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THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND:

ITS HISTORY, MERITS, DEFECTS, AND ABUSES.

BY

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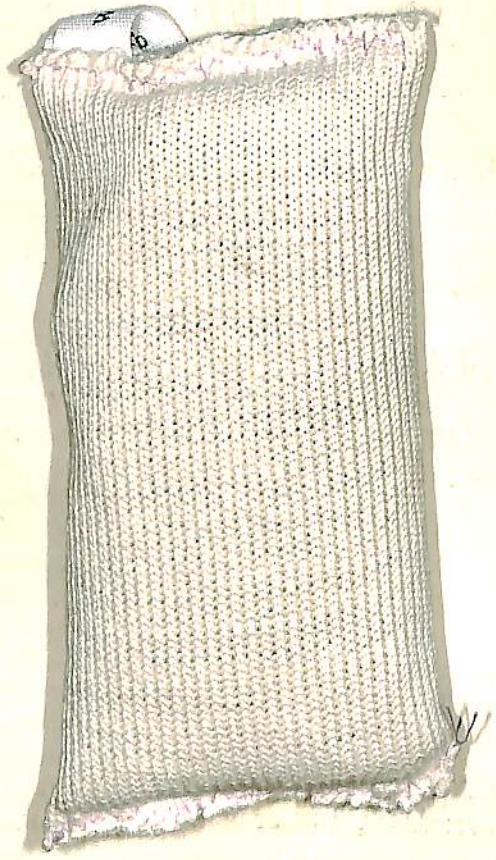

NATIONAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

The Irish Scheme of National Education may be likened to an edifice designed by a good architect but spoiled in execution by negligent and incompetent builders. The plan, as originally drawn, was admirable; the scheme, as in actual operation, is full of defects. In 1831, the late Earl of Derby, then Mr. Stanley—for three generations of the family have since passed away—held office as Secretary for Ireland, in the Ministry of Lord Grey. In that capacity he addressed to the Duke of Leinster a letter explanatory of the system of education which the Government had determined to establish in Ireland. Earlier attempts had been made to proselytise and Anglicise the Irish, but only in a secondary sense to educate them. Dr. Andrews, in his address on Education at the Belfast meeting of the Social Science Association, in 1867, observed: "It will be found that, in every measure for the promotion of education in Ireland, some other object of public policy was at the same time aimed at, and the intellectual improvement of the people was, in every case, made subordinate to the attainment of that favourite object." These words might perhaps be with nearly equal justice applied to the educational legislation for England, even down to the present day, for no impartial observer can say that we have yet obtained a measure which is solely directed to the diffusion of intellectual training among the people of this country. As regards Ireland, however, the object of educational enactments has clearly been, in every instance, mainly of a political character, The first example, passed in the

reign of Henry VIII., required every beneficed clergyman in Ireland to cause a school to be kept in his parish for teaching natives the English tongue, "if any came to him to learn the same." Compulsory attendance being a condition unknown in those days, neither schools nor teaching resulted from this statute. In the reign of Elizabeth there was actually passed an Act for the establishment of free schools in every diocese of Ireland, but that was a period when invention and design went far ahead of production. There were breech-loading and revolving fire-arms in the ships of the Spanish Armada, and, somewhat later, there were clear indications of the steam engine in the writings of Lord Worcester; but the world had to wait two or three centuries before there was any practical use either of the engine or of the arms. In like manner, the admirable proposal of free schools maintained by public funds—the only true solution of the problem of National Education—remained simply a proposal, so far as the general population was concerned; for it is not recorded that a single school of this description was established under the Act of Elizabeth, unless we reckon a few institutions of the "Grammar School" type. The next measure, passed in 1696, rendered it penal for the Roman Catholic youth of Ireland to be educated abroad, or to be taught by any except Protestant teachers at home. This was simply a foolish act of despotic rule. The legislators of George the Second's reign made the next experiment on the subject. A petition to the Crown, signed by Primate Boulter and others, set forth in vivid terms the condition of the Popish natives, as persons having little sense of religion except what they gained from their clergy, and as being kept "in gross ignorance, and in great "disaffection to the Government"—a condition, as will hereafter appear, which some part of the present system of teaching in Ireland is well calculated to maintain. Following on this representation, there was passed in 1733 an Act for endowing a number of schools—known as Charter Schools—"to the intent that the children of Popish and other poor "natives of Ireland might be instructed in the English "tongue, and in the principles of true religion and loyalty."

In 1775, the directors of these schools adopted a bye-law, under which none but the children of Popish parents should be admitted to them. The polemical having thus absorbed the educational object, the schools had to be finally shut up after a useless existence of about sixty years. In 1812 the question was again taken up. In that year there was issued a report, signed by the Archbishops of Armagh and Cashel, with other important personages, in which the authors of the document said: "We venture to express our unanimous "opinion that no plan for the education of the lower classes "in Ireland, however, wisely and unexceptionably contrived "in other respects, can be carried into effectual execution, "unless it be explicitly avowed and clearly understood as its "leading principle, that no attempt shall be made to influence "or disturb the peculiar religious tenets of any sect or "description of Christians." In observance of the golden rule thus declared, the Government of Lord Liverpool dispensed a large amount of public money to an association known as the "Kildare Place Society for promoting the Education of the "Poor of Ireland." This society was at one time of a very extensive character. In the year 1825 it had nearly 1,500 schools and 100,000 scholars under its management, but, as it adopted the rule that the Scriptures were to be read systematically, without note or comment, and that catechisms and controversial books were to be excluded from the schools, it failed to satisfy the fanatics of either side, especially those belonging to the Romish Church; for, with them, without an exposition, mischief rather than good is supposed to follow from reading the Scriptures. The society has for many years been practically extinct. In 1825 a new Commission undertook to grapple with the subject, and the result of its deliberations and recommendations was the formation of the present National Board.

Mr. Stanley, in his letter of instructions to this body, adopted the principle that religion should not be mixed with the regular course of instruction in a State-aided school. He thus fought to get rid of the element which had proved destructive of every previous attempt. After reciting the causes which had led to the failure of other schemes, he

quoted and affirmed the recommendation of the House of Commons Committee of 1828, in favour of "a combined literary and a separate religious education," and declared it to be the intention of the Government that the schools conducted under the authority and with the assistance of the Board should be kept open for certain hours on four or five day of the week "for moral and literary education only," the remaining days, or the beginnings and ends of days, being set apart "for such religious education to the children as may be "approved by the clergy of their respective persuasions." It was thus enjoined that the schoolmaster should teach one kind of knowledge in regular school hours, and the ministers of religion should be permitted to have taught what more they chose, to the children of their own followers, at times which did not interfere with the ordinary work of the schools. In this way a good education was to be secured for every child sent to school, without any mixing up of the theological element; children of various denominations were to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic in common, at the hands of the schoolmaster, and to obtain separately the denominational instruction which their parents preferred, from the priest, the clergyman, or the dissenting minister.

Such was the intention of Mr. Stanley and of the Government which he represented, and such was the rule on the faith of which the public money was so lavishly granted to the National Board; but, unfortunately, the royal charter of incorporation laid down no regulation for the observance of that body. By this instrument the members of the Board were simply endowed with authority to exercise the functions of a corporation acting in the cause of Elementary Education. Vested with arbitrary powers, they were left to do exactly what they pleased. The consequence was that they soon ran wide of Mr. Stanley's instructions, though they adhered faithfully to his scheme in part of their undertaking. They set up "Model Schools" of their own, in which the distinction between secular and theological instruction was strictly observed, and in which children of every persuasion could be educated together; but they also made grants of money to

"vested" and "non-vested" schools, where denominational teaching was practised in its most extreme form. Indeed, they seem to have left the business of education to drift along any course which happened to fall in its way.

In addition to instituting a system of inspection, the Board has set up, or allied itself with, several classes of schools. The Model Schools, built by public money, and managed as well as owned by the Board, are conducted strictly on the terms stipulated by Mr. Stanley. The Vested Schools, partly built with public funds, are vested in the Board itself, or in trust for the use of the National system. In them, the rule of separating secular from religious teaching is professedly maintained, though it is practically disregarded in all but a few instances. The Non-vested Schools, built by societies or individuals, stand in the same relation to the National system as the denominational schools of England. They are assisted with public grants but are under private management, and their teaching is such as their management prescribe, though they, as well as the vested schools, are bound to the observance of a conscience clause, under the operation of which no Protestant or Papist child can remain present while the opposite kind of religious teaching is being imparted. The whole of these schools are, therefore, far in advance of purely denominational establishments, though the vested as well as the non-vested may be regarded as receiving the public money in some degree under false pretences. There are, also, in connection with the National Board, some agricultural, industrial, and evening schools, in addition to workhouse and prison schools, but none of them demand any particular notice. Finally, there are about one hundred and fifty monastic and convent schools receiving subsidies from the Board, though they can have no possible claim to such assistance under the conditions named by Mr. Stanley, for they pursue a most severe line of denominational teaching, the emblems of Popery being conspicuously exhibited in the dress of the teachers and the fittings of the school-rooms, and religious service being allowed to intervene in the hours appointed for secular instruction. With a policy which can

only to be pronounced suicidal, the Board have actually helped schools of this description to be set up in the immediate vicinity of their own model schools, from which, with the aid of priestly influence, they have drafted away many of the scholars.

While making these reflections on the action of the Board, it would be unjust were we not to add that a highly valuable set of school books has been compiled and published under its authority. These books have been to great extent supplied gratuitously to the schools. Indeed, what with building grant, subsidies, and supply of books, the elementary schools in Ireland, which are under the auspices of the Board, appear to derive about five-sixths of their revenue from the produce of taxation. The public have, therefore, good right to specify the rules that shall govern their management. Lax as the Board has been in this respect, it has failed to satisfy two classes of school managers. They are the Christian Brothers, a Popish order which will admit no restriction on religious or denominational teaching, and the Church Education Society, an association which is equally bigoted on the side of Protestantism. The schools conducted by these organisations have never received any public grant, because they have made sectarian teaching or the practice of public rites a *sine quâ non* in their schemes, and have steadfastly refused to accept any inspection or control over their proceedings. The existence of these schools, outside of its operations, may be taken as a testimony to the liberality of the Board, and the soundness of its regulations. A body which finds implacable enemies among the extremes of Popery as well as of Protestantism must, at least in theory, be steering that middle course which commends itself to men of sense and discretion. The National Board may, therefore, be proud of the opposition offered by the Christian Brothers and the Church Education Society, though it has itself lapsed into so many irregularities and has pursued so latitudinarian a course as to render it a matter of surprise that there could be any form of school which could not establish a footing in its programme.

This brief sketch being given of the history, constitution, and operations of the National Board, three questions arise. Should the system of education in Ireland be allowed to remain in its present condition? Should it be reformed? Should the reform be in the direction of concurrent endowment, or in that of universal disestablishment? In seeking the true answers to these queries, we are naturally led to examine the proceedings of the Royal Commission which has lately enquired into the subject. There have been published by this body eight ponderous Blue Books, each crammed full of evidence, statistics, and explanatory documents. After a study of all this voluminous matter, the Commissioners arrived at the conclusion that many reforms were required, for they ended with presenting no less than one hundred and twenty-nine separate recommendations. Among these, several were of a practical as distinguished from a fundamental character. For example, they recommended that school funds should be partly raised by rating; that attendance at school should be rendered compulsory; that free admission should be given in cases where necessary; that the owner and occupier of land should pay jointly to a school-rate; that every elementary school should have suitable premises, fittings, appliances, and teachers, and should be subjected to inspection; that stringent rules should be enforced for the payment of public money only in accordance with the results of teaching; that the rights of conscience should be carefully observed in the case of children attending schools not belonging to their own denominations; that teachers should be placed on a respectable footing in respect to stipend and conditions of service; and that no alteration of rules, regulations, or bye-laws should be put in operation until it had been laid for one month before the two Houses of Parliament. With all this the pure educationalist must cordially agree. Every recommendation thus far quoted would tend to place the system of elementary education in Ireland on a sound basis. We come next, however, to some suggestions of a very different character, and of much greater importance, for they concern the fundamental principles of National Education.

The Commissioners recommend that schools subsidised by the public shall henceforth have a right of being registered as schools for particular denominations, and, subject to the prohibition against admitting children of one denomination to the religious ceremonies of another, shall be free from any regulation as to religious teaching; that convent and monastic schools shall be freely admitted to the subsidy of the nation; that the Christian Brothers, giving proof of educational efficiency, shall also become stipendiaries of the State; and that the model or purely mixed schools of the National Board shall be broken up. These recommendations amount to nothing less than the entire destruction of the system inaugurated by Mr. Stanley, and the conversion of public elementary schools in Ireland into hot-beds for the propagation of opposite theological dogmas. Under their operation there might be schools for forcing Popery and schools for forcing Protestantism, all alike maintained by the State, but all, at the same time, militating against the interests of the country by training up sections of the population to a condition of mutual hostility.

In order to learn what would be the practical effect of the kind of "reform" here indicated, let us examine the teaching imparted at one of the kinds of school which the Commissioners propose to admit into the national programme. Let the illustration be that of the Christian Brothers. These Brothers constitute a Roman Catholic religious order which was founded at Waterford in 1802. They possess in Ireland 60 educational establishments and 225 school-rooms, with an average daily attendance of 18,000 scholars. In the schools of this order there is always exhibited a crucifix, with statues of the Blessed Mary and other saints. Proceedings commence at half-past nine with a morning "oblation," also the Lord's Prayer, the "Hail Mary," the Creed, and the "Glory be to "the Father." At noon there is the "Angelus," followed by half-an-hour's instruction in Popish tenets, and throughout the day, every time the clock strikes an hour, all the pupils have to stop their school work and say the "Hail Mary." These practices are rigidly enforced in every school maintained

by the order, so that, if the schools were subsidised with public money, the State would clearly be paying for the inculcation of the most extreme doctrines of Popery. That, however, would be but a slight matter compared with what has yet to be stated.

The Christian Brothers use books of their own compilation, and the contents of these works are such as positively to create in the minds of the pupils a spirit of disloyalty and disaffection towards the government of the nation. In the preface of their Fourth Book, it is stated that one of its great objects is "to strengthen the moral energies," and "to "stimulate the feelings of the student;" and the Brothers "venture to assert" that by the passages contained in the volume "the ardour and generosity of the youthful mind "will find their legitmate direction and appropriate object, "as well as the source of those pure and endearing associa-"tions which exercise so beneficial an influence on after-"life." The following are some specimens of the passages by which these excellent ends are to be reached. In page 345 there is "A Chapter of Irish History" relating to recent times, Speaking of "the English Ministry guided by Mr. "Pitt," it says, "They were for the time forced to yield to the "just demands of the Irish nation. But their thirst for "dominion over this island, and for control over her purse and "her resources, was by no means quenched." It then goes on to say that, to effect the Union, "a policy equally deep and "wicked was pursued. In 1795 the Government encouraged "the Catholics to hope for immediate and full emancipation. "In the course of the same year this hope was suddenly with-"drawn, and a violent persecution, *accompanied in several* "*instances with personal torture*, was set on foot against the "Catholics in different parts of the kingdom." The chapter winds up as follows:—"Pitt, and his Irish agent, Castlereagh, "succeeded in extinguishing that senate which had lasted for "six centuries; which had indeed, like all other human "assemblies, often grievously erred; *but which had also shown* "*that its existence was essential to the greatness, the dignity,* "*the prosperty, and the happiness of Ireland.*" Here we have

the doctrine of Secession, Home Rule, Repeal—call it what you will—distinctly implanted in the mind of every poor, ignorant peasant whose lot is to be educated at these schools; and, more than that, the doctrine is supported by a falsehood of the most glaring character, for no man can truly say that there was in Ireland, at the time of Pitt, "a violent "persecution" of Roman Catholics, "accompanied in several "instances with personal torture."

In page 364 of the same book, Ireland is described, after the Union, as "cloven down, expiring under the feet of "England, who crushed her without mercy," and as having "given up all hope," and as being held "as a rebellious slave, "and as a nation constitutionally insurgent;" and the Imperial Government is defined as "a tyranny supported by law." Then comes this moral sentiment: "When, through pride or "insolence of power, one human creature dares to tyrannise "over another, it is power usurped, *and resistance is a duty*— "that feeling which tells him that all power is delegated for "the good, not for the injury of the people, and that when it "is preverted from its original purpose, the compact is broken "and the right is to be resumed—that principle which tells "him that *resistance to power is not merely a duty which he "owes to himself and to his neighbour, but a duty which he owes "to his God.*" It must be admitted that, proceeding as they do from a band of "Christian Brothers," the political doctrines here inculated are tolerably strong. Considering that they are impressed on the minds of children in their early childhood, at seven, eight, and nine years of age, with all the solemn accompaniments of the Ave, the Angelus, and the Gloria, and the outward symbols of crucifix and saintly images, is it any cause of wonder that the lower classes in Ireland grow up to become Fenians, Ribbonmen, and Whiteboys? The poor of the country are manifestly trained by these Christian Brothers to believe—first that they are a persecuted and oppressed race; secondly that the National Government is their oppressor; and thirdly, that it is their duty to God as well as themselves to assume an attitude of antagonism to that power. If they so apply the lesson as

to make themselves the bitter and uncompromising enemies of the Government, they simply do what any reasonable man would expect. Yet the Commissioners gravely propose that the nation shall consent to be additionally taxed in order that teaching of this atrocious description may be carried on at the public expense!

There are, however, some more extracts to be given from this wonderful example of a "Christian" book. The children are taught to read a professional speech of Lord Erskine's, in which that distinguished advocate, pleading on forensic stilts for a client, spoke of India as "an Empire wrested in blood "from the people to whom God and nature had given it," and as "an unjust dominion," maintained over "timorous and "abject natives by a terrifying, overbearing, insulting "superiority," and upheld only "by alternate stratagem and "force." There follows a quotation from one of the speeches of Lord Chatham, who, speaking of the Americans at the time of their War of Independence, said, "Three millions of "people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily "to submit to be slaves would have been fit instruments to "make slaves of the rest." It is not necessary to suggest the application which Irish children are, in after life, expected to make of a passage such as this. Not, however, content with the highly-spiced language of barristers and party politicians, the Christian Brothers have recourse to poets for material wherewith to manufacture rebellious subjects out of their pupils. Their book of school reading contains the following passage from the poem *Gauyaune Barra*, by Callanan—

> "The star of the West might yet rise in its glory,
> And the land that was darkest be brightest in story.
> I, too, shall be gone; but my name shall be spoken
> When Erin awakes, *and her fetters are broken.*

Written in our own time, and put into the hands of children at a period when Ireland has not a shadow of right to complain of being fettered, lines such as these have simply a tendency to instil into the minds of the ignorant among the Irish a persuasion that they have some infernal wrongs to be

avenged. The Christian Brothers say that this and the other passages recited are only placed before the children for the sake of impressing on their minds the incidents of history, and of making them acquainted with specimens of fine writing. The reader is left to decide for himself whether they are not rather intended as a false commentary on present circumstances, and as a means of stirring up rebellious feelings and encouraging rebellious actions among the Irish people.

Specimens having been given of the politics and poetry taught in these schools, it is proper to add an example of the religious teaching which is conveyed. In page 319 of the book referred to there is a heading, "What goes to the Saving of the Soul?" The answer to the question is thus given: "All "sorts of things—water, oil, candles, ashes, beads, medals, "scapulars—have to be filled with a strange, undefinable "power, by ecclesiastical benedictions in its behalf. The "body, soul, divinity of the Incarnate Word have to be com- "municated to it over and over again, till it becomes quite a "common occurrence, though each time it is, in reality, a more "stupendous action than the creation of the world. It can "speak up to heaven, and be heard and obeyed there. It can "spend the satisfactions of Jesus as if they were its own, and "can undo bolts and bars in purgatory, and choose, by its "determinate will, whom it will liberate and whom it will "pass over." Without engaging in theological controversy, we simply ask whether it is for the propagation of doctrines such as these that the people of Great Britain are invited to burden themselves with taxation.

It may perhaps be safely assumed that the nation will not consent to find money for disseminating the views of the Christian Brothers. Even Mr. Gladstone has lately given some kind of assurance on this point. He stated in the House of Commons, in reply to an enquiry from Mr. Leslie, that, "with regard to the present system of primary education "in Ireland, he and his colleagues had always considered that "there was nothing in it calling for anything in the nature of "a fundamental change." Like too many of Mr. Gladstone's

utterances, this is of an ambiguous meaning, for the use of the word "fundamental" renders it impossible for anyone to say whether or not he considers a change of any kind necessary. The Commissioners recommended that the schools of the Christian Brothers should be taken under the public wing. Would that be a "fundamental change?" It is for the student of metaphysics to supply the best answer he can after reading the words used by Mr. Gladstone.

Replying to the three questions which we have ourselves asked above, we think there can be no hesitation in declaring that the Irish system should *not* be diverted into the course of concurrent endowment; that it should *not* be allowed to remain in its present condition; but that it should be in such way reformed as to restore it to the condition it was intended to assume when the National Board was originally constituted. Considering the progress made during the interval in other respects, it seems remarkable that a difficulty should be experienced in maintaining as liberal an educational programme as that laid down by the late Earl of Derby forty years ago. Yet such is the predicament in which the country is now placed. The denominations have seized upon that statesman's creation as the blight sizes upon a plant, and have covered it with numerous traces of their noxious influence. Instead of the public money being appropriated exclusively to schools in which lay and religious teaching are separately imparted, it is given to many in which the two are mixed together, and in some where the theological object is regarded as superior to mere educational considerations. Instead of destroying the model schools, where Lord Derby's rules are strictly observed—as the Commissioners advise—the proper course would be to refuse any public grant except where the model plan is adopted. This was the understanding when the money was voted by Parliament, and a breach of faith has been committed by the National Board in deviating from it.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the only objection to denominational schools is of a denominational character—that Roman Catholic schools are good in themselves and only

objected to by persons who are not Roman Catholics, and that a like rule prevails as to the various sects of Protestantism. Long experience has proved that children cannot obtain a sufficient education in schools conducted by priests and ministers of religion. The amazing disclosures on this subject, regarding elementary schools in England, led to the passing of the late Education Act. In Ireland the condition appears to be even worse. In the evidence given before the Royal Commission by Mr. J. W. Kavanagh, formerly Head Inspector under the National Board, and now a professor in the Roman Catholic University—a strong opponent of non-sectarian education and, therefore, a witness who may be safely trusted not to exaggerate the dark side of the picture—we meet with the following particulars:—The number of children on the roll of inspected schools in Ireland is over 900,000; of them not so many as 300,000 are presented for examination in reading, 150,000 are presented in writing, less than 200,000 in arithmetic, and only 100,000 in dictation, while the percentage of "passed" in those examined is less than a third throughout, even comprising those who get through in the lowest standards. It is thus apparent that scarcely one in ten of the children enrolled in the Irish schools is really being educated. Turning to another return, also furnished by Mr. Kavanagh, we find reason for suspecting that education in Ireland is positively declining. Of persons married in England, the proportion who, being unable to write, sign the register with marks, is 21 per cent. of men, and 30 per cent of women, giving a mean of 26. That was the proportion in 1866, since when there has probably been no considerable alteration. In Ireland the ratio has been as follows:—

Per cent. who signed the Registers with their mark.

	Men.	Women.	Mean.
1846	18	36	27
1847	15	32	24
1848	20	37	29
1849	22	41	32
1850	25	44	35
1851	24	43	34

Per cent. who signed the Registers with their mark.

	Men.	Women.	Mean.
1852	26	45	35
1853	27	45	36
1854	26	44	34
1855	26	42	34
1856	27	44	36
1857	27	43	35
1858	27	42	35
1859	27	43	35
1860	26	41	33
1861	25	40	32
1862	24	38	31
1863	24	38	31
1864	No return.		
1865	43	53	49
1866	42	54	48

If this is any test of the educational progress of the country, it shows that the course has positively been of a retrograde character. It is said that there are certain reasons why marriage registers offer no certain test whether or not the parties are really able to write, but, as Mr. Kavanagh truly observes, out of a total of 30,000 marriages the average will be but slightly affected by the few instances in which the capacity to write is impaired by nervousness or any analogous cause. We may be well assured that any man or woman who can write well enough to make practical use of the art will not be found signing the marriage register with a cross. On the strength of the marriage returns it may therefore be concluded that the Irish stand long below the English in capacity to write their names, and that they have actually degenerated in this respect during the last twenty years.

The result of the present system of teaching was thus described by an Inspector examined by the Royal Commission. After stating that only 18 or 19 per cent. of the pupils reach the higher classes, he said, "I regard the instruction received "by the pupils while in the lower classes as of very little "value in itself; as scarcely of any value, indeed, except as

"a preparation for the instruction in the higher classes, which "alone, in my humble judgment, can reasonably be expected "to produce permanent impressions. When, therefore, the "pupil is finally withdrawn from school before he reaches the "higher classes, the information he carries away with him is "of such an evanescent character that it is more than "probable it will have entirely disappeared before he arrives "at manhood. If he gives up schooling before he gets into "the third class, he will in a few years lose the power of "reading, and he will certainly lose the power of writing." From this official description, we see what kind of education all but the 18 or 19 per cent. of third class scholars in Ireland obtain.

A main cause of the educational failure in Ireland lies in the practice of multiplying schools so as to make them ancillary to each denominational persuasion. This evil is thus explained by Mr. Kavanagh: "There is a patch of "Presbyterians here, a patch of Methodists there, a patch "of Roman Catholics here, a patch of Church of Eng-"land people there, each, while professing abstract attach-"ment to the mixed system, determined that they should "have the command of their own schools; so the schools went "down until they fell to fifteen children, or starving point." The witness gave the following account of the effect resulting from this increase of schools and diminution in number of pupils at each: "It is like a Dutch auction. A first-class "man's salary is reduced—owing to decreased attendance; "he goes away and is succeeded by a second-class man. The "school loses reputation by the degradation of class. He "leaves, and the school goes down. Second and third class "teachers of lower grades succeed each other, and the school "ultimately falls into the hands of women, or is closed "through want of sufficient attendance." These miserable results are produced by the policy into which the National Board has been seduced, of assisting to set up schools for particular denominations in places where there was only room for one good school, so conducted as to be suitable for the attendance of scholars belonging to every per-

suasion. In place of one efficient school there have thus been established, with the sanction and assistance of the public, two, three, or more, with attendance and teaching alike inferior.

Illustrations are given in the report of the Commission of the manner in which education has been thus sacrificed to denominationalism. In a Parliamentary paper of the year 1867, Mr. Macdonnell, the Resident Commissioner, says: "The "Commissioners have never refused to endow, in the im-"mediate neighbourhood of a model school, a well-conducted "rival school under Roman Catholic management, though "well aware that it had been established for the express "purpose of drawing away from the model school the Roman "Catholic children attending it."

An instance is given as follows in the Inspector's report on the Antrim district for the year 1865. He says: "Two new "schools were received into connection early in the year. "They are situate in the town of Larne, are in the same "building, and are on the grounds of the Roman Catholic chapel. "Before their opening there was ample school accommodation "in the town, and there was an efficient staff of teachers. "The new schools are exclusively attended by Roman "Catholics, and their establishment has practically given a "denominational character to the other schools, which have "been by them deprived of their Roman Catholic pupils." More striking examples of the practice might be given, but these are sufficient to show the mischievous rivalry which the fostering of sectarian schools exercises in reference to schools adapted for the general population. The mischief, however, does not terminate at this point. In the evidence of Mr. Sheridan, Head Inspector since 1858, occurs the following passage: "It is the characteristic of the convent schools "that they are impatient of competition. A rival school, "if it can possibly be extinguished, is not allowed to exist. "In crowded cities this is of course, impossible; but in "Tralee, Killarney, Newcastle, Kilsale, Queenstown, Mid-"dleton, Skibbereen, Bandon, Dingle, and a host of smaller "towns, no female schools, except those connected with

"convents, are to be found; none are permitted to be "established."

Tracing the consequence of this condition, Mr. Sheridan further says: "There is always a not inconsiderable number "of children who would readily attend lay schools, but cannot "be induced to frequent those conducted by religious teachers." And he adds: "I am not alluding to children of different "religious denominations, but only to Catholic children." His conclusion is as follows: "What is the result? When the "lay schools are extinguished a considerable portion of the "children of the poor of the locality receive no education whatever." As an example he mentions the town of Killarney, where there are two convent schools and one monks' school, but no lay school would be tolerated. He has it on the best authority, "that the number of children attending schools "in Killarney is considerably less than that of those who never "enter a school." It is apparent, therefore, that the action of the National Board in subsidising convent and monkish schools has been destructive, not only of the really National schools, but of education itself; and such must, more or less, be the effect of any attempt to provide schools for the children of every religious denomination, or even to render theological teaching part of the course of instruction.

The cardinal error on the part of the National Board of Commissioners has been that they have endeavoured to serve two masters—an endeavour which is proverbially hopeless. They have tried to serve the cause of Education on the one hand, and the cause of the Roman Catholic priesthood on the other, and the two have proved to be incompatible with each other. It appears to be quite clear that the Irish people, if left to the exercise of their own judgment, would be perfectly satisfied with a mixed or non-theological system of teaching, such as Lord Derby originally prescribed. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that, as a rule, they would prefer such a system to any narrow denominational method; but the Roman Catholic bishops and priests, making use of intimidation and coercion such as the ignorant multitude are unable to withstand, have issued their interdict against any but strictly

"religious" schools, and the others have consequently become in great measure deserted. Commanding obedience from the Board of Commissioners as well as from the populace, these ecclesiastics have not only driven scholars away from the National schools, but have obtained from the Commissioners the use of public money in order to set up substitutes of their own peculiar model. We can understand the yielding of the populace under ecclesiastical pressure, but it seems inconceivable that a National Board, constituted for the purpose of teaching the Irish children to read, to write, and to cypher, should suffer itself to be thus induced to place its resources at the command of an order of priesthood. A few references to the Report of the Royal Commission will clearly show what has been the inclination of the Irish people, and what the interference of the Papist hierarchy.

In the evidence given by Mr. O'Hara, several years one of the Inspectors of the National Board, the following statements are made as the result of witness's experience. As to the preference of the Irish people he says: "Where people "are free to choose between a denominational and a National "school, they prefer the National school." This observation applied both to Protestants and Roman Catholics. Being asked what he meant by "free to choose," the witness replied: "That is where there is not any penalty attached to "their exercising their own free choice. For instance, "in Clonmel there is a penalty attached to attending "National schools, and the same in other districts. In the "Ballina district there is a penalty attached to the attendance "of Roman Catholics at vested schools. I am aware of the "existence of vested schools in the county Mayo, the "teachers of which have not been allowed sacraments for "many years, and the children attending which are refused "sacraments." Being called upon to give instances, Mr. O'Hara mentioned one, and said he knew several others. Though the teachers of these schools were Roman Catholics themselves and of unexceptionable character and capacity, they and their scholars were placed under a ban by the Roman hierarchy and priesthood, simply because the teaching was of

a mixed or National description. Speaking in reply to further questions, Mr. O'Hara stated that there were in the town of Clonmel two schools of the Christian Brothers and two convent schools, none of which were connected with the National Board; but he said: "I believe the Roman Catholic children "in Clonmel would, if permitted, attend the Model school "in preference to any school. They are prevented from "attending by the refusal of the sacraments. In fact, it "is only by the refusal of sacraments that they can "drive children out of Model schools." He added the following illustration: "In the vicinity of Clonmel, some "miles out, there are National Schools. I am aware that "these are attended by Roman Catholics who have left the "Christian Brothers' schools, and have gone a distance to "attend the National Schools. I am aware of one school, "four statute miles from Clonmel, in which the teacher, the "other day, told me he had twenty-five pupils who left the "Christian Brothers' schools in Clonmel and came to him "as soon as his school was established." Being asked what the feeling of the people would be if the denominational views of the bishops were carried out by law, he answered: "As far as the lower class of the laity are concerned, they are "pretty indifferent on the subject. As far as the middle class "are concerned, I believe they would prefer the mixed "system to a concession to the views of the bishops." Being further asked why the mixed system was preferred, Mr. O'Hara answered that the preference was simply due to the superiority of the education conveyed. These extracts and references might be multiplied to any extent, but those already given are sufficient to show that the opposition to a national as distinguished from a denominational method orignates, not with the people of Ireland, but with a body of ecclesiastics who, deriving their orders from Rome, make use of spiritual coercion in order to deter the people from exericising their own choice.

Of the superiority of the Model or mixed schools, in an educational sense, there can be no question. A return obtained for all Ireland by the National Board, in the year

1865, showed that in model schools fifteen out of every hundred attended 220 days and upwards in the year, while at the conventual schools a like attendance was only made by one scholar in one thousand. Of 200 attendances in the year, the conventual schools only showed three in the hundred pupils, while the Model schools showed twenty-two. Comparing these figures with those of the opposite end of the return, we find that the conventual schools gave thirty-four per cent. attending less than fifty days in the year, and the Model schools only twenty-two. At what may be considered the mid-way—150 attendances in the year—the Model schools produced forty-one per cent. of the pupils and the conventual schools only seventeen. Judged by this undoubtedly fair test, the superiority of the Model schools as educational institutions is clearly established. Their educational merit is thus attested by Mr. Kavanagh—a witness whose sympathies are not likely to be in their favour. Being asked whether he considered the Model schools good in respect to the secular education imparted, he replied, "Excellent, if you ask me irrespective of the head of "expense, and of their receiving State grants, and also of the "religious difficulties involved. The teachers are, on the "whole, some of the best of the elementary teachers in "Ireland. They are of a respectable class, and are respectably paid. There is an unusually large teaching power or "teaching staff in the schools, and there is everything connected with them, looking at them merely as literary "schools, to give a superior, practical, and excellent course of "secular instruction to the class of children that go there, "leaving out of consideration the objections to them on other "grounds, economical, religious, and social." This being the judgment of a man who is now a professor at the Roman Catholic University, it must be considered as conveying a high tribute to the educational excellence of the Model schools. Yet the Royal Commissioners advise that these schools shall be suppressed, and that all their pupils shall be driven into those denominational establishments where the teaching is of a much lower order, the attendance much more

irregular, and the pupils receive, in place of a good education, a drilling in the formularies and observances prescribed by an ecclesiastical conclave! If a change of this kind be ever made, the enactment by which it is effected should be entitled, not an Act for promoting or improving the education of the people of Ireland, but an Act for compelling the British nation to pay for disseminating the rites and dogmas of Popery—for that could be its only real object or effect.

A vital consideration here arises. There are, scattered through the Roman Catholic districts of Ireland, certain Protestant families not sufficiently numerous to require or fill a school of their own, Under the existing system, where mixed schools prevail and the proper rules are observed, the children belonging to these families can be taught without any risk of interference with their religious persuasions. Supposing, however, the views of the Royal Commission be adopted, and the money voted by Parliament is applied to the maintenance of schools on a strictly Popish model, what is to become of such children? In cases where their parents were not able to pay the expense of sending them to a boarding school at a distance, they would either have to grow up without education, or to undergo a training in the ritual, the rites, and the peculiar observances of Popery. This feature of the case was plainly stated to the Commission by Mr. O'Hara. Being reminded that the clergymen of the then Established Church were bound by law and oath to maintain a school in each benefice, and being asked whether they did so in the Clonmel district, he replied: "They do not do so, "because they have not an attendance large enough to keep "up a school. You cannot have a school without pupils. "They would be glad to do so if they could, but throughout "a greater part of the Clonmel district the number of "Prostestants is so small that, with the exception of towns, I "don't think the Protestant clergy could maintain a school in "any rural part of the district." Being further asked whether the difficulty might not be surmounted by the passing of a law which would render it imperative to provide education for Protestants, he answered: "The minorities are

"so small that no qualified teacher will take charge of schools "consisting of such infinitesimal small minorities." From further statements made by this witness it appeared that, of the forty-four mixed schools in the Clonmel district, only two contained more than from three or four up to ten Protestant scholars. Manifestly, such children would be left completely unprovided for, except at the cost of violation of conscience, if the mixed schools were abandoned in favour of a denominational plan; for the parish priests, who now adopt the mixed system, would, in that case, universally receive orders to shape the teaching so as to serve the ends of their own Church. As respects the Protestant minorities, then, the question of maintaining or abandoning the mixed practice is one of education or no education.

It may be remarked that, till within a recent period, the mixed schools seemed to be in favour with the Roman Catholic authorities, their principle opponents having been among the clergy of the Established Church. So long ago as 1831, the Romanists in Ireland would have considered it something like a privilege to mix equally with Protestants in the enjoyment of State favours, for in those days religious equality was yet to be fully obtained. Times, however, have changed, and the Popish bishops have changed with them. Having achieved equality, they now demand supremacy, and claim that the nation shall find money to pay the cost of their holding the people of Ireland in a condition of mental slavery. Premising that the mixed schools were originally promoted, and are in fact managed to a great extent, by parish priests of their own persuasion, we will now show, by a few successive extracts from their published declarations, how the action of the Romish bishops has progressed up to its present intolerant pitch. In the year 1826, these bishops declared as follows: "Having considered attentively a plan "of National Education which has been submitted to us— "Resolved, that this admission of Protestants and Roman "Catholics into the same schools, for the purpose of literary "instruction, may, under existing circumstances, be allowed "provided sufficient care be taken to protect the religion of

"the Roman Catholic children, and to furnish them with "adequate means of religious instruction." Twenty years having passed away, with the mixed system apparently in satisfactory operation, the bishops met again in 1850, at the Synod of Thurles, when they issued a wordy manifesto, which made no direct reference to Irish schools, but which conveyed to the priesthood of that country the intimation that, "separated from her heavenly monitor, learning is no longer "the organ of that wisdom which cometh from above," but rather of that wisdom which St. James describes as "earthly, "sensual, and devilish." In this passage—the origin, perhaps. of the "clever devil" theory, ascribed to the late Duke of Wellington, and appropriated very generally by Churchmen in England at the present time—an objection to the separation of lay from theological teaching is plainly indicated, though not openly stated. When the bishops met to consult on the subject again—which was in 1859—they assumed a more bold attitude, They then resolved that schools for the education of Roman Catholic youth should be subordinated to the will of the bishops of the respective dioceses, as well to the selection of books for secular instruction as to the appointment and removal of teachers; and they declared that the Roman Catholics of Ireland had a right to demand their numerical proportion of the national grant for the establishment of purely Romish schools. Since that time they have been the active and unscrupulous opponents of the National system, and, as already explained, have made use of every means at their command to prevent its being adopted by the Roman Catholic part of the population. Whether the change of policy here indicated has been due to the Ultramontane influence of Cardinal Cullen, or has merely arisen from the Romish hierarchy fancying the opportunity had come for asserting a claim on the part of their religion to endowment by the State, it is one that requires to be decidedly met. The Romish bishops having denounced National Education, it is for the nation to speak with corresponding determination in its favour.

To sum up the argument thus far pursued, it appears, from

official and undeniable evidence, that the method of imparting secular instruction apart from theological training is successful in respect to educational results, is acceptable to the Irish people, and is the one for which money has been really voted by Parliament; that it is opposed by ecclesiastics, both of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant school, out of consideration for the interests of their respective churches; that the National Board, yielding to priestly dictation, has weakly abandoned the principles on which it was constructed, and that, as a consequence, bad teaching has taken the place of good, and the nation has been made to pay, in the name of education, for the inculcation among Irish children of the doctrines and observances of rival denominations. It further appears that sectarian propagandists of the Romish persuasion, setting up a creed establishment and calling it a school. have succeeded in obtaining from the Royal Commission a recommendation in favour of their being allowed to receive public money for a purpose which is directly antagonistic to the national interests. The duty of the people is, therefore, plainly indicated. It is to insist upon a strict observance of the golden rules which were enjoined by Lord Derby when constituting the National Board; to demand the withholding of all public grants from merely sectarian institutions, and to require that education, when paid for by the State, should be understood to signify nothing more than intellectual culture.

Unfortunately, the practice adopted with respect to education in England offers the most serious obstacle against the establishment of a good system in Ireland. Dr. Keane, Roman Catholic Bishop of Cloyne, when examined before the Royal Commission, after claiming that all ordinary schools in Ireland should become strictly denominational, explained his meaning thus:—"What we ask for is this: we ask for the "same system that has been already established in England—"the same system that has been found to work in England "satisfactorily. I don't know the details of it, but I would "say at once, in general terms, give us the outline of the "English system and we shall be satisfied with it." This is a kind of demand which cannot be easily answered. So long as

the religious sects in England receive public money for their respective schools, their brethren in Ireland have a fair right to require that they should be similarly treated. Though it would clearly tend to estrange the lower class of the Irish still more from the rest of the kingdom if schools such as those of the Christian Brothers were to become general, that is precisely the result which an imitation of the English model would produce. It is necessary, therefore, to deprive the English schools of their sectarian complexion before we can reasonably expect a non-denominational basis to be accepted by the heads of religious communities in Ireland. The maintenance of sectarian teaching in one part of the nation causes it to appear a sort of grievance if the like teaching may not be pursued in another. The teaching of disloyalty, as developed in the reading book of the Christian Brothers, is but a legitimate growth from the principle on which any denominational teaching is grounded; for sects may pursue the most opposite courses, yet justify them on one and the same rule. In England, for example, it is generally believed that by denominational teaching is meant teaching the Bible. In Ireland the meaning is just the reverse. Cardinal Cullen said, before the Royal Commission: "I would be very sorry "to adopt all Lord Stanley's sayings or doctrines. If I did, "I would cease to be a Catholic. He lays down a principle "which is contrary to the discipline of the Catholic Church, "He says parents have a right to order that the Scriptures "should be read to their children. The Catholic Church "denies that right." Again, speaking of a class of schools in which it was part of the daily practice to read the Bible, the Cardinal said: "I hope that as soon as possible all "Catholic children will leave those schools, because in going to "them they are violating the discipline of the Church, which "will not allow the Bible to be made a mere school book." Paradoxical as it may appear, the right which English sects enjoy of being subsidised by the public, in order that they may teach their version of the Bible in their schools, constitutes the main reason why the Catholic bishops of Ireland claim also to be subsidised for the maintenance of schools

from which the Bible is utterly excluded. Such would be the contradictory operation of a law which permitted the control of denominations over national education, if it were fairly administered; and the Roman Catholic prelates of Ireland, in asking the public to pay for their non-Bible schools, simply demand to be placed on an equal footing with the denominations of England. The only method of escape from the difficulty thus presented is to withdraw education altogether from the influence of sectarian communities. It is of course open to the members of any sect to establish schools of their own at their own cost, and to prosecute whatever line of teaching they prefer; but it is manifest that public funds cannot justly be given to one sect without being given to all.

It must, perhaps, be admitted that the State has a greater right to assert its own authority in Ireland than in England, on account of the greater proportion of its contribution towards the cost of education there. In England it may be stated, in round figures, that, out of a total annual expense of a million and a half, the State contributes one third and the scholars one third, while the remaining third is derived from subscriptions, congregational collections, bazaars, endowments, and other like sources. In Ireland the proportions are far different. Taking the returns of the year 1867—since when there will have been but little alteration—the aggregate income of the Irish National schools was as follows:—Public grant, £268,254; school pence, £40,884; subscriptions, endowments, &c., £11,986; total, £321,124. Since £4,948 of the subscriptions, &c., was derived from the province of Ulster alone, it is evident that the Roman Catholic portion of the community make but a very trifling contribution towards the voluntary part of the fund. The schools may, indeed, be considered in great measure free. For every pound given in subscription or endowment, the State gives about twenty-two, and it adds about six pounds to every pound paid in school fees. The average cost per scholar being a little over twenty-two shillings a year, less than one shilling is derived from subscriptions, &c., about three shillings from the scholar, and upwards of eighteen shillings from the State. If the cost of

inspection and central administration were comprised in the calculation, the share of the State would appear considerably higher, for the total expenditure of the National Board in 1867 was, not £321,000, but just upon £358,000.

The expenditure here stated covered an average daily attendance of 321,683 children, but twice that number would probably have to be provided for if all the denominational schools were taken under the patronage of the State, for the total number of pupils on the rolls at the end of 1866 was upwards of nine hundred thousand. The public expenditure on education in Ireland is already three-fourths of that in England, though the population is only one-fourth. If the denominations were all subsidised, as the Commissioners propose, the Irish schools would cost the State nearly fifty per cent. more than the English. The pecuniary question is therefore one of great magnitude, especially when contrasted with the poverty of the results that have been or ever can be produced under denominational management. There has existed, since 1831, a competition between the ambiguous action of the National Board and different extremes of sectarianism, and the result has been the erection of a great many so-called schools; but at the census of 1861 there were, in the whole population of persons exceeding five years of age, out of every hundred, thirty-nine who could neither read nor write, twenty who could read but not write, and only forty-one who could write as well as read. Such having been, in the past, the return for money and exertions denominationally expended, what is to be expected in the future if a like policy be continued?

The reader being left to answer this question himself, after examining the facts which are here stated, it is proper to add a few words on the subject of University Education in Ireland —a subject which is of concern to the public because it threatens to become one of public expense. The Roman Catholic hierarchy are extremely desirous of forcing the Government to grant them a Uuniversity, in which the teaching shall be entirely under their own domination, and it is evident that the head of the present administration

is in favour of yielding to their demand. After much coquetting with the subject, Mr. Gladstone, speaking for himself and his colleagues, made a frank avowal, in the House of Commons, on the 20th of March last, in the following words: "We have entertained and continue to entertain "the belief, we are pledged to the belief, that it is an extreme "hardship on that portion of the Irish population who do not "choose to accept an education apart from religion, that they "should have no University open to them in Ireland at "which they may obtain degrees; and we hold that this, call "it what you like and disguise it as you may, is the infliction "of civil penalties on account of religious opinions." In the round-about fashion so characteristic of the speaker, this is intended to signify that Parliament ought to vote money out of the produce of taxation for the sake of enabling the Ultramontane bishops of Ireland to possess a University of their own. In meeting the proposition, it is not necessary to enquire whether, outside of the ecclesiastical circle, there really is any portion of the Irish population who desire to have the higher branches of study served out to them with the extreme accompaniments of Popery; whether the State has any right, or is under any duty, to permit the interference of theology with the honest pursuit of learning; or whether a Protestant Government is observing the ordinary dictates of prudence in proposing to find money for training young men of the upper classes in Ireland to become the slaves of Rome, and consequently the enemies of the country over which that Government presides. The "belief" of Mr. Gladstone is sufficiently disposed of by the single observation that gentlemen who seek a University education are able to pay its expenses themselves. If there is any considerable number of Irish families, of the University grade, who wish their sons to become learned in classics, letters, mathematics, and natural science, with in each case a twisting of the truth to the Romish standard, and a constant admixture of Popish observances, the funds for such a purpose can easily be found without resort to taxation. If, on the contrary, there is no such considerable element in the

population, it would be a mere act of interference and obtrusion for the Government to set up a University governed by rules that were dictated by Romish cardinals and bishops. In any case, it is outrageous to propose that money exacted in taxes of the poor—who can scarcely find the means of having their own children taught to read and to write—should be expended in providing University instruction for the rich. This is the simple answer to Mr. Gladstone. A more elaborate reply might be given if necessary, but it would be a waste of argument to discuss other considerations in a case where a single reason is conclusive. The people of England are amply justified in refusing to pay for the establishment of a Popish University in Ireland, on the sole ground that such an establishment should be self-maintaining.

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THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND:

ITS HISTORY, MERITS, DEFECTS, AND ABUSES.

BY

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NATIONAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

The Irish Scheme of National Education may be likened to an edifice designed by a good architect but spoiled in execution by negligent and incompetent builders. The plan, as originally drawn, was admirable; the scheme, as in actual operation, is full of defects. In 1831, the late Earl of Derby, then Mr. Stanley—for three generations of the family have since passed away—held office as Secretary for Ireland, in the Ministry of Lord Grey. In that capacity he addressed to the Duke of Leinster a letter explanatory of the system of education which the Government had determined to establish in Ireland. Earlier attempts had been made to proselytise and Anglicise the Irish, but only in a secondary sense to educate them. Dr. Andrews, in his address on Education at the Belfast meeting of the Social Science Association, in 1867, observed: "It will be found that, in every measure for the promotion of education in Ireland, some other object of public policy was at the same time aimed at, and the intellectual improvement of the people was, in every case, made subordinate to the attainment of that favourite object." These words might perhaps be with nearly equal justice applied to the educational legislation for England, even down to the present day, for no impartial observer can say that we have yet obtained a measure which is solely directed to the diffusion of intellectual training among the people of this country. As regards Ireland, however, the object of educational enactments has clearly been, in every instance, mainly of a political character. The first example, passed in the

reign of Henry VIII., required every beneficed clergyman in Ireland to cause a school to be kept in his parish for teaching natives the English tongue, "if any came to him to learn the same." Compulsory attendance being a condition unknown in those days, neither schools nor teaching resulted from this statute. In the reign of Elizabeth there was actually passed an Act for the establishment of free schools in every diocese of Ireland, but that was a period when invention and design went far ahead of production. There were breech-loading and revolving fire-arms in the ships of the Spanish Armada, and, somewhat later, there were clear indications of the steam engine in the writings of Lord Worcester; but the world had to wait two or three centuries before there was any practical use either of the engine or of the arms. In like manner, the admirable proposal of free schools maintained by public funds—the only true solution of the problem of National Education—remained simply a proposal, so far as the general population was concerned; for it is not recorded that a single school of this description was established under the Act of Elizabeth, unless we reckon a few institutions of the "Grammar School" type. The next measure, passed in 1696, rendered it penal for the Roman-Catholic youth of Ireland to be educated abroad, or to be taught by any except Protestant teachers at home. This was simply a foolish act of despotic rule. The legislators of George the Second's reign made the next experiment on the subject. A petition to the Crown, signed by Primate Boulter and others, set forth in vivid terms the condition of the Popish natives, as persons having little sense of religion except what they gained from their clergy, and as being kept "in gross ignorance, and in great "disaffection to the Government"—a condition, as will hereafter appear, which some part of the present system of teaching in Ireland is well calculated to maintain. Following on this representation, there was passed in 1733 an Act for endowing a number of schools—known as Charter Schools—"to the intent that the children of Popish and other poor "natives of Ireland might be instructed in the English "tongue, and in the principles of true religion and loyalty."

In 1775, the directors of these schools adopted a bye-law, under which none but the children of Popish parents should be admitted to them. The polemical having thus absorbed the educational object, the schools had to be finally shut up after a useless existence of about sixty years. In 1812 the question was again taken up. In that year there was issued a report, signed by the Archbishops of Armagh and Cashel, with other important personages, in which the authors of the document said: "We venture to express our unanimous "opinion that no plan for the education of the lower classes "in Ireland, however wisely and unexceptionably contrived "in other respects, can be carried into effectual execution, "unless it be explicitly avowed and clearly understood, as its "leading principle, that no attempt shall be made to influence "or disturb the peculiar religious tenets of any sect or "description of Christians." In observance of the golden rule thus declared, the Government of Lord Liverpool dispensed a large amount of public money to an association known as the "Kildare Place Society for promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland." This society was at one time of a very extensive character. In the year 1825 it had nearly 1,500 schools and 100,000 scholars under its management, but, as it adopted the rule that the Scriptures were to be read systematically, without note or comment, and that catechisms and controversial books were to be excluded from the schools, it failed to satisfy the fanatics of either side, especially those belonging to the Romish Church; for, with them, without an exposition, mischief rather than good is supposed to follow from reading the Scriptures. The society has for many years been practically extinct. In 1825 a new Commission undertook to grapple with the subject, and the result of its deliberations and recommendations was the formation of the present National Board.

Mr. Stanley, in his letter of instructions to this body, adopted the principle that religion should not be mixed with the regular course of instruction in a State-aided school. He thus sought to get rid of the element which had proved destructive of every previous attempt. After reciting the causes which had led to the failure of other schemes, he

quoted and affirmed the recommendation of the House of Commons Committee of 1828, in favour of "a combined literary and a separate religious education," and declared it to be the intention of the Government that the schools conducted under the authority and with the assistance of the Board should be kept open for certain hours on four or five days of the week "for moral and literary education only," the remaining days, or the beginnings and ends of days, being set apart "for such religious education to the children as may be "approved by the clergy of their respective persuasions." It was thus enjoined that the schoolmaster should teach one kind of knowledge in regular school hours, and the ministers of religion should be permitted to have taught what more they chose, to the children of their own followers, at times which did not interfere with the ordinary work of the schools. In this way a good education was to be secured for every child sent to school, without any mixing up of the theological element; children of various denominations were to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic in common, at the hands of the schoolmaster, and to obtain separately the denominational instruction which their parents preferred, from the priest, the clergyman, or the dissenting minister.

Such was the intention of Mr. Stanley and of the Government which he represented, and such was the rule on the faith of which the public money was so lavishly granted to the National Board; but, unfortunately, the royal charter of incorporation laid down no regulation for the observance of that body. By this instrument the members of the Board were simply endowed with authority to exercise the functions of a corporation acting in the cause of Elementary Education. Vested with arbitrary powers, they were left to do exactly what they pleased. The consequence was that they soon ran wide of Mr. Stanley's instructions, though they adhered faithfully to his scheme in a part of their undertaking. They set up "Model Schools" of their own, in which the distinction between secular and theological instruction was strictly observed, and in which children of every persuasion could be educated together; but they also made grants of money to

"vested" and "non-vested" schools, where denominational teaching was practised in its most extreme form. Indeed, they seem to have left the business of education to drift along any course which happened to fall in its way.

In addition to instituting a system of inspection, the Board has set up, or allied itself with, several classes of schools. The Model Schools, built by public money, and managed as well as owned by the Board, are conducted strictly on the terms stipulated by Mr. Stanley. The Vested Schools, partly built with public funds, are vested in the Board itself, or in trust for the use of the National system. In them, the rule of separating secular from religious teaching is professedly maintained, though it is practically disregarded in all but a few instances. The Non-vested Schools, built by societies or individuals, stand in the same relation to the National system as the denominational schools of England. They are assisted with public grants but are under private management, and their teaching is such as their managers prescribe, though they, as well as the vested schools, are bound to the observance of a conscience clause, under the operation of which no Protestant or Papist child can remain present while the opposite kind of religious teaching is being imparted. The whole of these schools are, therefore, far in advance of purely denominational establishments, though the vested as well as the non-vested may be regarded as receiving the public money in some degree under false pretences. There are, also, in connection with the National Board, some agricultural, industrial, and evening schools, in addition to workhouse and prison schools, but none of them demand any particular notice. Finally, there are about one hundred and fifty monastic and convent schools receiving subsidies from the Board, though they can have no possible claim to such assistance under the conditions named by Mr. Stanley, for they pursue a most severe line of denominational teaching, the emblems of Popery being conspicuously exhibited in the dress of the teachers and the fittings of the school-rooms, and religious service being allowed to intervene in the hours appointed for secular instruction. With a policy which can

only be pronounced suicidal, the Board have actually helped schools of this description to be set up in the immediate vicinity of their own model schools, from which, with the aid of priestly influence, they have drafted away many of the scholars.

While making these reflections on the action of the Board, it would be unjust were we not to add that a highly valuable set of school books has been compiled and published under its authority. These books have been to great extent supplied gratuitously to the schools. Indeed, what with building grant, subsidies, and supply of books, the elementary schools in Ireland, which are under the auspices of the Board, appear to derive about five-sixths of their revenue from the produce of taxation. The public have, therefore, good right to specify the rules that shall govern their management. Lax as the Board has been in this respect, it has failed to satisfy two classes of school managers. They are the Christian Brothers, a Popish order which will admit no restriction on religious or denominational teaching, and the Church Education Society, an association which is equally bigoted on the side of Protestantism. The schools conducted by these organisations have never received any public grant, because they have made sectarian teaching or the practice of religious rites a *sine qud non* in their schemes, and have steadfastly refused to accept any inspection or control over their proceedings. The existence of these schools, outside of its operations, may be taken as a testimony to the liberality of the Board and the soundness of its regulations. A body which finds implacable enemies among the extremes of Popery as well as of Protestantism must, at least in theory, be steering that middle course which commends itself to men of sense and discretion. The National Board may, therefore, be proud of the opposition offered by the Christian Brothers and the Church Education Society, though it has itself lapsed into so many irregularities and has pursued so latitudinarian a course as to render it a matter of surprise that there could be any form of school which could not establish a footing in its programme.

This brief sketch being given of the history, constitution, and operations of the National Board, three questions arise. Should the system of education in Ireland be allowed to remain in its present condition? Should it be reformed? Should the reform be in the direction of concurrent endowment, or in that of universal disestablishment? In seeking the true answers to these queries, we are naturally led to examine the proceedings of the Royal Commission which has lately enquired into the subject. There have been published by this body eight ponderous Blue Books, each crammed full of evidence, statistics, and explanatory documents. After a study of all this voluminous matter, the Commissioners arrived at the conclusion that many reforms were required, for they ended with presenting no less than one hundred and twenty-nine separate recommendations. Among these, several were of a practical as distinguished from a fundamental character. For example, they recommended that school funds should be partly raised by rating; that attendance at school should be rendered compulsory; that free admission should be given in cases where necessary; that the owner and occupier of land should pay jointly to a school-rate; that every elementary school should have suitable premises, fittings, appliances, and teachers, and should be subjected to inspection; that stringent rules should be enforced for the payment of public money only in accordance with the results of teaching; that the rights of conscience should be carefully observed in the case of children attending schools not belonging to their own denominations; that teachers should be placed on a respectable footing in respect to stipend and conditions of service; and that no alteration of rules, regulations, or bye-laws should be put in operation until it had been laid for one month before the two Houses of Parliament. With all this the pure educationalist must cordially agree. Every recommendation thus far quoted would tend to place the system of elementary education in Ireland on a sound basis. We come next, however, to some suggestions of a very different character, and of much greater importance, for they concern the fundamental principles of National Education.

The Commissioners recommend that schools subsidised by the public shall henceforth have a right of being registered as schools for particular denominations, and, subject to the prohibition against admitting children of one denomination to the religious ceremonies of another, shall be free from any regulation as to religious teaching; that convent and monastic schools shall be freely admitted to the subsidy of the nation; that the Christian Brothers, giving proof of educational efficiency, shall also become stipendiaries of the State; and that the model or purely mixed schools of the National Board shall be broken up. These recommendations amount to nothing less than the entire destruction of the system inaugurated by Mr. Stanley, and the conversion of public elementary schools in Ireland into hot-beds for the propagation of opposite theological dogmas. Under their operation there might be schools for forcing Popery and schools for forcing Protestantism, all alike maintained by the State, but all, at the same time, militating against the interests of the country by training up sections of the population to a condition of mutual hostility.

In order to learn what would be the practical effect of the the kind of "reform" here indicated, let us examine the teaching imparted at one of the kinds of school which the Commissioners propose to admit into the national programme. Let the illustration be that of the Christian Brothers. These Brothers constitute a Roman Catholic religious order which was founded at Waterford in 1802. They possess in Ireland 60 educational establishments and 225 school-rooms, with an average daily attendance of 18,000 scholars. In the schools of this order there is always exhibited a crucifix, with statues of the Blessed Mary and other saints. Proceedings commence at half-past nine with a morning "oblation," also the Lord's Prayer, the "Hail Mary," the Creed, and the "Glory be to "the Father." At noon there is the "Angelus," followed by half-an-hour's instruction in Popish tenets, and throughout the day, every time the clock strikes an hour, all the pupils have to stop their school work and say the "Hail Mary." These practices are rigidly enforced in every school maintained

by the order, so that, if the schools were subsidised with public money, the State would clearly be paying for the inculcation of the most extreme doctrines of Popery. That, however, would be but a slight matter compared with what has yet to be stated.

The Christian Brothers use books of their own compilation, and the contents of these works are such as positively to create in the minds of the pupils a spirit of disloyalty and disaffection towards the government of the nation. In the preface of their Fourth Book, it is stated that one of its great objects is "to strengthen the moral energies," and "to "stimulate the feelings of the students;" and the Brothers "venture to assert" that by the passages contained in the volume "the ardour and generosity of the youthful mind "will find their legitimate direction and appropriate object, "as well as the source of those pure and endearing associa-"tions which exercise so beneficial an influence on after-"life." The following are some specimens of the passages by which these excellent ends are to be reached. In page 345 there is "A Chapter of Irish History," relating to recent times. Speaking of "the English Ministry guided by Mr. "Pitt," it says, "They were for the time forced to yield to the "just demands of the Irish nation. But their thirst for "dominion over this island, and for control over her purse and "her resources, was by no means quenched." It then goes on to say that, to effect the Union, "a policy equally deep and "wicked was pursued. In 1795 the Government encouraged "the Catholics to hope for immediate and full emancipation. "In the course of the same year this hope was suddenly with-"drawn, and a violent persecution, *accompanied in several "instances with personal torture,* was set on foot against the "Catholics in different parts of the kingdom." The chapter winds up as follows:—"Pitt, and his Irish agent, Castlereagh, "succeeded in extinguishing that senate which had lasted for "six centuries; which had indeed, like all other human "assemblies, often grievously erred; *but which had also shown "that its existence was essential to the greatness, the dignity, "the prosperity, and the happiness of Ireland.*" Here we have

the doctrine of Secession, Home Rule, Repeal—call it what you will—distinctly implanted in the mind of every poor, ignorant peasant whose lot it is to be educated at these schools; and, more than that, the doctrine is supported by a falsehood of the most glaring character, for no man can truly say that there was in Ireland, at the time of Pitt, "a violent "persecution" of Roman Catholics, "accompanied in several "instances with personal torture."

In page 364 of the same book, Ireland is described, after the Union, as "cloven down, expiring under the feet of "England, who crushed her without mercy," and as having "given up all hope," and as being held "as a rebellious slave, "and as a nation constitutionally insurgent;" and the Imperial Government is defined as "a tyranny supported by law." Then comes this moral sentiment: "When, through pride or "insolence of power, one human creature dares to tyrannise "over another, it is power usurped, *and resistance is a duty*— "that feeling which tells him that all power is delegated for "the good, not for the injury of the people, and that when it "is perverted from its original purpose, the compact is broken "and the right is to be resumed—that principle which tells "him that *resistance to power is not merely a duty which he "owes to himself and to his neighbour, but a duty which he owes "to his God.*" It must be admitted that, proceeding as they do from a band of "Christian Brothers," the political doctrines here inculcated are tolerably strong. Considering that they are impressed on the minds of children in their early childhood, at seven, eight, and nine years of age, with all the solemn accompaniments of the Ave, the Angelus, and the Gloria, and the outward symbols of crucifix and saintly images, is it any cause of wonder that the lower classes in Ireland grow up to become Fenians, Ribbonmen, and Whiteboys? The poor of the country are manifestly trained by these Christian Brothers to believe—first that they are a persecuted and oppressed race; secondly, that the National Government is their oppressor; and thirdly, that it is their duty to God as well as themselves to assume an attitude of antagonism to that power. If they so apply the lesson as

to make themselves the bitter and uncompromising enemies of the Government, they simply do what any reasonable man would expect. Yet the Commissioners gravely propose that the nation shall consent to be additionally taxed in order that teaching of this atrocious description may be carried on at the public expense!

There are, however, some more extracts to be given from this wonderful example of a "Christian" book. The children are taught to read a professional speech of Lord Erskine's, in which that distinguished advocate, pleading on forensic stilts for a client, spoke of India as "an Empire wrested in blood "from the people to whom God and nature had given it," and as "an unjust dominion," maintained over "timorous and "abject natives by a terrifying, overbearing, insulting "superiority," and upheld only "by alternate stratagem and "force." There follows a quotation from one of the speeches of Lord Chatham, who, speaking of the Americans at the time of their War of Independence, said, "Three millions of "people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily "to submit to be slaves would have been fit instruments to "make slaves of the rest." It is not neccessary to suggest the application which Irish children are, in after life, expected to make of a passage such as this. Not, however, content with the highly-spiced language of barristers and party politicians, the Christian Brothers have recourse to poets for material wherewith to manufacture rebellious subjects out of their pupils. Their book of school reading contains the following passage from the poem *Gaugaune Barra*, by Callanan—

> "The star of the West might yet rise in its glory,
> And the land that was darkest be brightest in story.
> I, too, shall be gone; but my name shall be spoken
> When Erin awakes, *and her fetters are broken.*

Written in our own time, and put into the hands of children at a period when Ireland has not a shadow of right to complain of being fettered, lines such as these have simply a tendency to instil into the minds of the ignorant among the Irish a persuasion that they have some infernal wrongs to be

avenged. The Christian Brothers say that this and the other passages recited are only placed before the children for the sake of impressing on their minds the incidents of history, and of making them acquainted with specimens of fine writing. The reader is left to decide for himself whether they are not rather intended as a false commentary on present circumstances, and as a means of stirring up rebellious feelings and encouraging rebellious actions among the Irish people.

Specimens having been given of the politics and poetry taught in these schools, it is proper to add an example of the religious teaching which is conveyed. In page 319 of the book referred to, there is a heading, "What goes to the Saving of the Soul?" The answer to the question is thus given: "All "sorts of things—water, oil, candles, ashes, beads, medals, "scapulars—have to be filled with a strange, undefinable "power, by ecclesiastical benedictions in its behalf. The "body, soul, divinity of the Incarnate Word have to be com- "municated to it over and over again, till it becomes quite a "common occurrence, though each time it is, in reality, a more "stupendous action than the creation of the world. It can "speak up to heaven, and be heard and obeyed there. It can "spend the satisfactions of Jesus as if they were its own, and "can undo bolts and bars in purgatory, and choose, by its "determinate will, whom it will liberate and whom it will "pass over." Without engaging in theological controversy, we simply ask whether it is for the propagation of doctrines such as these that the people of Great Britain are invited to burden themselves with taxation.

It may perhaps be safely assumed that the nation will not consent to find money for disseminating the views of the Christian Brothers. Even Mr. Gladstone has lately given some kind of assurance on this point. He stated in the House of Commons, in reply to an enquiry from Mr. Leslie, that, "with regard to the present system of primary education "in Ireland, he and his colleagues had always considered that "there was nothing in it calling for anything in the nature of "a fundamental change." Like too many of Mr. Gladstone's

utterances, this is of an ambiguous meaning, for the use of the word "fundamental" renders it impossible for anyone to say whether or not he considers a change of any kind necessary. The Commissioners recommended that the schools of the Christian Brothers should be taken under the public wing. Would that be a "fundamental change?" It is for the student of metaphysics to supply the best answer he can after reading the words used by Mr. Gladstone.

Replying to the three questions which we have ourselves asked above, we think there can be no hesitation in declaring that the Irish system should *not* be diverted into the course of concurrent endowment; that it should *not* be allowed to remain in its present condition; but that it should be in such way reformed as to restore it to the condition it was intended to assume when the National Board was originally constituted. Considering the progress made during the interval in other respects, it seems remarkable that a difficulty should be experienced in maintaining as liberal an educational programme as that laid down by the late Earl of Derby forty years ago. Yet such is the predicament in which the country is now placed. The denominations have seized upon that statesman's creation as the blight seizes upon a plant, and have covered it with numerous traces of their noxious influence. Instead of the public money being appropriated exclusively to schools in which lay and religious teaching are separately imparted, it is given to many in which the two are mixed together, and in some where the theological object is regarded as superior to mere educational considerations. Instead of destroying the model schools, where Lord Derby's rules are strictly observed—as the Commissioners advise—the proper course would be to refuse any public grant except where the model plan is adopted. This was the understanding when the money was voted by Parliament, and a breach of faith has been committed by the National Board in deviating from it.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the only objection to denominational schools is of a denominational character—that Roman Catholic schools are good in themselves and only

objected to by persons who are not Roman Catholics, and that a like rule prevails as to the various sects of Protestantism. Long experience has proved that children cannot obtain a sufficient education in schools conducted by priests and ministers of religion. The amazing disclosures on this subject, regarding elementary schools in England, led to the passing of the late Education Act. In Ireland the condition appears to be even worse. In the evidence given before the Royal Commission by Mr. J. W. Kavanagh, formerly Head Inspector under the National Board, and now a professor in the Roman Catholic University—a strong opponent of non-sectarian education and, therefore, a witness who may be safely trusted not to exaggerate the dark side of the picture—we meet with the following particulars:—The number of children on the roll of inspected schools in Ireland is over 900,000; of them not so many as 300,000 are presented for examination in reading, 150,000 are presented in writing, less than 200,000 in arithmetic, and only 100,000 in dictation, while the percentage of "passed" in those examined is less than a third throughout, even comprising those who get through in the lowest standards. It is thus apparent that scarcely one in ten of the children enrolled in the Irish schools is really being educated. Turning to another return, also furnished by Mr. Kavanagh, we find reason for suspecting that education in Ireland is positively declining. Of persons married in England, the proportion who, being unable to write, sign the register with marks is 21 per cent. of men, and 30 per cent. of women, giving a mean of 26. That was the proportion in 1866, since when there has probably been no considerable alteration. In Ireland the ratio has been as follows:—

	Per cent. who signed the Registers with their mark.		
	Men.	Women.	Mean.
1846 ...	18	36	27
1847 ...	15	32	24
1848 ...	20	37	29
1849 ...	22	41	32
1850 ...	25	44	35
1851 ...	24	43	34

	Per cent. who signed the Registers with their mark.		
	Men.	Women.	Mean.
1852 ...	26	45	35
1853 ...	27	45	36
1854 ...	26	44	34
1855 ...	26	42	34
1856 ...	27	44	36
1857 ...	27	43	35
1858 ..	27	42	35
1859 ...	27	43	35
1860 ...	26	41	33
1861 ...	25	40	32
1862 ...	24	38	31
1863 ...	24	38	31
1864 ...	No return		
1865 ...	43	53	49
1866 ...	42	54	48

If this is any test of the educational progress of the country, it shows that the course has positively been of a retrograde character. It is said that there are certain reasons why marriage registers offer no certain test whether or not the parties are really able to write, but, as Mr. Kavanagh truly observes, out of a total of 30,000 marriages the average will be but slightly affected by the few instances in which the capacity to write is impaired by nervousness or any analogous cause. We may be well assured that any man or woman who can write well enough to make practical use of the art will not be found signing the marriage register with a cross. On the strength of the marriage returns it may therefore be concluded that the Irish stand long below the English in capacity to write their names, and that they have actually degenerated in this respect during the last twenty years.

The result of the present system of teaching was thus described by an Inspector examined by the Royal Commission. After stating that only 18 or 19 per cent. of the pupils reach the higher classes, he said, "I regard the instruction received "by the pupils while in the lower classes as of very little "value in itself; as scarcely of any value, indeed, except as

"a preparation for the instruction in the higher classes, which "alone, in my humble judgment, can reasonably be expected "to produce permanent impressions. When, therefore, the "pupil is finally withdrawn from school before he reaches the "higher classes, the information he carries away with him is "of such an evanescent character that it is more than "probable it will have entirely disappeared before he arrives "at manhood. If he gives up schooling before he gets into "the third class, he will in a few years lose the power of "reading, and he will certainly lose the power of writing." From this official description, we see what kind of education all but the 18 or 19 per cent. of third-class scholars in Ireland obtain.

A main cause of the educational failure in Ireland lies in the practice of multiplying schools so as to make them ancillary to each denominational persuasion. This evil is thus explained by Mr. Kavanagh: "There is a patch of "Presbyterians here, a patch of Methodists there, a patch "of Roman Catholics here, a patch of Church of Eng- "land people there, each, while professing abstract attach- "ment to the mixed system, determined that they should "have the command of their own schools; so the schools went "down until they fell to fifteen children, or starving point." The witness gave the following account of the effect resulting from this increase of schools and diminution in number of pupils at each: "It is like a Dutch auction. A first-class "man's salary is reduced—owing to decreased attendance; "he goes away, and is succeeded by a second-class man. The "school loses reputation by the degradation of class. He "leaves, and the school goes down. Second and third class "teachers of lower grades succeed each other, and the school "ultimately falls into the hands of women, or is closed "through want of sufficient attendance." These miserable results are produced by the policy into which the National Board has been seduced, of assisting to set up schools for particular denominations in places where there was only room for one good school, so conducted as to be suitable for the attendance of scholars belonging to every per-

suasion. In place of one efficient school there have thus been established, with the sanction and assistance of the public, two, three, or more, with attendance and teaching alike inferior.

Illustrations are given in the report of the Commission of the manner in which education has been thus sacrificed to denominationalism. In a Parliamentary paper of the year 1867, Mr. Macdonnell, the Resident Commissioner, says: "The "Commissioners have never refused to endow, in the im- "mediate neighbourhood of a model school, a well-conducted "rival school under Roman Catholic management, though "well aware that it had been established for the express "purpose of drawing away from the model school the Roman "Catholic children attending it."

An instance is given as follows in the Inspector's report on the Antrim district for the year 1865. He says: "Two new "schools were received into connection early in the year. "They are situated in the town of Larne, are in the same "building, and are on the grounds of the Roman Catholic chapel. "Before their opening there was ample school accommodation "in the town, and there was an efficient staff of teachers. "The new schools are exclusively attended by Roman "Catholics, and their establishment has practically given a "denominational character to the other schools, which have "been by them deprived of their Roman Catholic pupils." More striking examples of the practice might be given, but these are sufficient to show the mischievous rivalry which the fostering of sectarian schools exercises in reference to schools adapted for the general population. The mischief however, does not terminate at this point. In the evidence of Mr. Sheridan, Head Inspector since 1858, occurs the following passage: "It is the characteristic of the convent schools "that they are impatient of competition. A rival school, "if it can possibly be extinguished, is not allowed to exist. "In crowded cities this is, of course, impossible; but in "Tralee, Killarney, Newcastle, Kilsale, Queenstown, Mid- "dleton, Skibbereen, Bandon, Dingle, and a host of smaller "towns, no female schools, except those connected with

"convents, are to be found; none are permitted to be "established."

Tracing the consequence of this condition, Mr. Sheridan further says: "There is always a not inconsiderable number "of children who would readily attend lay schools, but cannot "be induced to frequent those conducted by religious teachers." And he adds: "I am not alluding to children of different "religious denominations, but only to Catholic children." His conclusion is as follows: "What is the result? When the "lay schools are extinguished a considerable portion of the "children of the poor of the locality receive no education whatever." As an example he mentions the town of Killarney, where there are two convent schools and one monks' school, but no lay school would be tolerated. He has it on the best authority, "that the number of children attending schools "in Killarney is considerably less than that of those who never "enter a school." It is apparent, therefore that the action of the National Board in subsidising convent and monkish schools has been destructive, not only of the really National schools, but of education itself; and such must, more or less, be the effect of any attempt to provide separate schools for the children of every religious denomination, or even to render theological teaching part of the course of instruction.

The cardinal error on the part of the National Board of Commissioners has been that they have endeavoured to serve two masters—an endeavour which is proverbially hopeless. They have tried to serve the cause of Education on the one hand, and the cause of the Roman Catholic priesthood on the other, and the two have proved to be incompatible with each other. It appears to be quite clear that the Irish people, if left to the exercise of their own judgment, would be perfectly satisfied with a mixed or non-theological system of teaching, such as Lord Derby originally prescribed. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that, as a rule, they would prefer such a system to any narrow denominational method; but the Roman Catholic bishops and priests, making use of intimidation and coercion such as the ignorant multitude are unable to withstand, have issued their interdict against any but strictly

"religious" schools, and the others have consequently become in great measure deserted. Commanding obedience from the Board of Commissioners as well as from the populace, these ecclesiastics have not only driven scholars away from the National schools, but have obtained from the Commissioners the use of public money in order to set up substitutes of their own peculiar model. We can understand the yielding of the populace under ecclesiastical pressure, but it seems inconceivable that a National Board, constituted for the purpose of teaching the Irish children to read, to write, and to cypher, should suffer itself to be thus induced to place its resources at the command of an order of priesthood. A few references to the Report of the Royal Commission will clearly show what has been the inclination of the Irish people, and what the interference of the Papist hierarchy.

In the evidence given by Mr. O'Hara, several years one of the Inspectors of the National Board, the following statements are made as the result of witness's experience. As to the preference of the Irish people he says: "Where people "are free to choose between a denominational and a National "school, they prefer the National school." This observation applied both to Protestants and Roman Catholics. Being asked what he meant by "free to choose," the witness replied: "That is where there is not any penalty attached to "their exercising their own free choice. For instance, "in Clonmel there is a penalty attached to attending "National schools, and the same in other districts. In the "Ballina district there is a penalty attached to the attendance "of Roman Catholics at vested schools. I am aware of the "existence of vested schools in the county Mayo, the "teachers of which have not been allowed sacraments for "many years, and the children attending which are refused "sacraments." Being called upon to give instances, Mr. O'Hara mentioned one, and said he knew several others. Though the teachers of these schools were Roman Catholics themselves and of unexceptionable character and capacity, they and their scholars were placed under a ban by the Roman hierarchy and priesthood, simply because the teaching was of

a mixed or National description. Speaking in reply to further questions, Mr. O'Hara stated that there were in the town of Clonmel two schools of the Christian Brothers and two convent schools, none of which were connected with the National Board; but he said: "I believe the Roman Catholic children "in Clonmel would, if permitted, attend the Model school "in preference to any school. They are prevented from "attending by the refusal of the sacraments. In fact, it "is only by the refusal of sacraments that they can "drive children out of Model schools." He added the following illustration: "In the vicinity of Clonmel, some "miles out, there are National schools. I am aware that "these are attended by Roman Catholics who have left the "Christian Brothers' schools, and have gone a distance to "attend the National schools. I am aware of one school, "four statute miles from Clonmel, in which the teacher, the "other day, told me he had twenty-five pupils who left the "Christian Brothers' schools in Clonmel and came to him "as soon as his school was established." Being asked what the feeling of the people would be if the denominational views of the bishops were carried out by law, he answered: "As far as the lower class of the laity are concerned, they are "pretty indifferent on the subject. As far as the middle class "are concerned, I believe they would prefer the mixed "system to a concession to the views of the bishops." Being further asked why the mixed system was preferred, Mr. O'Hara answered that the preference was simply due to the superiority of the education conveyed. These extracts and references might be multiplied to any extent, but those already given are sufficient to show that the opposition to a national as distinguished from a denominational method originates, not with the people of Ireland, but with a body of ecclesiastics who, deriving their orders from Rome, make use of spiritual coercion in order to deter the people from exercising their own choice.

Of the superiority of the Model or mixed schools, in an educational sense, there can be no question. A return obtained for all Ireland by the National Board, in the year

1865, showed that in model schools fifteen out of every hundred attended 220 days and upwards in the year, while at the conventual schools a like attendance was only made by one scholar in one thousand. Of 200 attendances in the year, the conventual schools only showed three in the hundred pupils, while the Model schools showed twenty-two. Comparing these figures with those of the opposite end of the return, we find that the conventual schools gave thirty-four per cent. attending less than fifty days in the year, and the Model schools only twenty-two. At what may be considered the mid-way—150 attendances in the year—the Model schools produced forty-one per cent. of the pupils and the conventual schools only seventeen. Judged by this undoubtedly fair test, the superiority of the Model schools as educational institutions is clearly established. Their educational merit is thus attested by Mr. Kavanagh—a witness whose sympathies are not likely to be in their favour. Being asked whether he considered the Model schools good in respect to the secular education imparted, he replied, "Excellent, if you ask me irrespective of the head of "expense, and of their receiving State grants, and also of the "religious difficulties involved. The teachers are, on the "whole, some of the best of the elementary teachers in "Ireland. They are of a respectable class, and are respectably paid. There is an unusually large teaching power or "teaching staff in the schools, and there is everything connected with them, looking at them merely as literary "schools, to give a superior, practical, and excellent course of "secular instruction to the class of children that go there, "leaving out of consideration the objections to them on other "grounds, economical, religious, and social." This being the judgment of a man who is now a professor at the Roman Catholic University, it must be considered as conveying a high tribute to the educational excellence of the Model schools. Yet the Royal Commissioners advise that these schools shall be suppressed, and that all their pupils shall be driven into those denominational establishments where the teaching is of a much lower order, the attendance much more

irregular, and the pupils receive, in place of a good education, a drilling in the formularies and observances prescribed by an ecclesiastical conclave! If a change of this kind be ever made, the enactment by which it is effected should be entitled, not an Act for promoting or improving the education of the people of Ireland, but an Act for compelling the British nation to pay for disseminating the rites and dogmas of Popery—for that could be its only real object or effect.

A vital consideration here arises. There are, scattered through the Roman Catholic districts of Ireland, certain Protestant families not sufficiently numerous to require or fill a school of their own. Under the existing system, where mixed schools prevail and the proper rules are observed, the children belonging to these families can be taught without any risk of interference with their religious persuasions. Supposing, however, the views of the Royal Commission be adopted, and the money voted by Parliament is applied to the maintenance of schools on a strictly Popish model, what is to become of such children? In cases where their parents were not able to pay the expense of sending them to a boarding school at a distance, they would either have to grow up without education, or to undergo a training in the ritual, the rites, and the peculiar observances of Popery. This feature of the case was plainly stated to the Commission by Mr. O'Hara. Being reminded that the clergymen of the then Established Church were bound by law and oath to maintain a school in each benefice, and being asked whether they did so in the Clonmel district, he replied: "They do not do so, "because they have not an attendance large enough to keep "up a school. You cannot have a school without pupils. "They would be glad to do so if they could, but throughout "a greater part of the Clonmel district the number of "Protestants is so small that, with the exception of towns, I "don't think the Protestant clergy could maintain a school in "any rural part of the district." Being further asked whether the difficulty might not be surmounted by the passing of a law which would render it imperative to provide education for Protestants, he answered: "The minorities are

"so small that no qualified teacher will take charge of schools "consisting of such infinitesimal small minorities." From further statements made by this witness it appeared that, of the forty-four mixed schools in the Clonmel district, only two contained more than from three or four up to ten Protestant scholars. Manifestly, such children would be left completely unprovided for, except at the cost of violation of conscience, if the mixed schools were abandoned in favour of a denominational plan; for the parish priests, who now adopt the mixed system, would, in that case, universally receive orders to shape the teaching so as to serve the ends of their own Church. As respects the Protestant minorities, then, the question of maintaining or abandoning the mixed practice is one of education or no education.

It may be remarked that, till within a recent period, the mixed schools seemed to be in favour with the Roman Catholic authorities, their principal opponents having been among the clergy of the Established Church. So long ago as 1831, the Romanists in Ireland would have considered it something like a privilege to mix equally with Protestants in the enjoyment of State favours, for in those days religious equality was yet to be fully obtained. Times, however, have changed, and the Popish bishops have changed with them. Having achieved equality, they now demand supremacy, and claim that the nation shall find money to pay the cost of their holding the people of Ireland in a condition of mental slavery. Premising that the mixed schools were originally promoted, and are in fact managed to a great extent, by parish priests of their own persuasion, we will now show, by a few successive extracts from their published declarations, how the action of the Romish bishops has progressed up to its present intolerant pitch. In the year 1826, these bishops declared as follows: "Having considered attentively a plan "of National Education which has been submitted to us— "Resolved, that this admission of Protestants and Roman "Catholics into the same schools, for the purpose of literary "instruction, may, under existing circumstances, be allowed, "provided sufficient care be taken to protect the religion of

"the Roman Catholic children, and to furnish them with "adequate means of religious instruction." Twenty years having passed away, with the mixed system apparently in satisfactory operation, the bishops met again, in 1850, at the Synod of Thurles, when they issued a wordy manifesto, which made no direct reference to Irish schools, but which conveyed to the priesthood of that country the intimation that, "separated from her heavenly monitor, learning is no longer "the organ of that wisdom which cometh from above," but rather of that wisdom which St. James describes as "earthly, "sensual, and devilish." In this passage—the origin, perhaps, of the "clever devil" theory, ascribed to the late Duke of Wellington, and appropriated very generally by Churchmen in England at the present time—an objection to the separation of lay from theological teaching is plainly indicated, though not openly stated. When the bishops met to consult on the subject again—which was in 1859—they assumed a more bold attitude. They then resolved that schools for the education of Roman Catholic youth should be subordinated to the will of the bishops of the respective dioceses, as well to the selection of books for secular instruction as to the appointment and removal of teachers; and they declared that the Roman Catholics of Ireland had a right to demand their numerical proportion of the national grant for the establishment of purely Romish schools. Since that time they have been the active and unscrupulous opponents of the National system, and, as already explained, have made use of every means at their command to prevent its being adopted by the Roman Catholic part of the population. Whether the change of policy here indicated has been due to the Ultramontane influence of Cardinal Cullen, or has merely arisen from the Romish hierarchy fancying the opportunity had come for asserting a claim on the part of their religion to endowment by the State, it is one that requires to be decidedly met. The Romish bishops having denounced National Education, it is for the nation to speak with corresponding determination in its favour.

To sum up the argument thus far pursued, it appears, from

official and undeniable evidence, that the method of imparting secular instruction apart from theological training is successful in respect to educational results, is acceptable to the Irish people, and is the one for which money has been really voted by Parliament; that it is opposed by ecclesiastics, both of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant school, out of consideration for the interests of their respective churches; that the National Board, yielding to priestly dictation, has weakly abandoned the principles on which it was constructed, and that, as a consequence, bad teaching has taken the place of good, and the nation has been made to pay, in the name of education, for the inculcation among Irish children of the doctrines and observances of rival denominations. It further appears that sectarian propagandists of the Romish persuasion, setting up a creed establishment and calling it a school, have succeeded in obtaining from the Royal Commission a recommendation in favour of their being allowed to receive public money for a purpose which is directly antagonistic to the national interests. The duty of the people is, therefore, plainly indicated. It is to insist upon a strict observance of the golden rules which were enjoined by Lord Derby when constituting the National Board; to demand the withholding of all public grants from merely sectarian institutions, and to require that education, when paid for by the State, should be understood to signify nothing more than intellectual culture.

Unfortunately, the practice adopted with respect to education in England offers the most serious obstacle against the establishment of a good system in Ireland. Dr. Keane, Roman Catholic Bishop of Cloyne, when examined before the Royal Commission, after claiming that all ordinary schools in Ireland should become strictly denominational, explained his meaning thus:—"What we ask for is this: we ask for the "same system that has been already established in England—"the same system that has been found to work in England "satisfactorily. I don't know the details of it, but I would "say at once, in general terms, give us the outline of the "English system and we shall be satisfied with it." This is a kind of demand which cannot be easily answered. So long as

the religious sects in England receive public money for their respective schools, their brethren in Ireland have a fair right to require that they should be similarly treated. Though it would clearly tend to estrange the lower class of the Irish still more from the rest of the kingdom if schools such as those of the Christian Brothers were to become general, that is precisely the result which an imitation of the English model would produce. It is necessary, therefore, to deprive the English schools of their sectarian complexion before we can reasonably expect a non-denominational basis to be accepted by the heads of religious communities in Ireland. The maintenance of sectarian teaching in one part of the nation causes it to appear a sort of grievance if the like teaching may not be pursued in another. The teaching of disloyalty, as developed in the reading book of the Christian Brothers, is but a legitimate growth from the principle on which any denominational teaching is grounded; for sects may pursue the most opposite courses, yet justify them on one and the same rule. In England, for example, it is generally believed that by denominational teaching is meant teaching the Bible. In Ireland the meaning is just the reverse. Cardinal Cullen said, before the Royal Commission: "I would be very sorry "to adopt all Lord Stanley's sayings or doctrines. If I did, "I would cease to be a Catholic. He lays down a principle "which is contrary to the discipline of the Catholic Church. "He says parents have a right to order that the Scriptures "should be read to their children. The Catholic Church "denies that right." Again, speaking of a class of schools in which it was part of the daily practice to read the Bible, the Cardinal said: "I hope that as soon as possible all "Catholic children will leave those schools, because in going to "them they are violating the discipline of the Church, which "will not allow the Bible to be made a mere school book." Paradoxical as it may appear, the right which English sects enjoy of being subsidised by the public, in order that they may teach their version of the Bible in their schools, constitutes the main reason why the Catholic bishops of Ireland claim also to be subsidised for the maintenance of schools

from which the Bible is utterly excluded. Such would be the contradictory operation of a law which permitted the control of denominations over national education, if it were fairly administered; and the Roman Catholic prelates of Ireland, in asking the public to pay for their non-Bible schools, simply demand to be placed on an equal footing with the denominations of England. The only method of escape from the difficulty thus presented is to withdraw education altogether from the influence of sectarian communities. It is of course open to the members of any sect to establish schools of their own at their own cost, and to prosecute whatever line of teaching they prefer; but it is manifest that public funds cannot justly be given to one sect without being given to all.

It must, perhaps, be admitted that the State has a greater right to assert its own authority in Ireland than in England, on account of the greater proportion of its contribution towards the cost of education there. In England it may be stated, in round figures, that, out of a total annual expense of a million and a half, the State contributes one third and the scholars one third, while the remaining third is derived from subscriptions, congregational collections, bazaars, endowments, and other like sources. In Ireland the proportions are far different. Taking the returns of the year 1867—since when there will have been but little alteration—the aggregate income of the Irish National schools was as follows:—Public grant, £268,254; school pence, £40,884; subscriptions, endowments, &c., £11,986; total, £321,124. Since £4,948 of the subscriptions, &c., was derived from the province of Ulster alone, it is evident that the Roman Catholic portion of the community make but a very trifling contribution towards the voluntary part of the fund. The schools may, indeed, be considered in great measure free. For every pound given in subscription or endowment, the State gives about twenty-two, and it adds about six pounds to every pound paid in school fees. The average cost per scholar being a little over twenty-two shillings a year, less than one shilling is derived from subscriptions, &c., about three shillings from the scholar, and upwards of eighteen shillings from the State. If the cost of

inspection and central administration were comprised in the calculation, the share of the State would appear considerably higher, for the total expenditure of the National Board in 1867 was, not £321,000, but just upon £358,000.

The expenditure here stated covered an average daily attendance of 321,683 children, but twice that number would probably have to be provided for if all the denominational schools were taken under the patronage of the State, for the total number of pupils on the rolls at the end of 1866 was upwards of nine hundred thousand. The public expenditure on education in Ireland is already three fourths of that in England, though the population is only one fourth. If the denominations were all subsidised, as the Commissioners propose, the Irish schools would cost the State nearly fifty per cent. more than the English. The pecuniary question is therefore one of great magnitude, especially when contrasted with the poverty of the results that have been or ever can be produced under denominational management. There has existed, since 1831, a competition between the ambiguous action of the National Board and different extremes of sectarianism, and the result has been the erection of a great many so-called schools; but at the census of 1861 there were, in the whole population of persons exceeding five years of age, out of every hundred, thirty-nine who could neither read nor write, twenty who could read but not write, and only forty-one who could write as well as read. Such having been, in the past, the return for money and exertions denominationally expended, what is to be expected in the future if a like policy be continued?

The reader being left to answer this question himself, after examining the facts which are here stated, it is proper to add a few words on the subject of University Education in Ireland —a subject which is of concern to the public because it threatens to become one of public expense. The Roman Catholic hierarchy are extremely desirous of forcing the Government to grant them a University, in which the teaching shall be entirely under their own domination, and it is evident that the head of the present Administration

is in favour of yielding to their demand. After much coquetting with the subject, Mr. Gladstone, speaking for himself and his colleagues, made a frank avowal, in the House of Commons, on the 20th of March last, in the following words: "We have entertained, and continue to entertain "the belief, we are pledged to the belief, that it is an extreme "hardship on that portion of the Irish population who do not "choose to accept an education apart from religion, that they "should have no University open to them in Ireland at "which they may obtain degrees; and we hold that this, call "it what you like and disguise it as you may, is the infliction "of civil penalties on account of religious opinions." In the round-about fashion so characteristic of the speaker, this is intended to signify that Parliament ought to vote money out of the produce of taxation for the sake of enabling the Ultramontane bishops of Ireland to possess a University of their own. In meeting the proposition, it is not necessary to enquire whether, outside of the ecclesiastical circle, there really is any portion of the Irish population who desire to have the higher branches of study served out to them with the extreme accompaniments of Popery; whether the State has any right, or is under any duty, to permit the interference of theology with the honest pursuit of learning; or whether a Protestant Government is observing the ordinary dictates of prudence in proposing to find money for training young men of the upper classes in Ireland to become the slaves of Rome, and consequently the enemies of the country over which that Government presides. The "belief" of Mr. Gladstone is sufficiently disposed of by the single observation that gentlemen who seek a University education are able to pay its expenses themselves. If there is any considerable number of Irish families, of the University grade, who wish their sons to become learned in classics, letters, mathematics, and natural science, with in each case a twisting of the truth to the Romish standard, and a constant admixture of Popish observances, the funds for such a purpose can easily be found without resort to taxation. If, on the contrary, there is no such considerable element in the

population, it would be a mere act of interference and obtrusion for the Government to set up a University governed by rules that were dictated by Romish cardinals and bishops. In any case, it is outrageous to propose that money exacted in taxes of the poor—who can scarcely find the means of having their own children taught to read and to write—should be expended in providing University instruction for the rich. This is the simple answer to Mr. Gladstone. A more elaborate reply might be given if necessary, but it would be a waste of argument to discuss other considerations in a case where a single reason is conclusive. The people of England are amply justified in refusing to pay for the establishment of a Popish University in Ireland, on the sole ground that such an establishment should be self-maintaining.

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