manner of doing this rests with the different teachers' associations throughout the country; for they are quite powerful enough to achieve this end if they earnestly desire it. The public certainly have a strong wish at present to improve the state of secondary education both in England and Scotland. They feel very much, in the words of Wilhelm von Humboldt, when he took up the same subject in Prussia, that "the thing is *not* to let schools and universities go on in a drowsy and impotent routine; the thing is to raise the culture of the nation ever higher and higher." How nobly Germany has effected this purpose, during the last generation, by a good system of graded schools, and by a thorough attestation of the qualifications of teachers, I need not describe. The German universities have improved quite as much as the schools, because as the students come in better prepared, the instruction of the colleges expands itself. The organization of a true teaching profession in Germany quickened the intellectual life of each of its nations. For a profession differs from an empirical art by trying to base all its practice on science, instead of on a dull and monotonous routine. Medicine itself has only become highly honoured since it became scientific. Even in my early days there was scarcely a play or a farce in which a doctor, with his pompous manner and clouded cane, was not held up to ridicule. This would not be understood now, for the medical profession, in its dependence on science, has secured for its members confidence and honour from the public.

In spite of our disorganized education, England has experienced less retardation than might have been anticipated. I believe that this result is largely due to our free political life and liberal institutions, which have had an important educative effect on the whole nation. But late events have given this political advantage to other nations also, and their recent rapid advance in material interests is being felt in the industrial competition of the world, and is largely due to the education of their people having been organized and fitted to their life-work. All competent observers tell us that there is danger for England in the bad education of her middle classes. We are educating the working classes—our future masters—but surely it is time for the middle classes to look to their own education by an adequate organisation of their schools. Improved methods of education, secured by a competent training of future teachers, will be a great gain to the productive classes of this country, for time saved in learning is time saved for earning.

But how can the State expect to introduce order into the education of this country, when its own educational administrative machinery is in itself a type of disorder and incoherence? The amount of money annually voted by the State for educational purposes exceeds four millions. But the departments, or trustees, responsible for the administration of educational votes, have no connection among themselves, and so the schools or colleges supported by the State are carried on disjointedly and without system. There is no Minister of Education in this country. The Duke of Richmond, in 1874, speaking as President of the Council, said, "I am the minister of education." At the best, he is a mere Ministerial manager of primary schools in Great Britain, and the Minister in charge of the Science and Art Department. The latter and the Education Department for primary schools are indeed under one Minister, but in no other way are they connected. They run on parallel rails, with few crossings, lest they should come into violent collision. But the President of the Council, who says he is the national Minister of Education, is totally unconnected both with the elementary schools and with those for higher education in Ireland. In England he once had, but has now parted with, reformatory and industrial schools, which are managed by the Home Secretary, just as the military and naval schools are under the Secretary at War and the First Lord of the Admiralty. The public secondary endowed schools of England are under the Charity Commissioners, while those in Scotland and Ireland are under nobody. The educational museums and galleries supported by public funds are managed by irresponsible trustees loosely connected with the Treasury. The whole strength of our institutions for art and science is dissipated by disassociation. And yet with this chaos of educational administration, the President of the Council deceives himself by believing that he is a Minister of Education. The very object of such a high functionary is to produce order out of disorder. The building materials already cumber the ground, but the architect is wanting to use them on a plan. The castle is truly in the air, for since 1839 no large conception of educational administration has prevailed. The President of the Council, even as ministerial manager of primary schools for the people, is, with such a rare exception as proves the rule, invariably a member of the House of Lords. The Commons, who are elected by the people, have only an educational minister of the rank of an Under-Secretary of State to represent the Education Department. This has retarded educational organisation. The Lords, "looking down as from a balloon," have only a distant view of the wants of the people, whose interests are bound up with the educational administration of the country. A noble lord presides over the Education Department, charged with the education of the people, and cannot explain his views in the House which votes the supplies. His subordinate does sit in the House, and sometimes forces himself into the cabinet, but that is inconsistent with his irresponsible position. When any school managers go on business to the Education Department, the Vice-President, or irresponsible subordinate, alone is visible. It is like the old Government of Japan, when the invisible Mikado issued his orders through the visible Tycoon. But even in Japan this is altered, and the Mikado does his own business directly. So I hope before long this country may have a single responsible minister of education, charged with bringing into harmonious relations and co-operation our numerous public educational agencies. I tried, in 1874, to convince the House of Commons that the time had come for this administrative organisation. But, though I received the powerful support of Mr. Forster, my motion was not entertained, for Mr. Disraeli, now Lord Beaconsfield, whose Government had brought in a bill, in 1868, to make a sixth Secretary of State for the purpose of acting as an education minister, averred that in 1874 my proposal was altogether premature. Other countries have not thought so. It is a familiar fact that the existence of a ministry of education is considered essential to most countries in Europe. Even in China it has existed from time immemorial. In all countries there are family names, such as Stewart, Chamberlain, Falconer, Hunter, &c., denoting that, in remote antiquity, those families exercised functions at court. Now there happens to be an ancient record of one hundred noble families in China, dating fourteen hundred years before Christ, and one of the most honoured of these is, when interpreted, "Minister of Public Education." Surely what China has had for some thousands of years, it is, perhaps, not so absurdly premature that this kingdom should obtain now. I cannot see how Government can profess to reform the schools of this country, and to bring them into a graded connection, unless it first begins by an organization of its own most disordered educational system. If the schoolmasters of England are ready to organize themselves into a profession, with the view of improving national education, surely the State which has initiated the reforms of the endowed schools and universities, should begin to substitute a system for disorder in its own educational institutions supported by public money.

The future of teachers is in their own hands, and must be determined by themselves, at all events in great part. Government will no doubt insist in the case of endowed schools, as it has already for primary schools, that teachers in the future shall be trained and certificated. But the great body of private teachers might continue for some time at least outside the system, and remain without training or attested qualifications of their capacity. Naturally, however, they would sink lower and lower in public estimation, for there would then be a comparison between attested public qualifications and the mere assertion of a self-constituted fitness. If private teachers shun certificates of capacity as well as competent examinations of their teaching, the public will soon learn to shun the teachers. In the interests of both, therefore, it is desirable to promote the organization of a teaching profession, not only because such an incorporation would greatly add to the security of the tenures of teachers, and to the adequate remuneration of a laborious vocation, but, from the higher motive, that it would immensely promote the cause of education. Surely no profession ought to be able to claim a higher place than that which aims at the systematic development of the physical and mental powers of man. And for the dignity and elevation of such a profession, Parliament, in the interests of society, may well be called upon to provide an adequate organization, because, as Zeller puts it in a few words, "Society alone can form the institutions and provide for the means which all higher instruction requires, all the more the further science advances and spreads out into a multiplicity of single departments. From it alone can a suitable connected organization and direction proceed. . . . . The State is bound, in looking after her own future, to secure her permanence and prosperity by an adequate organization of instruction and education."

Lyon Playfair.

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