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THE ENDOWED SCHOOLS OF IRELAND.

From the Irish Quarterly Review for Sept., 1854.

The Royal Schools, the most important from their revenues, although not the first in point of time of the Irish Endowed Schools, were established in the years 1627 and 1629 by Letters Patent of King Charles I. In the former year, that Monarch granted certain lands in different places to the Archbishop of Armagh and his successors, for the sole use and behoof of the Master for the time being of the Free School,* at the towns of Mount-norris, in County Armagh, Mount-joy, in County Tyrone, Donegal, Lisgoole, in County Fermanagh, and Cavan. Two years afterwards grants were made upon similar trusts for the Schools of Carysfort and Banagher. From some cause which is now unknown, the positions of the earlier Schools were changed, and they were established in the towns of Armagh, Dungannon, Raphoe and Enniskillen. The aggregate endowment of these seven Schools is 13,660 acres, which at present produce a rental of nearly £6000. In consequence of the great abuses which were found to exist under this arrangement, the estates were, by an Act of Parliament, in 1813, vested in a Board of Commissioners, who, after paying the expenses inci-

* i. e. endowed Schools, not "free Schools," supported by local rates, as in Upper Canada. In this sense must the term "Free School" throughout this article be understood.

dent to the estates, and keeping the School-house in repair, pay the Master and his assistants salaries, which are generally regulated by the endowment of the School, and are directed to expend the surplus in the maintenance of Free Scholars, or in the foundation of Exhibitions in Trinity College, Dublin. The Masters, at their discretion, and usually at the same rate as the best private schools, charge fees for both board and tuition. The admission of Free Pupils appears to be regulated rather by the feelings of the Master than by any external control. If we exclude Carysfort, which has always been an Elementary School, and the two Schools recently established by the Board for the children of their tenantry, the annual number of pupils,* in each of the six principal Schools, on an average of the four years, ending 31st December, 1852, has been 46½—of these 7½ have been free. "The Royal Schools," we quote from the *Report of the Committee on Foundation Schools*, "were not precluded either by their Charter, or by any Act of Parliament or Bye-law, from receiving all religious denominations. Though the course pursued in the instance of Diocesan Schools, of appointing Masters from the Church of England and generally Clergymen, prevailed also in the case of the Royal Schools, it does not rest on any law. The Lord Lieutenant, as in the case of the Diocesan, has the appointment solely in his own hands, unshackled by any limitation of an exclusively religious character. The assistants also are usually Protestants, but chosen from the laity. The Royal Schools have at all times been considered open to all religious persuasions."

The Diocesan Schools, the earliest attempt at intermediate education in Ireland, date from the 12th of Elizabeth. The statute under which they are founded is intituled "An Act for the Erection of Free Schools," and provides that there shall be "a Free School within every Diocese of the realm of Ireland, and that the Schoolmaster shall be an Englishman or of the English birth of Ireland." The School-house for each Diocese was directed to be built in the principal shire town of the Diocese, at the cost and charges of the whole Diocese, and by the "device and oversight" of the Ordinaries of the Diocese, or, in case of vacancy, of Vicars General. The Sheriff of the shire, and the Lord Deputy or Governor were to fix the Schoolmaster's salary, of which the Ordinaries of each Diocese were to provide the third part, and the Parsons and other ecclesiastical persons

* These figures are taken from a Parliamentary Paper, Ordered by the House of Commons, to be Printed, 25th April, 1853—No. 400.