

# NATIONAL EDUCATION

IN

# I R E L A N D.

BY

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## P R E F A C E .

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IN adding to the multitude of Pamphlets published on the "Irish Education Question," I am not insensible to its difficulties. Being long an attentive reader of all that is written by others, I have had a more favourable opportunity than most persons of testing its accuracy. My conclusions may be erroneous, but the facts I have stated, I trust, will be found to be accurate, and I am content if they shall only have their just weight and influence.

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49, MOUNTJOY-SQUARE, DUBLIN,

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## NATIONAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

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IN the summer and autumn of the year 1856 it was my duty to inspect the Endowed Schools in the counties of Fermanagh, Donegal, Londonderry, and Antrim. The great majority of those which I visited happened to be schools of primary instruction, in connexion either with the Board of National Education or with the Church Education Society. It was also my duty to make inquiries after many schools which had been recently in operation, but have now become deserted and extinct, having lost their endowments, or ceased to use them. Of course it is not my intention here in any manner to discuss or allude to the subjects of inquiry intrusted to the Endowed Schools Commissioners, further than to say, that they did not involve the consideration of what is known in Ireland as the Education War, or the antagonistic working of the two great rival educational institutions. But though this particular subject formed no part of the inquiries of those employed on that Commission, it was hardly possible, as one passed over the many battle-fields strewn

here and there with desolate school-houses and expiring schools, not to have the attention arrested, and the contemplation fixed on the disastrous struggle which has been protracted now for twenty years and more, and not to feel impressed with an earnest desire that the conflict should be terminated, and reasonable terms of accommodation mutually offered and accepted. This is my excuse for intruding on the subject.

I do not propose to enter into the actual merits of this controversy, nor shall I venture to decide which party has the greater amount of reason or Christian principle on its side. I desire rather to apply myself to the practical question,—What is best to be done for the common weal of the nation, and the true interests of sound Education? And with this view, and no other, shall I consider the relative position of the parties, and the past history of the controversy respecting National Education.

Perhaps I cannot take any more convenient starting-point than the Fourteenth Report of the Commissioners of Education, published in the year 1812. It furnishes almost the only neutral ground we shall meet with. It is appealed to by the Resident Commissioner of the National Board “as the most important Report that ever came out on the subject of Education.” The Board itself appeals to it, as being the programme and basis of the present scheme of National Education. Sir Robert Peel, writing some years since to his Grace the Lord Primate of Ireland,

said:—"It would be difficult to name persons of higher authority on the subject of public instruction in Ireland." On the other hand, the names of the Commissioners,—including the Archbishops of Armagh and Cashel of that day, the late Bishop of Killala, and Provost Elrington, afterwards Bishop of Ferns, and Mr. John Leslie Forster,—are a sufficient guarantee to the Established Church that its rights were not overlooked. Time, though it has greatly modified the state of society in Ireland, and introduced vast improvements in the habits and comforts of the people, so far from detracting from the value of this Report, or turning it into an obsolete Blue Book, has produced the most singular confirmation of the soundness and prudence of the views entertained by those enlightened and liberal men, and of the grave mistake committed in adopting a part of their comprehensive plan, without its compensating adjustments.

The state of things which the Commissioners found to exist in 1812 was of this nature. The only general system of schools established by Parliament for the education of the children of the poor was that of the Parochial Schools. They, by the terms of their foundation, were not merely English schools, but essentially and necessarily Scriptural schools. They had been receiving some small Parliamentary assistance, through the medium of the Association for Discountenancing Vice, since the year 1800. Trifling as it was, the Parochial Schools had the monopoly of

whatever assistance was going, and attained a position comparatively respectable, as contrasted with the schools of the Roman Catholics. In the latter schools, attended by 200,000 children of the poor, the state of instruction was very limited, and the books found in use "were calculated to corrupt the mind, to incite to lawless and profligate adventure, to cherish superstition, and to lead to dissension and disloyalty." The Commissioners, finding this state of things, proposed to substitute for these "ill-taught and ill-regulated schools" (not the Parochial Schools) a systematic and uniform plan of instruction, to be provided in a set of supplemental schools, regulated by Commissioners appointed for the purpose. The leading principle of the new establishments was to be, that "all interference with the particular religious tenets of the pupils should be unequivocally disclaimed, and effectually guarded against." The text-book, for mixed religious instruction, was to be a selection from the Scriptures, "which would not be liable to any of the objections which have been made to the use of the Scriptures in the course of Education."

In all fairness it must be conceded that the supplemental schools thus recommended by the Commissioners of 1806-12 were the legitimate type and pattern of the National Schools of 1831; that non-interference in religious tenets was to be their fundamental principle; and that Scripture extracts, and not the Bible, were to form the basis of the re-

ligious instruction common to all. And so far, the National Schools had the unqualified sanction of four distinguished prelates of the Established Church.

But then the National Schools, if they were to conform to this type and pattern, were manifestly intended to be supplemental to some other schools. They are designated "supplemental" in five different parts of the Report, and this should have led to the inquiry,—What was to become of the original schools to be supplemented? Were the Parochial Schools to be absorbed and swallowed up in the supplemental schools, or were they to be superseded and supplanted by them? Either process would be a strange mode of supplementing them. They were Scriptural schools by the terms of their constitution, and could not well be incorporated integrally with a system of schools in which the general use of the Bible was to be a matter of accident, and in which extracts from the Bible were to be substituted for the Bible itself.

Accordingly, the Commissioners of 1806 did not contemplate or recommend any such amalgamation.\* In the Appendix to the same Report (the Fourteenth) they recommended that the Parochial Schools should not only be maintained, but increased and

\* On the contrary, they say :—"The check which the existing Schools would receive were, the superintendence of them to be transferred to the proposed Commissioners, the difficulty of changing long-settled establishments, and the waste of time to the Commissioners, who would be much more profitably employed in forming new seminaries than in

made equal to the number of parishes in Ireland—then computed at 2400. They thought that each school should be made capable of accommodating 50 children, and thus education might be provided for 120,000 children : a number approximate to the numbers supposed to be educated at present in the Parochial and Church Education Schools. But how were these schools to be maintained? Partly by a charge not exceeding £2 per cent. on the parochial income, and on the lay impropriations of tithe; and for the deficiency for salaries and building funds, they say : “ Money, it is presumed, will be willingly granted by Parliament to the Commissioners of First Fruits from time to time, and by them, under proper regulations, given to the rectors of the parishes applying for aid.”

So that, when the Church Schools demanded that the scheme of National Education should be conformed to their standard, the Board and the Government fairly appealed to the Report of these Bishops of the Church in vindication of the fundamental principle of the National System. But, on the other hand, when the Church Schools, finding that no provision had been made for their admission into the system of National Education administered by the Board, demanded a separate grant, or a restoration

altering old ones, induces us strongly to recommend that the institutions which now exist should remain under their present managers, and that the spirit of improvement already manifested among them should be left to operate undisturbed under the influence of that emulation which the new establishments would naturally excite.”

of the grant which had been withdrawn from the Scriptural Schools, and transferred to the National Schools in 1831,—the Church Schools had the authority of the same Commissioners in their favour; and there is little generosity or consistency in wresting the liberal recommendations of four Prelates of the Established Church in favour of the schools of their Presbyterian and Roman Catholic brethren, to the destruction of their own Parochial Schools. It was scarcely candid to put forward one portion of this plan, without making mention of the other part.\*

The fundamental principle of the New Schools of 1831, as propounded in the Fourth Report of the National Board for 1837, was this:—“The principle

\* It is right to say that the Right Hon. A. Macdonnell, the Resident Commissioner of the National Board, appeared to be entirely unaware of the nature of the recommendations in the Appendix to the Report of 1812, in favour of the Church Schools, until brought to his notice by the Bishop of Ossory, and that he then fully admitted their force and importance. He was asked, in his examination before the Lords' Committee in 1854, p. 268—

“Q. 1865. *Lord Bishop of Ossory*.—Considering what has been read to you, are you not of opinion that if the authority of the Commissioners of 1812 is to be quoted in support of the general scope of the National System, it is also as decidedly in favour of such an extension of it as would embrace the Church Education Schools?

“A. I think the spirit of what your Lordship read, while it shows clearly that the Commissioners approved as a new system of something very like what we have established, were also, on the whole, favourable to the endowment of Schools like the Parochial, or like the Church Education Schools.

“Q. 1866. And an extension of them?

“A. And even an extension of them.”

of the System, and which we consider fundamental and unalterable, is, that the National Schools shall be open alike to Christians of all denominations : therefore that no child shall be required to be present at any religious instruction or exercise of which his parents or guardians disapprove." Now, so far as this affirms that the National Schools shall be available to all, and that religious faith shall involve the exclusion of none, it is assented to by everybody ; the only real controversy is as to the particular means by which such a principle may be carried into effect.

It is carried into effect in England, by an impartial administration of the funds of the State among the different religious denominations. This—the denominational system—is a tribute to the independence and uncompromising earnestness of the religious sects ; but, at the same time, it must be regarded as an indication of a want of unity and combination in furtherance of any common purpose in regard to Education. It takes no account of mixed education ; it offers no encouragement to it. The National Board, on the other hand, refuses to recognise the existence of separate education ; it insists that mixed education shall be accomplished or attempted under all circumstances ; and even when this is a physical impossibility, as where the population is unmixed, it still makes scrupulous provision for its operation, and demands that it shall be considered as theoretically, if not actually, existent. Accordingly, it requires that each one of its 5000 or

more schools shall be so constituted, in regard to religious instruction, as to be, in theory, available to Christians of all denominations, without offence to their religious scruples. Its rules as to religious instruction are consistently adapted to this end: they require the religious instruction (if any) of each school to be confined within certain prescribed hours, which are not to be departed from; and the commencement of such religious instruction to be announced to the pupils, in order that any child who objects to be present may absent himself or herself while it is going on.

These rules, however necessary or proper for their designed object, were sure to conflict with the religious scruples of Patrons in two ways:—First, there was a class of men who would say, ‘We will not stand pledged to any such arbitrary and inflexible separation of the religious from the secular instruction; if we faithfully observed this rule, it would hinder us from introducing, when required, a word in season of religious admonition suitable to the exigencies of the moment, and compel us to defer it to an hour of the day when the pupil might be withdrawn from our care.’ The Presbyterians put forward this objection in another and a stronger form:—The Synod of Ulster in 1832 entered into resolutions to the effect, that they could never accede to any system which in the least interfered with their unrestricted possession and use of the Scriptures;—in other language, as expressed

by the Rev. Dr. Cooke, which restricted the use of the Scriptures to any certain prescribed hour of the day. Yet the Presbyterians were invited to join the Board *salvá conscientiá*, and with a special dispensation in their favour, by which they were not required to subscribe to the obnoxious rules respecting religious instruction, or to pledge themselves to any particular time or hour of the day for its impartation. They dictated their own terms in the Model Form of application (for the Correen School), and they were no more restrictive than these :—“The times for reading the Holy Scripture, and for Catechetical instruction, are so arranged as not to interfere with or impede the scientific or secular business of the School.” Further than this they are not asked to pledge themselves on this point.\*

But the grand objection made to the rules respecting religious instruction by the majority of the clergy of the Established Church, and by others, was, that they *required* the patron to give secular instruction to every child who pleased to enter the

\* The Minutes of the Synod of Ulster for 1840 gave the following description of the interview between a deputation from their body and the Lord Lieutenant at Dublin Castle. The conversation turned on the modified rules of the Board as contained in the last Report to Parliament :—“Your Deputation inquired whether these rules were to be considered binding upon the Committees and Schools, and were informed that *the only rules considered binding would be their own*, when approved of by the Board.” They were then requested to draw up an application for a School, stating the principle upon which the Synod’s Schools were conducted, and which, if approved of, was to be considered a model form of application for other Schools. The first application so made was for the Correen School, near Broughshane, county of Antrim.

school, and left it a matter of choice or caprice whether the child would accept religious instruction out of the Word of God: whereas they—the clergy—believed that the Holy Scriptures should form an integral part of the instruction of every child for whose education they were to become responsible. This latter objection, as recently stated in the “Times” newspaper and elsewhere, is made to assume the naked and repulsive form of a claim on the part of Protestant clergymen to direct the religious instruction of Roman Catholics: but in fairness it should be remembered that the National Board demands a strict observance of these rules in regard to religious instruction, whether a Roman Catholic child ever enters the school or not. According to the rules of the National Board, a Protestant clergyman is required to announce, in a distinct and audible voice, to all the children present in his school—and they may happen to be all children of his Protestant parishioners and members of his congregation—that religious instruction is about to commence, for the express purpose of notifying to them that they may walk out, if they please, from his Scripture class, or his religious instruction, whatever it may be, and come back in an hour, and have their wits sharpened with exercises in arithmetic, logic, and grammar.\*

\* One of the ablest of the Head Inspectors of the National Board carefully explained to the Committee of the House of Lords that this was the force and value of the rules, and triumphantly showed how

It is not necessary to enter into the question whether it is right or wrong to teach a child—be it a Roman Catholic or a Protestant child—reading, writing, and arithmetic, without requiring him to read the Bible, which his parent or his priest may consider a waste of time, or tending to proselytism. But I cannot forbear to say, that imperfect analogies upon ethical questions, such as this, help rather to confuse than to assist the understanding. For example, if it be asked,—Is it right to refuse relief in an hospital to a patient who will not listen to our spiritual instruction?—or would it be endured to obtrude a religious lecture at the hospitable board of a friend? I should answer, that an hospital is founded professedly for temporal relief,—the hospitable board is spread for festivity; and it begs the question to assume that a school is an institution designed or proper for secular instruction merely, and not for education in a sense that comprehends something more than secular teaching. Clergymen and Christian laymen are all agreed that education, without religious instruction, if not a contradiction in terms, “an unreality,” is at least essentially imperfect, and wants its better part, and perhaps a majority of reflecting men think it positively mischievous.

But without venturing to pronounce on a question upon which men of sense, learning, and piety are

they would protect a child from the religious teaching of its own pastor.—W. M'Creedy, Esq., Q. 3389, and following queries, “Evidence,” pp. 479-481.

to be found on either side, it may be said that it cannot with any propriety be designated as "fanatical," "unchristian," or "uncharitable," if a clergyman objects to give secular instruction to the children of his parish in his parochial school, without its being accompanied with a religious seasoning, such as, according to the measure of his judgment and the light of his conscience, he believes to be necessary to render it wholesome and safe. That measure will be different with different men. It is absurd to expect, and unreasonable to require, an absolute, unvarying uniformity, or to make the measure of one man's conscience the standard for another man's conduct. And whatever be the soundness of the view of duty insisted on by the clergy of the Established Church in general, nobody can doubt its sincerity. For many years it was officially announced that these principles incapacitated those who avowed them from all place, promotion, or preferment in the Church, which a *liberal* Government could confer; and though this tyrannical and most unconstitutional proscription has been formally recalled, yet it is still practically in full force and operation in regard to all the higher dignities in the Established Church in Ireland. Nobody who reflects on this can for a moment doubt the entire sincerity and self-sacrifice with which this view of duty has been maintained by 1500 or 1700 clergymen of that body, under circumstances of the utmost discouragement and difficulty. And before they are condemned as

obstinate and impracticable men, it would be well to reflect on the very peculiar position in which the Established Church is placed in Ireland with regard to the Scriptures. It is face to face with the Church of Rome, whose members are generally a rampant majority ; and not, as in Protestant England or in Presbyterian Ulster, a small and temporizing minority. It has sometimes, and even recently, had to witness the Scriptures burned, and the Scripture-reader maltreated, and its great controversy with the Church of Rome is, as it has ever been, whether the Bible shall be under sacerdotal restriction, or shall be free to the people? Everything that appears to give colour or countenance to the former assumption is naturally regarded with a keen and lively jealousy, to which men in Protestant England may be strangers. But place the same men in the position ordinarily occupied by a clergyman of the Established Church in Ireland, and ask them will they take part in the education of the people, on the understanding that it shall be Scriptural or Scriptureless, according to the dictate of the priest, the taste of the parent, or the whim of the child ; and I venture to think that there are few who will not return the answer given by the majority of the clergymen of the Irish branch of the Church. Indeed no less than 5414 members of the Established Church in England have expressed in strong terms their entire concurrence in the view of duty on which their Irish brethren have acted.

But, it may be asked, do not the Presbyterians subscribe to the fundamental rules of the Board, and are not they as good Protestants and as zealous for the Bible as the Established Church can be? I have shown that the Presbyterians are not required to subscribe to any one of the rules of the Board in regard to religious instruction; but it is, nevertheless, true that the section of the Presbyterian body which has joined the Board has denounced as strongly as possible, all compulsion in religious matters, as being abhorrent to their feelings. In the times of the Kildare-place Society the Presbyterians, certainly, had a considerable number of Schools in its connexion. They also had many Schools in connexion with the London Hibernian Society; and the universal and compulsory reading of the Bible was the rule in both societies. In 1832 the Synod of Ulster again declared that the Bible, unabridged, should be the basis of National Education; and prior to 1834 the Presbyterian body in Ireland does not appear to have made any declaration in favour of this principle of non-compulsion.\* Still I by no means desire to charge the Presbyterians with inconsistency in joining the National Board. When they did so, in 1840, it was perhaps under circumstances and upon the conviction that, as regards all the Schools for which they would become responsible, the Bible, unabridged, should *in fact* become the basis of Education, not alone in regard to their own children, but also to

\* See Rev. Dr. Henry's Evidence, p. 1147, Q. 9047.

the children of Roman Catholics frequenting their schools. They knew that in Protestant districts, where the Roman Catholics are few, and the parents see no objection to their children reading the Bible (as is almost universally the case), the priests are powerless to prevent it. Dr. Cooke was asked by a member of the Lords' Committee (Lord Donoughmore), "Evidence," p. 739 :—" Q. 5652. Do the Roman Catholics generally continue in the school at the hour of prayer ?" His answer was :—" As far as I know, they not only are present, but read the Scriptures as readily as other children do." Under such circumstances there was little room for the exercise of compulsion to make Roman Catholic children read the Scriptures when they were willing to do so freely. But shall we infer from this that the same Presbyterians, if they were asked to join the Board in Roman Catholic districts where the priests were all-powerful, and could render their schools practically Scriptureless, would have consented ? The best answer to the question is, that the Presbyterians have several schools in the West of Ireland in the midst of a Roman Catholic population, and I believe I am correct in saying that not one of them is in connexion with the National Board.

But then it is said, the scruples of the clergy of the Established Church are so clearly inconsistent with religious liberty, and so plainly in derogation of parental authority, that they cannot be entertained or countenanced for a moment. The parent

must be the judge as to what is for the spiritual interest of his child: and if he objects to the teaching of the Scriptures, whether right or wrong, his objection must be attended to. This is true,—neither Christianity, nor Protestantism, nor Scriptural knowledge, can or ought to be diffused by physical or moral force; and there ought to be no interference with the religious scruples of Roman Catholics or Protestants. But there may be another side to the shield: and we shall fall into error if we look exclusively at the brazen side, and overlook that there is a golden side as well. The relation, duties, and responsibilities of a patron to his school, may be taken to be the golden side; while the rights and privileges of the pupil and the parent are—not in point of actual inferiority or comparative unimportance—the brazen side. A school requires something more than books, and maps, and a salary for a teacher; these are not its most essential or valuable elements. It requires pupils, an intelligent and proper instructor, organization, discipline, management, and a manager. Nobody for a moment supposes it to be possible to concede to the parent of each child in a village school the right to direct the nature or amount of the secular instruction his child is to receive, or to select the books to be used or omitted. Sir Thomas Redington (a Roman Catholic Commissioner of National Education) says:—"The parents cannot exclude from the hour of combined instruction any book except the

‘Scripture Extracts’ and the ‘Book of Sacred Poetry.’”—“Evidence,” p. 689, Q. 5213. True it is, when we come to religious instruction, the motive and the excuse for parental interference become higher and stronger; but the sense of duty and responsibility, on the part of the patron, becomes, in the same degree, more intense and imperative; and if every parent were to exercise the right to enter into every school that he meets, and arbitrarily to cut the course of instruction short when it ceases to be secular; and to “demand” and “insist upon”—for such are the phrases used to express the parental right—the patron giving so much as the parent pleases, and no more: this, instead of being religious liberty, may become the rankest tyranny and license, and would, in fact, compel many a patron to dispense what he most unaffectedly regards in his conscience to be nothing less than moral poison, without its moral antidote. So long as the school is the school of the National Board—as in the case of the Model and Vested Schools—the parent has a right to use it on such terms as the State, which is the patron, pleases; but of the Non-vested Schools we are told, on the highest authority, that they “are not so much the Schools of the Government as of local patrons and managers, who submit voluntarily to certain regulations in order to entitle them to receive aid from the Government.” The education given in these Schools, though superintended and assisted by the State, is provided through the instrumentality and on the

responsibility of the individual patron. He alone appoints the master, and is the party answerable before God and man for the education which each child receives in the School: and therefore it is the moral right and duty of the patron to see that whatever education is given in the School is proper and wholesome, according to the measure of his judgment and conscience. When we speak of non-interference in religious matters, there ought to be some mutuality and reciprocity in it; and the parent's unquestionable right to direct the religious instruction of his child must be exercised in consistency with the patron's correlative right to give such instruction as he believes to be proper, and none other. It would surely be an extravagant price for the highest contribution the Board could make to a patron's school, to require that the direction of the patron's conscience should be submitted to every peasant in his neighbourhood.

To reconcile and harmonize these apparently antagonistic rights is the duty of Government, and a difficult duty, no doubt, it is; and we will even say that it is its paramount charge to see that, as far as possible, parents shall not be reduced to the dilemma of getting no education for their children, or an education which their conscience disapproves. Such might have been the state of the case when the Parochial Schools were the only good Schools available to the Roman Catholic children of the poor; and when the Kildare-place Society, whose original purpose was

pure, and whose labours were blessed with great, though transient success,—chiefly under the direction of the late excellent Sergeant Warren, and that upright and benevolent judge and Christian man, so recently laid in his honoured grave amidst the common regrets of Roman Catholics and Protestants;—I say, when the Kildare-place Society persisted in having one uniform rule in all its schools, after it had become obnoxious to the Roman Catholics, or to some of them, there was danger of moral compulsion. But there is no pretence for saying that any such danger exists now. In the year 1852 there were 2800 National Schools exclusively under Roman Catholic priests, and 277 under Roman Catholic laymen, making a total of 3077 out of 4602 schools accounted for,—as against 606 schools under Protestants of the Established Church, and 720 under Presbyterians. The numbers are very much more favourable to the Roman Catholics at the present time; and if there be cases still unprovided for, the Board, in its annual additions to its Schools (154 in the year 1855, and I believe as many in the year 1856), can find a remedy for them.

For these reasons, I am led to think that the rules as to religious instruction are not at present so necessary for the vindication of religious liberty and parental authority as they might have been heretofore, and that the natural course of events has suggested a more effectual security in the free choice of schools. On the other hand, there is room for appre-

hension that the universal enforcement of these same rules is now calculated to defeat their legitimate and ostensible purpose, by throwing the education of the country exclusively into the hands of the clergy of one denomination, and as far as possible driving the clergy of the other denomination out of the field. The tendency is latterly towards an unwholesome monopoly, and to narrow the field of choice, without which religious liberty is a fiction, inasmuch as it cannot be exercised. The officers of the National Board have become so sensible of this fact—how very little the fundamental rules have to do in the way of preserving Roman Catholics from Protestant teaching—that they have “extemporised” for the occasion an application of these rules which was never dreamt of before, namely, that they are to give a child protection against the coercion of his own pastor in religious matters.\* To give zest and piquancy to this modern idea, it is said that it is to be used in saving the Roman Catholics from their priests.† Nothing more absurd, or utterly delusive, ever entered into the mind of man. The National Board exercises no supervision or control whatever over, and even professes to take no cognizance of the nature or amount of the religious instruction given during the time set apart for it. Its fundamental rules, no doubt, profess to give a Roman

\* See Right Hon. Alexander Macdonnell, QQ. 2033, 2034, and pp. 287–8, of “Evidence.”

† William M’Creedy, Esq., QQ. 3389–3401, p. 479, of “Evidence.”

Catholic child the option of not accepting the religious instruction of his priest : but such an option, in such a case, is the merest mockery that could possibly be offered.

For these reasons, I am disposed to think that the fundamental rules in regard to religious instruction need not, and should not, be pressed to such an universal application as to render the co-operation of the great body of the clergy of the Established Church impracticable ; or that, if such a rigid application of the rules be essential to the maintenance of the present system in its integrity (a subject I shall consider presently), that some plan of separate assistance should be resorted to, in aid of the Scriptural Schools.

But there was a section of the clergy of the Established Church which, if not quite so considerable in numbers, comprised men of high character for piety and learning, amiability and good sense, who, falling in with the views of the Commissioners of 1806, felt that it was not right to make the secular instruction of Roman Catholics conditional on their conformity to the views of Protestants in regard to the reading of the Scriptures : and were, therefore, willing to co-operate with the National Board on the broader platform of a moral instruction derived from the Scriptures. Let us next consider the position in which this portion of the clergy at present stands with regard to National Education.

The first great difficulty which any system of mixed education is sure to encounter is the religious difficulty. In so far as a mixed community is alive to the value and necessity of an element of moral and religious instruction in the schools, in the same degree is the difficulty of finding the particular element on which its members will agree. In England, among the mere varieties of Protestantism, the difficulty has baffled statesmen, and compelled them to submit to the theoretical incongruities of the denominational system. In Ireland, with Protestantism on one side, and Romanism on the other, it was fondly hoped that the experiment might succeed better; and that a common element of moral and religious instruction might be discovered, upon which Protestants and Roman Catholics would agree. Each scheme of National Education that had been propounded made special provision for such an element, as an essential part of the combined teaching. The Commissioners of Education appointed in 1806 and in 1824, and the Committee of the House of Commons appointed in 1828, all concurred in recommending a Book of Extracts from the Scriptures. The Commissioners of 1824 themselves tried the experiment of introducing such a work, but failed, for a reason expressed by Archbishop Murray in a letter, dated 19th April, 1827, which deserves to be remembered in this inquiry. He said that "the Board had created for itself a very needless difficulty by requiring, as a matter of necessity, *any Scriptural*

*compilation* to be used in schools for the purpose of general instruction." With this failure fresh before him, Mr. Stanley (the present Lord Derby), when he approached the task of constructing a system of National Education for Ireland in 1831, probably despaired of being able to secure the loyal assent of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy to any compilation from the Scriptures ; and accordingly, his original plan did not contemplate more than a system of mixed literary and separate religious instruction ; the Board making no provision for the latter beyond securing for it a time and a place. But when this scheme was submitted to the Archbishop of Dublin and some others of the intended Protestant Commissioners, they naturally shrunk from administering a purely secular system ; and desired that some provision should be made for an element of moral and religious teaching in the general instruction of all the pupils, in lieu of the more special religious instruction which the rules of the Board debarred the Patron from giving after his own taste. Without a provision of this nature the National System of Education must evidently have been ranked, as regards the minorities in the schools, as a merely secular system of instruction.

Accordingly, it was agreed to make the experiment—(as expressed by Mr. Carlisle)—“How far Roman Catholics and Protestants could proceed together with perfect unanimity in introducing Scriptural light among the population generally.” The

Roman Catholic Hierarchy professed to assent to the experiment, and the late titular Archbishop, Dr. Murray, who had become a member of the Board of Commissioners of National Education, appeared to give it his cordial concurrence.

The only possible means of introducing Scriptural or religious instruction into the mixed education of the schools was by books prepared for and adapted to the purpose. Three books of a religious character, and intended for mixed education, were accordingly compiled by the National Board, with the unanimous consent of all the Commissioners,—namely, the “Scripture Lessons,”—the “Lessons on the Truth of Christianity,”—and the “Book of Sacred Poetry.” The series of “Scripture Lessons” were the first books prepared on this principle. They professed not to be taken particularly from either the Authorized or the Douay Version of the Scriptures. They were carefully and critically examined by Archbishop Murray, sheet by sheet, and approved and signed before they went to press. They were sometime afterwards submitted to the Pope for his consideration, and although, for obvious reasons, no official intimation could be made to the Government or to the Board, it was communicated to the individual members of the Board that the books had received the Pope’s sanction, or, at least, that *the Pope saw no objection to them*. Thus the grand difficulty in the mixed education of Protestants and Roman Catholics in Ireland was supposed

to have been removed by the unexpected moderation and new-born liberality of the Papacy. As regards Protestant children, "Extracts from the Bible" were, at best, but an unacceptable offering, and the Board's performance did not fail to provoke plenty of criticism and animadversion, into the merits of which it is fruitless now to enter. But as regards the education of Roman Catholics, the Government and the Protestant members of the Board naturally regarded the admission of these books as a matter of great importance and significancy, as indicating the amount of Scriptural instruction which the Roman Catholic Church was willing to permit in the course of National Education.

The second book of a religious character introduced by the Board was the "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity," compiled from a treatise on the subject written by Dr. Whately, Archbishop of Dublin. The Board's book was, of course, submitted to Archbishop Murray, who, after a most scrupulous examination, appeared to give it his hearty and warm approbation, having first made several material alterations, ostensibly with a view of making it "more fit for use in common education." This book also was submitted to the Pope for his consideration, and the Protestant Commissioners were led to believe that the Pope saw no objection to it. The Archbishop of Dublin, in his examination before the Lords' Committee, stated :—"I had it from Mr. Blake, who was on intimate terms with Archbishop

Murray, as everybody knows: and he gave me all the details of it. It was submitted by Archbishop Murray to the late Pope. It was read over to him by a person who was master of both languages; and *the answer he gave was, that he saw no objection to it.*—Q. 1246, “Evidence,” p. 170. Now the late Right Hon. Anthony Richard Blake was a Roman Catholic gentleman, universally regarded as a man of honour and a man of sense, who, upon a subject of this delicate and important nature, was not likely to give an assurance on the faith of a mere flying rumour; especially as he had the means of exact information from Dr. Murray himself. We are, therefore, obliged to conclude that Mr. Blake was but half-informed by his intimate friend of what was then, and until very recently, a profound ecclesiastical secret. A small glimmer of light let in on the transaction at Rome reveals a mystery into which it was not considered safe to initiate even the most eminent catechumens of the Church. The Very Rev. Dean Meyler (one of the present Roman Catholic Commissioners of National Education in Ireland), in his examination before the same Committee of the House of Lords, happened to be asked by Lord Eglinton, Q. 2089, “Evidence,” p. 296:—

“Are you aware that the ‘Lessons on the Truth of Christianity’ was brought before the notice of the Pope, and was approved of by him?”

A. “I am perfectly aware that it was brought before the notice of the Pope along with the ‘Scrip-

ture Extracts,' &c. (*sic*). I was conversant with the examination which took place in Rome on those books, and I took part in it, by communicating with those persons in Rome who were conducting the inquiry, and *urging them* to impress upon the Pope that the book, however objectionable in itself, *would be altogether removed from Catholics*, and that therefore the system should not, in that regard, be condemned. After a good deal of inquiry and examination, and explanation, the Pope, without giving any decision on the books (*sic*), was perfectly satisfied that they were perfectly innocuous in regard to Catholic children: therefore he passed no remark (*sic*) either of disapprobation or approbation upon them; but he gave his sanction to the *system* in a very strong manner; he merely cautioned the prelate not to admit improper books into the school, not specifying any particular book."

From a cursory perusal of this passage the reader might be led to suppose that the Pope saw no objection to the use of these books by Roman Catholics, and that it was in this sense that he regarded them as perfectly innocuous. Such was the impression that was allowed to prevail up to the moment when Lord Eglinton's question was put, as indeed may be inferred from its terms. But the Very Reverend gentleman's answers to subsequent questions prove, that although Dean Meyler said the Pope "passed no remark" on either of the books; what he meant was "no remark," *ex cathedrâ*, as Pope; for the

Pope, in his conversational intercourse, expressed the strongest condemnation of one of them, according to Dean Meyler himself. Speaking of the "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity," Dean Meyler afterwards says (Q. 2090, "Evidence," p. 297) :—  
 "He so highly disapproved of that book, that he thought it would have been quite sufficient to make him give his disapprobation of the whole system, till it was fully explained to him by the interference of Archbishop Murray (!! ) and the clergymen who were concerned in the inquiry, that the books (*sic*) could not affect or interfere with the Catholic children, as they were to be altogether excluded from them." Dean Meyler is asked (Q. 2092) :—

"Are the Committee to understand that the Pope condemned the book itself?"

A. "He did decidedly, i. e., not by an express decree, but in his conversational intercourse with the clergymen who were concerned in the investigation."

So far did Dean Meyler vouchsafe to enlighten the Lords' Committee with respect to these books, and he left the Committee under the impression that the Pope's condemnation was confined to one of the books, the "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity." But Archbishop Cullen, who was President of the Irish College at Rome when the examination was going on, two years later draws the veil a little further, and discloses something respecting the "Scripture Lessons," which the Dean forgot to mention, namely, that "the 'Scripture

Lessons' were *also* examined, and *condemned* by the Holy See."—(Pastoral Letter, Dec. 1, 1856, p. 17, *in nota.*)

All this was done in secret conclave, and not a word about it was to transpire for many a year. The Pope pronounces no formal decree of condemnation. He abstains from placing the books in the Prohibited Index, where Archbishop Whately's original book (translated into Italian, and published at Florence) may be seen. The Church of Rome does nothing hastily or unadvisedly; the books were, doubtless, considered to be very bad, but *the system* was excellent, when fully explained by Archbishop Murray. He—a Commissioner of National Education—gives his assurance that the Roman Catholic children shall be completely removed from the books; and the Pope thereupon contents himself with condemning them in his conversational intercourse, and giving to his bishops the significant intimation not to admit improper books—without specifying any particular books. It was unnecessary to condemn the books when once due provision was made for rendering them "perfectly innocuous to Catholics." *It was inexpedient*; because neither the British Government nor the Parliament were yet prepared to sanction a system of education which did not profess to contain an element of Scriptural instruction; and it was remembered that Archbishop Murray's rejection of the Scriptural element in the scheme of the Commissioners of 1824 had proved

fatal to it. With the country overrun with Scriptural schools, it was wise for the Roman Catholic Church to appear to accede to the prevailing idea in order to get afloat a system of schools more to its taste; and therefore it was that Archbishop Murray, and those who went back to Ireland, should be left free to tell inquisitive people, like Mr. Blake, what was logically and formally true, but morally and substantially false,—that the Pope had examined the books, and (as Dean Meyler's formula runs) "was perfectly satisfied that they were perfectly innocuous to Catholic children." But no sooner does the Church of Rome find itself securely entrenched in upwards of 3000 schools, established and supported by the Protestant Government of England, than it expels the Scriptural element from every one of them without the smallest ceremony. Mr. Buxton says of his visit to the Roman Catholic schools in the West of Ireland:—"A traveller may visit one National School after another without finding a trace of Scriptural education." In the Dublin Model School at Marlborough-street there were 1213 children reading the "Scripture Lessons" in the week ending June 11, 1853—immediately before Archbishop Cullen's Pastoral; in the week ending July 23, 1853, and after the Pastoral, the number was 175. The "Scripture Lessons" were not read by a single Roman Catholic child in 1854 (see Professor Sullivan's Evidence, Q. 2809, p. 386). In a school under the immediate patronage of the

Archbishop of Dublin, the mistress received orders from the priest that the "Scripture Lessons" were not to be read there any more; another mistress was appointed, and the attendance of children fell from 40 to 5 or 6. The children went home crying and deeply mortified, and the parents came to the Archbishop of Dublin to say how sorry they were that they could not send their children to the school any more (see Archbishop of Dublin's Evidence, pp. 148, 152, QQ. 1121, 1144).

With regard to the "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity," Dean Meyler ventures to say that Archbishop Murray never approved of the book except for Protestants. He says, though strictly a Protestant book, it was not offensive, nor was it controversial. "Dr. Murray told me he thought it very fair that Protestants should not be deprived of the opportunity of reading a book which was so essential to them, and contained their principles fairly and openly expressed."—Q. 2082, "Evidence," p. 295. He was asked by Lord Eglinton (Q. 2084, p. 296):—

"After the change was made in the two first chapters which you have just described, Archbishop Murray was perfectly satisfied with the book, and agreed in reports recommending the book; did not he?"

"A. I do not think he was perfectly satisfied with the book. I believe when he saw that *so important a change* had been made as the removal of those two chapters, he thought it would be ungracious to ap-

pear to be too querulous about it, *as it was to be confined to Protestant readers exclusively*. He thought that Protestant children should not be deprived of a book which was so important to them, though slight objections might be made to it, particularly when Catholic children were perfectly free to abstain from reading it."

Bishop Denvir (Q. 8776, "Evidence," p. 1117) and Master Murphy (Q. 8853, "Evidence," p. 1126) adopt the same line of defence of the conduct of Archbishop Murray, and seek to vindicate the orthodoxy of the deceased prelate at the expense of his character for sincerity of purpose. They do not appear to reflect that if Archbishop Murray, when he gave his assent to these books, and accredited them to the world as fit for mixed education of Roman Catholics and Protestants, was merely temporizing and tolerating the books, with a foregone determination, or bound by a secret obligation, to avail himself of the first favourable opportunity to get rid of them, and exclude them from Roman Catholic children,—he was practising a most unworthy deception on the British Government and his brother Commissioners. Gladly would I rescue the memory of a Roman Catholic Archbishop, who was much respected and esteemed by Protestants, from a charge so discreditable. But the charge is not mine: it comes from three of the present Commissioners of National Education, who are Roman Catholics. I be-

lieve there is an anachronism in the statement made by some of them, that Archbishop Murray acceded to the admission of this latter book, i. e. the "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity," relying on the protection of the 8th Rule. This must be a mistake, for the book was introduced in 1838 ; the germ of the 8th Rule first appeared in a passage of the Report for the year 1840, and it became a substantive rule in 1842, and first included this book by name in 1850. But whatever were the real motives or feelings under which the Roman Catholic Archbishop first assented to the introduction of the book in the year 1838, the most charitable conjecture I can offer is, that he himself saw no real objection to its use until his judgment was corrected or coerced by the more intolerant spirit that reigns at Rome. The investigation there was going on from 1838 to 1841 (J. J. Murphy, Q. 8872, "Evidence," p. 1129), when the book, according to Dean Meyler, incurred the unqualified condemnation of the Pope, and Archbishop Murray found it necessary to give his assurance that the book should be gotten rid of. The part of Archbishop Murray's conduct which appears to me indefensible is this, that he continued to act as a Commissioner of National Education from that period down to near the close of his life, about the year 1852. Meantime, not a word was breathed respecting the Pope's condemnation, or Archbishop Murray's pledge; on the contrary, the books were

issued year after year as suitable for mixed education, and ostensibly accredited as such to the Roman Catholics chiefly by Archbishop Murray himself. Parliament was asked year after year for large and increasing votes to the Board, on the ground of the existence of this important amount of Scriptural and religious instruction in the National Schools. Protestant clergymen and laymen were invited, and many of them induced to join the Board on the faith of it; and yet we are now coolly told by Archbishop Murray's friends, that it was a total mistake,—that he approved of the books only for Protestants, and that he never intended that they should reach the hands of a Roman Catholic child.

But not the least strange part of this curious little history is the contrivance by which the religious books were eventually gotten rid of. The task was one of no ordinary difficulty; the books had been compiled, and recommended by the National Board itself, for general mixed education. They were well received and popular among the Roman Catholic laity, the inferior clergy, and even among the nuns. Parental authority plainly could not be evoked to effect their expulsion; and the Court of Rome did not consider it desirable that priestly authority should be brought too prominently to the task; it was reserved for the National Board itself to become the instrument of its own stultification. For this purpose a seemingly harmless paragraph was suggested by somebody, and introduced into the Report

for the year 1840.\* It remained there unnoticed until the year 1842, when a revision of the Rules of the Board was suggested by somebody else, and the task was committed to a *Select Committee of five*, by whom the little paragraph was transmuted into a substantive rule, without a word of discussion or explanation. The rule was infelicitously worded;† its terms were so ambiguous as to bear two senses—a natural and reasonable sense, and a literal but absurd sense. By the terms of this notorious 8th Rule—in case any single child in the school thought fit to object to either of the religious books prepared by the Board for the mixed education of all—not merely was the particular child exempted from reading that book, according to the natural sense of the Rule, but the book was, according to the literal

\* The passage was as follows:—

“25. We should also state that we by no means insist on having the ‘Scripture Extracts,’ published by our authority, read in any of the National Schools, nor would we allow them to be read during the time of secular or literary instruction in any school attended by any children whose parents or guardians objected to them. In such cases we should prohibit the use of them, except at the time of religious instruction, when the persons giving it might use them or not as they should think proper.”

† The 8th Rule was in these terms:—“The Commissioners do not insist on the Scripture Lessons [‘Lessons on the Truth of Christianity,’ or ‘Book of Sacred Poetry’] being read in any of the National Schools, nor do they allow them to be read, during the time of secular or literary instruction, in any school attended by children whose parents or guardians object to their being so read. In such case, the Commissioners prohibit the use of them, except at the time of religious instruction, when the persons giving it may use these books or not, as they think proper.”

sense, excluded from the mixed education of the entire school, and banished to a time allotted for separate religious instruction. During this time the patron, if a Roman Catholic, would not suffer it to be read; and, if a Protestant, would not have a Roman Catholic child to read it. Dean Meyler confessed that this rule was "a regular puzzle;" that it was "hard, absurd, and foolish." The Lord Justice of Appeal, an eminent judge of construction, found the Rule to be framed "with singular ambiguity," and that in its literal sense it was totally subversive of the legitimate authority of the Board itself. The Archbishop of Dublin, an acute logician, and an accurate grammarian, protested that he never assented to this Rule in a sense so monstrous and absurd; but, nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Commissioners insisted on enforcing it in the sense they confessed to be absurd, and hard, and foolish. Wherefore? Because nothing short of this could have fulfilled Archbishop Murray's undertaking to the Pope, that these books should be wholly removed from Roman Catholic children. The books were popular with the parents, with priests, and with nuns. A Roman Catholic lay Commissioner tells us, the object of the Rule was to *give* protection to Roman Catholics against these dangerous books. The better informed ecclesiastic (Dean Meyler) tells us that its object was to give protection *against* Roman Catholic parents:—"We were afraid, in the first instance, that though the children might

not like to read it (*sic*), there was no protection to prevent Roman Catholic children from reading it, *if their parents consented*, from any motive which did not become them as Catholics, such as the interference in country places of their landlords insisting that the children should read these books, &c.”—Q. 2157, p. 304. So that, in order to prevent some fifty or sixty misguided or wayward parents, who might wish their children to receive Scriptural instruction, to prevent them from exercising their parental authority in a wrong direction, it was necessary to subject their aggregate parental authority to the direction of any single parent, influenced by motives more “becoming a Catholic.”

Such was the singular exemplification given by the National Board of “due respect to parental right and authority,”—the great watch-word and war-cry against the Scriptural schools. Such the respect for its own authority, that the objection of the merest infant in the school was sufficient to banish its own books from the general instruction, and to relegate them to an hour before or after the ordinary school-time, at which it is scarcely practicable for those who wish to read the books to attend.\* In the Dublin Model Schools, out of 117

\* Professor Sullivan admits (Q. 2806, “Evidence,” p. 386) :—“But certainly the result is, that if the book is confined to a period before or after the regular school hours, it will not be read. It is not to be supposed that the children will come before school to read it, nor will they willingly remain after school to do so.”

Protestant children, not more than forty-four did attend at the hour fixed for the reading of the "Scripture Lessons."

It may well be asked, who was the author of such an extraordinary Rule,—so effective, and so ambiguous? The Rule, or rather the passage in the Report from which the Rule was taken, is proved to have been penned by Mr. Blake, the confidential friend of Archbishop Murray. It is also proved, as a matter of fact, that Mr. Blake had not the slightest conception of the real force and drift of the Rule. So far from this, he interpreted it in its natural sense, and, had he lived, would doubtless have been astonished at the use to which it was turned. He, most probably, was but its godfather. We are told, on excellent authority, that it was framed at Archbishop Murray's express desire;\* and recollecting

\* "He (Master Murphy) also said to the Lord Lieutenant, in Mr. Blackburne's presence (I believe I am justified in reporting it at second-hand) that this Rule had been framed at Archbishop Murray's *express desire*, on the first introduction of the 'Scripture Lessons' and of the other religious books, *on purpose* to exclude these books from the schools in any case where a single child might object," &c. &c.—(Evidence of the Archbishop of Dublin, Q. 1222, p. 164.)

The reader will remember that the Rule was originally confined to the "Scripture Extracts." In the "Dublin Evening Post" of October 22, 1838, may be found a letter addressed by Archbishop Murray to the Roman Catholic Prelates, exculpatory of his conduct in sanctioning the use of the "Scripture Lessons." His apology was, that "the books of the Board were not imperative, and if any parent was opposed to the reading of those books, *his children* would not be compelled to read them." Further agitation compelled him in 1840-1 to advance a step further.

his solemn pledge to the Pope, immediately before its introduction, we can be at no loss to conjecture its author or its object. The thin edge of the wedge was thus introduced in 1840, it was pushed home in 1842, and went on silently accomplishing its work in more than 1700 schools, before its real design or its great effects were discovered. The discovery was made accidentally by the Archbishop of Dublin, on a visit to the Clonmel Model School on the 1st July, 1852.

When the 8th Rule was thus brought to the light, and convicted of ambiguity, absurdity, hardness, and folly, its virtue was lost, and it could no longer do its office. It then became necessary to throw off the mask. On the 7th of July, 1853, the Commissioners of National Education, by a majority of seven to four, resolved, that the "*Lessons on the Truth of Christianity should be altogether expunged from the list of books published by the Board.*" The "*Scripture Lessons*" and the "*Book of Sacred Poetry*" were suffered to remain on the nominal list of books sanctioned. But it was also resolved, that on the objection of any child in the school, they should be consigned to an hour of the day either before or after the ordinary school business, at which Roman Catholics will not, and Protestants do not, attend.

The common Reading Books of the Board are referred to as containing an infusion of religious matter sufficient still to sustain the religious element in the combined teaching of the National Schools.

It is generally said that the Reading-books are thoroughly penetrated with religious knowledge. Nobody can read these books without admiration of the tact and ability with which useful and entertaining knowledge is *alternated* with historical readings from the Scriptures. But it is not accurate to say that the Lesson-books are penetrated with religious knowledge in any such practical sense as that intended to be conveyed,—namely, that each lesson, or any large proportion of the lessons, is so far impregnated with Scriptural or religious instruction, that so long as the book is used, the children cannot be deprived of the benefit intended for them. For example, the “Second Book of Lessons,” which, perhaps, contains the greatest proportionate amount of religious instruction, contains seventy lessons; of these seventy lessons there are twenty lessons, and no more, in which the least allusion is made to a religious topic. The teacher has therefore fifty lessons to choose from, in which there shall not be a word touching on religion.\* The first sequel to that book contains thirty-four lessons, some ten of which make allusions to sacred subjects,—all of them, save two, in a general sense, to which a Mahommedan or a Hindoo could

\* At page 55 there is a piece of moral poetry to which Protestants, without being over fastidious, might take some little exception. It is this:—

“It is a sin  
To steal a pin;  
*Much more* to steal  
*A greater thing.*”

This is not exactly conformable with Protestant teaching. In the

take no just exception. The so-called infusion and penetration does not go beyond that ; and, such as it is, and I am far from wishing to detract from its positive value, it is most offensive and unwelcome to the Roman Catholic Church. The Archbishop of Dublin apprised the Lords' Committee that he had reason to know there was a design on the part of some of the Commissioners to weed out everything relating to religion in the Reading-books. The Roman Catholic Commissioners were examined to this point, and disavowed any present intention or desire in that direction in a manner not altogether assuring. Bishop Denvir was asked ("Evidence," p. 1118, Q. 8788) :—

"Do you entertain that desire yourself?"

A. "There is (*sic*) very *few* things in the Reading-books which I think objectionable."

Again, he is asked (Q. 8789) : —

"Do you object to those passages from the Holy Scriptures which are to be found in the secular Reading-books now?"

His answer is remarkable—

A. "I have never *had reason* to object to them,—they are *tolerated* there. Some persons object to them, and some do not. Some read them, and *some do not*."

"Third Book of Lessons," the Scriptural Lessons are arranged in a connected series, and, as stated in the Preface, "form, therefore, a separate portion of the book." The patron is told: "The Table of Contents will present the subjects under their respective heads; *should any person, therefore, prefer another arrangement of the reading course, they can easily make it for themselves.*"

The Bishop may have taken his lesson from the Pope when the latter declared the "Scripture Lessons" and the "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity" perfectly innocuous to Catholic children; having first made sure that they should not be read. So the Bishop, probably taking care that the Scriptural passages in the "Lesson Books," though tolerated there, and read by some people, shall not be read where he has control, safely says that he has had no reason to object to them. Dean Meyler admitted that the continuance of the religious element in the Reading-books depended not on the Board, but on Archbishop Cullen and the Bishops not objecting.—("Evidence," p. 299, Q. 2114.) Now Archbishop Cullen has objected most vehemently to all combined religious instruction of any kind. He deprecates it as unsafe that Roman Catholics should be taught anything relating to history, morals, or religion, at the hands of Protestants. The Synod of Thurles has declared:—"It is much safer that in mixed schools the instruction should be only in general learning, than that what are called the fundamental truths of religion should be taught, reserving to each sect the teaching of its own peculiar doctrines." In fact, it is not to the quantity or the nature of the religious element in mixed education to which the Roman Catholic Church so much objects; it is to its existence in any shape or form whatever; and the objection points as strongly to the narrative passages and moral maxims in the

“Lesson-books,” as to the pure and unadulterated Bible itself. These may be regarded as extreme views,—views with which the Roman Catholic laity, and even the inferior clergy, have little sympathy ; but what can *they* possibly do ? Archbishop Cullen, “Apostolic Delegate,” wields the vast legatine powers of the Pope in Ireland with a firm hand and despotic will, and they must and will obey. His fiat has gone forth, and has begun to work ; for we are already told that there is a large portion of the Roman Catholics who object to the religious instruction contained in these class-books (Wm. M’Creedy, Esq., “Evidence,” p. 473, Q. 3348).

The day will assuredly come when everything relating to religious or Scriptural subjects will be expurgated from the “Lesson-books.” One Commissioner (Bishop Denvir) has said :—The element of the system which is called Combined Religious Instruction ought to be done away.—(“Evidence,” p. 1118, Q. 8785.) “*Delenda est Carthago*,” says the Roman. A lay Roman Catholic Commissioner says :—“I certainly do not think it was a wise step.” (J. J. Murphy, Esq., “Evidence,” p. 1129, Q. 8870.) Another says :—“I cannot admit the term Combined Religious Instruction” (Sir Thomas Redington, “Evidence,” p. 673, Q. 5111.)

It is said to be the purpose of the Court of Rome altogether to withdraw from the Board of National Education the two Commissioners who are Dignitaries of its Church,—Bishop Denvir and Dean

Meyler,—and to commit the care of its interests to the lay Commissioners of her communion. Without pretending to penetrate its intentions, I must say that I regard such a consummation as highly probable.\* The presence of a Roman Catholic Bishop and Dean at the Board renders it difficult to impeach the religious element as dangerous to faith and morals ; and that such is the drift of the current of events passing before us, and the ultimate object of the Church of Rome, is not to be doubted.

So virtually has ended the experiment of mixed education on a religious basis. The Archbishop of Dublin, the warmest and ablest advocate of such an element, has resigned. The Lord Justice of Appeal (Mr. Blackburne) and Mr. Baron Greene retired, because an entire department of education, represented by the expelled books, had been expunged from the scheme of National Education, never to be restored.

In what position, then, are the clergymen of the Established Church who have joined the Board, and placed their schools in connexion with it, on the faith of the large amount of religious instruction which its rules enabled them to give to every child under their charge? Mr. Cross, the Secretary to the Board, says : “ I have no doubt of the fact that a considerable number of the patrons have put their

\* Since the above was in type, the appointment of the eminent Roman Catholic barrister (Thomas O'Hagan, Esq., Q. C.) in the room of Bishop Denvir, *resigned*, has been announced. What next?

schools, whether vested or non-vested, under the Board, upon the express understanding that the 'Scripture Lessons,' 'Sacred Poetry,' and the 'Lessons on the Truth of Christianity,' were to be used in the schools" (M. Cross, Esq., "Evidence," p. 76, Q. 542). Mr. Cross honestly admits—"The patrons of such schools might very naturally and justly consider that, by the withdrawal of such books, or any one of them, *their compact with the Board was violated*"—(Q. 541). Many of them expended their money and vested their school-houses in the Board, and entered into covenants with them on the faith of this compact: and now, by the altered rules, they cannot so much as use the Board's own books for the purpose of the combined moral and religious instruction of a single child who is put up to object to them. What faith or confidence can henceforth be reposed in the National Board? The vested school, the legitimate type of a mixed school, is rendered impossible. No man in his senses will vest his property in a Board in whose good faith and steadfastness of purpose he cannot rely for twenty years. The Protestant community in Ireland have felt the instability of Parliamentary compacts, and the little security to be found in the most solemn acts in regard to education, more than once. They were led to make grants of one or two acres of land for sites of schools all over the country, and to expend their money in the erection of school-houses, on the faith of Parliamentary support, after-

wards withdrawn from a mere change of purpose and policy, and from no act or default of the donors. Now, again, they have committed their property to the Board of National Education on the faith of its adherence to certain plain principles, and the Board, at the bidding of the Papal Legate, abjures them, and forbids the use of its own books.\* But, notwithstanding this, the Board has failed to secure the confidence of the Roman Catholic Church, which is still more reluctant to vest its schools in the Board than the overreached and betrayed Protestant Church. The sagacious Church of Rome cannot be assured that some change of political circumstances may not render it the interest of the Board to break faith with it next. And thus have all the great religious denominations in Ireland arrived at this common consensus, that there is no ground of confidence against any amount of departure from the fundamental principles of the system to which they are invited to pledge themselves.

Again, let us see what is the position of the Protestant children in the vast majority of the non-vested schools which are under Roman Catholic priests or laymen. In 1852 they constituted 3163 out of a total of 4566. In probably not one of these schools, under Roman Catholic patrons, can a Protestant child receive a particle of religious or

\* See Archbishop Cullen's Pastoral, July, 1853, denouncing the books, and the Board's immediate submission ("Evidence," M. Cross, Esq., p. 80, QQ. 569, 570).

moral instruction beyond what he may happen to glean from the Reading-books. The religious element provided by the Board is banished; and each patron has an absolute discretion of excluding all religious instruction whatever from the school.\* A Roman Catholic Inspector is asked (Q. 2593)—

“Is there, practically, any considerable number of non-vested schools in which the Bible is excluded at any time?”

A. “I think in all those under Roman Catholic management it is.”—J. W. Kavanagh, Esq., “Evidence,” p. 356.

So that in, perhaps, 3000 National Schools, *professing to be intended for the education of Protestant children as well as Roman Catholic children*, no Protestant child can receive an education which a Protestant parent can consider suitable or agreeable to his conscientious convictions. It may be too much to say that the National Board actually forbids the use of the Bible in its schools; but it is just as remote from the truth to represent it (as the late Bishop Townsend and other over-zealous advocates have done) as affording every facility to those who wish to be instructed in, or are willing to read, the Holy Scriptures in its schools. Whatever may have been the original purpose of its framers,

\* “In schools not vested, but which receive aid only by way of salary and books, it is for the patron to determine whether religious instruction shall be given in the school-room or not.”—Ninth Report, 1842.

or the individual wishes of its administrators, any such facility or opportunity of Scriptural education is, as a matter of fact, *impossible* in two-thirds of the present National Schools. On this ground many of the original patrons belonging to the Established Church have been forced to withdraw from the National Schools; while those who remain are in a situation of perplexity and insecurity; and those who would join are naturally led to hesitate, and doubt the prudence of such a step under existing circumstances. May it not, then, fairly be asked,—is it just, is it expedient, is it absolutely necessary, to hold the Established Church in Ireland in such an unequal yoke with the Church of Rome?

This leads me to consider the necessity for an universal enforcement of the fundamental rules as to religious instruction from another point of view. Mr. Fortescue, the Parliamentary champion of the National Board, admitted that “if there were no combined schools in Ireland, there were no need of the fundamental rule.” Let us, then, see to what extent combined schools exist, and what the present state and future prospects of mixed education under the National Board are.

The expression “United Education” may be understood in two senses,—a literal and commonly received sense, importing the education of members of different communions in the same schools, and within the same walls; and a more strained, but not unnatural sense, namely, the education of members

of different communions in one common system of schools. How far has the Board succeeded in combining the two greatly disunited denominations, Protestants and Roman Catholics, in either sense?

As regards the latter sense,—the extent to which the National Board has attracted the children of the different denominations in the aggregate to its schools,—the returns made by the Board, on the motion of Lord Clancarty, give the latest enumeration of the children of the respective denominations on the rolls as they stood on March 31, 1853 :—

Roman Catholics, . . . . .	390,840
Established Church, . . . . .	23,629
Presbyterians, . . . . .	39,751
Protestant Dissenters, . . . . .	2,083
	<hr/>
	456,303
Unascertained, . . . . .	33,724
	<hr/>
Total,	490,027

This gives a proportion of something like  $6\frac{1}{2}$  Roman Catholics to each Protestant child; and it gives the following constituent elements in each 1000 children on the rolls :\*—

Roman Catholics, . . . . .	863
Established Church, . . . . .	50
Presbyterians, . . . . .	83
Protestant Dissenters, . . . . .	4
	<hr/>
	1000

\* The figures are those of Mr. Kavanagh, Head Inspector of the National Board.

We have no means of determining the relative proportions of the religious denominations in the general population of Ireland as they stood in 1853. The latest official estimate was that made by the Commissioners of Public Instruction in the year 1834: according to it, the composition of each 1000 of the population gave the following numbers:—

Roman Catholics, . . . . .	809
Established Church, . . . . .	107
Presbyterians, . . . . .	81
Protestant Dissenters, . . . . .	3
	<hr/>
	1000

So that, even if we were to assume that the relative proportions of the population in the year 1834 continued undisturbed down to the year 1853, the Protestants of the Established Church were in 1853 less than half represented in the National Schools, while the Roman Catholics were more than fully represented. We are, no doubt, to make a considerable allowance for the excess of poorer children belonging to the Roman Catholic denomination; but, on the other hand, we should take into account the numbers swept away by famine, pestilence, and a national exodus in the interval between 1834 and 1853: the effects of which are indicated by the loss of two millions and a half of population, chiefly Roman Catholic poor.

But, in the literal and more exact sense of united education—the actual distribution of the children

in the schools—the success has been far less. In three provinces, Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, there were—

Roman Catholics, . . . . .	338,464
Protestants of all denominations, . . . . .	7,419

or nearly a ratio of 48 Roman Catholics to 1 Protestant. In the province of Munster the distribution was still less—

Roman Catholics, . . . . .	148,849
Protestants, . . . . .	1,525

or a ratio of 97 Roman Catholics to 1 Protestant. To descend to counties, we have in Cork—

Roman Catholics, . . . . .	53,941
Protestants, . . . . .	0,471

or a ratio of about 114 Roman Catholics to 1 Protestant. In Protestant Ulster, the proportions were about 2 Roman Catholics to 1 Presbyterian; and about 5 Roman Catholics to 1 Protestant of the Established Church.

But, to look at the matter from another point of view. It appears from a comparison of the Clancarty and Eglinton Returns, that out of 490,027 children on the rolls of the National Schools in 1852–53, there were 203,271 children being educated in unmixed schools; 165,740 in mixed schools under patrons of their own communion; and 87,292 in mixed schools under patrons of other communions; 33,724 were not accounted for. It also ap-

pears that there was not a particle of mixed education going on in 1859 National Schools—1740 under Roman Catholic patronage, and 119 under Protestant patronage. The mixture did not exceed 5 per cent. in 918 schools; thus making 2777 out of a total of 4704 schools brought into account, in which mixed education had absolutely or virtually failed in 1852–53. Everybody knows that the tendency to separativeness has largely increased since that time; so that, on the most favourable showing, this great mission of the National Board has not been accomplished in even one-half of its schools.\*

I desire to impute little blame to the Board for this. The result was, to a great extent, owing to causes beyond its control—to the unmixed nature of the population in many districts, to the absence of co-operation on the part of the pastors of the different creeds, to the absolute refusal of the Presbyterians to join in applications with other denominations; but, most of all, to the unfortunate, though perhaps inevitable circumstance, that a vast number

\* The principal officers of the Board admit this fact to a greater extent even than we wish to press it. The Right Hon. A. Macdonnell, Resident Commissioner, in his examination before the Lords' Committee in 1854, stated: "I do not think that the National System has attained any great degree of success with regard to united education, that is, united education understood in the literal sense of Protestants and Roman Catholics being educated within the same walls."—p. 275, Q. 1932. Professor Sullivan said: "I am decidedly for mixed education, but that, unfortunately, we cannot carry into effect."—p. 402, Q. 2887.

of the National Schools had been built on chapel and meeting-house grounds, which have necessarily acquired (as the Board expresses it) a "peculiar religious aspect" and a "distinctive stamp."

But then, I would beg leave to ask, this being so, why should the fundamental rules be insisted on in an *universal* sense? Mr. Fortescue says: "If there were no combined schools, there were no need of the fundamental rules." In 1859 of the National Schools there was not a particle of combined education, not one single child, who required the protection of these rules; was not their enforcement so far a needless cause of irritation? If 119 Protestant schools conformed to the rules without obtaining a single Roman Catholic pupil, would it not be hard to insist on the 1769 Church Education Schools conforming to them without some probable advantage? I desire to press this question:—If not so many as one-fifth of all the children in the National Schools are under the protection of the rules, can their universal application be absolutely necessary?

Seeing the palpable conclusion to which the statistics of the schools lead, the National Board has latterly invented a definition of mixed education, which merits the title of being, at least, singularly original. I have noticed two senses in which the expression may be understood—first, as the education of members of different communions actually present within the same walls; secondly, as present in a system of schools all regulated on a common

principle. The National Board has discovered another sense, in which the members of different communions, though *absent in the flesh*, may be united and present in the same schools—figuratively and theoretically.

In the Eleventh Report for the year 1844, the Board, defending itself from the charge of failure of the system as one of united education, by reason of the unmixed character of the population in some districts in which an intermixture, of course, does not take place, says: "But the system never was designed to be one of united education *in that sense (sic)*; else, in numerous districts in Ireland in which schools are much needed, it would be wholly inapplicable. The system of united education, which it was really designed to establish, and which has, in fact, been established, is a system which does not *exclude (sic)* children of any denomination, which will *admit (sic)*, without doing violence to conscience, those of whatever religious creed who may wish for education."

In the Thirteenth Report of 1846 they say: "This is the true meaning of our united education plan. It is not a necessary part of it that there should be, in every school, an actual mixture of persons of different religious persuasions: but that every school, supported by the common funds of the nation, should be open to all, by keeping the secular part of the education distinct from the religious."

Thus all the schools of the National Board are,

by a fiction of the imagination, to be considered united, because they might be united. There is no hindrance to the union, save and except that the parties do not choose to be united; but the evidence of our senses, and the experience of years, tell us they are and will be separate. In this sense, two schools in the same village, opposite to each other, without a particle of admixture, and exhibiting their separateness in the most marked manner, may be satisfactory parts of a system of united education. And why? Because, says the Board, they are *bonâ fide* open to all, and though all will not enter them, still it is our care that they may enter them if they choose, and with a safe conscience.

Well, let us try the National Schools by this test, —Are they *bonâ fide* open to all? Is it a fact that all may enter them with a safe conscience? For this is the pretext for the universal application of the fundamental rules, and consequent exclusion of the Scriptural and certain other schools. If one were asked what is the most separate and exclusive type, the most dangerous and repulsive form, of all schools for the education of Protestant children, what would be the answer? The Convent School. It is presided over by Roman Catholic ladies, who are not merely sincere, but enthusiasts in religion. Secluded from the world, and dedicated to devotion, to acts of charity and mercy, their energies are, in the present case, concentrated on the instruction of

children—not as mercenaries, but as zealous devotees. They are influenced by a natural, a necessary, and an intense desire to instil into the infant minds placed under their care the principles of their faith—to promote and cherish which they have sacrificed their liberty, their social affections, and the pleasures of the world. In what light do they regard the neutrality rules of a secular Board? As flimsy webs, cunningly devised by shallow worldlings—“more honoured in the breach than in the observance.” Would any Protestant in his senses consider such a school, presided over by such votaries, in the impenetrable recesses of their convent, a safe establishment for the education of his child? Either the principle, that every National School must be open to all, is a pretence, or the past administration of the funds of the National Board has been partial and unfair, in giving aid to convent schools, and denying aid to Scriptural schools.

The defence of the Board on this point is curious. The Secretary of the Board informs the Lords' Committee:—“The convent schools, like all others under the Board, must be *bonâ fide* open to children of all denominations; *but, on account of the peculiar and distinctive* character of those schools, Protestants, *of course,* do not generally attend them. There may be a case or two in which a very few Protestant children do attend; *but practically they are exclusive schools,* subject to the rules of the Board with regard to religious as well as secular instruction.”—

("Evidence," M. Cross, Esq., p. 106, Q. 800.) He is asked by the Earl of Desart ("Evidence," p. 405, Q. 2929):—

"Do you think that Protestant parents *can* send their children to conventual schools with any confidence in the education they would receive there?

# "A. *No*, generally speaking, they could not; I think they could not," &c., &c.

Again he adds:—"I have always considered those schools as exceptional, and that none but Roman Catholics will attend them."—p. 407, Q. 2943. But then, remembering the Board's theoretical principle of mixed education, he gravely adds:—"There must be in them, *at least in theory and in principle*, a portion of the day during which children of all denominations might attend: *but I do not say that Protestant children will attend these schools, or that they ought to attend them.*"—Q. 2944.

# If the reader would desire to see how this theory and this principle are worked out into practice in convent schools, I would refer him to a pamphlet of the Rev. A. Formby, priest of the diocese of Birmingham (published by Duffy, Dublin: 1854). The pamphlet is written, no doubt, with a strong bias against the mixed system of education of the National Board; and its opinions and conclusions, perhaps, could not fairly be adduced or relied on for more than they are intrinsically worth; but as a narrative of facts, of which the writer professes to have been an eye-witness, its statements, I think, can

hardly be discredited. This gentleman appears to have visited the National Schools with a commendatory letter from Archbishop Cullen. He speaks of breaches of the religious neutrality endeavoured to be secured by the rules of the National Board, as matters of the commonest occurrence in the ordinary Roman Catholic National Schools. Speaking of the nunnery schools in particular, he says:—  
 “ Thus in schools of religious, I have heard the Litany of the Blessed Virgin sung *during the time of secular instruction*, and on inquiry how this came to pass, I was told that the Board was fully cognizant of this being done in other schools, without interposing to prevent it, as they might have done: and that, under the circumstances, *they felt they were justified in the practice.*”—p. 53.

He refers to the case of the Newry Convent School, in which it was proved that the regulations of the Board had been evaded, and the contraband religious books smuggled in (p. 61).

Another case, that of the Youghal Convent School, was brought before the Lords' Committee in 1854. Religious instruction was proved to have been given in a school, *attended by Protestant children*, at hours not notified in the time-table. The “Hail Mary” was said hourly at the stroke of the clock; the Roman Catholic Catechisms were found on the desks, and in use during the time for secular instruction: the nuns read and explained them, while the girls were at their needle-work. Some poor Protestant

children attended the school, attracted by the price paid for their work: their parents, so far from consenting to their children being present at the religious instruction, had expressly forbade it. The facts above stated were brought to light by an intelligent, active, and upright Inspector of the Board (Mr. C. Graham). Previous infractions of the same rules had taken place with the connivance of a Roman Catholic Inspector; the latter Inspector, after proof of this, was continued an officer of the Board; the former having, I suppose, been found inconveniently troublesome, was removed to the North of Ireland, and his ultimate reward will probably be—the conviction of having done his duty.

In what sense can the conventual and nunnery schools be said to be *bonâ fide* open to children of all religious denominations? It might as well be said that the Goodwin Sands are free and open for refuge and anchorage to the ships of all nations. No Protestant parent could think of venturing his child within a nunnery school but for the treacherous light of a false security held out by the National Board. It is not merely a mockery of mixed education to expect that Protestant children, in any appreciable numbers, will resort to such schools, but it is a reckless and profligate abuse of mixed education to attempt to lure them into positions of such extreme danger to their religious faith, and in which the Board must be sensible of its inability to render them protection. To countenance or encourage

such an imposture, is to hold forth a premium for falsehood and deception, and to affix a penalty on sincerity and truth.

A convent school may be induced to write a lie over its doors, purporting that it is open to Christians of all denominations, on their own terms as regards religious instruction. A Scriptural school cannot and will not do this. It does not hold the convenient doctrine stated by the Rev. Mr. Formby (the Roman Catholic priest already alluded to) to be that which regulates the schools of his creed in professing their allegiance to the neutral principles of the Board, when he says: "But under the system of the National Board, recourse must be had to the very vice itself (lying and deception, the national reproach to which the poorer Irish are most exposed), in order to obtain its antidote. *You must first stoop to manœuvre, to trick, and to cheat the National System out of its neutrality, in order to gain that which is to teach you not to trick or to cheat.*" —p. 60.

There are some wise and excellent men who think the universal application of the fundamental rules useful to the small minorities of two and three and five in the ordinary schools. These small minorities cannot expect separate schools for themselves, and the fundamental rules secure them at least a secular instruction, without their being compelled to accept the religious instruction of the majority. Assuming the rules to be faithfully observed,

they, no doubt, in such cases have that advantage. They may secure the minorities from overt acts of proselytism. But they can afford no protection against an influence hardly less injurious than proselytism, and from which there is no escape,—I mean the influence of numbers and the religious atmosphere of the school. “There is” (says a Roman Catholic Head Inspector) “what is called the sympathy of numbers, and a parent may naturally fear that the common sympathies of playfellows and constant association might insensibly imbue his child with Roman Catholic ideas and sentiments, though no change of creed might result.” A highly intelligent Protestant patron of more than one National School (the Archdeacon of Meath) says :—“I am prepared to certify to the deteriorated condition of those children who do attend the National Schools under such circumstances.”

But it should be observed, that this question as to the protection of the small minorities by means of the fundamental rules, almost exclusively concerns Protestants. The Clancarty Returns show that of the minorities under and not exceeding 1 per cent. Roman Catholic children were in but 3 Protestant schools ; whereas Protestant children were in 141 Roman Catholic schools. Of the minorities, from 1 to 2 per cent. Roman Catholics were found in but 23 Protestant schools ; whereas Protestants were in 218 Roman Catholic schools. Total, under 2 per cent. Protestants in 359 Roman Catholic schools,

against Roman Catholics in 26 Protestant schools. In the next grade of minorities, from 2 to 5 per cent., the Protestant children were in 316 Roman Catholic schools, while the Roman Catholics were in but 89 Protestant schools.

So that the question, as to the protection of the small minorities, mainly affects Protestant children; and wherefore should an universal enforcement of the fundamental rules be persisted in, in their behalf, who have never asked for, and do not set any value on, the protection they are supposed to afford. It cannot be pretended that the primary object of these rules was to protect Protestant children from Roman Catholic teaching. Protestants repudiate any such protectorship; and when the National Board appears more solicitous about the members of the Protestant Church than the Protestant Church itself is, its solicitude is too transcendental to be altogether free from suspicion.

But, as regards those sincere and well-wishing friends of the Established Church who urge this excuse for the universal enforcement of the fundamental rules,—I would seriously ask them, are the substantial interests of thousands to be sacrificed to secure this poetical justice to units? Will they, in order to open the way for the attendance of these small minorities of one and two and three scattered Protestants in the schools of the Roman Catholic majorities, disregard the cost at which this very problematical advantage is purchased,—the exclusion

from a sound education of from 70,000 to 100,000 children, who are, by an inflexible adherence to these rules, shut out from the advantages which the National Board might confer ?

Let me not be supposed for a moment to depreciate the value of the fundamental rules in their legitimate sphere and proper place. They have ample scope and an useful application in securing the elements of mixed education where such really exist. Where mixed education can be attained in any practical sense,—where the children of opposite creeds will combine in any tolerable quantities, there must be a truce against religious interference, and the truce will be respected and observed. Every school established on this principle is a positive gain to the public, not so much in the economising of its resources, as in cementing two opposite parties in fellowship and good-will. But we must look at matters as they are, and, finding that such a state of things is not always practicable, we should recognise the fact, the inevitable fact, of separate education in a great many instances.

The actual amount of mixed education, though very disproportionate to what might have been anticipated from the National Board, is still by no means unimportant. Let it, by all means, be cherished and increased as far as possible. More than one-half of the children in the National Schools are being educated under a *regime* of mixed education, and one-fifth are possibly under the direct protec-

tion of the fundamental rules. So far as this is true, it is most satisfactory ; but, however, it is not less the fact that four-fifths of the children do not happen to require any such protection. The Roman Catholics, in whose behalf these rules were primarily introduced, have been placed in circumstances in which they require them no longer. In addition to the workhouse and model schools, which are common ground to all, "the vested schools are principally under the patronage of the Roman Catholic clergy." ("Evidence," M. Cross, Esq., p. 49, Q. 339.) In the year 1852 they possessed the most complete control over 3163 schools, out of a total of 4566. And as to the exceptional cases, where the twos and the threes of Protestant children are obliged to enter the schools of the Roman Catholic majorities, their position is doubtless unfortunate, and to be deplored ; but no effort of Government can seriously improve it, and the attempt rather results in throwing parents off their guard, and involving their children in consequences seriously detrimental to their religious faith.

There are more substantial anomalies, which should first be redressed. There are many parishes in Ireland in which the only National Schools are non-vested schools in the hands of Roman Catholic priests. In these parishes or neighbourhoods there are tens and twenties of Protestant children who have no option given them by the National Board but to attend the school of the priest, in which they

are debarred from receiving any Scriptural or religious instruction whatever. Their pastor cannot follow them there; and if he be willing to join the Board, and to give those ten or twenty Protestant children the advantages of a National School, with suitable religious instruction, the Board will afford him no assistance. The Secretary to the Board admits that the case I have stated exists, and that the Board's rules do not provide the means of removing such a difficulty ("Evidence," M. Cross, Esq., p. 59, Q. 429). When this shall have been effected, it will look more like sincerity to profess solicitude for the Protestant twos and threes.

Finally, what are the direct effects of the universal enforcement of the fundamental rules on the prospects of mixed education? In the first place, it excludes the great body of the Protestant clergy from connexion with the Board—the most earnest friends and efficient agents in accomplishing mixed education. It excludes not merely that section of the clergy which disapproves of the principles of the Board, but it equally excludes a large section who might be perfectly willing and free to join it.

Now, if those who honestly dissent from the Board's rules as to religious instruction were treated with the consideration due to their character, numbers, and position, the bond of sympathy and union which knits them together in one compact phalanx with those who entertain no such scruples, would be broken; and very probably many of those

who are now found in unhappy antagonism to the Government would look more to their own immediate charge—the education of the children of their own communion—whose numbers are daily increasing, and may very soon furnish them with urgent employment.

As regards the laity, the universal enforcement of these rules excludes not less, perhaps, than 100,000 children from the benefits of National Education. The National Board, instead of having 5000 schools, might have 7000 or 8000 schools, and add 200,000 children to its rolls at a small comparative increase of expense.

In the Church Education Schools alone there were educated more than 102,000 children each year, on an average of ten years, at an average annual cost to the Society of £40,900. The collection of these funds proves a heavy and unequal tax on the Protestants of Ireland, who, however independent they may be, are not quite so rich as their brethren in England, at this moment receiving large public assistance towards their schools. The funds of the Church Schools are sustained at their present amount by an undue pressure on the liberality of a few individuals, headed by the princely munificence of the Lord Primate; but if this liberality were to cease, I should tremble for the cause of Protestant education in Ireland. The Parochial Schools are supported chiefly by the working clergy: curates with incomes of £70 a year, in many cases, make them-

selves liable for sums of £5 or £6 per annum for their support (see "Evidence," Rev. H. Verschoyle, p. 877, Q. 6843). The schools themselves, though possessed of some peculiar advantages of inestimable value in the shape of local superintendence and inspection, are, in other respects, sadly deficient. The entire apparatus of instruction—the books, maps, &c.—are below the standard of the present day: and, such as they are, the schools are too frequently but scantily supplied with them. The sum available for inspection of 1827 Church Schools, in the year ending 1855, was £1628 19s. 4d.; the sum expended in the inspection of the National Schools in that year was £20,637. The sum for training and model schools in the Church Education Society was £2726 6s. 10d., against £47,194 5s. 8d. expended by the National Board. Having officially inspected a great number of the Church Education Schools, I must with pain add my testimony to that of Mr. Buxton, when he said:—"One could not help feeling, in visiting the Protestant schools, that there was a great want of the advantages which the State can give in the way of books, and apparatus, and salaries for teachers, and so on."

Then, is it right or prudent that the children of the Protestants in Ireland shall be brought up in ill-ventilated, ill-provided schools, while the Roman Catholic peasantry are receiving their education, for the most part, in commodious buildings, furnished with abundance of the best books and school appa-

ratus, with masters trained, and stimulated, and paid by the State? This is more than a question of religious polemics: it is one of State policy. Were the clergy of the Established Church never so wrong-headed, here is a state of things which no prudent statesman, whether he be Whig, Tory, or Radical, should regard without the deepest concern and anxiety. Is there an adequate necessity for it? This leads me to consider, lastly, whether there be any modification of the present system which could admit of the comprehension of the Church Schools without compromising the proper application of the fundamental rules, or the experiment of mixed education.

Regarding the National System of Education as a settled institution of the country, doing a great deal of good to the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian communities, though still excluding from its benefits some important sections of each, let us, lastly, consider whether any modification or enlargement of the system can—without subverting or endangering its essential constitution, or infringing the acquired rights of those who have already joined it—admit the co-operation of the Established Church—the Wesleyan Methodists—the Christian Brotherhood—the Sisters of Mercy and Charity—and the residue of the Presbyterians.

Three plans are before the public, with more or less of authority to recommend them. The first plan

1  
was that which Lord Granville, as the organ of the Government, opened to the Committee of the House of Lords in July, 1854. He suggested that the Church Education Schools (mentioned, I suppose, *exempli gratia*) should receive grants of school-books and school requisites from the National Board, and that the benefit of inspection by the officers of the Board, and access to its training-schools, should be extended to them.

2  
The second plan was that proposed by the Earl of Derby, and differed from the first in giving, in addition to these advantages, an allowance to the teachers for the actual progress of the pupils, founded on the Report of the Inspectors of the Board.

3  
The third plan was that submitted by Mr. Walpole to the House of Commons in June, 1856. It sought for such a modification of the rules of the Board as would extend the advantages now enjoyed by non-vested schools to any other than vested schools, whatever might be the regulations of the school as to the mode of religious instruction : subject to the condition that no child should be required to learn catechisms, creeds, or formularies, to which his parents objected.

Lord Granville, for some reason unexplained, withdrew his proposition, and did not suffer it even to appear on the Minutes of the Committee. The Committee ended their labours without arriving at any conclusion on the subject further than to report

the evidence. The House of Commons adopted Mr. Walpole's resolution, and embodied it in an address to the Throne; but in a few days later, with singular inconsistency, it affected to repudiate it, and accepted a counter-resolution of Mr. Fortescue, supported by the weight and influence of the Government. In this awkward and unsatisfactory position the question of National Education at present remains, after years of debate and discussion.

It may be assumed that no statesman, on either side of the House, would regard without anxiety any step which would undo, or even appear to undo, what has been accomplished with so much pains, or unsettle the existing establishment of schools in Ireland. Therefore, apart from the abstract merits of any particular plan, we should, in the first place, estimate the probable amount of displacement it would involve. If Mr. Walpole's proposition is considered in this light, it cannot be expected that the displacement which it does contemplate in favour of the Protestant schools will stop there. The Roman Catholics would naturally demand the same privilege, of regulating their religious instruction after their own fashion. The Presbyterians may have (as lawyers say) estopped themselves from insisting on a compulsory rule, which they say is abhorrent to their principles, and unnecessary. Their schools, in March, 1853, were about 677; the work-house schools were 134; the vested and model schools were 1631; the schools under mixed patronage, 79;

and schools composed exclusively of Protestants or Roman Catholics were 1859: making a total of 4380. Allowing for duplicates, or schools appearing under two or three heads, there might, perhaps, be about 3000 schools in which no disturbance would have resulted if Mr. Walpole's resolution had been acted upon. Still there would have remained not less probably than 1500 schools in which the fundamental rules of the Board were then professedly observed, and might thenceforth be repudiated; and these schools receiving an accession of some 1700 Church Schools, it must be confessed that the plan of education so cordially recommended by the Commissioners of 1806 and 1824, and the Committees of 1828 and 1830, and since inaugurated with extreme difficulty and care, might be endangered, and the principle of non-interference virtually cease to be the predominant principle of National Education. Lapse of time, and usage have, in a manner, established the present system. It has conferred great advantages on the Roman Catholic population, and the State has derived corresponding advantages from it, which it would be unwise to throw away. Anything which would annul what has been done since 1831, by supplying the Roman Catholic priesthood with an adequate motive and moving power to withdraw the Roman Catholic population from the National Schools, would be regarded as little short of a national calamity. The pretext of an organized State proselytism

might be as spurious as the greased cartridges of the Sepoys, but it might be one which would furnish an appeal to the inmost souls of the people, and should not lightly be offered. On the other hand, let us not exaggerate, and thereby add to the danger we fear; let us not so far give way to timorous counsels as to become insensible to the claims of justice and the interests of education. To propitiate the Roman Catholic priesthood, and keep them quiet, it is not wise to deliver over the rising generation of our Protestant brethren to their mercies. It is not only an unrighteous but a dangerous experiment to take the education of the country altogether out of the hands of Protestant clergymen and laymen, and commit every educational stronghold in the kingdom to the Roman Catholic priests. We may rest assured that whatever they may threaten, so long as the Roman Catholic priests are left the exclusive dominion of the great majority of the National Schools, it will not be their interest nor their policy to withdraw their children from them. The rebellion against the Kildare-place Schools was because the priests had not the control of them. As regards the National Schools, the Roman Catholics are securely entrenched in more than 3000 of them; and the danger that is to be apprehended now is—that, by practising on the compressibility of the Government, they shall get the command of all the schools, and of the entire educational machinery of the country as regards primary instruction. Each fresh instance of undue deference

to their behests inspires them the more with an inordinate estimate of their power and importance, and of the facility and weakness of the Government; it raises their expectations, and increases their demands.

The Decrees of the Synod of Thurles, and the Pastorals of the Papal Legate, indicate a determination on the part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to effect a total overthrow of the system of National Education from its two fundamental bases—first, as a system of mixed education of Protestants and Catholics; secondly, as a system of secular instruction sanctified by a moral and religious element. Statesmen may disregard these fulminations, and imagine that because they outrun the sympathies of the laity and inferior clergy, and even outrage the proprieties of educated and independent Roman Catholics, they are vain and harmless as stage thunder. No greater mistake could possibly take possession of the mind: these decrees are working their way, and accomplishing their purpose silently but surely. The moral and religious element they have banished; and the Roman Hierarchy are now struggling to insulate the Roman Catholic children from the wholesome influences of communication with Protestant patrons and teachers. They are tramping out every trace of mixed education; and the National Board seems to be conspiring to the same end, by excluding its warmest and best friends. The result is rapidly developing itself in the schools. The

vested schools—the appropriate seats of mixed education, and the proper sphere for religious neutrality—are rapidly giving place to the non-vested school, which is essentially denominational and exclusive. Out of 5192 National Schools, in the year 1855, no more than 1526 were vested. Out of 154 new schools added in that year, but 17 were vested; while of the old vested schools an unusually large number had been in that year 1855 suspended or struck off the rolls.

Lord Derby's plan, and Lord Granville's, in its degree, would, unquestionably, have afforded that kind of partial assistance to the Scriptural schools which the Commissioners of 1806 intended for them. It would have completed the comprehensive scheme of education they had sketched out, and of which the schools of the National Board are but a fragmentary part. The Parochial Schools were assumed to possess some independent resources, and were not to be integrally incorporated with the National Schools, but to be complementary or auxiliary in the system. No doubt the Commissioners of that day intended a separate grant for them; but all parties seem now pretty well to agree that the National Board may fitly dispense such assistance as Parliament thinks proper to give. Lord Derby's plan would have opened the public purse, not merely to them, but to all schools, upon equal terms. Mr. Walpole's plan might, perhaps, have shut the door against the Wesleyan Methodists, the Roman Ca-

tholic Confraternities, and a large section of the Presbyterians, who would not pledge themselves to abstain from the use of Catechisms and the formularies of their creed. It proposed a test as obnoxious to some of them as the restricted reading of the Holy Scriptures was to the Church Education Schools. Lord Derby's plan, above all, involved *no organic change or unsettling of the existing system of schools*; it would have introduced an addition to, and an enlargement of them, rather than a modification or an alteration. The Normal School of the National Board—the regular “National School”—would still be a school for the mixed education of Protestants and Roman Catholics, conducted on the principle of non-interference in religious tenets. The Board would recognise none other as its regular or salaried agent; it would give every encouragement and pre-eminence to those who could and would undertake to accomplish mixed education. In this sense, and for this purpose, the fundamental rules as to religious instruction should be as fully maintained and enforced as they had ever been, and far more honestly and effectually carried out. The Board would extend and cherish its vested and model schools. It would retain such of its *existing* non-vested schools as were content even to profess to undertake mixed education on the principles of the Board; but it would add to the list, for the future, only such schools as were really sincere in such a profession, and capable of accomplishing it. It would cease to represent, and to

guarantee, convent schools as safe and suitable for Protestant children, while it accepted their services as valuable seminaries for the education of the Roman Catholics, and most important to be embraced in a comprehensive system of National Education.

It would class them—not as regular “National Schools” for mixed education, which is a gross misnomer, and enables them to sail under false colours—but in some secondary rank. In the same rank might be included the admirable schools of the Christian Brothers, a wide-spreading institution, embracing all the great centres of population in the South of Ireland, and bidding fair to extinguish the National Schools in that quarter; also the schools of the Wesleyan Methodists, and of those members of the Presbyterian body who cannot submit to a separation of the religious from the secular element in education. All might be comprehended, if not as regulars, at least as auxiliaries and contingents, which would do the work of education at half the expense to the State, and with double the energy and zeal of the regular servants of the Board. Such as would not profess to undertake united education on the principles of the Board, and preferred to retain or to regain their independence of action, should take their reward according to the value of the services they rendered, and rely for stated support mainly upon the assistance of the religious denominations to which they belonged. The schools which would thus be comprehended would not be,

in any respect, more exceptional than the conventual and monastic schools of the Board, nor would they be more exclusive and separate than the non-vested schools on chapel and meeting-house premises actually are. The fundamental principle, that no child shall be excluded from a sound secular instruction by reason of his religious principles, instead of being violated, would rather be cherished and promoted. At present this principle is professed in schools in which it is impracticable, and truly "a mockery and a snare;" while it is virtually set at nought by the exclusion of the children of large bodies of the people, too honest to subscribe to a principle in order to attain the means of violating it.

Lord Derby's plan—by bringing the several systems of education into connexion with a common central body—might go far to compose their differences and allay their hostilities: at least it would deprive their rivalry of much of its sectional bitterness. It would moderate and restrain, rather than stimulate or increase, that zeal which is supposed to be intent on religious proselytism. For, what more harmonizing influence could be brought to bear on the education of a country,—what more restraining influence could be found to keep in bounds the eccentricities of denominational zeal,—than the use of a common set of books, and subjection to a common system of training, management, and inspection?

Then it is surely the interest of the State that

whatever education is going on shall be as good of its kind as possible. This was the Board's justification for taking into connexion a class of schools which they were obliged to confess wore a peculiar religious aspect and a distinctive stamp: the schools built on chapel grounds. "Were we to do otherwise (said the Board), the school-houses would, notwithstanding our rejection, be built on the proposed site; *would be conducted without our books, control, inspection, and training*; in other words, the people, though educated, might be badly educated, and would consider that they had been unjustly excluded by the State from the benefit of the public grant, towards which all have contributed."\* My only regret is, that the principle here so fairly stated did not receive a more liberal and impartial application.

Without saying it would be the best, perhaps it would have been one of the most economical means of improving the education which is going on in the unincorporated schools, to give (as proposed by Lord Derby) small rewards to the teachers in proportion to the proficiency attained by their pupils in the books issued by the Board. This has been strongly recommended by some of the Board's best inspectors for general application. The Board at present assists ordinary schools, by giving a fixed salary to the teacher according to his classification, but unless the average attendance reaches thirty it withdraws

\* Fourteenth Report of the Board of National Education, for 1847.

the salary. It assists the nunnery schools by a percentage on the average attendance. In the former case the payment is irrespective of the proficiency of the pupils; in the latter case, it is irrespective not only of the proficiency of the pupils, but also of the teacher. To make the teacher's remuneration depend entirely upon the actual attendance of the children, will, in ordinary cases, make him the slave of the parents, and shut his mouth from asking for assistance from them in the shape of school fees, and so far cripple his means of decent subsistence as to affect his ultimate efficiency. In another point of view, proficiency allowances form the most unobjectionable means of assisting an auxiliary and independent school: they are so much direct payment for actual service rendered, by a good general education, and cannot be said to be given in furtherance of any particular form of religious instruction.

It has been, and may be again urged, that possibly Roman Catholics would be under a disadvantage in this open competition, because that the Protestant schools may be supplemented by subscriptions, and so enabled to offer unfair inducements in the shape of food and clothing to the children who frequent them. To this the answer seems to be, that if the grant from the Board to any Protestant school—whether in connexion with the Board under its existing plan, or under any proposed plan—should be abused, it can be withdrawn. The most absurd exaggeration

tions appear still to be current in regard to the resources of the Established Church. They were formerly reckoned by millions. The gross parochial income is about £357,000, and affords to each beneficed clergyman an average income of about £190, leaving from 200 to 300 incumbents with less than £100 per annum. Two per cent. on the gross parochial income (the maximum impost contemplated by the Commissioners of 1806 for schools) would give no more than £7140 per annum, and it would certainly be no exaggeration to say that three times that amount is contributed by the clergy to the support of the Parochial Schools. After all, the schools are in a languishing condition, and there seems little available for bribes. As regards the maintenance of a school, every person must see that the great superiority of numbers on the part of the Roman Catholics ought more than compensate any imaginable superiority of wealth on the part of the Protestants. A school supported by fifty or sixty children, each paying even a penny a week, will in ordinary cases have a more substantial and reliable endowment than one depending on the precarious benevolence of a few wealthy patrons. Under Lord Derby's plan, the more numerous attended schools would have the greater number of chances of support, in the shape of proficiency allowances. Besides all this, the Roman Catholics are increasing rapidly in wealth, intelligence, and independence; they not only erect costly cathedrals, and

chapels, and hospitals, but have even aspired to found an University, to supersede that of the Queen, and I have no doubt that under a more judicious administration of the funds of the National Board, the Roman Catholic body could be brought to give more liberal contributions to the National Schools than they do at present. It is well known that schools, formerly well supported by voluntary contributions, have, since their connexion with the Board, been thrown on its support entirely. This is not reasonable or proper in the case of schools virtually separate and denominational. It is a startling fact, that out of 4704 National Schools in operation in 1851, so many as 3529 did not receive a farthing of local assistance beyond the miserable school-fees. The teachers in 3682 of the schools were unprovided with even a residence. The total amount of school-fees and local aid together, in 2841 schools, did not exceed an average of £5 per annum. The average local aid given to all the National Schools throughout Ireland, in the shape of school-fees and subscriptions, did not exceed £5 2s. 11d., while the Parliamentary endowment, the Board's average salary, to each school was £16. The children did not pay one farthing per week on the average for their education. This state of things is complained of even in respect of the comfortable Presbyterians of Ulster. How is this to be explained? Is it the deadening influences of a monopoly which destroys the spirit of self-reliance, and

induces parties to throw the whole support of their schools on the State? Or is it that the inflexible rules of the Board depress and control overmuch the religious principle,—the mainspring of energy and generosity? One Head Inspector says:—"Generally speaking, the effect of the system is to impose a restraint upon the opinions and feelings of all parties, or rather upon the liberty of action in carrying them out, &c."—"Evidence," W. M'Creedy, Esq., p. 536, Q. 3741.)

Whatever may be the cause, the noble and ennobling spirit of self-reliance and independence requires to be stimulated in the school system of Ireland. The pecuniary value of the local aid is the least part of its advantages. Patrons take more interest in an education to which they contribute something; parents set some value on what they pay something to procure; irregular attendance of the pupils is checked; the resources of the State are economized; the reckless multiplication of schools starving each other is stopped; the teachers are rewarded, and competent men encouraged to remain. Out of 3122 teachers trained by the Board up to 1851, the Board has been able to retain in its service no more than 1170; 41½ per cent. of the male teachers had left them. In 1853, out of 4326 teachers trained, only 2131 remained. In 1851 the Board had to employ 3006 *untrained* teachers. Those who leave the service of the Board are commonly the ablest and the best. This is attributa-

ble to the general absence of local sympathy and support, and constitutes the greatest difficulty and defect in the working of the System of National Education in Ireland. The Board is unfortunately obliged to commit the patronage and management of National Schools to a class of patrons who are not qualified by personal intelligence, or social rank or position, to appreciate a liberal education. The teachers trained by the Board become disgusted, and seek other walks of life, and the Board is compelled to commit the charge of its schools to untrained teachers, selected by ignorant patrons, without judgment or discrimination. The Inspectors of the Board say, that even the best trained teachers whom they can send out, when put in charge of country schools, and left to their own resources, without that local sympathy and encouragement which an intelligent, zealous patron can give, rapidly and invariably deteriorate, and become as inefficient as the worst. The officers say, over and over again, that almost everything depends on the character of the patron, and the kind of local superintendence to which the school is subjected. Official inspection, three or four times a year, is not enough ; it must be aided by local inspection. "And this" (say they) "is what our schools require most." Here, then, we can get an idea of the inestimable loss which the public suffers in being deprived of the cooperation of the clergy of the Established Church,—a body of educated gentlemen, who are scattered all

over the country, possessed of local interest and zeal, and whose accession is confessed by every intelligent servant of the Board to be essential to the proper working of the system of National Education. Head-Inspector M'Creedy, in his evidence, said—"Until they do join the Board and become patrons, our system will not be what we all desire."—"Evidence," W. M'Creedy, Esq., p. 495, Q. 3484.\*) How far this deterioration in the managers and teachers of the National Schools operates on the character of the primary education of the country, is a question into which I advisedly forbear to enter at present.

One difficulty remains in the way, but it is not altogether insurmountable. The Resident Commissioner, says: "In those 1500 Church Education Schools, if conducted on their present principles, *we* should be acting against what I consider to be matter of conscience, in giving public aid to to them."—"Evidence," Right Hon. A. Macdonnell, p. 273, Q. 1915. Such a statement, coming from a sober Protestant gentleman of great respectability, would

\* Q. 3484.—Lord Ardrossan (Earl of Eglinton).—"Do you see any reason for supposing that the secular education in Ireland would be improved by the alteration of the system, in any of the ways suggested by the writers to whom you have referred to-day?"

"A.—No; but I think, and I have always thought, that our system would be greatly improved, and primary education greatly advanced, by the accession of the Protestant clergy, the landed proprietors of the country, and the local gentry; and that, until they do join the Board, and become patrons of schools under its management, our system will not be what we all desire it should be."

naturally lead a stranger to think that the present principles of the Society were something very abominable, and not the identical principles on which every Protestant school in England is conducted.\* Boards are not usually supposed to have consciences, but here we have a Board with a conscience in one direction. If its conscience had been as lively in other directions, we should not have to detail its breach of faith towards those who entered into covenants signed and sealed on the understanding that the education which they were invited to take part in, was not merely a course of secular, but also of moral and religious instruction. The Board has declared the two latter elements contraband at the bidding of each little child, and forbidden the use of its own religious books to the patrons who, with misplaced confidence, vested their schools in a Board which has no right to be considered or consulted on the ground of conscience. The public does not want a Board with a conscience to act and to repent for itself, and play fast and loose with compacts. What it wants is a Board with a conscience, to administer the system laid down for it, in strict conformity with the regulations propounded for its governance. Individual members of the Board are expected to have their conscientious feelings, but when one says that it is against *his* conscience to administer aid to the Church Education Schools, while conducted on their present principles, it does seem to be, to say the least of it,

\* See Appendix, p. 93.

very extravagant and indefensible. If, indeed, it were said that it was impolitic or unwise to do so, one might understand this, though it would be expected that there should be given some better reason than Mr. Macdonnell put forward in his evidence before the Lords' Committee. He seemed to think that, although it might be proper in England to give aid to denominational schools, *because* it is almost impossible at present to have *there* one united system of education; yet in Ireland it was improper, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the country, and the very general acceptance of the National Grants. If by this he meant to convey that in Ireland it was possible to have one united system of education, he would be contradicted by other parts of his own evidence, and if he meant less, his reason was worthless.

But who are the conscientious "We," that object to administer this aid to the Church Education Schools? The Board of National Education originally consisted of seven members; the number has been latterly increased to fifteen. All the more eminent members of the Board,—indeed, eleven or twelve out of the fourteen unpaid Commissioners, hold elsewhere important and exacting public offices, quite sufficient to occupy their time: one is the Chancellor; another, a Bishop of two extensive and remote dioceses in the north of Ireland; another is President of a Royal College at Belfast; another, who has *lately resigned*, a Roman Catholic

Bishop in the same district; another is a Commissioner for Sale of Incumbered Estates; another was the late Judge of the Insolvent Court; another is a Master in Chancery; two are noblemen of high rank and station; and three are Chairmen of large counties.

Here are the great majority of the fourteen unpaid Commissioners; but, suppose their attendance to be punctual and exemplary, for what purpose are they to be summoned to a weekly Board? Is it to decide whether a petty school in Donegal or Kerry shall have a grant of £15 or £20; or is it to propound rules, and to interpret them? The Archbishop of Dublin says the original functions of the Board have been fulfilled; the rules were framed and explained; the books prepared; the inspectors trained; and there is no longer occasion for the exercise of anything but purely administrative functions. Mr. Macdonnell, on the other hand, seems to think that the system is still in a state of growth and development, and requires a representative Board to sanction a certain *further amount of improvement*, which yet remains to be introduced.

If this be the assumed office of the Board, it remains for Parliament to say does it intend that further *improvements* shall be made on such authority alone; and before it determines that question, it would do well to consider in what manner the past improvements made by this representative body have been completed. A little inquiry will show that the business devolved on four or *five* of

the Commissioners who happen to be the most constant in their attendance ; and among the fruits of whose deliberations we find recorded the sanctioning of the memorable exclusion of the " Scripture Lessons" and the " Lessons on the Truth of Christianity" from the model schools at Newry and Clonmel, without a word of previous communication with, or even subsequent intimation to, their ten absent colleagues.\* The other members of the Board, when this decision came to their knowledge, were in a manner obliged to confirm it, because it was foregone, and could not easily be recalled. The ultimate value of the Board, as a deliberative coun-

\* See the evidence of the Right Hon. Alexander Macdonnell, p. 238, QQ. 1577, 1578, 1579. M. Cross, Esq., p. 235, Q. 1558.—With regard to the consideration given to the subject by the Commissioners, Mr. Macdonnell states:—"The Commissioners *who were present* agreed with me in that view, and thought we had exercised a wise discretion, *and that nothing else need be done* in the matter."

He was asked by Earl Granville, Q. 1579, p. 238,—“Were any means taken to inform the Commissioners, who were not present, of the fact that the books were not used?”

“A.—Nothing further than this: that every week there comes up a report from each district model school, and in the front page of that report there is an exact list of the books used, and the number of children using them; and from that list, each week, it would appear clearly that the ‘Scripture Extracts’ and the ‘Christian Evidences’ were not used in either of those schools.”

That is, if the ten absent Commissioners had regularly attended the Board meetings, and had suspected that such a silent revolution was going on, and examined the heaps of formal returns lying on the board-room table, or in the office, they would have discovered it. In point of fact, the discovery was made by accident long afterwards, at Clonmel, by the Archbishop of Dublin.

cil, cannot be reckoned very high, if we are to judge by the fact stated by Mr. Macdonnell, that the final decision on this vital matter, of the retention or expulsion of the religious books from the curriculum of National Education, was come to "with very little discussion on the subject at the Board; the members had made up their minds without much discussion as to their particular reasons." The Bishop of Ossory asked (p. 257, Q. 1768)—

"Were there no arguments employed by one side to convince the other, or to justify themselves for the course they took?"

"A. No, I do not think there were. I do not think the thing was ever regularly discussed at the Board."—("Evidence," Right Hon. A. Macdonnell.)

Regarded as an administrative body, it is impossible to expect that men in the high positions occupied by most of the Commissioners, whose names are intended to attract public confidence in the Board, can work the petty details of the system. The real business must be done by a few individuals; the responsibility is scattered and lost among fifteen, most of whom know nothing of what is doing under the sanction of their names. The experienced Secretary of the Board says, in answer to a question of the Earl of Derby:—"I have no doubt whatever that the business of the Board generally cannot be effectually administered by a numerous Board. That is my decided opinion after long official experience; in fact, the ordinary business is now trans-

acted chiefly by Mr. Macdonnell, who is the resident and only paid Commissioner, myself, and my brother Secretary; but the successful working of the establishment requires that it shall be done in a different way from what it is at present."—"Evidence," M. Cross, Esq., p. 233, Q. 1551.) Some change is obviously needed: a small administrative Board, and a minister responsible to Parliament, seem to be what is required.

I have endeavoured to show how far the Fundamental Rules of the National Board, in regard to religious instruction, were in accordance with the views of the Commissioners of 1806, and necessary in a plan of education of Roman Catholics undertaken by a Protestant Government. I have also shown that the application of these same rules to the Parochial and Scriptural Schools was against the views of these Commissioners; was open to grave objections of a substantial character, on the ground of duty and conscience; was uncalled for by any wise purpose; and, that while it has been a source of painful and gratuitous irritation, and of injurious exclusion, it has in its results gone far to defeat the legitimate aim and object of the rules themselves. I have shown that their application was, as to a considerable number of the schools, nugatory, and as to some of them—the Convent Schools—illusory and mischievous, and that there was no semblance of fair dealing in aiding schools of so exclusive and sectarian a character, and refusing aid to

the Scriptural and Parochial Schools; and lastly, I trust I have made the proposition clear, that a persistence in the present course,—while it tends more and more to depress and deteriorate the standard of national education, to alienate its best friends, to divorce the Church of England and Ireland from its co-operation with the State, to expel those of its clergy and laity who had confidently trusted the Board, and to obstruct the advancement and lower the social position of the poorer Protestants,—wholly fails to propitiate or to satisfy the heads of the Church of Rome. Having for the last five-and-twenty years done no little service to that Church in sheltering the Roman Catholics from the influences of Scriptural light and truth, it is now being made the slave of a more uncompromising and exacting task-master, who banishes contemptuously the mild element of moral and religious instruction as if heretical; who rigorously interdicts religious communion with Protestants, in respect even of the rudiments of their common Christianity; and would fain convert the National Schools of Ireland into nurseries of a bigoted and intolerant ultra-montaniam.

## APPENDIX.

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THE following Correspondence between the Committee of the Model Secular School of Manchester, and the Committee of Council on Education (a copy of which was laid before the House of Commons, in return to an Address of the House dated July 2, 1856), illustrates the very different views taken by the Government in respect to religious instruction, as the basis of National Education in England and Scotland, from that which it takes in Ireland.

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### CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN THE PROMOTERS OF THE MODEL SECULAR SCHOOL, MANCHESTER, AND THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION.

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(MEMORIAL.)

To the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee on Education of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council.

*The Memorial of the Committee of the Manchester Model Secular School.*

Respectfully Showeth,—That your Memorialists are desirous that your Lordships may instruct one of Her Majesty's Inspectors to visit the Manchester Model Secular School, and to report to your Lordships upon the character and condition of the School, with a view to its being admitted to participate in the Government grants for education.

That the said School is situated at the junction of Jackson's-row with Deansgate, Manchester, and is in the midst of a dense population of persons, who are for the most part very poor.

That about 350 boys, with very few exceptions, from seven to twelve years of age, are receiving useful instruction, free of charge, at the said School, and that almost the whole of these are the children or wards of destitute and very poor persons, who cannot afford to pay for their school instruction.

That a very large proportion of the children attend Sunday schools in connexion with many different religious denominations. That of those children who attend Sunday schools, about a half are attending Sunday schools in connexion with the Church of England; about a third are attending the Sunday schools connected with the Roman Catholic Church; and that the residue attend Sunday schools connected with various denominations of Dissenters.

That in so far as the character of the instruction given in such School is concerned, *it is based upon the model of the Irish National Schools*; the object of the School being "to afford combined literary and moral, and separate religious instruction to children of all persuasions, upon the fundamental principle that no attempt shall be made to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any description of Christian (or other) pupils."

That the promoters of the School are sincerely desirous "that the clergy and laity of the different religious denominations should co-operate in conducting" the said School.

That the School was opened for the reception of scholars on the 28th August, 1854; that it is maintained by voluntary subscriptions, at an annual cost of about £500; that the master, Mr. B. Templar, is a certificated teacher, who has had five pupil teachers under his direction and training in the inspected British School at Bridport, and is assisted by four adult paid teachers.

That it is earnestly desired by the promoters of the School that it may be admitted to participate in the advantages of the Pupil Teacher system, under your Lordships' Minutes. That the said School stands peculiarly in need of this instrumentality, from the circumstance that the partial employment of monitors is indispensable, and that the most useful boys, employed in part as monitors, leave the School for other employment almost as soon as their services have become really valuable; whereas it is believed the Government allowance to pupil teachers would be a sufficient inducement to retain the services of such a number as to insure greatly increased efficiency in the School, without detriment to the interests of the pupil teachers themselves.

That your Memorialists *do not profess to give special religious instruction, or to cause the reading of the Holy Scriptures in the school*; the composition of the attendance, and other influences connected with the School, indeed, would render either of these courses impracticable. Notwithstanding these circumstances, your Memorialists feel encouraged to hope for a favourable consideration of this application, knowing, as they do, that the annexed statement of opinion, amongst others from men of distinction and experience, affecting, as your Memorialists conceive, such applications as the present, have already been brought under your Lordships' consideration. Your Memorialists venture most respectfully to ask your Lordships to reconsider these opinions in connexion with this application.

That your Memorialists are persuaded that an important and salutary moral and religious influence is exercised through the instruction communicated in the said School: and in confirmation of this opinion, and in evidence as to the value and importance of the School as a popular educational institution, they have much pleasure in referring your Lordships to the accompanying testimonials from—

1. Thomas Bazley, Esq., President of the Chamber of Commerce, Manchester.
2. Mark Philips, Esq., of Manchester and Snitterfield, Warwickshire.
3. The Rev. W. F. Walker, M. A., Incumbent of St. James', Oldham.
4. The Rev. Dr. M'Kerrow, Manchester.
5. The Rev. Dr. Beard, Manchester.
6. A joint certificate from a number of influential gentlemen who have visited the School more recently.

Your Memorialists enclose also a copy of the First Report of the School, and, placing this statement and these documents in your Lordships' hands, respectfully entreat an early and favourable consideration to this their Memorial.

By order of the Committee,

(Signed) R. W. SMILES, *Secretary.*

80, KING-STREET, MANCHESTER,

*February 25, 1856.*

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REPLY TO THE FOREGOING MEMORIAL.

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MANCHESTER MODEL SECULAR SCHOOL.

*Committee of Council on Education,  
Privy Council Office, London, 17th June, 1856.*

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of Council on Education, to inform you that the Memorial from the Committee of the Manchester Model Secular School, which was transmitted to their Lordships in February last, has been considered.

Your Committee was of course aware of the reply which had been made by my Lords, in 1853, to a similar Memorial from the promoters of Williams's Secular School in Edinburgh. That Memorial and the Reply are both printed in the Minutes of the Committee of Council for 1853-54, pp. 43-45.

I am to enclose a copy of that Reply.

My Lords have hitherto felt it right to maintain the same principle, which they believe to be *in accordance with the opinion of the majority* of the promoters of education throughout the country, as well as with the intention with which grants for education have been made by Parliament.

Although the actual practice in schools, which are admitted to aid under the Minute of 10th July, 1847, cannot in all cases be ascertained by inspection; the managers of all such schools at any rate profess that, in undertaking to provide for the education of a child, they *undertake thereby to assign to revealed religion a place in the teaching.*

The question, therefore, of the admissibility of the Model Secular School at Manchester, to aid under the Minutes which regulate the appropriation of the grant, resolves itself into one of fact, viz., whether that school presents any features different from other secular schools of the class considered by their Lordships in 1853.

After careful examination, it appears to my Lords that there is *nothing in the rules of your school to insure that the children, towards the cost of whose education the State would be paying if the school were admitted to aid, must necessarily have the opportunity of instruction in revealed religion, as well as in secular knowledge, and in the ordinary rules of morality.*

My Lords, therefore, regret that while they do not doubt the desire of the managers of your school, that the children who are taught in it should have the opportunity of receiving religious instruction by other means than those afforded in the School itself, they do not feel themselves at liberty, in discharge of the trust reposed in them, to comply with the application which you have addressed to the Committee of Council.

I have, &c.,

(Signed),

R. R. W. LINGEN.

*R. W. Smiles, Esq.,*  
80, *King-street, Manchester.*

THE END.

... that while they do not doubt the desirability of your school, that the children who are taught in it should have the opportunity of receiving religious instruction by other means than are afforded in the school itself, they do not feel themselves obliged, in discharge of the trust reposed in them, to comply with the resolution which you have addressed to the Committee of Council.

I have, &c.  
R. B. W. LINDEN

(Signed)  
A. W. ...

THE END.

Houses of the Oireachtas



Houses of the Oireachtas