

children who formed the school attached to the monastery. It was roofed, but otherwise exposed to the weather, and the monk had to brave the hardships of a sedentary life all the year round in the open air. More than once a chronicler tells us that he is obliged to break off his work for the winter, because his fingers are nipped by the frost. Some of our mediaevalists look back, or fancy that they look back, wistfully to those times. It is a pity they cannot put on the magic shoes of Hans Andersen's tale, and be transported for one day back to the Middle Ages. One day's experience would probably satisfy their desire.

High honour is due to the Monasteries, and especially to those of the Benedictine order, for the services thus rendered by them to education as well as to learning in the darkest hour. But their pupils, all told, must have been few in number, and of these, while a few were scions of the lay nobility, the bulk, and probably all those taken from the poorer classes, were destined for the ecclesiastical order. That order, indeed, was far more comprehensive than it is in modern times; it included not only the priest proper, but all the intellectual professions, the lawyer, the physician, the literary man, the architect, the artist, the mechanic—every one, in short, but the soldier, the trader, and the tiller of the soil. Still it was limited compared with the mass of the population, which remained in a state of total ignorance; among the consequences of which we may reckon the blind and sanguinary fury of labour movements in the Middle Ages, such as the insurrection of the villains under Wat Tyler, which strongly contrasts with the generally peaceful and orderly, though sometime erroneous, contests waged by the better educated mechanics of the present day. Even among the nobility and gentry elementary education was very scarce, and most of the English nobles might have said, with Old Douglas in Marmion:—

"Thanks be to Heaven, no son of mine,
Save Gawaine e'er could pen a line."

With that great movement of the sixteenth century which, from the prominence of the religious element in it, we call the Reformation, but which might more aptly be termed the revival of humanity, came the spirit of national education. Of the first efforts in that direction the honour may be ascribed to enlightened Catholics, to William Wykeham, and after him to the group of which Sir Thomas More was the noblest man in England, while Erasmus was their leading spirit in Europe; but these men, though, when the religious crisis arrived, they shrank from schism, and clove to the ancient faith, belonged intellectually, and not in that respect alone, to the Reformation. A number of grammar schools, of which Christ's Hospital is the greatest and most famous, founded by the young Protestant King Edward VI., and still bearing his name, are at once the first fruits of the newly-awakened spirit of national education in England, and the proofs of the connection of that spirit with the spirit of the Reformation. This connection it is impossible to doubt, and it may be admitted even by a Catholic without necessary disparagement to his religion; for a Church which can herself teach all truth needs not the aid of the human intellect, perhaps naturally mistrusts it, and therefore has comparatively little interest in education; while a Church which appeals to reason and to private judgment, must of necessity educate; and this irrespective of the abstract truth of the doctrines of either Church. Which are the educating nations? Scotland, New England, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Canada. Which are the non-educating? Spain and her colonies, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Belgium—Belgium, in spite of the existence in her of a large manufacturing element, which generally carries with it activity of mind. In the case of Spain, the facts are eloquent. By its last census not a fifth of the population can read. But even this amount of progress has all been made since the beginning of the century, prior to which time, we are told to be able to read was in men very rare, in women immoral; and the growth of popular education has proceeded at exactly an even pace with the demolition of political despotism and of ecclesiastical intolerance. If, in parts of Catholic Germany, and in Ireland, we find popular education, this is traceable in the case of Germany to the influence of Protestant neighbours, in the case of Ireland, to the direct interposition of a Protestant power. It is true that the Jesuits were good educators; so great as to extort from Bacon the exclamation, *tales cum sint, utinam nostri essent*, "they are so excellent that I would they were ours;" but Jesuit education was the offspring, as well as the antagonist of the Reformation: its object was not to enlighten, but to influence and to re-convert, and with a view to that object its pupils were selected. No Jesuit was ever a hearty friend to popular education. We need not press the case too far. That vast extension of popular education in recent times, which is one of the most momentous facts in the history of the nineteenth century, is traceable, no doubt, to other causes besides religious emancipation. Even in Prussia, public instruction was comparatively little cared for in the interval between the Reformation and the French Revo-

lution. Frederick the Great, at the end of the Seven Years' War, provided for his superannuated grenadiers, by making them school-masters. It was when the army of Frederick the Great had been overthrown by Napoleon, in the hour of calamity and shame, that Prussia, feeling the need of something stronger than an army to redeem her from the depths into which she had fallen, first abolished serfdom and then instituted the great system of public instruction which has carried her from Jena to Sedan. But in the main, the fact remains indisputable that public instruction as a duty and as a policy has been intimately connected with the prevalence of religion, which appeals to an open Bible, and to reason, as the interpreter of its pages.

In the land of John Knox, the Reformation was completely victorious, and drew with it the general love of education which has made Scotchmen what they are the world over, as well as the political Liberalism to which even at the present moment of Conservative reaction in England, Scotland remains true. But in England, as in France, the issue was doubtful. France, even after the defeat of the Huguenots, did not lose all traces of their spirit or sink ecclesiastically and mentally to the level of Spain; while in the English hierarchy and in the monarchy and aristocracy, which were allied with it, as the monarchies and aristocracies of France and Spain were with the hierarchy in those countries, there was preserved some of the doctrine and temper of the Church of the Middle Ages. The spirit of education which touched with fire the lips of Milton, belonged in the main to Milton's party; with the Puritans it conquered, with them it fell; with them it went into illustrious exile, and founded in New England the first common schools. The State clergy of the Church of the Restoration were almost as indifferent to public instruction as the State clergy of Spain; the only proofs they gave of anxiety about the subject were Acts of Parliament, passed under their influence to prevent Dissenters from educating their own children, the last and most infamous of which was the work of the infidel Bolingbroke, pandering to the passions of fanatical ecclesiastics. This apathy lasted through the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century. George III. expressed a pious wish that every poor child in his dominions should learn to read the Bible—we may be sure he meant with a political commentary of a very orthodox kind; but no public measures were taken to give effect to the King's desire. About the only places of popular education were those Dames' Schools, which have furnished themes to every painter of English peasant life, from Crabbe to Wilkie, and in which a decrepit old woman who knew nothing, taught the children of the peasantry all she knew. After the great French war, however, the mind of the nation being turned again from that mortal conflict to its own affairs, the current of reform, long icebound, began to flow, and the cause of popular education as well as that of political improvement was taken up with accumulated energy and fervour. Wesley had done something by his school at Kingswood, and still more by showing his sense of the importance of the subject. Bell and Lancaster had done something by agitating educational questions, as well as by devising the monitorial system. But the motive power came from that revival of the spirit of progress in the nation, after the long period of reaction caused by antagonism to continental Republicanism, which was so strong, so tempestuous in its character, so powerful in its effects, as almost to receive the name of the English Revolution. A revolution, in fact, it would have been, had not the obstinacy of the aristocracy and the clergy quailed before the advent of civil war. Brougham, thundering in the van at once of political and educational reform, was the master spirit and typical man of the day. With stentorian voice and vehement gestures he enforced upon the national mind the necessity of public instruction; he once spoke in Parliament on the subject for seven hours. At his bidding, and that of the age of which he was the embodiment, the schoolmaster went abroad, Penny Cyclopædias were published, Mechanics' Institutes rose, enquiries into educational character commenced, and everything betokened the advent of educational revolution. At the same time the clergy of the State Church, seeing that education must come, and that it might fall into bad hands, met their danger in the best and most creditable way, by exerting themselves in their parishes, and with great effect for the improvement of the Church schools. Those were days of hope as all days of revolution are; young men dreamed dreams and old men saw visions. It seemed that a Reformed Parliament and Public Instruction would make new heavens and a new earth. It is a beneficent illusion; for if we could see beforehand how limited the results of our improvements would be, we should hardly exert ourselves to make any improvements at all.

Singularly enough, or I would rather say naturally enough, the first scene on which this spirit of educational reform displayed itself in practical legislation was Ireland. Whether it be in education, or police, or the Church, or the land law, England is always ready for radical reform—in Ireland. Cromwell saw the value of Ireland as