

cant recommendation :—"That no scheme of education should be undertaken in Ireland which attempted to influence or disturb the peculiar religious tenets of any sect or denomination of Christians. The commencement of the Irish national system of education dates from 1831. The basis—combined literary and separate religious education—was suggested in a letter from Mr. Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby), Chief Secretary for Ireland, to the Lord Lieutenant. The system was committed to a Board of seven members of different religious opinions. State aid was given on condition that the repairs of the school, the salary of the master, and half the cost of the school-requisites should be locally provided. The policy, as at first announced, was accepted by the Catholics, but strongly opposed by the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches. In 1839, on account of some explanation made by the Board, the Presbyterians withdrew their opposition to the scheme. By a report issued for the year 1841, it appeared that there were 2,237 schools connected with the national system, in which were taught 281,849 pupils. Shortly after this a strong desire was shown by the Catholic Church to control all schools in which were any of her children. In 1850 one of the Synods made the following declaration :—"The separate education of the Catholic youth is by all means to be preferred to having them taught in the national schools." Notwithstanding that the Board had made several changes, and all with the view of conciliating the Romish Church, such as repeated modifications of the conscience clause, the special regulation in favour of convent schools, the increased proportion accorded to Catholic representation in the Board, which had been increased from two to seven in 1831, five to fourteen in 1851, and ten to twenty in 1861, and

the endowment of schools under Catholic management in the vicinity of Model Schools, still the Catholic hierarchy is very active in its opposition to the national system. No Catholic dignitary has sat in the Board since 1863. We may quote a few of the regulations :—"School-houses are not to be used as the stated places of divine worship of any religious community, nor for the transaction of any political business, and no emblems of a denominational character are to be exhibited in them during the hours of united instruction. The patrons and managers of all national schools have the right to permit the Holy Scriptures to be read at the time set apart for religious instruction." Many of you, I doubt not, remember the decidedly religious character of the Irish series of National School Readers.

Besides the national schools, which are designed, as we have seen, for all denominations, there are many schools under the immediate management of different Churches, such as the Church Education Society, the Diocesan Schools, the Institute of Christian Brothers, etc. The teachers are divided into three classes : first-class males receive from Government £58, third-class, £32 ; females, first-class £48, third-class £25. These salaries are supplemented by result fees, and, generally speaking, the salaries are small as compared with those in either England or Scotland. The National School Teachers' Act, 1875, was designed to supplement the incomes of teachers by granting State aid corresponding to local contributions. A favourable Pension Bill has been passed quite recently, the Government setting apart £1,300,000 for this laudable purpose. The Irish teachers seem to be pretty well satisfied with the general principles of the Bill, and are now seeking to have some of its details changed.