

.....and our trusty and well beloved George Shipton, Esq. Greeting.

Whereas we have deemed it expedient that a commission should forthwith issue to enquire into the working of the Elementary Education acts in England and Wales.

Now, know ye, that we, reposing great trust and confidence in your knowledge and ability, have authorized and appointed, and do by presents authorize and appoint you the said Sir Richard Assheton Cross, Henry Edward Manning, Cardinal Archbishop; Dudley Francis Stuart, Earl of Harrowby; Frederic Earl Beauchamp; Frederic, Bishop of London; Charles Bowyer, Baron Norton, Anthony John Mundella, Sir Francis Richard Sandford, Sir John Lubbock, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, James Harrison Rigg, Robert William Dale, Robert Gregory, Benjamin Frederick Smith, Thomas Daniel Cox Morse, Charles Henry Alderson, John Gilbert Talbot, Sydney Charles Burton, Thomas Edmund Heller, Bernard Charles Molloy, Samuel Rathbone, Henry Richard and George Shipton, to be our commissioners for the purpose aforesaid. And for the better effecting the purpose of this our commission, we do, by these presents, give and grant unto you, or any six or more of you, full power to call before you such persons as you shall judge likely to afford you any information upon the subject of this our commission; and also to call for, have access to and examine all such books, documents, registers and records, as may afford you the fullest information on the subject, and to inquire of and concerning the premises by all other lawful ways and means whatsoever.

And we do further, by these presents, authorize and empower you, or any six or more of you, to visit and personally inspect such places in our United Kingdom as you may deem expedient for the more effectual carrying out of the purpose aforesaid.

And we do, by these presents, will and ordain that this our commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, our said commissioners, or any six or more of you, may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued from time to time by adjournment.

And we do further ordain that you, or any six or more of you, have liberty to report your proceedings under this our commission from time to time if you shall judge it expedient so to do.

And our further will and pleasure is that you do, with as little delay as possible, report to us under your hands or seals, or under the hands and seals of any six or more of you your opinion upon the several matters herein submitted for your consideration.

Given at our Court at Saint James, the fifteenth day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, in the forty-ninth year of our reign.

By Her Majesty's command,
RICHARD ASSHETON CROSS.

On the 10th of March, 1886, Her Majesty appointed the Honorable E. Lyulph Stanley as substitute to the Right Honorable H. J. Mundella, who had resigned his seat upon the commission.

At a later period Mr. Bernard C. Molloy withdrew from the commission. His place was filled by the Duke of Norfolk, who was appointed a commissioner on the 15th of June, 1887.

There is no doubt that the commission is purely English, it emanates from our beloved Queen, and is addressed to some

of her most distinguished subjects, selected on account of their known ability, as well as their love for their country. These twenty-five commissioners have for the field of their labor, England and Wales; there is nothing of foreign proclivities in these men. Most of them are Protestants and belonging to different denominations; their social position identifies them with all that is honorable and fair: their loyalty to the Crown does not admit of doubt; the trust of their Sovereign imposes to them the duty to meet her views as fully as possible; so we can be assured that such a commission commands respect and attention, not only in England and Wales, but through all the immense domains of Her Majesty.

Let us review what has been accomplished by this commission of Royal appointment, composed of men of distinction and ability, and entrusted with a sacred cause.

2. THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION.

The work of the commission is immense, and will give just cause of surprise to those who believe that the question of education can be fairly and sufficiently discussed in a political speech, or a careless letter to the press, or by a fanatic who thinks it is only necessary to appeal to passions.

I invite those who are not acquainted with the efforts of the said commission to pay some attention to the short analysis I take the liberty of publishing, and which suffices to give a striking proof of the consciousness with which a matter of such great moment as the cause of education is approached in the very heart of the British Empire.

The Royal Commissioners immediately after their appointment set to work with a zeal worthy of themselves and of the trust with which they had been honored by their beloved Sovereign. The inquiry began on the 20th of January, 1886, and lasted until July, 1888. The commissioners themselves state in their reports to Her Majesty, the sources from which they gather their information and say: "After considering the numerous applications received from persons desiring to give evidence before us, we determined to summon representatives of all public bodies who were in any way concerned with the administrative and working of the elementary education acts, and of all classes of persons whom these acts most immediately affect, in addition to such other witnesses as, either from their special knowledge, or from their experience, we thought likely to furnish valuable information. No representative witness, so far as we know, has been precluded from giving evidence before us."

"Mr. Patrick Cumin, Secretary to Your Majesty's Education Department, was the first witness called, whom we heard at great length. We next examined several of Your Majesty's Chief Inspectors of schools; and these witnesses were follow-