

homes acquire much which the child of the cottage must be laboriously taught. But to rich and poor the early awakening of the powers of observation, of attention and application, is of the utmost value. And though the young patrician is not taken from school to follow the plough, he can ill afford to lose the first years of his education.

But when all is done that can be devised for the inmates of the workhouse, there are still beyond its walls upwards of 288,000 pauper children receiving out-door relief. This class was left in a perfectly hopeless condition previously to the passing of Mr. Denison's Act, by which 'guardians are permitted, if they deem it proper, to grant relief to enable out-door paupers to provide education for their children, provided always it shall not be lawful for the guardians to impose as a condition of relief that such education shall be given.' Thus the education of these children depends on the co-existence of zeal for education on the part of the guardians, and a desire for it on the part of the parents. Under the head of out-door paupers, as Mr. Riddock observes in his Report, are ranged two very different classes—those who are the victims of chronic pauperism, receiving relief each winter, or on every accidental failure of employment or increase of the price of food; and secondly, those who have fallen into accidental pauperism from sudden causes, such as death, contagious disease, total cessation of a branch of industry, or any of the many breaks to which social economy is exposed. In habits and feelings these two classes are essentially different, the one being scarcely depressed below the level of the independent labourer, the other hardly raised above that of the workhouse pauper. Yet neither can be expected to co-operate very heartily with the efforts of the Legislature for the education of their children. There seems to be much uncertainty as to the number of children receiving education under this Act; but, on the most favourable supposition, there are at least 100,000 who attend no schools whatever; and there is strong evidence to prove that the 'education of those who do attend school is most deplorable.'

The remedy recommended by the Commissioners, and by almost all the witnesses whom they have examined, is to make the Act imperative, and to trust its execution to the Poor-law Board. It is not proposed that that Board should provide schools, but that they should enforce attendance at some school (under Government inspection, if possible). It is, we think, a good suggestion, that the district schools might in many instances be made available for the out-door pauper also. But there are not a few practical difficulties. 'It would not be sufficient,' says Mr. Lingen in his examination before the Ragged Schools' Committee, 'to make Mr. Denison's Act compulsory; it would also require a carefully-devised code of rules' to regulate its operation. It may not perhaps be easy to fix the limits of age before and after which education ceases to be compulsory; and there is some difficulty in the case of a child who is earning money in aid of his parents' support. But this, we think, may be obviated by allowing a discretionary power to the Poor-law Inspector, add also by the plans for combining a certain amount of education with remunerative labour, which the example of the 'Norwich Homes' has brought into notice, and for which the half-time system (hereafter to be mentioned) affords great facilities. The committee above referred to seem also to fear that this alteration of the Act would be considered as a step towards compulsory education. But if education has already been made the condition of a boy's earning his bread, where is the hardship of making it the condition of his eating the bread of the public? However ill compulsory education may sound in the ears of the House of Commons, there is no doubt that when they by law enforced education on any class, they did, in fact, assert the principle; and how far it shall be carried out is merely a question of policy and expediency. One great obstacle to making the Act imperative is the same which has paralysed its operation while only permissive. Guardians are reluctant to clog with conditions their scanty measure of out-door relief, and still more reluctant to raise it so as to send the children properly to school. But in spite of these, and other objections which may be raised it seems scarcely possible to propose any remedy for this enormous evil that does not, in the first instance, involve the amendment of Mr. Denison's Act. The law has for some time, we are told, been voluntarily carried out at Reading with great success; and we do not doubt that when its working is superintended and supplemented by private benevolence—and to no more useful object can private benevolence apply itself—as much will be effected as at present is possible to improve the education of the out-door pauper.

The objection to the establishment of good schools for pauper children, which operates most strongly, though it is more frequently, felt than stated, is, that it gives the pauper an advantage over

the independent labourer. We are not of those stern moralists who would visit on the children the sins of the fathers. That such is the course of Providence none who look on the world around them can doubt. But it is not laid upon man to be consciously and intentionally the executor of the decree. It is rather his duty and his privilege to do all in his power to lighten its severity. But great care must be taken in our zeal for the unfortunate not to hold out rewards to the guilty; and this makes the act of 'doing good,' of all others, the most difficult. We do not desire that the idler and the drunkard should be enabled to provide for his offspring the benefits of an affectionate home and 'voluntary guardianship,' by living a life of vice and dying a death of shame in the workhouse or gaol. But we would save the child from the necessity of following the father's steps. We can only strive to steer a middle course. Suchlike objections never can be fully answered. We must give the criminal in his cell a better meal than many an honest man can earn for himself, or he would die of gaol fever. We must educate the pauper 'above his station'—that is to say, above his station of pauper—for the object is to prevent his ever being a pauper again. The best practical answer to these objections is to raise the standard of education generally; and not merely for the children of the independent labourer, but for those of the farmer and the tradesman—a most important part of the subject, which we must reserve for future consideration.

The great obstacle to improvement is the want of hearty and intelligent sympathy with the advancement of education on the part of a large portion of the public. It is easy to account for the lukewarmness of landed proprietors and the hostility of farmers, by attributing an extraordinary degree of narrow-mindedness to the possession or occupation of land; but in truth by the passive and inert public at large, the present system has been accepted rather than approved, and is tolerated rather than supported. Even by the promoters of education the Privy Council's arrangements are less generally applauded than Inspectors are apt to suppose. 'Certificated teachers are popular,' but it must be remembered that part of their salaries is paid by the public; and it is only because they hold the purse-strings that their Lordships have been enabled to impose, if not without murmurs, at least without resistance, not only their whole scheme of education, but every crotchet which they were pleased to embody in their code of rules. In fact, the supposed enemies of education have a better case than they always have the skill to make good. Neither the scheme itself, nor the manner of its execution, is above exception.

The Commissioners' Report startles us with the information that three-fourths of the children 'do not learn, or learn imperfectly, the most necessary part of what they come to learn—reading, writing, and arithmetic.' And it further attests a still more lamentable failure in imparting sound religious knowledge. Too much is attempted; and what ought in the first place to be made sure is neglected. This unfavourable statement, we own, takes us by surprise; but it is the part of wisdom to inquire not how far it may be denied, but how far it must in candour be admitted. If, upon a fair view of the whole country, it should happily prove that a more satisfactory account would be justified, still the present Report is valuable, as pointing out the faults which the Privy Council scheme has a tendency to encourage. Unsoundness in teaching the elements is, indeed, the besetting sin of all places of education, especially for the poor. An educated person, when speaking to the very ignorant, has a difficulty in fully realizing to himself that he is almost in the position of a Frenchman who speaks no English, and is teaching an Englishman who understands no French. The Report contains some ludicrous answers to the Questions of the Catechism, which were given in writing by school children, and prove—not that they had learnt it by rote, but that they had never learnt even its words, and, instead of them, had been accustomed to repeat a senseless gabble which might be mistaken for them by a master who did not take pains to make his pupils pronounce audibly and distinctly. But the root of the evil is that, in the laudable endeavour to raise the standard of education, the Privy Council make the mistake of grasping too much. No doubt the examination papers quoted by Mr. Senior (p. 323), and the many others we have seen, would lose much of their apparent absurdity if we knew the class-books on which they are grounded. But the range of information required is such as in the time can be mastered only by the help of 'cram.' And the masters, having been crammed themselves, are apt to cram their scholars. Instances are mentioned of children who were scarcely acquainted with the great elementary truths of the Gospel, but could answer questions on the succession of the kings of Judah, the names of the minor prophets, and the geography of Asia Minor. Contrast this state of religious knowledge with the answers of the little boy