

## 2. EDUCATIONAL QUESTION IN IRELAND.

The official reply of Mr. Cardwell, to the Irish Roman Catholic prelates, has since been made public, and from which we quote some extracts.

"In Ireland, Parliament assigns a considerable sum to the purpose of national education, and as this sum is drawn from taxes contributed by all, so it is devoted to an object in which all are equally concerned, the institution and maintenance of schools, where an excellent instruction is offered equally to every denomination of Christians. In the benefits conferred by such an application of the public money, the Roman Catholics largely participate. Of the total number of 5,335 schools mentioned in the last report of the commissioners, as in connexion with the board in March, 1858, and educated in the whole 569,900 pupils, 3,683 schools were under Roman Catholic patrons, and 481,000 pupils belonged to the Roman Catholic church; of every 100 pupils in attendance, 84 were Roman Catholics; of the teachers of all classes in the service, 80 in every 100 were Roman Catholics; of every £100 paid to those teachers, £80 were paid to Roman Catholics.

"In the schools of which the patrons are Roman Catholics, the religious instruction is Roman Catholic; while in all the schools vested in the National Board, Roman Catholic pastors have free access before and after school hours—for the purpose of giving instruction—to the pupils of their own church.

"For this instruction every facility is offered. All the State requires is, that during school hours a good education, open to all Christians, should be given; and that no child should at any time be required to receive or be present at any religious instruction of which his parents or guardians disapprove.

"This system has now been in operation nearly thirty years. It has educated a whole generation, and is universally admitted to have conferred the greatest benefits upon the population of Ireland. Its maintenance must ever be an object of the utmost interest to a government anxious to promote the welfare and happiness of the Irish people.

"In replying, therefore, to the memorial of the Irish Roman Catholic archbishops and bishops, Her Majesty's government desire, in the first instance, to express in the plainest terms their steadfast adherence to the principles on which the national system of education has been created. Those principles were clearly laid down by the Earl of Derby, then Secretary for Ireland, in the well-known letter addressed by him to the Duke of Leinster in the year 1831. They secure to the clergy their legitimate right of conveying religious instruction to the members of their respective churches, while at the same time they sustain the just independence of the laity, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant. They have been repeatedly and deliberately considered in parliament, and constitute the recognised conditions on which education in Ireland receives assistance from the State."

## 3. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

Elementary education is a subject which is so seldom discussed in our high-priced reviews, that we deem it right to direct attention to an article in the last number of the *Edinburgh Review*, bearing the title, "Expense of Public Education in England." The writer of the article is evidently favourable to the maintenance of the existing system of the Committee of Council, subject, however, to important modifications. The debate on Mr. Wise's motion (which by the way, was carried) for a Committee of the House of Commons to revise the expenditure under the head of the "Civil Service Estimates," clearly showed that considerable alarm is felt by many members of the House (Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright being among the number) in reference to the rapid strides which the grant for education is annually making. The Committee of Council on Education have already commenced reducing their grants; and a royal commission is now sitting to consider the whole question of popular education, and if possible, to suggest measures for the future. No doubt the financial part of the question is an important element in their inquiry, and one which engages serious attention. In their last report, the Committee of Council stated that the total number of children for whom they would probably have to provide school-accommodation, teachers, &c., is 3,000,000. The number of teachers required for this supply of scholars was said to be 300,000. The total expense has been estimated at a sum somewhere between two and three millions. The writer of the article to which we have referred, attempts to prove that only 2,000,000 children are likely to be in inspected schools; that only 200,000 teachers will be required; and that even if the grants are not reduced, the total demand on the national exchequer would not exceed the sum of £1,600,000. But the writer suggests various reductions. He thinks that the capitation-grants might be discontinued, and observes that those grants "have scarcely answered their object; that the general

opinion is, that they have not to any material extent prolonged or increased the attendances; and it is certain that in some cases they have merely replaced local contributions; and that in others—the condition on which they are granted, namely, that the school-pence shall not exceed 4d. per week, prevents the managers exacting from parents payments which they are well able to make; so that, instead of increasing the school-fund, they substitute public assistance for private benevolence or parental duty." The writer of the article says he would substitute "stipendiary monitors at yearly payments of £5 or £6, for the worst half of the pupil-teachers." He also thinks that the building-grants are capable of reduction. He would moreover cease to employ "a separate staff of inspectors, exclusively attached to each church or doctrinal denomination." We do not allude to other reductions which have been suggested, but confine the present summary to the points stated above.—*English National Society's Monthly Paper*.

## 4. REV. W. FRASER ON EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND.

During the past year the Established Church of Scotland received £46,774, being an increase over the preceding year of £9,944; the Free Church received £31,609, being an increase of £3,194; the Episcopal received £5,536, being an increase of £661.

The necessity for legislation is overwhelming, when we bear in mind that, after all our efforts, tens of thousands of children are growing up, a curse to themselves, a burden to the community, a feebleness to the State, and dying as the heathen die.

The extension and elevation of Public Schools in Scotland have hitherto been prevented by incidental and moral obstacles, which may be briefly stated, and which are too well known to require explanation:—

I. The exclusive claim of the Established (Presbyterian) Church to the Parish Schools.

II. Extreme voluntarism.

III. Prevailing educational apathy. The public in Scotland are sick of the subject, and nauseate further discussion.

The foregoing sentiments and statements form a brief but almost *verbatim* outline of evils detailed in a pamphlet recently published by the Rev. William Fraser, of Paisley.\* Now, educationally speaking, we have a great respect for Scotland. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that, comparatively speaking, Scotland, in educational matters, is at the present time, and has been for some years, retrogressive.

With regard to the Universities, a correspondent of the *Times* lately observed that there are causes of weakness and languid activity in the Universities over which the Professors have no control, which a board of supervision is equally powerless to remedy. There is a want of organization, of unity, of *esprit de corps* in the several Colleges; what there is of this comes from the clubs and associations of the students themselves. In regard to the studies of the place, the class-room is the "be all and the end all." There is nothing to lead the student to advance further in his studies than the Professor has led him; there is no authoritative review of work done which aims at more than ascertaining that the student has paid a fair attention to the lectures. University distinction is hardly possible where the only publication of honours gained is a single advertisement in a local newspaper.

More than two years since, Professor Blackie, in his introductory lecture at the commencement of the Session, said—"Those who still choose to indulge themselves in the pleasant occupation of contemplating our academical excellencies, real or imaginary, may do so. I have a more serious business on hand, and, so long as I see the most glaring defects and the most unmitigated absurdities tolerated in our existing University system, shall consider it my duty on every suitable occasion, to stand forward and denounce them, that both my own usefulness may no longer be marred, and the intellectual character of the nation no longer degraded by the continuance of puerile practices in our highest seats of learning, which only the most besotted ignorance can defend, and nothing but the most culpable laziness can tolerate."

In the course of his lecture, the Professor observed—"What I call on the Scottish people to do in reference to this matter is, that while they continue every fair encouragement to the talented sons of the poor, they should beware of allowing their professors to dole out rations of meagre soup by way of charity, which the sons of the rich will despise, and which must have the effect of causing our academic halls to be deserted by the most cultivated classes of the country. We must manage matters so that no young man of enterprise and talent, whether rich or poor, shall have occasion to go to Oxford or to Berlin because in the metropolis of Scotland he cannot find teachers who have both time and talent to carry him on to the most advanced heights of his particular study."

\* "The Educational Condition of Scotland." Paisley: Robert Stewart.