

twelve or thirteen years of age shall be allowed to work without producing a certificate that he is able to read and write. Such a law, accompanied by an adequate provision of schools, would not be long in conveying, even to the most ignorant and degraded of our population, that sense of the value of education which is the truest indication, as it is the fairest fruit, for advancing civilization. I will leave to others who are, I believe, prepared to address you on the subject, the task of suggesting the best means of superintending and utilizing our educational endowments. I fully recognize the importance of the subject, and the good which may result from its discussion. But it has always appeared to me doubtful whether these endowments could be made as largely and generally available for the education of the poor as some sanguine persons have supposed. Whatever changes in their administration may be effected; to whatever extent the smaller charities may be consolidated, and useless or mischievous ones devoted to the purposes of education, the present local distribution will, I apprehend, be virtually preserved. That distribution is so uneven, so widely different from the distribution of our population, that it seems inevitable that the best arrangements which can be made will only work a partial good.

NECESSITY FOR FEMALE EDUCATION.

There is, I am satisfied, no more crying want in our age than that of a sound and solid education for our women. I need not insist upon the immediate bearing of this subject upon that now under discussion. Education is like the cloud,—

“Which moveth altogether, if it move at all.”

Any substantial improvement in the education of our middle-classes will tell directly and powerfully on those immediately below them in the social scale. Again, one of the difficulties which retards the progress of education is the demand for male labour, sensibly limiting the supply of masters, except at rates of payment beyond the means of many of our schools. I look with hope to a remedy for this evil in the example of a country which has outstripped all others in the extent and completeness of its public system of education. In the United States of America, the work of education, not only in the elementary, but even in the more advanced classes of schools, may be said, almost without exaggeration, to be carried on by women. In the schools of Massachusetts there are 9,340 females employed as against 1,544 male teachers; and the proportions in many other states are nearly similar. The great subject, however, for our consideration is how to give to our fellow-countrymen that indispensable minimum of education which is, in the language of M. Guizot, the author of the greatest and most successful scheme of national education in our days, “the bare debt of a country towards its offspring.” “sufficient to make him who receives it a human being, and at the same time so limited that it may be everywhere realized.” The demand is so reasonable and moderate, that in a country like ours, so full of good and conscientious men, lovers of the public weal, and impatient of all recognized evils, it would seem only necessary to proclaim and prove the necessity for a remedy in order to secure its application. But, alas! the forces combined against the adoption of any comprehensive system are many and powerful. Once more we shall find arrayed against us the fears, the jealousies, and what is more formidable, the deep-seated convictions of religious bodies. Once more we shall encounter the enthusiasts of voluntary effort. And I greatly fear that the majority of our ruling classes are as yet rather inclined to self-complacent congratulation on the progress we have made than to acknowledge the necessity for renewed and more systematic exertions. It would almost seem that nothing less than one of those providential calamities which have so often roused our fellow-countrymen into wise and strenuous action will awaken them from their pleasant delusion. Fear of an Irish rebellion brought us Catholic Emancipation; an Irish famine was the death-warrant of the corn-laws; the terrible mutiny in India became, we may hope, the starting-point of a happier era for our greatest dependency; and, if I may borrow a minute example from your recent experience, I can testify to the improved perception of sanitary evils, and the alacrity and vigour infused into our sanitary legislation by the presence of the cholera. We can hardly hope for any such impulse to the cause of national education. To many the misery and debasement of so large a part of our fellow-countrymen are either unknown, or, at any rate, they do not interfere with the daily comforts and sense of security of our educated classes. The thunder-clap from Manchester, repeated, as I earnestly hope it will be, by similar investigations in our other great cities, may alarm their fears, or, better still, may touch their hearts and consciences, and rouse them into vigorous action. And I cannot doubt but that, stirred by this unexpected and appalling revelation of widespread ignorance and hopeless apathy, a younger generation of public men, some of whom perhaps now honour me with their presence and attention, will aspire worthily to complete the work of national education, so nobly begun by those

veterans of a glorious war—Lord Brougham, Lord Russell, Lord Shaftesbury, and Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth.

3. EARL RUSSELL ON RELIGIOUS TEACHING.

At the Borough-road Schools, the sixty-fourth general meeting of the British and Foreign School Society was lately held. Earl Russell as usual presided.

The President, in the course of a long speech, said that he considered it a great misfortune that at the beginning of its school career, now more than 60 years ago, the Established Church did not consent to proceed on the same principle—viz., to give that religious instruction which they thought right according to the doctrines of the Church of England, but omitting all distinctive religious teaching in the schools, and combining all in their schools through the teaching of the Bible. It was a great misfortune that she then established a system of her own, but that cannot be now repaired, and we must look to other means to supply the wants of the present generation. He trusted that religious instruction would not be lost sight of in any plan of education which the Government might think fit to introduce to Parliament, and that while systematic education should pervade the land, and while schools should be established throughout it, we should be permitted to give that instruction in the Bible which had always been the mark and distinction of that society. He hoped that those who had hitherto been taxed unduly to maintain schools would no longer be called upon to bear the burden alone, but that those who have shown themselves unwilling, and yet have plenty of means, would be rated fairly to provide and maintain schools. Lord Lyveden, in moving the adoption of the report expressed a hope that in any scheme of education Government might propose, nothing would be done to damp voluntary education, believing as he did that any system of compulsory education carried out by means of rates and taxes would cramp the object instead of promoting it.

4. LORD LITTLETON ON UNIVERSITY LOCAL EXAMINATIONS.

Lord Littleton presided at a public meeting held at the London University for the distribution of the certificates and prizes obtained at the last examination of students in the London centre, not members of the University. The noble Chairman in opening the business, remarked that the Oxford and Cambridge local examinations were important features in the movement in favour of what was popularly called middle-class education. Glancing at the efforts made of late years to promote education, the institution of the system of public examinations at the two ancient Universities, its recent extension to the middle-classes, and its advantages, he turned to the report of the Royal Inquiry Commissioners, which he said had placed the whole subject of national education upon a footing altogether different from that on which it formerly stood, and added that if their recommendation should receive effect it would render it impossible that the important question of the education of the people should depend any longer upon mere voluntary effort, one of the proposals being that the whole of the endowed and the private schools of the country should be placed under some general management, which should embrace the whole country. He hoped that these local examinations would receive permanent establishment in any general measure that might be adopted, because nothing could compete with the prestige which the high character, the antiquity, and acknowledged authority of the two great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge necessarily conferred in their certificates and honours. He recommended, in order to test the efficiency of the instruction, that in future whole classes should be sent up for examination, instead of a few prominent boys from each school. He claimed credit for the University of Cambridge, in having been the first to introduce an examination for girls, whose capacity for dealing with almost all educational subjects was, he believed, quite equal to that of boys. He deprecated the system of cramming, and quoted from the report of the Syndicate to show that in too many instances the pupils sent up from some of the private schools were little better than parrot-taught, knowing nothing really of the subjects in which they were examined, while in respect to some of the girls it was astonishing how ingenious they proved themselves in filling whole sheets of paper with well and grammatically written sentences having no meaning whatever.

5. PROF. FAWCETT, M.P., ON PRACTICAL EDUCATION.

Professor Fawcett, in the course of a speech at a meeting held at Brighton, to witness the distribution of the prizes and certificates gained at the last University Local Examinations, said:—“There is a school growing up—if more prominently represented by one man than another it is by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer—