

we await the revelation of these dismal researches, let us take a general view of the state of education in Manchester and Salford. In these towns there are 104,000 children between the ages of three and twelve. A minute inquiry has established the fact that the numbers on the books of all the day schools of every class in Manchester and Salford in 1865 was 55,000. Add to these 7,000 who may, judging by the sample already examined, be assumed to be at work, and there yet remain 42,000 neither at school nor at work. It is not, of course, to be assumed that none of these children get any schooling, but after making every allowance for a short and occasional attendance at school of a portion of this vast horde of neglected children—equal in numbers to the population of a considerable town,—what a picture of the state of our urban fellow-countrymen does it present! And let us not solace ourselves with the hope that Manchester, which has thus manfully laid bare her sore places, and thrown light into her darkest lairs, stands alone in educational destitution. I know that the enormous population of such a city as Manchester imposes a task of peculiar difficulty upon those who devote themselves to supply and keep pace with its religious and intellectual wants. But have we no other great cities in England? And if the state of things in Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle, were depicted with equal honesty and skill, have we any reason to hope that they would exhibit different results? Are their merchants more liberal, their ministers of religion more zealous, their missionaries of good more numerous or devoted than those of Manchester and Salford? An inquiry less minute and exhaustive than that made at Manchester, but sufficiently careful to deserve confidence, has, at the instigation of the Bishop of London, been made under the auspices of the Committee of the Diocesan Board of Education into the state of education in the metropolis. Already, in 1861, the Royal Commission, presided over by the late Duke of Newcastle, had proclaimed the fact that, whereas the proportion of the population of all classes receiving some sort of education in England and Wales was one in seven, or fourteen per cent., the proportion in Middlesex was one in thirteen, or eight per cent. The inquiry just made shows no improvement in the interval. The most that has been done has been to keep things at their level, and prevent retrogression. The committee reports that the means of education are wanting in the diocese of London (which, be it remembered, does not include all the metropolis, a considerable portion of which is in the diocese of Winchester) for from 150,000 to 200,000 children. Add to this statement the fact that the average increase of the metropolis calls for an annual increase of school accommodation for 5,000 children of all classes every year, and what stronger demonstration could be furnished of the necessity of devising some elastic machinery capable of adapting itself to these tremendous numbers, this gigantic growth? But the want of accommodation is not the only, nor even the most pressing evil. The Committee of the Education Aid Society, on whose information I have so largely drawn, assert their belief that more valuable than the aid they have extended to 7,000 or 8,000 perishing children, more than the knowledge of their social wants which they have revealed to their fellow-citizens, is the proof they have supplied “that no voluntary or private effort can reach the depths of this evil in the social constitution, and that further legislation is urgently needed, such legislation as shall boldly seek to provide for, and, as far as possible, secure the primary education of every child in our great community.”

WHAT THE LEGISLATURE HAS DONE, AND WILL NOT DO.

The demand of the advocates of a national system is, that the legislature should provide machinery by which schools should be built and maintained wherever they were wanted. To this demand Parliament has declined to accede. However urgent the need, however absolute the destitution, Parliament refuses to supply, or to enforce the supply, of a single school. It contributes with no reluctant or niggard hand towards the erection and maintenance of schools which have received a certain amount of local support, and give certain guarantees of good management and efficiency. But it initiates nothing. That the grant voted by Parliament, and dispensed under the superintendence of the Committee of Council on Education, has done immense good, and has not reached the limit of its useful operation, I should be the last to deny. I doubt whether any nine millions of our vast expenditure have been ever so beneficially applied as those devoted to the promotion of education. The annual grant has provided for the inspection, and largely contributed to the maintenance of schools in England and Wales, at which some 1,200,000 are receiving an excellent elementary education. These schools are taught by upwards of 11,500 certificated teachers, probably the best of their kind that any country contains, the cost of whose training has been mainly contributed by the State. It has greatly improved our school buildings and apparatus, and everywhere, even where it gives no direct aid, it has tended greatly to raise the stand-

ard of education. It has, indeed, improved in a far greater degree than it has extended education. I do not deny that the £1,600,000 it has contributed towards the erection and enlargement of school buildings, have added something to their numbers and still more to their convenience. But the real substantial work done by the parliamentary grant has been to give us better masters and mistresses, and to test their work by the instrumentality of inspection. And the value of the work thus done it is hardly possible to exaggerate. But beneficial as is this work of improvement, it must not be forgotten that other work has to be done, and that to provide schools where there are none, and to secure the attendance of our youthful population, are matters well deserving the attention of our legislature.

NECESSITY OF BOLDLY MEETING THE EDUCATION DIFFICULTY.

We must, instead of having recourse to petty and mischievous makeshifts, boldly face our difficulties, and by enlightening the public mind and awakening the public conscience, enable Parliament to supply us with the machinery which will impose on all alike the duty of providing education for our whole population. I know the objections to such a proposition, I appreciate the difficulties of carrying it; I foresee the religious controversies to which it will give rise; I admit that we run the risk of losing some considerable advantages connected with the present system; but it is my deep conviction that the balance of good lies on the side I advocate. Briefly and generally stated, my proposition would be to maintain the present system where it works well, but wherever satisfactory evidence is given that the provision of education falls short of the wants of the population, to supply the deficiency by an education rate. It is affirmed that even this partial introduction of the rating system would be the death-blow to all voluntary effort. I have no doubt that many schools now maintained with difficulty by the voluntary sacrifice of a few over-weighted men would be devolved upon the rate. But I do not believe in the extinction of the voluntary system. It is too deeply fixed in the habits of a large portion of our people; its advantages are too strongly felt, both by Church and Dissent, to be easily uprooted or readily surrendered. Nevertheless, experience has proved that the voluntary spirit, in its full power and development, is the growth of certain favourable soils, and that there are wide ungenial regions in which it can find no sufficient nutriment. In districts like the principality of Wales where the population is not collected in overpowering masses, and the voluntary system is thoroughly organized; in many of our rural parishes, where the squire and clergyman work heartily together; in those portions of the country where the rich, poor, and middle classes co-exist in fair proportions; our present system has very nearly supplied the means of education, and may be trusted to make up the deficiency within reasonable time. But in the poorer districts of our larger cities, in parishes where the clergyman struggles in vain against the niggardliness of the landowner and the apathy or hostility of the farmer; in those places, in fine, which the voluntary system, after 30 years' trial, has failed to reach, some other means more stringent and peremptory, and independent of individual caprice or illiberality, must be found. The alternative is the growth of a vast population in ignorance and vice, with ever-increasing danger to the State, and to the reproach and scandal of a civilized and Christian people.

DISCUSSION OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION PREMATURE.

This settlement of the question, “whether we are to have a national system of education,” must, it seems to me, precede the consideration of any measure of compulsory attendance; and I confess that I should regret to see the energies of the friends of education expended in that direction. Laws of compulsory attendance may almost be said to exist only where they are not needed, as in Prussia, in some of the Swiss cantons, in Massachusetts, where the conviction of the value of education is so deep and general that the only use of such enactment is the formal recognition of the duty of parents to their children. I am satisfied that among ourselves such a law would simply be inoperative, that it would not and could not be enforced; and I would therefore venture to recommend that, placing our chief confidence in the growth of a better spirit among our people, and sparing no effort to evoke and cherish it, we should exert ourselves to obtain such indirect aid from the legislature as is suggested by the precedent of the Factory Acts. The last extension of the principle of these Acts in the Pottery districts, and to some five or six new trades, has already had the most beneficial results, unalloyed by any of the predicted inconveniences. There can be little doubt that similar regulations will shortly be extended to many other occupations, in accordance with the suggestions of the Children's Employment Commission. When this great step has been taken, and one more proof afforded of the feasibility and advantage of such legislation, Parliament will, I hope, gain courage to make one general law that no child under