

Lancaster had, by the most unwearied exertions..... succeeded in carrying every one principle of the scheme into *complete practical effect*, and in spreading the beneficial use of it over the whole island; and when in those books Dr. Bell does not even make mention of Mr. Lancaster, offers him no acknowledgment for his corporal fatigues—we will go no further; tenders him no thanks for having (we will call it) taken the trouble of adopting and disseminating his doctrines; presents to him no gratulations upon the unhopèd-for success which had attended his preaching and practice of those doctrines—nay, deigns not even to record the fact so important to his *own fame*, that the Madras system had wonderfully prospered in England under the management of one Joseph Lancaster..... truly this silence is too unnatural even to be mysterious, and in our ears—do all we can to shut them, to stop them up with the remembrance of the man's former merits—it loudly rings a distinct charge against the reverend gentleman of pitiful jealousy towards one whom he may be desirous of thinking his imitator, but towards one whom he thus betrays the wounded feelings of a disappointed rival." The controversy between the friends of Bell and Lancaster was fierce and bitter enough, but we can look at it with philosophic unconcern, for we can see that the antagonism was of immense service to the cause of education. The clergy were frightened at the success of Lancaster's plans, and, as it was evident schools must spring up all over the land, nothing remained for the clergy but to get the management of them into their own hands. In Dr. Bell they had ready to hand a means whereby they could "at once dole out to the lower orders that lower degree of knowledge which best befits their station, and that peculiar kind of instruction which most exactly suited their own interests and opinions." The consequence was the establishment of the National Society for the education of the poor in the principles of the Established Church. There were thus two educating societies where, without the rivalry of Lancaster and Bell, there would only have been one.

I have said that Lancaster's enemies made two charges against him: the first, that any part of his system which was meritorious was stolen from Dr. Bell; the second, that the part which was admitted to be his own—the unsectarianism of the religious instruction—was in awful evil. I have dealt with the first charge. It would be difficult for us to apprehend the rancour with which he was attacked in the second, had we not in these days heard the education given in the schools of the London Board described as "godless." Deacons and archdeacons thundered at him from the pulpit, fools and fanatics denounced him through the press. One of the first to raise the howl against him was Mrs. Sarah Trimmer—a lady who was tolerably well-known as a writer of schoolbooks and "goody-goody" stories. To give my readers a specimen of the bigotry and ignorance with which he was attacked, I will make a few extracts from this respectable lady's book. She says: "In answer to Mr. Lancaster's observation that '[education] ought to be a national concern,' I may appeal to the Act of Uniformity for the proof that, from the first establishment of the Protestant Church in this kingdom, education *has been* a national concern." Sydney Smith, in the *Edinburgh Review*, criticised the work in an article,* where, as usual with him, the shafts of sense were pointed by wit. On the remark I have just quoted from Mrs. Trimmer, he says: "If there are millions of

Englishmen who cannot spell their own names, or read a signpost which bids them turn to the right or left, is it any answer to this deplorable ignorance to say there is an Act of Parliament for public instruction?—to show the very line and chapter where the King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, ordained the universality of reading and writing, when centuries afterwards the ploughman is no more capable of the one or the other than the beast he drives?"

In speaking of Lancaster's system of rewards and punishments, instead of pointing out the real and palpable objections to it, she makes such remarks as the following:—"If the star which in this kingdom is the appendage of high nobility be adopted by him as the insignia of his order of merit, surely the emblem of Majesty [in capitals] should not be made a mark of disgrace and ridicule. Besides, it should be remembered that the Saviour of the world was crowned with thorns in derision, which is another reason why the punishment is improper for a slovenly boy!"

She could not get over the stars, for in another part of her book she says:—"When one considers the humble rank of the boys of which common-day schools and charity schools are composed, one is naturally led to reflect whether there is any occasion to put notions concerning the origin of nobility into their heads, especially in times which furnish recent instances of the extinction of a high and ancient nobility in a neighbouring nation, and the elevation of some of the lowest of the people to the highest stations. Boys accustomed to consider themselves as the nobles of a school may in their future lives, from a conceit of their own trivial merits, unless they have very sound principles, aspire to be nobles of the land, and to take place of the hereditary nobility."

To this Sydney Smith says:—"For our part, when we saw these ragged and interesting little nobles shining in their tin stars, we only thought it probable that the spirit of emulation would make them better lawyers, ushers, tradesmen, and mechanics. We did, in truth, imagine we had observed, in some of their faces, a bold project for procuring better breeches for keeping out the blasts of heaven, which howled through those garments in every direction, and of aspiring hereafter to greater strength of seam, and more perfect continuity of cloth. But for the safety of the titled orders we had no fear; nor did we once dream that the black rod which whipt these dirty little dukes would one day be borne before them as the emblem of legislative dignity, and the sign of noble blood."

I had marked for quotation many other curious and amusing passages from Mrs. Trimmer's book, but want of space compels me to omit them. As when a cat howls upon the tiles her cry is taken up by all the "Toms" in the neighbourhood, so the wail of Mrs. Trimmer raised wails responsive from the upholders of the Church. Thus in June, 1806, the Rev. Archdeacon Daubeny, in a charge delivered at Sarum, said that Lancaster's system would "ultimately lead to general infidelity," and that as the plan spread "so far must Christianity in proportion decline." "The evil to be apprehended from the public support of a system which professedly rejected the established religion was the destruction of all religion." I have not room to quote even the titles of the works against Lancaster which followed the publication of the venerable archdeacon's charge. I will only give two as a "taste of their quality":—"A letter....." in which the "religious part" of "Mr. Lancaster's system" is "shown to be incompatible with the safety of the Established Church, and in its tendency subversive of Christianity itself: by John

* The king was so pleased with this article that he made Sir Herbert Taylor read it twice to him.