# THE NECESSITY

FOR AN

# INTERMEDIATE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

BETWEEN THE

## National Schools and Colleges of Ireland,

IN LETTERS ADDRESSED TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE EARL OF ST. GERMAINS, LORD-LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND.


BY THE

REV. JAMES M'COSH, LL.D.,

PROFESSOR OF LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS IN QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST.



BELFAST:

JOHN SHEPHERD, 9 HIGH STREET.

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY

# THE EARL OF ST. GERMAINS,

LORD-LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND.

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BELFAST, *February* 1, 1854.

MY LORD,

I HAVE felt myself for some time past strongly impelled, by the discovery of a great and manifest gap in the educational institutions of Ireland, to address the Government, and the country at large, upon the subject. In giving to the press some thoughts on the establishment of academic institutions between the universities and preparatory schools already in existence, I have thankfully to acknowledge the favour which your Excellency has conferred, in allowing me the privilege of addressing my letters to a nobleman whose collegiate associations and official acts are equally on the side of educational advancement. Whilst I avail myself of this liberty, I shall have all due respect to the terms of your Excellency's permission, by not presuming to suppose that my individual convictions are in any way exponent of the views of the Government, or of the educational authorities; but, having reason to believe that you regard the subject as important, and worthy of consideration, I am relieved from embarrassment in addressing the following remarks to your Excellency, as the chief governor of a country, the proper and adequate education of which continues to excite the deepest interest both among the people and in the Imperial Parliament.

I need not inform your Lordship, nor remind the public, that Government has done much during the last twenty years for the education of Ireland. It has provided, first, the National Schools,

and then the Queen's Colleges. The former originated with Lord Stanley, now the Earl of Derby, and the Ministry with which he was at that time connected; the latter, with Sir Robert Peel, and the Government presided over by him. Each succeeding Government, without a single exception, has been friendly to these institutions. It is not necessary for the object which I have in view to take any side in the controversies which have raged as to the constitution of the schools and colleges. My argument applies, whether they are kept as they are, or modified, provided only that they are continued; and no man, so far as I am aware, proposes to abolish them. We have, then, on the one hand, the National Schools, giving instruction in the common branches of education to half-a-million of children. On the other hand, we have the three colleges, each with a staff of twenty professors, imparting instruction in arts, medicine, law, and agriculture; and, connected with these, the Queen's University for Ireland, authorised to grant degrees to the young men who have studied at Belfast, Cork, and Galway. The colleges and the university have taken a high standard of scholarship—as high as that of any collegiate institution in the three kingdoms. The students have to undergo a matriculation examination before entering college, and the examiners appointed by the university exact an accurate acquaintance with the courses prescribed before granting degrees in any department. But when one looks first at the National Schools, and then at the Colleges, the question presses itself upon him, How are the Irish youth to rise from the one to the other? The one class of institutions furnishes English reading, penmanship, and arithmetic, with the elements, in some places, of mathematics and the natural sciences. The other requires, in order to admission, a considerable proficiency in classical studies. But how are our young men to mount from the lower to the higher platform? Every one has heard of the person who built a fine house of two storeys, each very large and commodious, but who neglected to put a stair between. It appears to me that, if the Government goes no further than it has done, it may be represented as guilty of a similar blunder. We need a set of intermediate schools, to enable the more promising youth, belonging to the middle and lower classes of Ireland, to take advantage of the education provided in the Colleges.



Without such intermediate institutions the work begun in the National Schools will be improperly intercepted. I am not one of those who think that it is for the good of the country that the higher classes of society should be brought down; but I am convinced that it is for the advantage of the country at large, and even of the upper classes, that facilities should be given to the more deserving members of the lower ranks to raise themselves to a higher elevation. It is for the benefit of the whole social atmosphere that the more fervent and aspiring parts of the lower stratum should be allowed to mount upwards, and carry their heat and energy along with them into the upper regions. I believe that a country is not wisely or impartially governed which does not prepare a way by which the son of the tradesman or small farmer may, if gifted with the proper talents and perseverance, rise to the higher offices of the land. But there are no such facilities at this moment in Ireland. A young man might have genius and indomitable perseverance equal to that of my two countrymen, Robert Burns and Hugh Miller; but there are wide districts in Ireland, whole half counties, in which he could not at this day find the means of acquiring that smattering of the Latin language which the two eminent persons referred to were enabled to procure at their own door in Scotland, and no possible means of enabling him to rise to any of the learned professions. I hold that, if a country be equitably governed, there will be provision made for enabling young men of ability and energy to rise beyond the common schools to the colleges, and thence, if they have crowning merit, to the very highest offices in Church and State. Such fresh blood ever poured into the veins of the upper classes in rank and profession, would greatly promote their health and energy, and would bring them into a state of more friendly sympathy and fellowship with the other portions of the community. The Irish, in the more sequestered districts, have been taught to look upon themselves as a people trampled on and crushed; and I know nothing better fitted to gain their generous hearts, than to find that their promising youth, instead of pining in poverty in their turf-built cabins, or being driven to far-distant shores, have really the means of rising to honour and competence in their own land.

The existing deficiency, while so far limiting the benefits which

the lower storey of the building might effect, is found to be a still greater hindrance to the utility of the upper storey. When the difficulties with which the Queen's Colleges have had to contend are taken into account, they may be regarded as wonderfully successful. Still, they might accomplish much more than they have hitherto done, provided the Government of the country were to finish what they have so well begun. And here I may be permitted to remark, that I believe there is a great misunderstanding among the friends of the Queen's Colleges as to the chief hindrance to their entire success. Certain influential members of various churches have spoken strongly against them, and this circumstance is supposed to constitute the main obstacle with which they have had to contend. This, in my humble opinion, is a mistake. The influences referred to have been brought to bear against the National Schools without much visible effect. I have far too high an opinion of the independent spirit of the Irish people to believe that they are to be deterred by such influences from supporting institutions which have, as they see, a beneficial tendency. *I am convinced that the grand difficulties with which the Queen's Colleges have had to contend have proceeded, not from ecclesiastical opposition, but the utter want of adequate feeders.* Give us only a sufficient number of classical schools, judiciously planted throughout the land, and in a few years the class-rooms of the Queen's Colleges would be crowded. Nay, I am persuaded that Trinity College itself would feel the influence in an increased number of young men, belonging to the middle and lower classes, eagerly seeking to take advantage of its high scholarship and its many privileges.

I do not plead, then, for these intermediate schools merely as a means of increasing the usefulness of the Queen's Colleges. As a professor in one of these Colleges, I acknowledge that I am anxious to make them thoroughly fulfil the end designed by them. I would not be worthy of the office which I have the honour to hold were I not desirous to see them accomplish the good which they are fitted to serve. But I plead for upper schools, not on the ground of promoting the welfare of the Queen's Colleges; I plead for them as fitted to benefit every other collegiate institution in this island, or in Great Britain, to which Irishmen are accustomed to resort; I plead for them as calculated to elevate



the Irish people to a higher status in the scale of nations, and scatter innumerable blessings throughout the land.

It is not needful in this age to adduce arguments to prove that the knowledge—classical, mathematical, and scientific—communicated at these upper schools, would tend to elevate those who may acquire it. It does more. I am persuaded that when a number of young men, in a given district, learn these branches, in rising themselves they tend to raise up the whole community with which they are connected—the brothers, sisters, companions, with whom they associate—nay, all who hear of their attainments and advancement. Nor need I enter on any elaborate statement to show that schools for giving instruction in the higher branches of learning cannot flourish without an endowment from some quarter. Except in certain very favoured districts, a teacher cannot live, cannot feed or clothe himself, by classics. In the rural districts, and in the smaller towns of England, Scotland, or Ireland, a teacher of Latin, Greek, mathematics, and natural sciences, will not, from the fees of his pupils, earn as much as a clerk in a bleaching establishment or a provision store—nay, in most cases, not so much as a journeyman mechanic or artisan in Belfast, or any of our other large commercial and manufacturing cities. It follows that, if the higher branches are to be taught in this country, there must be an endowment on the part of the Government, or some other parties. I know of no other parties in the least likely to supply the want throughout the land generally, and therefore I address myself to the country, and the Government as representing the country.

There is an especial reason for the Government directing its attention to the subject—the want has been to some extent created by the Government. In former years, there were to be found throughout the North of Ireland a considerable number of teachers, who earned a livelihood, miserable enough, I grant, by combining the common branches of learning with Latin. Even in the South, there were *hedge teachers*, who professed to give instructions both in the English and Latin languages, and who taught both with about the same amount of perfection or imperfection. The establishment of the National Schools withdrew the English scholars, who were the main support of the teacher, from these mixed schools, and the consequence is that a large number of them have

disappeared. Some were able to lengthen out their existence till the year of the famine, when their chief supporters intimated to the teacher that it was no time to think of Latin or mathematics for their children, when the question was how they were to get bread. Wherever I travel throughout Ulster, I hear of places where classical schools of some sort existed ten, twenty, or thirty years ago, but which have not now the means of learning the rudiments of the ancient languages within the distance of ten or twelve miles. The Convener of the College Committee reported to the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, that he had heard of seven or eight classical schools existing formerly in the County Down, but which have now disappeared. Were it not invidious to select, I could name distinguished men in the various churches, and at the bar, who were prepared in whole, or in part, at these schools, for the universities of Dublin or Glasgow. A large proportion of the Presbyterian ministers in the North of Ireland were trained at such institutions. In the South of Ireland, the hedge teacher set many a clever boy to learn the Latin language, and thus gave him a taste for scholarship, which impelled him on to seek an entrance into the higher academies and colleges. Now, I am not disposed to be the minstrel employed to raise a funereal wail over the decease of the hedge schools. It is matter of congratulation that they have been superseded by something better. But the National Schools, in providing a higher kind of English education, have not hitherto offered any instruction in classical learning. On the contrary, the teaching of classics is positively interdicted in the National Schools. They have thus done away with seminaries in which Latin was taught, I grant, often very imperfectly, but where the boy frequently got as much as gave him a taste for more. It appears, then, that the National Schools have been, incidentally, the means of diminishing the number of classical schools. It is surely not too much to ask the Government of the country to remedy the evil which it has unintentionally created.

In my next letter, I shall enter somewhat more into detail. —Meanwhile, I am, yours, &c.



## LETTER II.

My Lord,

In a former letter, I called your Lordship's attention to the wide gulf which separates the National Schools from the Colleges of Ireland, and undertook to show that there are no adequate means of enabling the youth of the middle and lower classes to rise from the one to the other.

It is not necessary, in order to the validity of my argument, to maintain that there are scarcely any classical schools throughout Ireland. The position which I lay down is, that the existing schools are far from being sufficiently numerous; that they are not diffused over the land; that some of the best of them are, in fact, feeders exclusively of Trinity College, Dublin, and supports of the Established Church; and that most of the others are very inadequately supported, and are utterly insufficient to meet the wants of the country. In Belfast, besides a very few private schools, which occasionally send a pupil to college, we have two admirable public institutions, which are struggling manfully with the too exclusively commercial spirit of the place, and a chief means of supplying students to the Queen's College. Then there are throughout Ireland a number of Diocesan and Royal Schools, some of which have large endowments, and teachers of distinguished learning and ability. These schools are in the hands of the Church of England, and the course of education pursued has reference throughout to Trinity College, Dublin. It is easy to understand how they should, in consequence, send few pupils to the Queen's Colleges. This is now the fifth session in which the College in Belfast has been in active operation, and the College books report only three students as having entered from the Diocesan, and four from the Royal Schools. As the Diocesan Schools are chiefly supported by the contributions of the clergy of the Established Church, I do not feel as if I were called to offer any criticism upon their mode of management. But the Royal Schools are differently circumstanced. These schools are supported out of public funds, and there is nothing in the original constitution connecting them with Trinity College or the Church of England But the Commissioners of Education, appointed under the act of 53

Geo. III. c. 107, have turned the pupils in that direction, by founding thirty exhibitions, of the value of from £25 to £50 each, for students who enter Trinity College from any of the following schools, viz. :—Armagh, Dungannon, Enniskillen, and Cavan. Many persons think that it is high time that a Parliamentary Commission were appointed, to inquire into the working of these institutions. But it is not necessary that I should enter into this discussion. It may be very proper, some would argue, that the Church of Ireland and the College at Dublin should have such supports; but in this case it is necessary to furnish similar advantages to other sections of the community. But it is more to my present purpose to remark, that whatever be done with these schools, they are not fitted to meet the difficulty. There are only seven of them altogether, and these, with the few other endowed schools to be met with here and there, are not commensurate with the wants of a country which has four State colleges, and a population of six millions.

Besides these endowed Episcopal schools, there are, in a few of the wealthier localities, some others, either at the teachers' own adventure, or supported by a few families clubbing together. In regard to the latter, I have to remark, that they are often confined to twelve (or some other small number of) select pupils, and are utterly beyond the reach of the lower, or even of the middle classes. As to the others, we find that in very few cases is the teacher possessed of proper professional qualifications, and that in no case is he adequately supported. Here and there you will find a student teaching the Latin language, along with the common branches, during the summer vacation of College, or for a year or two, in order to find the means of prosecuting his own education, and when he leaves the district the school is broken up. Then, in the smaller market towns and villages, and in the country districts, even the most populous, there are no schools at which the upper branches are taught. And what is the consequence? The benefits of a learned education are altogether beyond the reach of those classes of society which supply the greater number of the students to the colleges in Scotland, in the United States of America, and in Germany. In this respect Ireland is far behind the countries I have named. It is not now inferior to them in its colleges, but vastly behind them in the



apparatus provided for supplying students to its collegiate institutions. It may be safely affirmed, that there is not a country in the world which has set up so many colleges, relatively to the population, and yet planted so few preparatory schools.

In Scotland, the country with which I am best acquainted, by far the greater part of the students attending the four universities come from the country towns and parishes. By means of the Burgh, the Parochial, and latterly the Free Church schools, classics at a very cheap rate are brought to every man's door. If we keep out of the thinly populated Highland districts, we shall not be able to find a family in Scotland which has not, within a very few miles of it, a school in which the Latin language is taught. The consequence is, that not only in the large cities, but in every small town, in almost every village, and in most populous country districts, you will find a number of children learning the classical languages. All of them do not go forward to college (it is well that they do not), but those who have the proper talents and tastes do, and several of the colleges are mainly fed by such pupils. It is in consequence of the means of acquiring the higher branches being so universally diffused and pressed on the notice of every family, that so many children are tempted to begin the study. The following is a case which is occurring every year in every populous district, urban and rural, of Scotland. A boy has been three or four years at school, and has acquired the elements of the ordinary branches. Being, as yet, only about ten years of age, he is unfit for manual work, and his father, a small farmer, a shopkeeper, or respectable tradesman, is willing to keep him at school for a time longer. The teacher, pleased with the quickness and diligence of the boy, proposes that he should take instruction for a quarter of a year in Latin, the fee for which is only four or five shillings. The father is flattered by the implied compliment to the ability of his son, and after uttering some expressions of affected reluctance, consents to the proposal. The youth is already put upon a course which is to lead to his becoming a useful member, perhaps an ornament, of one of the learned professions.

But there are no such wide-spread advantages and facilities as these in Ireland. There are large villages, populous rural districts, and even market and burgh towns, which are not within

five, ten, or even twenty miles of any classical school. I am to submit a few statements, which are confined to Ulster, not because it is worse than the other provinces (it is notoriously in a better position), but because it is the part of Ireland with which I am best acquainted. Beginning with the County Down, we have Donaghadee, with a population of 4000, without a single classical school, endowed or private, in the town, or within six miles of it. In Rathfriland, with a population of upwards of 2000, there is no public school for the upper branches, and the only private one, from frequent changes of teachers, is almost extinct. In Newtownards, with a population of 10,000, there is no endowed classical school, though there is a private school in which classics, along with the branches of an English education, are taught. Going north to the County Antrim, we meet with Larne, with a population of between 4000 and 5000, but having no classical school. In Antrim, the county town, there is a private classical school, confined to twelve boys of the upper classes, but no provision for the children of the middle or lower classes. I have heard of some boys in the neighbourhood of Antrim who come in every day, a distance of eighteen miles, by railway, to school in Belfast. Those families which do not live in the vicinity of a railway-station must just do without education in the higher branches for their children. In the neighbouring town of Randalstown, which is so important as to have a branch railway leading to it, there was lately no classical school of any description. Passing on towards Derry, I ascertained, when in Coleraine, a few months ago, that in this town, while there have been, from time to time, private teachers giving instruction in classics, yet these being inadequately supported, have either been drawn away to other localities, or have failed for want of encouragement; and that there is not at this present time in Coleraine, which has a population of 6000, or within a circle of twenty miles, including the thriving and populous towns of Ballymoney and Newtownlimavady, and the lesser, though still important, towns of Garvagh, Kilrea, Portglenone, Maghera, Bushmills, Dervock, Portrush, and Portstewart, a single endowed classical school or upper school, on any foundation which can be described as permanent. In most of the places named there is no classical school whatever; and I heard of small farmers, living in populous



country districts, of shopkeepers and poor Presbyterian ministers, living in towns of considerable importance, sending their boys, of only ten or twelve years of age, to board at places which are at the distance of twenty or thirty miles. It is proper to mention, however, that in a very few of the places referred to there are classical schools. Thus, in Newtownlimavady there is a school kept by a clergyman for about a dozen boys of the upper classes, but no school intended for the other classes, or adapted to them. In Ballymoney there is no endowed school, but there is a private school, taught by the non-subscribing Presbyterian minister, in which classics are combined with the usual branches of an English and mercantile education. I rather think that, in nearly the whole of the other towns referred to, there are no means whatever of acquiring the higher branches. At Dungiven, for instance, a town of considerable importance in County Derry, there is no classical school of any description. Passing round to the north-west of Ireland, correspondents write me that they are ten and twenty miles distant from the nearest classical school of any efficiency. At Ramelton, with a population of nearly 2000, there is no school in which the Latin language is taught. A gentleman writes me, from the chief town of one of our northern counties, that there is no endowed classical school in the place, and that a private school at which classics are taught is of no great usefulness. Another, writing from a town with 2000 of a population, says, "The teachers we have had, from time to time, are young men looking forward to the Presbyterian ministry, and who, after a short stay, generally leave for some other locality, or for college. Their removal has the effect of scattering the school, and great difficulty is experienced in collecting it." This remark applies to many other places. Coming round towards the point from which I started, I find that, in the market town of Ballibay, in Monaghan, with a population of 2000, and seated in the heart of a populous district, there is no classical school of any description. I have similar statements from the County Armagh; but the above will, I think, be deemed sufficient. They are only specimens of what is far too wide-spread. Unfortunately, such statistics are to be had much too readily from every district of Ireland.

These statistics* relate merely to one province of Ireland. I have before me a rough sketch of a Plan of Collegiate and Academic Education for Ireland, drawn out by the Very Rev. Dr. Bagot, Dean of Dromore, in 1845, and in it there are certain statements given as to the whole country. "There are in Ireland," he says, "98 towns, containing a population exceeding 3000 each. Of these, 18 have endowed schools, leaving 80 towns, of a population exceeding 3000 each, requiring good academies."

It is evident that, in most districts of this country, it is all but impossible for a boy belonging to the middle or lower classes, whatever may be his genius or abilities, to become a member of the learned professions. In order to the acquisition, on his part, of any of the higher branches, it will be necessary for the parent to board him, at a high rate, in some town at a distance where there happens to be a classical institution. It is vain to expect that the lower, or even the middle classes of society, in such a poor country as Ireland, should be willing or able to expend twenty or thirty pounds a year in boarding a boy of ten or twelve years of age. *The result is, that the means of acquiring a learned education are practically denied to the majority, I should say to three-fourths, of the people of Ireland.* The colleges are thus made to depend for the supply of students on but a fraction of the population. Of this portion many are led, by the privileges held out to them, to patronise Trinity College, Dublin, leaving only a comparatively small segment of the community to support the Queen's Colleges. The partial success of the New Colleges, under such disadvantageous circumstances, is a proof that they would be eminently successful in more favoured circumstances, and if only they had the same feeders as the Dublin University and the colleges of other lands.

In closing this letter, I beg to state, in the very strongest language, my deep conviction that, if a set of higher schools for classics and mathematics, and some of the simpler of the natural sciences, were planted throughout the land, they would be ardently patronised by the Irish people. I may be permitted to state

* It should be stated that they were procured six months ago, since which time alterations may have taken place in some of the localities.



that I have no national predilections to gratify in upholding the Irish people. I belong to a country where the people are acknowledged to have a taste for learning. But I give it as my decided testimony, that the Irish have as great predilection for learning, and as great an aptitude for taking it up, as the Scotch—might I not add, as any nation on the face of the earth. It is to be regretted that, amid political and ecclesiastical divisions, so little should have been done for ages for the education of the people. The pity is that, at this moment, there should be such a hiatus in its educational institutions. I am convinced that the present is a favourable opportunity for extending the means of a higher education. The farmers, tradesmen, and peasantry of the land, after coming through such a trial as Ireland never experienced before—such, indeed, as few nations have ever been doomed to pass through—are beginning to feel that they are in more favoured circumstances, and will hail with gratitude any attempt which may be made to give their sons an education which may enable them, if they have the requisite abilities, to set forth on a career of usefulness and honour.—I am, &c.

## LETTER III.

My Lord,

My main object in these letters is to call attention to the want which exists. If only our statesmen and the country were sufficiently impressed with the greatness of the deficiency, and the importance of meeting it, there would speedily be devised a means of supplying it. As long as the necessity is not felt, persons will only see difficulties in carrying out any suggested scheme; as soon as the need is acknowledged, obstacles will be found to give way.

I can conceive of the evil being remedied in a variety of ways; indeed I am convinced that more than one step should be taken in order to meet the circumstances of the case, as it is presented to us.

(1.) There might be a modification in the operation of the Royal Schools, not in the way of depriving them of these privileges, or narrowing their utility, but in order to make them truly national institutions, and the means of supplying students to the colleges in connection with the Queen's, as well as to the Dublin University. These schools are similar to the Queen's Colleges, in being of Royal Foundation, in being endowed by Royal Charter, in being open to persons of all religious persuasions, and free from any interference with the religion of the masters, the assistants, or pupils. I state these important facts on the authority of a report of a Select Committee of the House of Commons, on Foundation Schools in Ireland, which was presented to Parliament in 1838. In that report it is stated—"The Royal Schools were not precluded, either by their charter or by any Act of Parliament or bye-law, from receiving all religious denominations. Though the course pursued, in the instance of Diocesan Schools, of appointing masters from the Church of England, and generally clergymen, prevailed also in the case of the Royal Schools, it does not rest on any law. The Lord-Lieutenant, as in the case of the Diocesan, has the appointment solely in his own hand, unshackled by any limitation of a religious, exclusive character. The assistants also are usually Protestant, but chosen from the laity. The Royal Schools have at all times been considered open to all religious persuasions." By an Act already referred to, passed in 1813, the commissioners are entitled to allot funds to the "endowment of such and so many exhibitions at Trinity College, to be held by such persons, and under such regulations and restrictions, as to the said commissioners shall seem proper." By an Act passed in 1822—(3 Geo. IV., c. 79)—the powers of the commissioners were extended, by enabling them to apply the funds of any of the Royal Schools in aid of the funds of any other of these schools. It would only be carrying out the object of the original constitution of these schools were her Majesty's Government to introduce an Act (similar to that of 1822, amending the Act of 1813), enabling the commissioners to endow "such and so many exhibitions in any of the Queen's Colleges, to be held by such persons, and under such regulations and restrictions, as to the commissioners might seem meet." I indulge the hope that there will be found some Irish Member of Parliament sufficiently patriotic to call the attention of the Legislature to the management of the Royal Schools, and that the members of her Majesty's Government will be inclined to take the whole subject into their favourable consideration.



But, as I have said in my last letter, the Royal Schools, even though remodelled, and administered on a more liberal principle, are not so numerous nor so equally distributed as to admit of their supplying the middle or lower classes with the means of acquiring the higher branches of education.

(2.) It has occurred to me that, without any injury to the National Schools, nay, greatly to their advantage, there might be a system of higher education grafted upon them.

First, there might be immediate permission given to all the teachers to impart instruction in any of the higher branches which they were competent to teach, at those hours at which they were not occupied with their ordinary work. As there is such a watchful superintendence of them by the Inspectors of the Board at the ordinary school hours, I cannot conceive that this liberty could ever be abused. On the contrary, I am convinced that the permission thus given would tend rather to elevate the teacher, and encourage him in his arduous work. Between the hours of nine and ten in the forenoon, and three and four in the afternoon, or in the evening, classes might be formed for instruction in the

higher branches, without at all interfering with the business of the Elementary School. I have spoken to several Inspectors of the National Schools on this subject, and they were not able to foresee any inconvenience likely to arise from such an arrangement.

But I am inclined to go farther than this. The teachers of the National Schools should not only be permitted but encouraged to give instruction, at the hours referred to, in the higher branches of education. It appears to me that great benefit would arise from allowing all the teachers who have attained the first class in the National Schools to compete for an additional salary, to be given to those who could stand an examination in classics and elementary science, and who would be bound at certain times, not being the regular school hours, to teach these branches, at a low fee, to all who might apply for instruction in them. I am quite aware that there are persons who fear that this subsidiary employment might rather divert the attention or energy of the teacher from his proper work; but, from a large observation of the operation of such a combined system in Great Britain, I am certain that there is no ground whatever for such an apprehension. In the Parochial Schools of Scotland, the teachers are found to be more competent for the work of teaching the elementary branches, from the circumstance that their minds are enlarged by a knowledge of the higher departments. The Committee on Education of her Majesty's Privy-Council allot salaries to their teachers, which rise according to their proficiency, as ascertained by examination in mathematics and languages; and this system, to my knowledge, has had the happiest results in elevating the proficiency and status of the schoolmaster both in England and Scotland. It appears to me to be one grand defect in the national system of Ireland, that it contains no such provision. It stands in need of some such spring to give energy to its operations—to give a motive power to those engaged in the work of tuition. At this present moment, no teacher can, by scholarship, rise beyond a certain level, and that not a very high one, in respect of office and emolument. There is no inducement held out to young and aspiring teachers under the National Board to employ their leisure hours in acquiring the higher departments of knowledge; and some, I fear, are tempted, in consequence, to devote their evenings and their



spare energies to far different pursuits, in the idea that learning is to be of no service to them. I can think of no measure so well fitted to elevate the character and scholarship of the younger teachers as a well-digested scheme by which they could better their position by reading, and the study of the nobler branches of knowledge, whether stored up in the writings of the ancients, or opened up by the discoveries of modern science. It is only by some such means as this that the schoolmaster can be raised to the status which he ought to hold, and the education imparted can be made to keep pace with the spirit and requirements of the age.

I am convinced that the Board of Education has the power of carrying such an arrangement ino effect. For years past, the "Committee of her Majesty's Privy-Council on Education" has been acting on this principle in the distribution of the money allotted for *education of the poor* in Great Britain; and I am not aware of any reason why the teachers in Ireland, and the poor in Ireland, should be put in a worse position in this respect than the corresponding parties in England and Scotland. I cannot see how Parliament should object to the distribution of the money allotted for the education of the poor in Ireland being made on the same principles as that under the control of the Committee of Council for the education of the poor of Great Britain. But if any doubt hangs over the subject, the country would second the Board of Education in Ireland in asking for an extension of its powers, so as to enable it to accomplish this end.

This subject has been brought under the notice of the Commissioners of Education, as in the report for 1852, on the Clonmel District Model-Schools, by James W. Kavanagh, Esq., Head Inspector of National Schools.

"During the past year, a memorial was presented to the commissioners by a deputation from the parents of the children, requesting that opportunity might be afforded to such as desired, and as were willing to pay increased school-fees, to have their children instructed in a course of Latin, Greek, and French, so as to qualify them for entrance in the colleges and collegiate institutions in Ireland. From the rank in life to which many of the pupils belong, several are likely to become professional men, and to these a knowledge of classics is a matter of necessity; whilst to all, the study of a second language, besides its influence as a

mental discipline, would not merely make them better understand the peculiar genius of their own, but would lead them to the literature of which the dead or living language is the vehicle. In science, knowledge is power; in literature, it may be said, with equal truth, that knowledge is pleasure. One effect which the absence of instruction in classics is sure to produce on the school, is to have numbers of boys withdrawn from it at the age of ten or eleven years, in order to go elsewhere and enter on the study of Latin and Greek. In almost all the English training colleges and schools for masters, the candidate teachers are taught a second language; in St. Mark's Chelsea, Latin, Greek, and French; in York and Ripon, Latin and Greek; in Cheltenham, Latin; and, in Battersea, Chester, and Durham, the students are taught French. Notwithstanding this practice in England, there appear to be many persons in Ireland who doubt the propriety of giving our pupil teachers in the District Model-Schools, and our masters in the Central Training Institution, the important advantage of a knowledge of Latin and Greek; some fearing that its expense would be a misapplication of the public funds, although the State itself mainly supports the English Training-Schools just mentioned, and the scheme is received unfavourably by other persons, on grounds of a different character. All the friends to the national system in and about Clonmel—the clergy of all denominations, the landlords and gentry, and the professional and mercantile classes—unanimously urge the necessity there exists for the addition of a classical branch to the school; and I beg to state that I cordially concur in that opinion."

It appears to me that, through the National Board, there might be afforded, at least, a certain amount of classical and scientific instruction in districts where it is required. It would be found, in fact, that the teachers placed in populous country districts, and in towns, would commonly be the persons competing for the additional salary to be awarded to those who could stand an examination in the higher branches; they would certainly be the persons selected to fill the office of schoolmaster in such localities when a vacancy occurred. In this way, the means of a higher education would come *practically* to be pretty equally distributed over the more thickly peopled districts of Ireland.

(3.) But all this will not adequately meet the wants of the



country. In the more important towns, there must be instituted a set of academies similar to the Burgh Schools of Scotland, and the Gymnasia of Germany. In these institutions, a higher education—commercial, literary, and scientific—would be afforded to the children of the middle classes of the immediate locality, and the classical tuition commenced in certain of the National Schools in the neighbourhood would be carried on. The masters might, in some cases, be draughted from the teachers who had distinguished themselves by their scholarship in the National Schools, and, in other cases, taken directly from the colleges; and in this way the whole educational institutions of the country would be made to fit into and to aid each other. These academies, though not under the Board of Education in the same way as the Elementary National Schools, should still be under the inspection of the Government. I am disposed to think that the election of the teacher, and the ordinary management of the institution, might be left to local parties subscribing to its funds,* and the examination of the teacher and the inspection of the tuition to a Government official, as in the schools in England and Scotland aided by the Committee of Council on Education. It might be made a condition that local parties should, at least, assist in the erection of the school buildings, and provide a certain proportion of the salaries of the teacher, the rest to be given by Government. Certain general enactments could be made to secure in such academies, as in the Queen's Colleges, liberty of conscience to the children of parents belonging to all denominations.

I have already referred to a plan of academic education drawn out by the Dean of Dromore. "*Academies* in the *towns*," he says, "are much more required than colleges in the provinces. A man-of-war cannot do without a tender; and so a college

* In Coleraine, local parties are at present setting up an academic institution, and are aided by two of the London companies. Throughout the whole of Ulster there is a strong desire on the part of the middle classes in towns to have such academies; and I am anxious that the Government should aid the local efforts in much the same way as the London companies have done at Coleraine. I am tempted to add, that the London companies which have property in this country might, by sparing an expensive dinner or two in the course of the year, succeed, by the assistance granted by them, in setting up academic institutions in all the towns in the North of Ireland with which they are connected.

cannot do without academies." There were, at the time he wrote, 80 towns, with a population exceeding 3000 each, without endowed classical institutions, and he would give one academy, at least, to each of these, and a greater number to the larger cities.

But I have already gone far enough into details, and become sufficiently specific in my suggestions, at least at the stage at which this matter is at present. If only the community can be made to take up the subject heartily, as I know they are doing in some places,* and your Excellency and her Majesty's Ministers be induced to give it their serious consideration, some plan will be found of supplying a want as obvious as it is great.

Allow me, in conclusion, to state, that I have no other object in view in writing these letters, and in addressing them to your Lordship, than to further, as I am bound by my office to do, the education of the young of this country, and in this way to promote the best interests of a people who have shown that they are prepared to value knowledge, by supporting every educational institution set up for their benefit.—I am, your Lordship's obedient servant.

* I hope the electors will press the subject upon the attention of their representatives in Parliament.

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