

as soon as a single generation of instructed parents shall have been called into existence.

"At present the law knows no other form of direct compulsion than that exercised by School Boards. But since the adoption of a School Board is generally the spontaneous act of each separate district, the application of the principle of compulsion is accidental and voluntary, and far from universal. Up to October, 1874, the total number of School Boards in England and Wales had reached 854, covering, besides the Metropolitan district, 106 out of 224 municipal boroughs, and 942 out of 14,082 civil parishes. Out of a total population of 22,712,266, only 10,818,825 are included within the jurisdiction of School Boards; and of these the number to whom by-laws for enforcing school attendance apply is 9,538,971. Compulsion is now the law for rather less than forty-two per cent. of the entire population, and for about seventy-nine per cent. of the borough population. In many places Boards have been formed for no other purpose than to enforce the attendance of children in schools of which the supply was already sufficient. A Parliamentary return in June last enumerated 173 School Boards which had not rate-supported schools under their own control. The number of Boards is daily increasing, and would probably increase faster but for the belief that they are a somewhat costly and cumbrous machinery to call into exercise for one purpose alone, added to the strong prejudice, reasonable or unreasonable, against the Board type of school, and to a belief on the part of many that, once a School Board is established, a school with the dreaded Cowper-Temple clause is not far off.

"It seems, therefore, very desirable that the end—universal compulsion on which all friends of education are practically agreed should be attained, if possible, without necessary recourse to the particular means—the establishment of School Boards—on which those persons are not agreed. And this object is not difficult of accomplishment.

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"II. If by some such means the problem of securing the attendance of children up to the age of thirteen is once solved, there remains the further task of encouraging the best and most promising scholars to stay longer, and to continue the education they have begun. Whatever may be our wishes and aspirations in regard to public instruction, it seems certain that for the rank and file of the labouring classes a good, useful education, such as may be carried on till the age of thirteen, is all that will be possible in the elementary schools. At that age, the child will, as a rule, be withdrawn for labour; although it may be hoped that other agencies, such as the newly-established University lectures, more systematic provision for evening classes, and societies for mutual improvement, will multiply rapidly, and satisfy an increasing appetite for further teaching, after the hours of labour are ended. Yet, among the scholars of the primary schools there is always a considerable number of thoughtful, studious boys and girls, who evince a desire for further improvement, and who, if taken by the hand and properly encouraged, would make an excellent use of advanced instruction, and would, either as highly-skilled workmen, or as recruits in the ranks of what Mr. Buckle calls 'the intellectual classes,' add appreciably to the wealth and strength of the community. Such children are now compelled, by the inexorable necessities of their parents, to leave school just at the moment when school-learning is beginning to tell upon the formation of their characters. For them, the chief need is some provision analogous to the scholarships and exhibitions of the Universities.

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"We have well nigh overweighted the higher education of the country with premiums and rewards of this kind, but we have forgotten that there is exactly the same necessity for such arrangements in the lower department of educational work as in the higher. It is only by the adoption of some such means that full justice can be done to the intelligence of the poor, and that the 'carrière ouverte aux talens,' of which so much has been said of late, can become a reality. And it would be wrong to measure the expediency of such a measure merely by its influence on the highly-exceptional scholar. The

"divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began,
And on a simple village green,"

would, it might be urged, find his way to honour and usefulness even without such aid. But every provision of this kind for discovering and rewarding special ability, raises the whole level of work in a school, and gives to hundreds of children, who are not prize-holders, a better standard of excellence and a more active intellectual life.

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"III. As a correlative to all efforts for securing more regular and prolonged attendance at school, there is need of a steady elevation

in the aims of the schools themselves, and of higher requirements on the part of the central government, as represented by the Code of Regulations. But the time has already arrived when, without injustice to the teachers, or serious financial embarrassment to the managers, a substantial change in the requirements may properly be made. The ablest of the Inspectors, judging from the recent report of the Committee of Council, are unanimous in the opinion that the public grant might easily be distributed on conditions more likely to increase the efficiency of the schools.

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"But, concurrently with any measures designed to raise the standard of instruction in the schools, the necessity arises for a higher standard of qualification in the teachers themselves.

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"But the best possible corrective for the faults of the present system is not a scheme of examinations only, but in the case of a limited number of the best teachers, an actual introduction for a time to the world of letters and of science, and to the direct influence of an ancient university. In the prospect of the inevitable changes suggested by the recent report on the revenues of the Universities, it seems not unreasonable to hope that the field of their influence and usefulness may ere long be widened in this direction. The establishment of a professorship mainly concerned with the history and with the scientific aspects of Education would be the first step. To this should be added a special arrangement, whereby persons who had taken a good place at the certificate examination, and who intended to become teachers, might be admitted for one year's residence on condition of attending the lectures of the Professor of Education, and of pursuing some one branch of science or literature. A third provision enabling every person who had thus kept three terms in the University, and passed a suitable examination, to receive special teacher's diploma from the authorities of the University, would go far to secure for the exceptional students who were enabled, either by their own self-denial or by means of scholarships, to undergo this preparation, an excellent chance of reaching the highest places in their profession. In this way there would be a constant infusion of men into the ranks of elementary teachers who had received a three years' instead of a two years' training; but who, during the last year of the three, had added to their experience in the primary schools and in the training college the inestimable advantage of breathing the atmosphere of an ancient seat of learning, and coming into contact with a higher standard of scholarship and of life than would otherwise be attainable to them.

"On the influence of a few such schoolmasters in leavening the whole class to which they belong, it is needless to insist. But it may be safely said that unless the teacher's profession is ultimately so organized that at least the highest posts in it are honourably filled by persons of really liberal education, the general level of acquirement and of aspiration among the body of elementary teachers will always be low. And it is scarcely less evident that the ancient Universities, which have already evinced by the extension of their local examinations, and by the recent establishment of local professorships in the great centres of industry, a commendable desire to make the power and prestige they possess operative upon classes of people and upon fields of work to which such influences had never before penetrated, will forfeit a great opportunity of usefulness if they do not seek, by some means or other, to reach down to the elementary schools of the country, to show sympathy with their teachers, and to ennoble the conception which such teachers form of their work."

I. Other Papers on English Education.

1. RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH AND WELSH SCHOOL-BOARD SCHOOLS.

The British Education Department some time ago issued a circular in obedience to an order of the House of Commons, asking for information from all the school boards of England and Wales established up to the 1st of August, 1874, as to the rules in force regarding religious observances and religious instruction in their schools. The replies which have been received are of considerable interest, as showing the different ways in which the Act of 1870 has been carried out in this particular. Answers are scheduled from 479 boards; others, to the number of 278, are recorded as having made no regulations on the subject. Nearly one-half of the Welsh cases—that is to say, 65 out of 140—fall within the latter description. This is probably to be attributed in most cases either to the recent election of the boards, or having no board schools under their control. This latter reason accounts for the absence of any response from many of the boards. The majority of the boards appear to have framed their regulations on the model of a resolution passed