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BRIEF SKETCH OF THE PRESENT CONDITION OF EDUCATION IN THE PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD.*

A brief review of the present condition of education in the more prominent countries of the world, may be interesting. In *England*, the facilities for acquiring a thorough university education are excellent, for those who have sufficient means at command; the course of study at Cambridge and Oxford, though perhaps giving too much prominence to classical and mathematical studies, is still well calculated to develop the intellectual powers. The London University, and some of the colleges of the dissenters, give more attention to popular science. The great endowed schools of Eton, Rugby, Harrow, Westminster, Winchester, Christ's Hospital, &c., &c., are for the most part, devoted to classical and mathematical training.

In provision for the education of the masses, England is yet behind many of the countries of Europe. Still, under the persevering efforts of Lord Brougham, Sir J. Kay Shuttleworth, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Stanley, and other distinguished friends of education, there has been decisive progress within a few years past: the factory children are not now brought up in utter ignorance; a cheap yet instructive literature pervades every hamlet, and has developed, even in the lowest classes, a love of reading; evening schools for adults, and Sunday-schools, which there, as well as on the continent, are very often occupied with instruction in reading and other elementary branches, are very largely attended.

The education of deaf mutes and the blind, is more limited than in France or this country, being generally confined to reading, writing, and the acquisition of some mechanical art, on the part of the deaf and dumb; and reading by touch, singing, playing on musical instruments, and knitting, mat-braiding, weaving, or basket-making, for the blind.

The Reformatories of England are deserving of high praise, both for their number and success. Hundreds are every year rescued by them from a life of crime, and rendered good and intelligent citizens.

Scotland is inferior to England in its facilities for higher education; and the low salaries afforded to the professors in its universities, prevent, in many cases, highly qualified scholars from accepting the posts; but in secondary and primary education, it is far in advance of England; Its system of parish-schools is not, indeed, perfect, but it is constantly improving. Its humanitarian institutions have a higher reputation than those south of the Tweed.

Ireland, so long the victim of ignorance, is improving in education and general intelligence, as much, or more than any country of Europe. Within a few years, good schools have been greatly multiplied; and, ere long, her peasantry will be beyond those of England in intelligence. This is the result of the system of national education, established there about thirty years since, which, from small beginnings, has at last drawn into its schools the great bulk of the children of the country. It provides for *combined* secular, and *separate* religious instruction, and thus obviates the great difficulties under which the English schools have labored.

In *France*, *superior education*, as it is called, especially in mathematical and physical science, is not inferior to that of any country in the world; and the colleges and lyceums which are found in every considerable town in the empire, are generally well conducted.

Primary education was very much neglected from the time of the Revolution of 1793 to the accession of Louis Philippe; but the efforts of that monarch, seconded, most zealously, by Guizot, effected, in the course of the next eighteen years, a wonderful change; and, in 1850, only two thousand five hundred communes, out of more than thirty-eight thousand, were without one or more primary schools, and one-ninth of the whole population were attending school. The charitable, reformatory, and special schools of France are generally well conducted, and the success of some of them—that of the institutes for the deaf and dumb, and for the blind, and the reformatory colony at Mettray—has been such as to attract the attention of all the nations of Europe.

* From the *History and Progress of Education*, by Philobibulus. New York: A. S. Barnes & Burr, 1860.