

the effect if he were taken from school; and how soon those principles might be trampled out of him if he were left to fight his battle of life—and that too, perhaps, under some unfeeling master who sneered at all the good principles inculcated into the child. In any neighbourhood they might easily find five or six such children; and if they took them—though perhaps the most promising whilst in the school—at 16 or 17 years of age, they would see how lamentable was the result. Reference had often been made to the slight difference there was in the number educated on the Continent, in those countries where education was compulsory, and the number educated in this country, where it was voluntary. It was true that in Prussia there were only eight being educated for every six at school in England; but then in Prussia their ages averaged between seven and fourteen, whilst in this country the average was between $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 8. They would have at the conference to consider whether it should become a permanent body; whether they should meet in future years; and whether a committee should be appointed to watch over and report upon the results of that conference. He had been requested to place these suggestions before the meeting, and he trusted their conference might be productive of the best results.

H.R.H. Prince Albert then formally declared the conference open, and the meeting broke up.

MEETING OF THE SECTIONS.

The business of the conference was afterwards renewed yesterday at the Thatched House Tavern. In order to systematise the work the Conference was split up into four sections, presided over respectively by the Bishop of Oxford, Lord Lyttelton, Sir J. Kay Shuttleworth, and the Dean of Salisbury.

SECTION A.—Chairman, the Bishop of Oxford.

A paper was read by the Rev. Mr. Mitchell, one of the Inspectors of Schools, on the early age at which children are taken away from school. It appeared that only 6 per cent. completed their 14th year under instruction.

Mr. J. D. Goodman, chairman of the statistical department of the Birmingham Education Association, read a paper on "The School and the Workshop in Birmingham." The following are the principal portions of his contribution:—

At the close of last year an association was formed in Birmingham, having for its object the removal of the existing obstacles to education. It was determined to institute a special inquiry to ascertain what proportion of the children between 7 and 13, were receiving education, what was the description of education, and what number were employed in workshops. Returns have been obtained from fourteen districts out of twenty-one. They include 1,043 families in which were found 1,373 children between 7 and 13, viz, 753 males and 620 females. Of these 1,373 children 1,050, or $76\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., are receiving some kind of education; 42 per cent. are at day school, and of these latter $30\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. attend Sunday School; also, $22\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the 1,373 children are employed and at Sunday School, of whom $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. attend evening school also. Having thus found $76\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. at some kind of school, we have $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. at none; of these $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. are employed, and 13 per cent. neither employed nor at school. Brought under the three great heads we have 42 per cent. at day-school, 33 per cent. employed, 25 per cent. unemployed. Comparing girls with boys, we have $41\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. boys' and $42\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. girls' at school. Boys employed are 38 per cent. to girls 26 per cent.

From these figures we gather that the day school life of one-fourth of those children who attend school ceases at nine years of age, two-fourths remain at school till eleven, the remaining fourth remain till between twelve and thirteen. A large proportion of the employed children attend Sunday-School.

On inquiring into the nature of the employments which draw these children from school, it is found that 77 different callings take the boys, and 32 the girls—of these brass-foundry engaged 16 per cent. of the boys who are employed; errands, 12 per cent.; button making, $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; gun-making, 4 per cent.; of the girls, button making employs 31 per cent.; service, 23 per cent.; warehouse employment, 7 per cent., &c. The average age at which boys go to work is $9\frac{1}{2}$, and girls 10.

A prize scheme has been instituted by the Birmingham Association, which it is hoped will tend to reduce the numbers in the "employed" and "unemployed" classes, and that it will retain the children at school beyond the present average of nine and a half and ten. A movement is also afoot for an extension of evening school education.

SECTION B.—Chairman—The Right Hon. W. Cowper.

Mr. Joseph Kay read a paper on the age at which children leave the elementary schools in various countries of the continent of Europe.

The Rev. Mr. Glennie read a paper from Strasbourg, relative to France, and Captain Boscawen read one on the state of education in Germany.

SECTION C.—Chairman—Sir James K. Shuttleworth, Bart.

Papers were read by the Rev. J. P. Norris and the Rev. W. J. Kennedy,—the former "on the working of the Staffordshire certificate and registration scheme," and the latter, "on the principles to be observed in promoting school attendance."

The Rev. T. Nash Stephenson, M.A., incumbent of Shirley, near Birmingham, read a paper entitled, "A consideration of the expedients which have been proposed for keeping the children of the working class longer at school, and an examination into the nature and administrative machinery of prize schemes." He proposed that 100 prizes, of the value of £85, should be offered; namely, sixty books of the value of 10s., for the third or lowest class; twenty-five of the value of £1, for the second or middle class; fifteen prizes of cash, of £2, and ornamented cards, for the first class. The number of prizes should, of course, vary in proportion to the expected number of candidates. Ornamented certificate cards might be added, but not so as to make the gross average of successful and commended candidates more than a moiety.

SECTION D.—Chairman—The Very Rev. the Dean of Salisbury.

The Rev. P. Marshall, of Hulme, read a paper upon "Factory education, with suggestions for its improvement."

The Rev. C. H. Bromby, M.A., F.S.S., read a paper on "Voluntary Half-time Schemes." The difficulties in the way of this and similar plans arose, in manufacturing districts, from the demand for juvenile labor; in agricultural districts from the indifference of parents. The question to be discussed resolved itself into this—how far could they persuade the employers of labor that the scheme will not diminish their material profits? Something must be done in all departments of labor. The votes of State money formed no true index of progress. Schools expensively appointed were becoming mere nurseries of infants. School work possessed no lasting hold, produced no real effect. The great want was not schools but scholars, not hives but bees. The object of the conference should be to take such practical measures as should furnish data to the Government for determining how far Government aid could be extended, and where Government interference must begin. If Lord Ashley's tentative Act had succeeded, extend it; if it had failed, repeal it. As a political question, England needed skilled and educated workmen. Whether in factories, mines, or farms, the first step should be to require an educational test before employment, namely, a certificate of two years' attendance at school before ten years of age.

Mr. Akroyd, M.P., of Halifax, gave an interesting account of his own schools,—comprising, in infants, boys, girls, and the Working Men's College, a total of 1,805.

SECTION E.—Chairman—The Very Rev. the Dean of Westminster.

Miss Carpenter read a paper on the subject of juvenile delinquency. She pointed out the slow degrees by which young persons fell into crime from evil associations, and especially from ridicule on the part of other children previously corrupted. In the majority of cases she thought juvenile delinquency did not arise from poverty, but from the evil associations to which she had adverted. A large array of statistics was adduced in support of this view of the case. Miss Carpenter believed that high intellectual training would never arrest the progress of crime, a strictly moral education being the only safeguard.

Various other papers were read in the several sections, and every contributor appeared to urge that the great evil to be guarded against was the too early removal of children from school. At the close of the business, reports were to be drawn up by the Secre-