

VII. Education in other countries.

1. COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.

For more than thirty years the "education of the people" has been aided by grants from the public purse. These grants, very considerable in themselves, have been very largely supplanted by voluntary contributions, and by "school-fees" paid by, or on behalf of, the "independent poor" themselves. This expenditure, as is well known, has produced great and important results. The means and appliances of education have been improved and multiplied. School-buildings, school-furniture, school-books, school-teachers have been carefully prepared, and abundantly scattered over the land. Some of the best wisdom of the country has been employed in the service of popular education. Committees of Council, Parliament, Inspectors, School-managers (many of them men of great learning and of high social standing) have been working zealously and pertinaciously in the cause. Education has been almost the subject of the day: and its agencies have been rapidly extended and widely diffused. We seem, almost at least, to have seen our way clear to placing knowledge "within the reach" of "all the children whom our soil maintains." And yet, despite these improvements and exertions, the "working-class" are not yet becoming "educated classes" but throughout the country, and especially in our crowded city populations and great centres of industry, masses of children are growing up in ignorance and vice, nearly, if not altogether unamenable to the educational influences around them. We have spread our board with abundant provision of the best kind, but the bulk of those who have been invited to the banquet either never appear at the table at all, or do not stay there long enough to be refreshed by its abundance.

It becomes necessary, therefore, that we should add to the provision of the means of education some efforts to secure their application to all the children for whom they are intended. At present the educationist has to contend, unaided, against the apathy and indifference of parents, and the demand for juvenile labour, and he is worsted in the contest. Irregular attendance, capricious removals from school to school, and withdrawals at an early age, prevent the successful education of many of those who pass through our elementary schools, and in addition to these partially-instructed ones, there are immense numbers who never get to school at all. The Manchester Education Aid Society, which during the two years of its existence has canvassed *one-tenth* only of Manchester and Salford, paying the fees in whole or in part, where necessary, has in one year nearly doubled the number of children in the schools of those two boroughs! It pays the whole of the school fees for 3612 children, most of whom, there is good reason to believe, would not have been at school at all but for its operation. This fact alone shows conclusively how much has to be done after schools and their adjuncts have been provided. The committee have learnt much respecting educational wants during their two years' canvass. "One of the most important facts elicited is that voluntary effort cannot calculate upon getting more than two-fifths of the neglected children into schools. The committee believe they have proved that no private effort can reach the depths of this evil, and that further legislation is urgently needed to provide for the primary education of every child in the community." With these facts before them it is not wonderful that the speakers at the meeting of this society—men of different modes of thinking—should have all agreed that something must be done to bring educational negligence under the cognizance of the law, and that an attempt should be made to make it almost impossible for children to escape school.

If, indeed, Manchester may be taken as a type of other manufacturing towns, it must be admitted that the Education Aid Society has proved that a greater necessity exists for compelling the use of existing schools, than for building new ones. If, after thirty years of exertions, voluntarism can only get hold of two-fifths of the children on whose behalf its efforts are made, it is high time compulsion was tried. For it is quite certain that we cannot afford, as a nation, to leave the mass of our labouring population uneducated. The industrial activity, which causes the competition of the labour market with the school, also necessitates a supply of "skilled" labourers. If our artisans remain uneducated, our manufacturing and commercial superiority will be undermined. So that, if we cannot "induce" we must "compel" parents to avail themselves of the facilities offered them for educating their children.

It cannot be denied that such "compulsion" is not calculated to be popular in this country. Englishmen are proud of their liberty, even if it be liberty to "perish for lack of knowledge." But it may be possible—we are inclined to believe it is desirable—to adopt a measure of indirect compulsion. We must as the Revise Code has taught us to do in other educational matters, demand "results." In other words, we may extend the application of those Acts for

"compulsory education" which are already in existence. For, in fact, we have for more than 20 years introduced the compulsory system, by enacting that no child shall be employed unless he either can read and write, or is attending school for a certain number of hours per week. In the session of 1860, Mr. Adderly and Sir Stafford Northcote brought into the House of Commons a Bill for extending this principle to *all employments*. This Bill was supported by those of "H. M. Inspectors of Schools" who were then engaged in manufacturing districts, and a petition in its favour was presented to the House on behalf of the General Associated Body of Church Schoolmasters. The chief enactment sought was that "No child under twelve be employed in any regular employment whatever, for time or by piece-work, without a certificate of being able to read and write." There were certain exceptions, and a clause permitting employment in such a case, if conjoined with a certain amount of schooling; but these were undesirable excrescences. Let the law be made general and absolute. The child's right to education would thus be enforced by making the parent's right to benefit by the labour of his offspring depend upon his discharge of his educational duties to them. Such an Act the members of the Education Aid Society suggest. Without relaxing their endeavours to make a good school accessible to every child, educationists should seek the means for giving every child a share in the education thus required, and rescuing it from the hard grip of the iron hand of labour until it has been subjected to the moulding pressure of the gentler hand of instruction. This would be done by an Act such as that suggested. We do not see how, otherwise, the apathy of parents and the competition of the labour-market can be surmounted, and our educational progress made commensurate with our efforts and expenditure on its behalf.

[Since writing the above, we find that in the House of Commons, on April 17th, in reply to Mr. Fawcett, Sir G. Grey said he was "unable to fix a day for introducing the promised measure for the extension of the Factory Act. The Government had not considered any plan for regulating the employment and education of children who were employed in agriculture." As the subject is thus under the consideration of the Government, and likely to be legislated upon shortly, educationists, who feel the importance of having all children's employment alike "regulated," and their previous education made a *sine quâ non*, should at once bestir themselves, make their views known, and strive to give them effect. It would be seen that the simple enactment we have advocated covers the whole ground, including that which "the Government" has "not considered."—*Papers for the Schoolmaster.*

2. TOWNSHIP SCHOOL SYSTEM OF PENNSYLVANIA.

BY G. D. HUNT.

During the past winter, I was engaged in teaching a rural school in Allegheny county, Pennsylvania, and thus had opportunities of learning some of the peculiarities of the Pennsylvania school system. Each township constitutes a school district, in which are established a suitable number of schools, each situated in such a place as will best accommodate the people, and all under the jurisdiction of a board of directors, six in number, who are elected by the people in the same manner as other township officers, and who hold their office three years, two of them being elected each year. It is the business of these directors to determine the number of months that school shall be kept each year in their respective townships, to levy a tax which, with the State appropriation, shall be sufficient to defray the expenses of the schools, to levy a tax to purchase sites and build school-houses, to employ teachers, visit the schools, etc.

In each county there is a County Superintendent, who is elected by the township directors, and who holds his office three years. It is his business to examine and license teachers, inspect the schools, etc. The directors usually give notice at the proper time, by advertisement, of the number of teachers wanted in their respective townships. The Superintendent holds examinations at different localities in the county; and no teachers are admitted to them except those who are applicants for schools. The directors attend these examinations, and afterwards choose their teachers from those examined.

The township institutes constitute another good feature of the system. These are held on alternate Saturdays at the different schools of the township in rotation. All of the teachers are required to attend them. Attendance is reckoned the same as a day's teaching, and non-attendance forfeits a day's wages. Twenty-two days of teaching constitute a school month; and it is optional with boards of directors whether they will have the institutes or regular teaching. Hence in some townships institutes are held, and not in others. When townships are small, two or more of them can unite and hold joint institutes.

The method of holding these institutes is this: School is held in the usual manner in the forenoon. At the close some one, previously