

these homeless children—the Arab classes—by their wandering habits, unreached by their system. Every one, indeed, who has visited much in the East of London, and observed the swarms of half-naked young creatures left to their own devices in those foul slums which are a disgrace to any civilized country, must be aware that the operations of School Boards, or other agencies—and there are not a few in the East of London—are inadequate to the requirements of the case.

That the necessity of caring for this long neglected class is being generally recognized by the State, is a hopeful sign of the times, and a step in the right direction for reaching the masses ; and the new system of National Education, if it fulfils all that is expected of it, must at least reform the deplorable state of ignorance of this juvenile population, though whether the “general instruction,” as it is called, for which the rates are levied and paid, without something deeper and more elevating, and without some prospective hope for the future, will alter their habits and character, is more than questionable. It may make them sharper, and more wily, but not the less dangerous, or more disposed to a life of steady labour, than to a life of “loafing,” wandering, and begging, when turned out into the world at the most dangerous age (from eleven to twelve, as the children of the poorer classes cannot be kept at school beyond that age) free to seek their old haunts, and evil associations,—a cheerless prospect for the poor little Arab, unless some kind hands intervene to save him.

It may well be feared also, that unless something is done to improve the condition of their existence, all the benefits of the amount of education these children may receive in Board Schools, will soon be obliterated by the degrading influence of their home-life, herded (as thousands of families are) in single rooms, surrounded by dirt, drunkenness, and the lowest vice :—“A condition of affairs”—as James Greenwood, the well-known writer on the phases of pauper life, states—“so horrible, that to exaggerate it would be impossible.” The time has come when this gigantic evil must be taken up by Government, as private endeavours are quite unequal to deal with it.