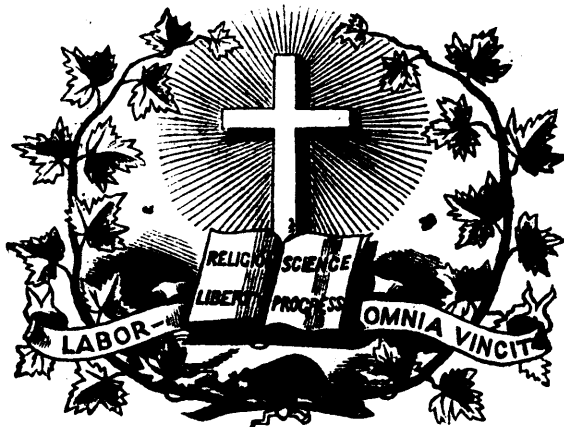




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Education in England.

MR. FORSTER DEFENDS THE EDUCATION ACT.

On the 25th of last November, and on the eve of the elections for the London School Board, the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P., the member of the British Cabinet under whose auspices the present Educational law for England was passed, visited Liverpool and inaugurated the handsome and commodious schools which have been erected by the School Board in Queen's road, Everton. Mr. Forster, on his arrival in Liverpool, was met at the Board room by the members of the recently elected School Board, and, accompanied by the Mayor, the members of

the Board, and a number of leading gentlemen of the town, proceeded to Butler street, where the foundation-stone of the new Board schools for that district was laid by Mr. Christopher Bushell, the Chairman of the late Board. After the ceremony, Mr. Forster addressed a large meeting in the Queen's road schools in regard to Education matters generally and the Education Act in particular, his special object being to reply to recent attacks on that Act and his share in it by Mr. Bright and others. He complimented the Liverpool Board for their energy in educational matters, for meeting the religious difficulty, and on the increase of the attendance by 25 per cent. Reverting to the position of the question three or four years ago before the Act was passed he said:

"What was the educational position of the country? We had no State system of education; that is, no State system in this way, that the State had not undertaken to see or to secure that every parent would find a school for his child, but there was a voluntary system spreading over the country, supported by great energy, and doing very much. That voluntary system reached all corners and all parts of the kingdom; and what did we find was the state of things with regard to the teaching of the great mass of the population? We found much done, much doing, and much left undone; many good schools; many bad schools; and many districts with no schools at all; many parents able to get, and really getting, a good education for their children, and many children brought up in utter ignorance and utterly neglected."

Public opinion demanded that something be done to provide a system of National education. There are those who say the Government should have waited until public opinion indicated precisely what kind of a law was wanted; but Mr. Forster did not think the Government in a matter of this kind should wait for such instruction. The friends of the Church and voluntary schools and the Birmingham League had both spoken in favor of waiting. The former said:—

"Give us time, and we will fill up all the gaps. Let our system work on, and although there is no security that it reaches to every part of the country, we will undertake that it will do so." What was our reply? "We can't afford to wait; we dare not trust to your filling up the gaps; we know that children are escaping your net, and that they will grow up in ignorance, while