

forms, denunciations from educational enthusiasts, and articles by leading educationists in the most influential magazines, have led to the appointment of commissions and committees by Parliament and the preparation of voluminous reports. But everywhere these efforts are hampered or directly opposed by the three obstacles which must always be overcome by those who enter the field of educational reform—“vested interests, local prejudices and stupid obscurantism.”

It must also be mentioned to their credit that the universities, by means of local examinations, have sought to influence the secondary education of the country, and not without good results. Many excellent schools have been, by the success of their pupils at these examinations and those of the College of Preceptors, brought into public notice and have had their credit established as sound and reliable places of learning. And at the same time there has been demonstrated to the public the fact that judicious examination is not only of advantage to their interests, but that it cannot fail to bring fame to and increase the income of the schools. But educational reformers, though satisfied with these as experiments, are by no means content to rest here. They behold, with dismay, that every new experiment, however successful, only adds to the chaos that formerly existed. They feel confident that from the £600,000 stg., of annual income, devoted by endowment to secondary education, there ought to be derived education of better quality and of greater quantity, and that three or four times the number of pupils ought to participate in it. And they are convinced that the spasmodic efforts of the teachers of the higher departments in primary schools, the private adventures of enterprising teachers, and the combined efforts of the wealthy in certain localities to establish proprietary schools, cannot supply the deficiency. And, therefore, during the last few years, constant, untiring and enlightened efforts have been put forth to educate public opinion on this great question, and to keep up a constant pressure in the direction of reform. Doubtless the debate in the House of Commons on 27th April brought gladness to the hearts of many. Its whole tenor was a pledge from both sides of the House that both parties were resolved that the present state of things must not continue any longer, and emphasized the admission that they were responsible to the public for the efficiency of secondary as well as primary education. And the least sanguine are justified in hoping that a resolute effort will be made, by the appointment of well qualified inspectors, to bring order out of the existing confusion, and by the power to be granted under the proposed

“Local Government Bill,” to utilize, to the utmost extent, local efforts and local capabilities to satisfy the demands of secondary education.

Such an admission on the part of English statesmen of their obligation to provide for the higher education of the youth of the country is a very hopeful feature of the politics of the day. It has long been acknowledged in Germany as the duty of the state to see that education, from the primary school to the university, is as perfect as it can be made. Germans are always ready to express their opinion that what they are at the present day, in the arts, or in war, is most of all attributable to their admirable educational advantages. In Germany the state inspects the primary schools, but reserves its grants for the higher education. Mr. Matthew Arnold writes: “We are misled if we are merely told that the schools for the lower classes in Berlin are free, while those for the middle and upper classes charge school fees. What would the schools for those classes be in Berlin, or anywhere else in Germany if they had merely the school fees to depend upon? The schools are built and maintained, and their teachers are paid by the state or the municipality; the school fees of the pupils, always very moderate according to their notions, are merely a contribution in aid of the expense of admirable schools provided really like the elementary schools by the public.” Such being the case, need there be any fear of following in the footsteps of the Germans. A generous and intelligent support of the higher education will serve to develop, foster, and exalt the professional spirit of the teachers, and quicken and stimulate the intellectual energies, and strengthen the moral force of the pupils.

#### THE PLANETS FOR JUNE.

*Jupiter* shines with great splendor in Scorpio. It is slowly moving westward from Beta Scorpii, with which in May it was nearly in apparent contact. After night-fall it will be the most conspicuous object in the southern sky.

*Mars* is further west in Virgo, but is moving eastward among the stars. It was in conjunction with *Uranus* on the 6th inst.

*Saturn* is still further west, east of Pollux and Procyon, in Cancer. It is moving eastward, and during the month will pass Præsepe, the nebulous cluster, also called the Beehive.

*Venus* is morning star in Taurus with Neptune.

*Mercury* is in greatest eastern elongation from the sun on the 12th, when it sets about two hours after the sun. It is then in Gemini and forms a triangle with Procyon and Pollux.