

whole body of our schools withdrawn from our ken by the necessity which is cast upon the parents of sending the children out to work. Now, the question is, what shall that remedy be? And as on former occasions the subject has been discussed by us, the same course will be continued until we arrive, as I hope we shall, at a solid practical result. I am not so presumptuous as to wish to put in my own remedy, but I must be permitted to say what I think we cannot do. I am persuaded that anything like an attempt to catch hold of young men and young women after they leave school, and by holding out either a pecuniary reward or in any other manner attempting to persuade them to take a deeper interest in the subject of education than their own minds naturally induce them to take, will end in failure. I know that it is a most tempting thing for any clergyman or country squire, who has taken the trouble to establish a school in his parish or his estate, to offer an artificial stimulus of that kind, for the purpose of inducing them to attend the school and give more attention to their mental culture. But anything of that kind has a tendency to draw them away from their natural employment, and can only be carried out in very exceptional cases. What we ought to do is to devise some means of attracting and keeping a hold on the young after leaving school, without interfering with their ordinary operations, or interfering in any way between the employers and the employed. It is rather too much to expect that an employer will consent to keep a boy at school at the time when he ought to be at work; and indeed, even in that case, I doubt very much whether such a plan would be successful. I can give you an instance in which it was not. Some years ago I was very desirous of doing something of the kind in my own parish, and I engaged two boys to do a certain amount of work; but I made an engagement with them that I would not pay them unless the boy who was not employed in labour attended the school. I, however, totally failed, for the boys preferred labour to school, and both of them left my employment as soon as they could find others to give it to them. I attempted to interfere artificially with their natural desire, and I deservedly failed. I think, therefore, we may lay it down as a general principle, that the only enduring mode by which we can hope to effect the object we have in view is to adopt some system which shall produce in the minds of the boys when they are leaving school a desire to continue the improvement of their minds. To speak plainly, I see no other remedy for the evil. Much good may, I think, be done by evening schools; nor do I think that in all instances paid masters will be necessary; for I think it very probable that many young men, of from twenty-five to thirty years of age, competent to fill the situation, would do so for a comparatively small addition to their ordinary earnings, and I know that such is the case in my own district; but after all the main thing is to interest the people themselves, and I take the liberty of mentioning that at the time of the Crimean war and the Indian mutiny the greatest desire was evinced in many of the rural parishes to know what was going on. In my own district I endeavoured to supply the want by establishing a news-room, to which the subscribers paid one penny a-week, but at the end of it many of them came to me and said, "Sir, we cannot go on: we have all been to school and can read, but we cannot read these newspapers; the print is so small, that they are so hard to read." By my advice they chose a reader for them, and by that means were enabled to meet the difficulty and great good was effected. I think it very desirable that some other name than that of schools should be given to the establishments which adults frequent for the purpose of education, because I think oftentimes the very name of schools would deter men from going there, as they would fear the gibes of the younger persons. If once an interest is created among them some way will be found to effect our object, and perhaps no means would be more useful than that of employing readers. I also think the introduction of drawing into such establishments most desirable, for nothing tends to form the mind and give the first elements of instruction to man more than drawing, however roughly it may be done. Let us, however, always remember that we must not interfere with the ordinary active occupations of those men whose business in life will be to earn their own livelihood."

II. COMPULSORY EDUCATION A NATIONAL NECESSITY IN ENGLAND.*

Legislation, merely speculative, is now valueless, it must be strictly enforceable—our condition has made compulsory education a national necessity. The real difficulty with which we must grapple lies, not in the magnitude of the untaught masses, but in that all-pervading apathy, that moral paralysis, which no ordinary appliances can now either arouse or remove. A national measure, though equalising the distribution of the educational burden, and diffusing the benefits of

better school-houses, lower fees, and higher teaching, cannot impart the desire to be educated where it never existed, nor restore it where it has perished. The apathy has, in thousands of instances, become hereditary; and none of the national measures hitherto proposed, therefore, for either England or Scotland, would have lessened, by one jot or tittle, our educational difficulties, inasmuch as they left this widely and deeply diffused sunkennes unacknowledged, and without remedy.

Without enactments, either directly or indirectly compulsory, the difficulties remain unmet, and all legislation becomes utterly valueless; for most assuredly the means of education are already within the reach of all who really desire it, both in town and country. Construct the most perfect national measure ever dreamed of in theory, let schools be everywhere planted, let them be open to all, let a higher education be diffused than has ever yet blessed the public schools of any country, and our uneducated children will, by hundreds of thousands, as at present, make the streets their sphere of moral training, heedless alike of the attractions of the National School, and the invitations of Christian philanthropy. To trust in the mere establishment of National Schools as a power to reach these uneducated masses, is to believe in the effectiveness of the hand-passes of quackery, to remove a disease requiring the firmest and most forcible applications of medical skill.

The objections long so strenuously, in many instances so fiercely, urged against compulsory education, are rapidly losing their weight. In the light of well-ascertained facts, and of fuller knowledge of the social condition of the masses, nearly every formidable difficulty has already lost much of its original magnitude. I will proceed to notice such of its aspects as have been more distinctly brought to light in the course of this investigation.

The objection, that to enforce the attendance of children at school would draw away from the labour market so many as to interfere seriously with our commercial relations, rendering it impossible for us to compete with other nations in certain manufactures, has been almost altogether destroyed by the census return of 1851.

It was generally supposed, that those who were not at school were detained by employment: but it has been ascertained, that of 2,262,019 not at school, though of the school age, only 599,829 were employed; of these, 381,776 were boys, 218,055 were girls. Thus, more than a million and a-half of the school age, were neither at school nor employed; and the objection that sweepingly comprehends more than two millions and a-quarter, is now shown to affect but little more than a quarter of a million.

A compulsory enactment would thus affect two classes. 1. Those employed and unable to attend. 2. Those unemployed and unwilling to attend school.

Looking at the first class, one naturally asks, *While the labour market has its interest, have not children their indefeasible rights? Have they no claims on the justice and power of the State, if not on its benevolence and mercy?* It is a legitimate function of the labour market to traffic in the nerves, sinew, and bone of children—to work them up into a sadly enfeebled manhood or womanhood—and throw them, prematurely woe-worn and wasted, into the poorhouse, the infirmary, or the grave? It is a legitimate function of the labour market to lay its broad foundations, and extend its imposing structure on the most precious elements we find on earth—on finest sympathies, which it crushes and deadens—on strong and hopeful intellects, which it keeps for ever dark, and on consciences which it touches only to blunt or sear?—Does not society pay through its infirmaries, asylums, and poorhouses, at the close of life, for what the labour market gains at its commencement? And who can estimate the loss through life to each neglected child of its one privilege—education; the bitterness of crushed feeling, and the curse of mental deformity and feebleness which *might* have been prevented?—Has not Britain, in legislating for the slave, and paying for his emancipation, deliberately broken in upon the alleged sacredness of the labour market, and set aside the principle on which men now rest their vague arguments against compulsory education? Why not therefore carry into the midst of her own home circle the blessings of blending justice and mercy, and break from off the wrist of her children the manacles of premature and oppressive toil?—We insist that the body shall not be maimed, distorted, nor deformed, even when silent as to physical processes which are prematurely wearing it out. Why not insist that the higher part—the mind—be not maimed, stunted, nor deformed, though silent as to those general home and social influences which we know to be wasting much of its strength, and robbing it of comeliness?

What real difficulties lie in the way of enforcing school attendance on the idle?

One source of weakness, irritation, and expenditure lies chiefly in the idle masses, and but very subordinately in the employed. The unemployed who are not at school are about 84 per cent. of the whole, the remaining 16 per cent. being at work. Why not by some compulsory measures save society from these simmering and seething

* From "The State of our Educational Enterprises in Britain." By the Rev. W. Fraser, of Scotland. Though not endorsing all the sentiments expressed in this paper, we consider them well worthy of consideration.—*Ed.*