under the management of a board, consisting of the Duke of Leinster, Archbishop Whately, Archbishop Murray, Rev. Dr. Sadlier, Rev. Mr. Carlile, Mr. Blake, and Mr. Holmes. This board was to undertake the distribution and management of the funds to be annually voted by Parliament for the support of national education.

2.—*The National Schools.*

The most essential feature of the new system was that while all religions were to receive secular and moral instruction together, they should get their religious instruction apart. A certain portion of the school day was to be reserved, during which the ministers of various religions were to be permitted to give religious instruction to the members of their own faiths. The National system, notwithstanding much opposition at first from all sections, gradually won general approbation. Members of all religions make use of it, and that in almost exact proportion to their numbers. The attendance has gradually increased, though the total population of the country is diminishing. In 1841, while the population of Ireland was over eight millions, the number of National schools was 1,978, and the number of pupils on the rolls 232,560. In 1861, with a population of something under six millions, there were 5,632 schools, with 804,000 pupils on the rolls; and in 1881, with a population a little over five millions, there are 7,590 schools, with 1,083,020 children in attendance.

The Irish National schools at present are divided into vested and non-vested. The former are partly built by aid from the National Board; the latter are local or private property. In the vested schools, clergymen of different religions are permitted to visit the schoolrooms at stated hours, which will not unduly interfere with the school arrangements, to give religious instruction. In non-vested schools, it rests with the patron or local management to decide what religious instruction may be given. If none be allowed, the children must be given facilities to absent themselves at reasonable times for the purpose of obtaining it. Every National school must be open for secular instruction four hours a day upon five days in the week. At present the non-vested greatly exceed the vested schools, the numbers being 5,782 to 2,085 in the year 1881.

3.—*The Training and Remuneration of Teachers.*

In all systems of primary education the training of the teachers is one of the most important problems to be solved. In Germany, especial care is given to the subject. The teacher is expected to devote his life to his profession, and is looked on as an official of the state. In England and Wales forty-one training colleges for teachers are supported by Government grants. Of 31,422 teachers in charge of primary schools, upwards of 19,046, or about 60 per cent., have gone through a regular course of training, and the majority of the rest have served as pupil-teachers or assistants in large schools. In Ireland, on the other hand, out of 10,674 teachers, only 3,309, or 31 per cent. have been trained. As, however, is the case in England, the majority of the Irish teachers have been pupil-teachers or monitors in the ordinary model national schools. In 1880 upwards of 72 per cent. of the new teachers were so prepared. As is also the case in England, every teacher has to pass a stringent examination before receiving an appointment. This defect in the Irish National system—for so it must be regarded—is due to the religious difficulty. The Roman Catholic bishops have always expressed strong objection to the principle of mixed training. They will not approve of any training school in which Catholics are boarded and educated along with the pupils of other denominations. The result is that until recently Ireland only possessed one training college. Within the last few months, however, two training schools under local management, in accordance with the English and Scotch system, have been established under the charge of a most efficient staff of teachers. When we consider the vital necessity in every system of education of having experienced and specially prepared teachers, and the good results accruing from such training in schools on the continent, we must hope that the steps now taken to remedy the want, will render more efficient the National system in Ireland.

It was originally the intention of the National Board to leave the payment of teachers to the pupils and patrons of the various schools, and merely supplement their salaries by grants. These grants gradually increased, so that at the present time the greater part of the teachers' remuneration is contributed by the Board. Salaries now range from £35 to £75 for masters, and from £27 to £62 a year for mistresses. Pupil and result fees, however, bring them to double these figures. For the purpose of removing the inequalities arising from the inadequate contributions of some localities, "The National School Teachers (Ireland) Act" was passed in 1875, empowering poor-law guardians to contribute out of the rates sufficient funds to equalise in different localities the result fees paid to teachers. Though many unions contributed the first two or three years, they have gradually dwindled away, so that the Act must be considered a failure. The annual income of Irish teachers, both male and female, is on the whole far lower than that received by the English and Scotch. Following the example of Prussia—where a scheme for providing pensions for retiring teachers, and for making provision for widows and orphans of deceased masters, has been in operation since 1819—

a sum of £1,300,000 was appropriated by Parliament in 1879 to form the nucleus of a fund for pensioning Irish teachers. The interest of this sum, together with certain deductions from the salaries of the teachers, is to be utilised so as to form a pension fund on the assurance system. This act, passed by the late Parliament, has been received with satisfaction by the many Irish teachers, the only fault found being that the ages at which pensions are to be given are considered too high.

The late Conservative Government, by an act passed in 1875, sought to remedy another grievance of the National School teachers with reference to residences. Not more than 16 per cent. of the National schools are provided with dwellings for the teachers, while in England and Scotland upwards of 47 per cent. and 57 per cent. respectively are so provided. The act of 1875 empowered the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland to make loans for erecting teachers' residences on liberal conditions, but up to the present it has been little availed of by the managers and patrons of schools.*

ENGLAND.

1.—*Historical Sketch.*

After the Reformation, the business of education in England was undertaken by the Church. By the mass of the people the clergy were considered the rightful undertakers of the work. The Church, however, altogether neglected the duty, and no system of education existed for the people in the 17th century. The 18th century was little better provided for. An attempt indeed was made in 1698 by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, to establish primary schools in the neighbourhood of London. Reading, writing, and the catechism were taught. Children were admitted to the schools free of charge, and often, in addition, were supplied with food and clothing.

For some years these schools had considerable success in London. In 1704, there were in existence 54 schools, attended by 1,386 boys, and 745 girls. Five years later, the number of schools increased to 88, with 2,181 boys and 1,221 girls in attendance. In 1714 there were in England and Ireland in all upwards of 1,073 charity schools, attended by 19,453 pupils.

The early promise exhibited in the success of these schools was not brought to maturity. We hear little more of any efforts to spread education until the monitorial system was introduced at the beginning of the present century. The introduction of Sunday Schools by Robert Raikes in 1780 did much to spread instruction among the poorer classes. Still no one attempted to do anything towards popularising education, and that chiefly on the ground of expense, until the discoveries of Lancaster and Bell showed that by means of a system of monitors—that is, of having the junior pupils instructed by the senior—the cost of teaching would be greatly diminished. Lancaster calculated that one master, in accordance

* See Mr. Ferguson's paper, read before the Society in January, 1882.

with his principles, could manage to teach 1,000 boys, and that at a cost of not more than £200 per annum. This sum was to include the master's salary (£100 per annum), rent of school-room, etc. To prove practically how this could be done, he opened a school himself. All, even the most sceptical, were convinced. Money poured in. The patronage of Royalty was obtained. A society was formed. Lancasterian schools were established in every city. In 1814, the name "British and Foreign Society" was given to the institution. But the religious questions had in the meantime cropped up. Lancaster, who was a Quaker, taught the Bible, and the Bible only, in his schools. The Church of England was declared to be in danger. An agitation sprang up. The rival claimant for the honour of having discovered the monitorial system—Dr. Bell—established by the aid of his friends another institution, of which the distinctive principle was the inculcation of the tenets of the Church of England. This was called the "National Society," and at once became a great success. In 1813, the number of National Society schools in England was 230, with 40,404 pupils. In 1817, there were 725 schools, with 117,000 children; and in 1820, upwards of 1,614 schools, having over 200,000 scholars. The schools of the British and Foreign Society increased more slowly. In 1817, they numbered 260, and ten years later, 400. These societies greatly lightened the expense of instruction, yet in 1816 there were no less than 130,000 children within the area of London and Westminster totally unprovided with the means of education.

From 1816 to 1833 little was done to advance primary education. Brougham, James Mill, and others, did much, but were met with a bitter opposition. At length matters got so bad that the Government became alarmed. The social and moral condition of the people exhibited signs of deterioration. Crime increased to an enormous extent. Lord Althorp procured a Parliamentary grant of £20,000 for education purposes. The religious question threatened danger, so the money was spent only in building schoolhouses. The following years, various efforts were made to improve matters. The parliamentary committee on the education of the poorer classes reported that the education given to the children of the working classes was lamentably deficient, and that some effort should be made to improve it. Over 160,000 children were entirely destitute of any means of education. In 1839 a vigorous effort was made. A committee of the Privy Council, consisting of Lord Lansdowne, Viscount Duncan, Lord John Russell, and Mr. Spring Rice, was appointed to manage the distribution of the increased grant made by Parliament. Inspectors were appointed. A scheme was proposed for founding a normal college to train teachers. But the religious question immediately came to the fore. The adherents of the Church of England would have nothing but a denominational system. Many Independents and Dissenters would have no state interference at all. Most of the educated classes, including the leading statesmen, were in favour of a national undenominational system. Of the 561,000 children at school in 1839, upwards of 514,000 attended the schools of the National Society, which were under the clergy of the church.

Therefore the system of denominational education had to be retained. After a few years, the examinations of the inspectors revealed a deplorably defective state of affairs. Teaching in very many instances was carried on by ignorant monitors. Masters of long experience often taught only reading and spelling, and prohibited writing lest the boys should scribble offensive words on walls and pailings. The secretary to the committee of the Privy Council, Mr James Kay (afterwards Sir J. Kay Shuttleworth), a man of great energy and experience, resolved to do everything in his power to improve the methods of instruction. After a careful study of the existing systems in Germany and Switzerland, he saw that no good system of education could be had without carefully-trained and properly-remunerated teachers. Training schools were accordingly started. Pupil teachers were encouraged to complete their training at one of the normal colleges, and grants were made to the best schools. But this system, though eminently advantageous to the better class of schools, allowed those belonging to poorer denominations to remain without any assistance, while children not belonging to any religious body were left totally unprovided for. This state of affairs continued until 1861, when Mr. Lowe was appointed to the post of vice-president of the Committee of Council on Education. A commission, consisting of Mr. Matthew Arnold and Dr. Mark Pattison, had been sent to the Continent in 1858, to examine foreign systems, and suggest amendments. Their report was now sent in, and various improvements proposed. Mr. Lowe, however, had his own ideas on the subject. From his point of view, two main objects were to be sought for in a proper system of education, viz :—economy and practicality. The first was to be attained by the aid of the second, and that was reached by teaching little or nothing but reading, writing, and arithmetic. All other subjects were thrown into the background. The higher subjects of education were neglected, and the essentials were taught no better. This was the effect of Mr. Lowe's revised code. But the agitation still went on. The religious question was as yet unsettled. The majority of the schools were under the Church of England, and all pupils attending them were compelled to submit to the entire course of religious instruction, whether their parents approved of it or not. A conscience clause was proposed. The clergy gave it a violent opposition. Mr. Forster's Bill took the matter up. The "Elementary Education Act" of 1870, decided the principle that no scholars should be compelled to listen to religious teaching opposed to the church to which they belonged.

2.—*The Present English System.*

The act of 1870 did much more than settle the religious question. It reformed and placed on an entirely new footing elementary education in England. The first provision of the act is that the whole of England and Wales be divided into a certain number of school districts, eighty in all, of which London should have ten. Each district must maintain sufficient accommodation for the education of its inhabitants. Where there is a deficiency, it must be supplied by the formation of a school board, of which the election belongs to the

ratepayers, male and female, of the district. This board is empowered to levy a rate to defray all expenses. It has the entire control of educational matters, and can if it please render education compulsory. No instruction is given gratis, but the fees of the children of parents too poor to pay for them are supplied by the board. When the bye-laws of the school board adopt the principle of compulsory attendance, the school inspectors are empowered to stop children between five and thirteen in the streets, and make inquiries respecting their school attendance. If it is found that they are taught at a school not under the board, they can be examined before a magistrate, and if the school is not considered a satisfactory one, the child is compelled to attend another.

Every public elementary school must be conducted in accordance with four regulations, copies of which shall be hung up in the school-room. The substance of the rules are as follows :—

1. It shall not be required as a condition of any child being admitted into or continuing in any school, that he shall attend, or abstain from attending, any religious worship or instruction. 2. That religious instruction shall be given only at the beginning or the end of each meeting of the school, so as to enable parents to withdraw their children if they please. 3. That the school shall be open at all times for the inspection of Her Majesty's inspectors, who, however, shall not inquire into the religious instruction given. 4. That the school shall be conducted in accordance with the conditions required to be fulfilled by an elementary school in order to obtain a Parliamentary grant.

In the case of schools founded by the school board itself, no distinctive religious teaching is supplied. Power is also given to the school board to purchase land for the purpose of erecting schools, etc., under the Land Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845, and the acts amending the same, which afford great privileges. The board can also take in hands and utilise for its own purposes, existing schools of which the managers wish to give up the charge.

As has been pointed out, school fees are everywhere demanded. These range from a penny to ninepence a-week, according to the circumstances of the parents. In some very poor districts also, the school board can obtain permission from the Education Department to erect free schools.

3.—*The Training of Teachers.*

With respect to the training of teachers, much has still to be done. The state grants subsidies to colleges founded for the purpose by different religious communities. Those aspiring to the office of teachers are first employed as pupil teachers. On attaining the age of eighteen, and on passing an examination, they may be received into a training college. After remaining there for about two years, they are admitted to a final examination, at which certificates of different degrees of proficiency are awarded. This system, somewhat resembling that in Germany, would be satisfactory enough, were there a rule in force limiting school-board teacherships to persons so trained. As, however, the number of candidates possessing this qualification

is much too small to supply all needs, many having little or no proper qualifications are employed.

The act of 1870 has been supplemented by another act, passed in 1876 by the last Conservative Government, which has mitigated some of the most objectionable features of the earlier act, and added various improvements, which the experience of six years had suggested.

4.—*Compulsion.*

The first important question that arises is that of compulsion. The statute declares that it shall be the duty of the parent of every child to see that such child receives sufficient instruction in the elements of education—in reading, writing, and arithmetic. This end is to be secured by both direct and indirect compulsion. Direct compulsion, if the local school board thinks fit to apply it, may be secured by means of bye-laws and school attendance orders. With the approval of the education department, each school board may make bye-laws requiring the parents of children of such age (not less than five, nor more than thirteen) as may be fixed by the bye-laws, to cause such children to attend school, unless there be some reasonable excuse. For the purposes of the act, any of the following reasons shall be deemed a “reasonable excuse” for the non-attendance of the child at school :—

(1) That the child is receiving efficient instruction elsewhere; (2) that the child is prevented from attending by sickness or other unavoidable cause; (3) that there is no public elementary school open within such distance (not exceeding three miles from the residence of the child) as shall be fixed by the bye-law.

A “school attendance order” can be made by any court of summary jurisdiction, on the complaint of the local school board, or (if there be no school board) the school attendance committee, that the parents of a child, being within the ages specified in the act, do not provide any efficient elementary instruction for such child. Indirect compulsion is to be secured by imposing restrictions on the employment of children, except when they have attained a certain standard of proficiency in reading, writing, and arithmetic, or have obtained a certificate of previous due attendance at school; and also by making the attendance at school of the children of paupers a condition precedent to the giving of out-door relief. After the 1st January, 1878, no person is to take into his employment a child under the age of ten years, or any child between the ages of ten and fourteen who has not obtained a certificate of proficiency, or of due attendance, at a public elementary school, unless the child is employed or attending school in accordance with the Factory Act, or of any bye-law of the local authority (s. 5). By the Elementary Education Act of 1870 (s. 25), the local school boards were empowered to pay the school fees of children whose parents were unable from poverty to do so. This section is repealed by the present act, and in case of poverty it is provided that the fees are to be paid by the local board of guardians. The act of 1876 also makes provision for the dissolution of a school board, if it be no longer needed in a district, and gives power to the education department to deal with cases of default of local authority.

Conclusions.

When we examine the results of these acts, and compare the system established by them with that existing in other countries, the first point that will probably strike us is that the standard of efficiency is far too low. In Germany, no pupil is considered exempt from school attendance until he has shown that he possesses a certain amount of proficiency in knowledge. In England, no such test is requisite. The standard of time is taken as that of efficiency. Even when compulsory attendance is necessary, a child may leave school knowing little or nothing. It would be far better to introduce a standard of excellence, before attaining which no child of average intelligence should be permitted to leave school.

Another point in which the English system (and this also, as we have seen, holds good of Ireland) is capable of improvement, is the proper training of teachers. Means should be adopted by which an efficient number of thoroughly trained instructors could be secured, and no one should be allowed to hold such a post unless properly fitted for it. The Germans have seen the advantages of this point, and can always secure an abundance of suitable candidates by making the position one worth seeking by persons with the necessary qualifications. The German teacher can, if steady and intelligent, rise to very honourable and important positions. The English and Irish teacher, on the contrary, must be satisfied with his school, and can never rise beyond it.

Another fault in the English system, is that too low a standard of instruction is adopted. The school course is supposed to extend over six years, and for each year a special course is appointed. If the children were properly taught, it is not too much to assert that the course fixed for the last year could be mastered by the end of the fourth, which would give at least two years more for instruction in many necessary subjects now altogether overlooked. Thus, the sixth grade standard at present in use requires only the knowledge of fluent reading, writing, and arithmetic to proportions and fractions. We have no mention of such important subjects as history, geography, and what the Germans include under the head of natural history. In Holland, the law defines the subjects of primary instruction as follows: reading, writing, arithmetic, the elements of geometry, of Dutch grammar, of history, of geography, of the natural sciences, and singing. In Switzerland generally the course is nearly as extensive, and in the German Cantons more so. In France, in addition to moral and religious teaching, every primary school must teach reading, writing, arithmetic, the elements of French grammar, and the French system of weights and measures. Then there are facultative subjects, which may or may not be taught, as the communal council desires. These are history, geography, the elements of physics and natural history, agriculture, hygiene, surveying, drawing, singing, and gymnastics. In girls' schools, instruction in needlework is given for about three hours a-day.

In each of the three countries whose educational systems I have brought under notice, much improvement has taken place during

the last and especially the present generation. As Mr. Matthew Arnold has remarked, primary education has little or no history. No one apparently even thought of establishing a national system until the present century, hence we should not be surprised if the results are still often unsatisfactory. Germany is generally considered, and rightly so, far ahead of England and Ireland in the completeness of its system—a result which is due to the imperialistic character of the government, which enabled methods far too arbitrary to suit the free institutions of the British Isles to be readily introduced. Perhaps the point which future reformers will pay most attention to in national primary education is the industrial training of the masses. It seems reasonable that during the later years of school life, attention should be especially devoted to preparing the pupil for his future life, and there is no reason why intellectual and manual education should not to a great extent be united. Experience has shown that when, in accordance with the Factory Acts, children attend schools as “half-timers,” they learn much quicker than those who have been undergoing instruction all day. This, however, is a question which cannot be adequately considered in a paper such as the present, which has already grown to inordinate proportions.

III.—*The Nationalization of the Land.* By James J. Shaw, Esq.,
Barrister-at-Law.

[Read Tuesday, 29th January, 1884.]

THE questions raised in Mr. George's book, *Progress and Poverty*, are so many and so large that to discuss them adequately would require a book at least as large as his own. I propose to deal this evening only with the main thesis of his book—viz., that the private ownership of land is the cause of the poverty that accompanies progress, or at least is the cause that progress does not put an end to poverty; and that the remedy for poverty is to abolish the private ownership of land without compensation to the owner. And I propose to deal with this question entirely on economic grounds. I put aside for the present all consideration either of the morality or of the political expediency of the remedy proposed. I simply desire to examine in the light of economic fact and principle the truth of Mr. George's theory as to the cause of poverty, and the efficiency of the remedy by which he proposes to abolish it. The task I thus set myself is rendered much easier by the fact that Mr. George admits the validity of the economic methods of reasoning and investigation, and professes to found his theory on certain well-established economic principles. In fact he presents his system as a logical deduction from the theory of rent propounded by Ricardo, and since his time generally accepted by writers on political economy.

I must, in the first place, endeavour to present to you as fairly as I can, even at the risk of unduly lengthening my paper, the course