

patriotic feeling is stronger than that, which since the Reformation has created the religious communions of this country. Probably, therefore, so vast an annual charge as that which will be required for a complete and efficient national school system could not have been imposed by Parliament in any form of tax, unless aided by those religious communions. Elementary education now spreads and becomes efficient in proportion as religious congregations are willing to make the success of their Sunday, day, and evening schools, a primary object of exertion and sacrifice.

DEFECTS OF A DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.

The defects commonly imputed to the denominational system are, that it needlessly wastes funds in the building and support of separate schools; that it rears scholars in separate camps for future sectarian warfare; that it thus undermines the charity of our common faith, and subjects minorities either to a submission to conditions inconsistent with the rights of conscience, to a mere toleration, or to exclusion from the civil privileges of the school. But some of these evils may be cured by creating,—as a result of an improved public opinion and of the action of Parliament,—a better constitution for schools which shall include all in their secular advantages without oppression of conscience. Where schools exist for all sects, as in great cities, every parent may secure for his child not simply sound secular instruction, but religious training and example in strict accordance with his own wishes. He may rear his child as an aspirant for all the privileges of the congregation, as well as of the school. Let us hope that the rivalry of sects in our common Christianity will be even more generous, and that the law of charity will guide each in receiving as a sacred trust, children who belong to other chapels of the church of Christ, to be brought up in all the common elements of faith and practice. [The evils of denominational schools are further noticed in the last paragraph of the paper on "Newfoundland," page 118.]

PRESENT POSITION OF THE EDUCATIONAL QUESTION IN ENGLAND— FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS.

I have thus brought under review the steps which have led to our present position. Some immediate consequences are too obvious to be neglected. This school system is capable of great extension and improvement. Rural and town districts, in which intelligent proprietors are not resident, are often neglected. The wealth is there, but the mind and sympathy are absent. These are true stations of missionary work, and under our present plans are to be met by appeals from the minister and congregation to the absent proprietors. In very spare populations the school pence and local subscriptions bear a small proportion to the teacher's stipend. Mixed schools, taught by a class of well-educated matrons or widows, would perhaps provide a partial remedy. We need a Training Institution in which matrons and widows could be prepared to give thorough efficiency to that much discredited institution, the ancient Dame school, not without reason cast aside.

The efficiency of our day-schools depends on the gradual introduction of assistant masters to aid the principal and the pupil teachers. This necessity has been, from the first, foreseen as an indispensable feature of our school plan. The number of pupil teachers and the number of students who will annually leave the Training Colleges are now so great that, under the Minute of the 26th of July, 1858, many schools will be enabled to secure assistant masters as probationers. This aid, and the capitation grant extended to evening schools, will lead in a few years to the creation of prosperous night schools, for boys from thirteen to eighteen, in connection with every efficient day-school. If, then, the Mechanics' and Literary Institutions of the manufacturing districts are encouraged to provide instruction for our artisans above this age, they make them familiar with some one or more of the following subjects, viz.,—with the laws of health in their homes, occupations and habits; with the means of self preservation in dangerous occupations, such as mining, knife grinding, management of steam engines, working in mercury, lead, and other metallic poisons: with the most obvious applications of science to industry, in dyeing; calico printing;—the laws of heat; the elements of mechanics, &c.; navigation; agricultural economy; with the rudiments of art, so as to cultivate the sense of the beautiful, a knowledge of the laws of the combinations of color, skill in design, and in the inventive faculty which adapts natural forms to the wants of society and commerce. The subjects to be selected as appropriate to the habits of the trade of each district; the mode in which their teaching should be provided for; the proper inducements to such studies in a population still addicted to sensual habits, the amount of aid which they need from local property and intelligence, and from the government,—these are all subjects which await the same patient trial as that out of which our present day-school system has sprung.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AND THEIR LEGITIMATE SPHERE OF LABOUR.

The Mechanics' Institutions have, however, in large towns, been useful pioneers. They have shown that it is impossible to expect

from the mass of wearied workmen steady attendance on long systematic courses of scientific instruction. The preparatory training is wanting, and therefore the rudimentary instruction is absent, and the habits of thought are not formed. Then they have also proved that the excitement of single lectures on separate subjects, (though perhaps an indication that the sensual forms of amusement are giving way,) adds no permanent element to the prosperity of these institutions. The work of Mechanics' Institutions has therefore been accomplished more and more in the class-room by assiduous teachers, who have enabled the workmen to master the rudiments, and have led the more gifted and persevering to somewhat higher studies. The necessity of providing education for those who have neglected or not enjoyed it during the usual school age, and of strengthening those trained in our day-schools in the perilous struggle of mind with the senses, through which our youth must pass, has ever been present to the supporters of Mechanics' Institutions. For this great object they have in cities and populous districts raised buildings often at large expense and sometimes of beautiful design, which ought to take their place in the scheme of national education for our workmen. There are in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire, about 20,000 in attendance on the evening classes of these institutions; and from 45,000 to 50,000 members. In Great Britain, the evening classes probably comprise about 30,000 pupils, and the institutions 120,000 to 130,000 members. In 1853, their libraries contained 758,016 volumes, and 1,992,295 were annually issued from them to their subscribers. That would be a wasteful and narrow policy which should wilfully or ignorantly supersede these institutions;—sacrifice the large capital invested in their buildings;—rudely mortify the generous exertions which have made them what they are;—and scatter the social organization which is their strength. Rather let us strive patiently to ascertain what is the true function of these institutions. Within a few years we may confidently anticipate that, aided by the Minute of the 26th July, 1858, evening schools will be attached to all efficient day-schools in populous districts. There is work enough both for the evening school and for the Mechanics' Institution. The Mechanics' Institutions even in the thickly-peopled manufacturing districts do not comprise one per cent. of the population among the scholars of their night classes. Experience may prove that the evening classes connected with the day-schools will be most attractive to scholars who have been trained in them, up to the age of sixteen or eighteen. At that age, we may expect that the youth would prefer education with adults, and would be prepared by his proficiency in elementary knowledge to work with success in all the classes of the Mechanics' Institution previously enumerated. The day and evening schools would thus be preparatory to two great objects, and by the classes of the Mechanics' Institution the occupation in which by manual skill he must earn his daily bread would cease to be a monotonous drudgery, fixing his mental sight, with its lifelong gaze and microscopic power, on one process from which it was never withdrawn. Apart from the moral dignity of that labour which enables us to fulfil the duties of life, his intellectual insight into the relations of his own work would give him a never failing interest into that great whole of wonderful mechanical, or industrial combination, of which it formed a part, and in all those intricate weblike links which connect it with a great commercial system. Then let us not forget that, even when the Sunday-school did not exist, there were men in whom the intellectual life had a power to struggle with the grossness and want of a rude neglected boyhood. The privations, the exhaustion of daily toil for bread, never broke the resolution or chilled the ardour of these men. The divine preference for the mental over the animal life in them, resembled faith in the spiritual and the eternal, as contrasted with the sensual and transient. Their intellectual faculty enabled Brindley, Simpson, and Stephenson, to work out their own mental triumph unaided. But I would not have it so in future. For one strong swimmer who has been enabled to reach the shore, how many have perished unknown? Every Mechanics' Institution ought in its library, its museum, its classes, its naturalists' club, its mutual improvement society, its examinations, prizes, and other aids, to form for all men in whom this great instinct exists a source of help and encouragement.

INCREASING PARLIAMENTARY GRANT FOR EDUCATION, NOW NEARLY £1,000,000 PER ANNUM—PROPOSED SCHEMES.

These are some of the obvious immediate consequences of our present position. To depart from them is to enter upon a region of speculation. That subject which invites the earliest attention is one which has frequently been discussed both in Parliament and elsewhere. The Parliamentary grant is rapidly approaching one million per annum. If we estimate the annual outlay on the support of elementary schools at two millions, the sources whence that income is derived may be rudely estimated as about £700,000 from the government; about £800,000 from private subscriptions and collections of the supporters of schools; and about £500,000 from the