

me. But it's party, my lad, it's all a party cry, to please the people.

George. It won't please me any more, I know. And, Jem, another very important thing. There'll have to be lots of Free Schools to take in all the children.

Jem. So there will.

George. New schools built, eh?

Jem. Of course.

George. Great big places, with halls, and exercise grounds, and all?

Jem. Right you are.

George. Costing an awful lot of money?

Jem. No doubt.

George. But, Jem, man, where is the tin to come from? Who's to pay for it all?

Jem. Why *you*, my lad, you and I, and the poor stupid long-suffering ratepayers and taxpayers. We shall have to pay well for Free Education.

George. Out of our pockets, eh?

Jem. Yes, out of our own pockets, and clapped on to our rent, or to our tobacco, or tea, or something.

George. A nice look-out.

Jem. And the man that has no children will be called to pay heavily to educate other people's children.

George. Very unfair that.

Jem. There's ever so many more children now taught in Voluntary Schools than in Board Schools.¹ You and I'll have to pay for *them*. Folks reckon there'll have to be a sum of twelve to sixteen millions raised.

George. Millions of *pounds*, Jem?

Jem. Yes; you feel bad, don't you? It's a queer sort of Free Education; and when we've paid for it, I reckon we shall wish for the old sort back again. A big common school without religion won't please the English working-man overmuch.

George. A man told me we working-men were to manage these Free Schools ourselves. *Representative management*, he called it.

Jem. Another dodge that.

¹ Out of every 100 children, there are now 66 in Voluntary Schools, and only 34 in Board Schools.

George. He said the parson got all his own way now.

Jem. A poor ignorant chap your friend must be. Why, Government itself lays down the laws of all such schools. There's a time-table hanging in every school signed by the Inspector, and it's written down what's to be done every hour and every minute of school-time. No parson can say a word.

George. Then what have the managers of Voluntary Schools got to do?

Jem. They're mostly picked out by the congregation of the church or chapel (whichever it is the school belongs to) to engage teachers, buy materials, and raise extra money, if it's wanted. I know this, for my brother-in-law's a manager of the Wesleyan School at Castleton, and he finds it a hard job to make two ends meet.

George. Jem, we working-men couldn't do this if they made us ever so much representative managers. We've not got the time.

Jem. Don't you fret yourself, my lad. A representative manager means no good to us. It's all talk. They've got representative managers to the Board Schools now. Yet there's no school so unpopular with the working people.

George. They think to please us, no doubt, by giving us a big name, and making out we're to be important folk; but how jealous these chaps are of the parson, Jem!

Jem. Well, yes, that's at the root of it, and of the attack on the Church, too; and we've got to look about us, and not to be taken in by every fine-sounding scheme.

George. Well, I'm due at my work now, but I've something to think about. Free Education don't please me. The sound fetches, but it don't ring true. But I see my way clear, anyhow. Whatever else I may vote for, none of their FREE SCHOOLS for me!²

² This Dialogue can be had printed as a tract (price one half-penny, or 2s. 6d. per 100). It is a good work to distribute it among the working classes at this time. Send to the Manager, 6, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.