

own language may be patriotic, but it is not business.—Evening Standard.

The only true foundation for the law-abiding life, is reverence for the law of God.

ALFRED THE GREAT AS AN EDUCATIONIST.

We doubt not that in most of our schools of every grade advantage is being taken of the millenary of King Alfred's death to lay before the young the many points of interest which centre round his memory. Many parts of his reign are enshrouded in a legendary mist; and the stories connected with them, though very attractive to the minds of the young, are of more or less doubtful authority. We all know the pretty tales about the King's first lesson in reading, the swineherd's cakes, the vision of St. Cuthbert, and the like; but in addition to these there is very much that is entertaining and instructive in the history of King Alfred.

For instance, it is quite evident that King Alfred was not only distinguished as a brave warrior, and as a highly-gifted, judicious, and conscientious ruler and legislator, but as a scholar and educationist with ideas far in advance of his times. Finding his subjects, in consequence of the Danish invasions, sunk in barbarism and ignorance, he applied himself most vigorously to the promotion of sound knowledge amongst them. Hume tells us that he invited over the most celebrated scholars from all parts of Europe. Although it may not be correct to say that he was the first to establish the University of Oxford, he certainly revived it and liberally endowed it. He established schools throughout

his dominions. Nor was he satisfied with these measures, for he introduced the principle of compulsory education. He enjoined upon all freeholders or freemen possessed of two hydes of land (about 200 acres) to send their children to school until they could read English writing perfectly. How the funds for this purpose were obtained we are not told. There do not appear to have been any School Boards or voluntary rates, nor can we suppose education to have been gratuitous. The parents were probably able to contribute a share of the burden, and the State, in the person of the King, supplied the rest of the money. In any case, the children of the fairly well-to-do classes were sent to school, and kept there as long as was necessary. This must have been an immense improvement on the previous state of things.

Alfred also realized the great importance of educating the clergy as well as the laity. The monasteries, then the seats of learning, had been destroyed by the Danes, their libraries burnt, and the monks massacred or dispersed. The King complained on his accession to the throne that he knew not any person south of the Humber who could so much as understand the prayers in English, or even explain in the vernacular an Epistle from the Latin; and he added, "I likewise suspect that