

within the reach of all classes of society, but they are only to be obtained by the improvement of the intellect. I am one of that terrible class of politicians called Radicals. My Radicalism, however, does not consist in putting everybody down; my desire is to raise everybody up. (Cheers.) I believe the working men of England have—and I say it advisedly—as much power of obtaining all the elegancies of life as the man who dwells in a palace. Suppose now—and let me urge this upon your attention—suppose a young man marries early in life and becomes the father of a family, and that family grows up into boyhood and girlhood. Suppose the children are instructed and the father is not. The father, if he be a good man, stays at home in the evening with his wife and children; he does not go abroad for excitement, but his children, availing themselves of the knowledge they have acquired, read to that father, and thus convey to him the knowledge which they have obtained by means of availing themselves of the advantages which associations like this bestow. It is that more than anything else which I wish to point out to my fellow countrymen. Foreigners invariably remark that though in England there is perfect liberty, a man may say anything he pleases so long as he do not injure his neighbour, and may do what he likes so long as he do not injure his neighbour—there is no great potentate to say you shall not print, you shall not speak, you shall not think; any man may speak, think, and do what he likes, so long, as I have said, that he do not injure his neighbour. Yet the foreigner remarks that between the various classes of Englishmen there is a greater chasm and a greater separation than there is in any country on the Continent; that the labouring man in England is not in any way a companion for, and has no means of consorting with the gentleman; and it is true. The gentleman, also, although he may be kind in his behaviour, though he may be a good man in all his relations of life, yet he shrinks from the bench of the labouring man. Why is that? It is because the labouring class of this country is not endowed with the winning manners that the labouring classes of other countries possess. Now I want to break down this barrier of separation; I want to make the labouring man in all things—in his character, in his manners and his intelligence—quite equal to any other man in the country.

EVILS OF KEEPING CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL.

Now, we are told here this evening that the little people, the quarrymen, go to work at seven years of age. This is a mistake on the part of parents. (Hear, hear.) It is throwing away their capital, it is living upon their capital. If you sent your children to school until they were of the age of twelve, and then had them back after they had gained the means of acquiring knowledge of an elementary character, the education given them would be far richer for the poorer class of men than if they were sent to work when seven years of age. Now, Sir, I will endeavour to address myself to those who are striving to educate the class by whom they are surrounded. The great difficulty you have in educating the people is that the fathers take their children from school too early, but if they were told, by allowing their children to remain at school until the age of twelve, what advantage they could acquire from the habit of reading, what great use and great pleasure they could obtain for themselves by acquiring the habit of writing, and what great advantage they could obtain by acquiring the first rules of arithmetic, every one of them, I think, would say with us that it was a great point gained. (Cheers.)

ADVANTAGE OF SHORT SCHOOL HOURS.

Now, Sir, it happens that amongst my friends, one who is very enthusiastic, one who has paid great attention to the subject of teaching, with his friends, has endeavoured to find out whether the hours of instruction might not be greatly shortened, and I moved, Sir, in the house of Commons for this return, which I believe was printed by order of the House of Lords. This is a return containing an inquiry into the advantage of what is called the "short time" system in teaching. My friend and his friends thought that the time of children was occupied too much in teaching and that their minds were strained and overburdened, and that they did not learn nearly so much as they would if half the time were employed in teaching them, and they advised the adoption of the short time scheme—taking half the usual time for instruction, and the other half for drilling them as Volunteers are drilled and as sailors are drilled. They employed these means, and the consequence was that the children who spent half their time in scholastic instruction learnt quite as much as those who spent their whole time at it, and that they freed themselves from awkward habits by means of the Volunteer and naval drill. Now, I wrote to my friend when I was first spoken to on this subject, asking him to tell me what he thought on the question, and he wrote me a letter which, with your permission, I will read. It is very instructive and very amusing. The hon. gentleman then read the letter of his friend, in which the writer said that the systematic infliction of punishment, mental as

well as bodily, inseparable from the old plan of teaching, was altogether wrong. He made it a rule to discharge any groom who whipped his horse, for where one required punishment 99 out of 100 were spoiled by it, and so it was with children. Schoolmasters in the half-time schools and schoolmasters in some of the best schools in the land never used corporal punishment. With respect to the reduction of long hours of study, he was of opinion that after too long a period of sedentary confinement, the attention of the pupil would flag. A good teacher would adapt his lessons to the capacity of the child, and would make the value of the lesson sustain itself by the interest he infused in his manner of teaching. When the voluntary attention of the scholar flagged, when coercion was required to keep up his attention, then it was time to stop. The writer proceeded to mention what he had been told by Sir Edward Hay, who had great acquaintance with children, respecting a small school which he had visited. The hours were reduced from six to four, and the system of drilling had been adopted, and during the first year of the new plan the number of non-attendants on account of illness was but one-tenth of the number formerly. The reduction of the long hours was the reduction of great weariness, and the consequence was that the number of malingeringers, or those who shammed illness, was very great. The scholars were not now so desirous of escaping from school as formerly, and did not wend their way to school with such gloomy forebodings of punishments as before. The children, the writer continued to say, should have just enough of lessons to give them a relish for play, and just enough of play to give them a relish for their lessons. The physical and mental exercises should be so adjusted as to stimulate each other. One point (continued the writer) to be enforced in connection with the half time school system is that instead of sacrificing the domestic economy to the school, the school adapts itself to the domestic economy. Children cannot too soon be got into the moderate exercise of the business of life, and the half-time system, if it is properly alternated, should have reference to the actual business and duties of life, while the elementary instruction should make the children cheerful and happy. The first object is to enable children to read to their parents at night, and every boy who has acquired the necessary education is thus in a position to derive all the pleasure and advantage that reading gives to the reader.

VOCAL MUSIC IN SCHOOLS.—AN ILLUSTRATION.

In all elementary classes vocal music ought to be encouraged as a means of cheering the family circle. I will stop one moment here (continued Mr. Roebuck) to describe the school that was established by Mr. Ottery, a clergyman of the Church of England, who has a cure at Windsor, and who is also a teacher at the school at Eton. At his invitation I went down to Windsor, and saw a new building raised entirely by the people who supported the school. The school was after this fashion. Within, the children were singing, not ballads, not wild songs, and not, if I may use the phrase, black-guard tunes; but they played the whole of the *Messiah* of Handel, and sang the great parts of that great work. I went down afterwards and saw a band of Volunteers out of the school, who marched into a building underneath, for it happened to be bad weather, and a finer set of young fellows I never saw. They were all working mens' children, the sons of railway porters, the sons of farm labourers, the sons of servants—they were all the sons of working men, and these boys were as thoroughly gentlemanly in their manners as any of the young gentlemen at Eton. I never enjoyed a day of more happiness than the day I beheld that school. Mr. Ottery told me that one of our consuls at a port in the Mediterranean wanted a servant, and he sent him one of the boys out of his school. No sooner had the gentleman got him over than he said, "This boy can do a great many things; I will make him my secretary." Soon afterwards the secretary wrote to Mr. Ottery to send him another boy out for his servant, and, accordingly, another boy was sent out, and thus became the servant of his fellow-scholar. (Applause.) Now, this is a proof that education does not simply mean the education of the intelligence, but the boy's manner, his whole character, to make him so that his master, like the consul, could trust him in any real difficulty, or in anything of a serious character—trust him, in fact, sufficiently to make him his secretary. But, Sir, I do not adduce this as a thing that may happen to a great number of people, but I adduce it to show that the kind of teaching at that school made the man in all his thoughts, his feelings, his way of dealing, a gentleman, although he was but a labourer's son.

ADVANTAGE OF MILITARY DRILL IN SCHOOLS.

Now, Sir, I have here a report which contains a series of evidence from which I have made a great number of extracts. One extract is the evidence of the schoolmaster of a district workhouse in North Surrey, and to this statement I wish particularly to call your attention and the attention of my young hearers present. The question put to him is, "What has your experience of military drill been in mental and bodily drill?" The answer is, "The effect of military