

# AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

IN

## IRELAND.

"There could not by possibility be a better application of money in Ireland than in teaching the peasantry and small farmers how best to cultivate the soil."—  
LORD PALMERSTON, in 1856.

"To education in its widest sense we look as the most powerful aid in the further progress of agriculture."—JAMES CATRD, Esq., M.P.

TO RICKARD DEASY, Esq., M.P.,

*Solicitor-General for Ireland, &c., &c.*

SIR,

Identified as your name has been for some years in Parliament with the advocacy of measures calculated to promote the prosperity of Ireland, and representing, as you do, the most extensive constituency in the country, I venture to lay before you a few facts that may the better enable you to form an accurate opinion on a question which I know has occupied your attention.

At a very early period the National Education Board felt the necessity of imparting to Irish youths destined for agricultural pursuits—whether as farmers, land stewards, or labourers—instructions in those elementary laws and fundamental principles which modern science has established for the guidance of the tiller of the soil. The Commissioners, knowing and recognizing the fact, that agriculture has been, and must long continue the staple industry of Ireland, and (to use the words of their own report for 1837), "considering the very backward state of agriculture in the country, and that it forms the only source of employment for a vast portion of the labouring poor," justly thought "it particularly desirable that a better knowledge of it should be promoted," and that the schools under "them should tend, as far as practicable, to bring forward an intelligent class of farm labourers and servants." The machinery by which the Board at first sought to realize the views set forth in this extract—of diffusing correct notions of the science and art of husbandry among the farmers and peasantry of Ireland—was the Ordinary National Schools of the country. But a difficulty of no ordinary kind presented itself—the schoolmaster himself must first of all be instructed. To meet this difficulty, a farm was rented in



the vicinity of Dublin, and its manager gave a daily lecture on agriculture to the literary teachers in training in Marlborough-street. And thus the germ of a system which was sown some twenty years ago at Glasnevin, has, in the fulness of vigour, now attained to considerable magnitude and undoubted usefulness.

No sooner did the Board's trained teachers return to their respective districts than many of them formed in their schools agricultural classes; and by this means the knowledge of modern agricultural science, imbibed at Glasnevin and Marlborough-street, was imparted to the rural population. The new system was warmly supported by all classes and creeds; it was agitated in the pages of journals of all shades of politics; there was not a dissentient voice heard from Cape Clear to Fair Head, nor from Dublin to Galway. I believe there was not a member of the community, from the peer to the least enlightened peasant, who did not hail with unmixed pleasure the introduction of agricultural instruction into the schools of this country; and I am equally impressed with the conviction that the Board of Education have acted all along in strict accordance with the voice of public opinion, and the current of men's thoughts, on the expediency of engrafting this branch of education on the ordinary secular course of instruction. Indeed, before they planted the germ of the future system at Glasnevin, the question had been advocated with a warmth exceeded only by the ability and profound experience of the requirements of the Irish nation possessed by its advocates.

The distinguished D'Alton only conveyed the sentiments of the community at large, when, in 1835, he stated before a parliamentary committee, appointed to consider the education of the Irish people, as the result of his observation and reflection, that "agricultural instruction should be transfused through every vein and artery of the system of National Education."

As time rolled on the public became more and more interested in the agricultural branch of national education; and in 1839 the sentiments of the nation may be said to have been again embodied in the following passage, from the pen of Mr. W. Sharman Crawford, one of the ablest advocates of the agricultural interest of Ireland. "The principles of agriculture," says that distinguished patriot, "should be a leading feature of instruction in every school supported by the state."

That the system continued to grow in public favour, and that the Board, instead of prematurely embarking in the undertaking, was led on by the strong voice of the nation to extend the agricultural element of the system of education, is rendered evident by the most overwhelming testimony; and, as it appears to me, that this point has been recently overlooked, and falsified in certain quarters, I wish to direct your attention to one fact which is conclusive on this point. In 1843 appeared the Digest of Evidence taken before



the commission on the occupation of land, commonly known as the "Devon Commission," in which it is stated that "there was no difference of opinion amongst the witnesses as to the advantages to be derived from an extensive establishment of agricultural schools throughout Ireland."

These schools accordingly continued steadily to increase. The Board was well supported by the landed gentry, who, in many cases, erected farm-offices at their own expense. The Commissioners, as a great educational body, alive, as we have seen they have been from the commencement of the system, to the great national importance of agricultural education, did not regret to find the landed interests of the country evincing deep interest in the movement, but they rather encouraged than stimulated it.

In 1846 Ireland was afflicted, by an all-wise Providence, with a famine, which hurried to the grave a large portion of the Irish people. The nation was paralyzed, and the agricultural interest reduced to a state of ruin. The most profound thinkers ascribe the extreme severity of that calamity to the extreme ignorance of the people. To help the nation out of the fearful abyss, into which it had been plunged, various expedients were suggested.

The Royal Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland, which numbered the most influential and estimable men in the land, urged that "the corner-stone of whatever social edifice to be erected or preserved in Ireland, must be the practical instruction of the people; we therefore believe that we require the aid of the Board of Education more than the Board of Works."

In September, 1847, Lord Monteagle, the well-known advocate of Irish rights, addressed an able and elaborate communication to the Board, in which he sketched out, in his own lucid way, a scheme for the future management of Agricultural Schools. "We are called upon," says his Lordship, "*under the penalty of famine*, to teach our people modes of cultivating better crops; what before the blight of the potato crop was a matter of undeniable usefulness, is now, by this casualty, made a matter of indispensable necessity."

The press, and more especially the agricultural press, of Ireland, advocated with ability and warmth, the establishment of Agricultural Schools. The *Irish Farmers' Gazette* of the period, ably edited by Mr. Edward Carroll, who, perhaps, fully knew the real requirements of the working farmers of Ireland, as well as any man in the country, became the indefatigable and constant advocate of the instruction of the Irish farmers in the principles of agriculture. That journal contained "leader" after leader on this great question, and helped on the movement most materially. I will not weaken the force of these facts by additional evidence, as enough has been advanced to convince the most sceptical that the Board of Education was only complying with the urgent wants and demands of Irish farmers, when it asked Parliament for means to



supplement agricultural instruction upon the literary education afforded in the National Schools of the country. The Board sought aid to carry into full realization the sentiment of our distinguished countryman, Sir Robert Kane, who said in 1847, that "every National School in Ireland should be an Agricultural School, if situated in a rural district."

I will not occupy your valuable time in tracing the history of the Agricultural Schools of this country any further. I will rather next direct your attention to their organization, and the good emanating from those now in existence. I will begin at the lowest, and proceed upwards to the most extensive, expensive, and useful. There were, at the date of making out the last Return—

- 70 Workhouse Agricultural Schools.
- 50 Ordinary Agricultural National Schools.
- 18 Model Agricultural Schools, under the management of Local Patrons.
- 20 Model Agricultural Schools, under the exclusive management of the Commissioners.

158 Total, of all Classes.

1. The agricultural education afforded to the young lads in our Workhouses, consists in a certain amount of instruction in those elementary principles which are calculated to make them skilled workmen: the agriculturist, or agricultural teacher, directs the boys, on the piece of ground attached to the Workhouse, in reducing those principles to practice.

It appears to me a work of supererogation to argue that such a course of training must promote the interests of the nation at large. Facing the room in which I now sit is the small, but well-tilled, farm of the North Dublin Union Workhouse, where I see the lads receive daily lessons in the use of the various implements of tillage. Instead of being permitted to grow up in indolence and vice, they are inured to manual labour, and trained to industrial occupations. There is not in Ireland a man endowed with a particle of common sense, who does not desire an extension of this system to every pauper in the Irish Workhouses, instead of being asylums for the idle and the wicked.

The Commissioners of National Education have, on all occasions, co-operated with the Poor Law Board, in giving the pauper boys instructions in agriculture. They never refuse the aid expected of them, if there be a prospect of good being effected. But it may be asked, what do those Workhouse boys cost the Board of Education?

At the time of making out the last Return, there were 1,479 boys receiving instruction in the science and art of cultivating the ground; the total payments made by the Commissioners in 1857, on account of these boys, amounted to £635 19s. 11d., or about



8s. 7d. per head, per annum! Who would object to an expenditure so trivial, when he calmly and dispassionately reflects on the inestimable advantages, material and moral, derivable from training the future labouring population to proper habits? Is there in the Imperial Parliament a man who would vote against the expenditure of 8s. 7d. for inculcating on a youth, who, by accidental circumstances over which he can have had no control, has been thrown as a recipient upon public charity and public support, correct notions of the art by which that youth is to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow? The Irish workhouse system has recently attracted a great deal of attention. It may have many defects, and more especially in the training up of the juvenile portion of the inmates. But some of them may be prevented, or materially mitigated, by turning the workhouses into industrial schools. Agricultural labour appears to me to present to the guardians of the poor the best branch of industry; and if it were more universal, we should hear less of the evils of the system.

And that the industrial education of the boys would diminish instead of increasing the rate, there is abundant evidence. I will take a few examples.

Attached to the Clonmel Workhouse is a piece of ground, containing about 30 Statute acres; the rent is £3 10s. per acre, and after paying for seeds, manures, and other expenses incidental to the management of a farm of that extent, and allowing £50 for the Agriculturist's salary, there was, in 1858, a balance of £192 *net* profit to the Union, by the industrial training of the boys, of whom there were sixty: the average profit by each boy's labour in his own education has been £3 4s. Profit per Statute acre, £6 8s.

At Tullamore—in one of the Midland counties—the Guardians very wisely bring up the boys in the manner I have described, and with a considerable saving to the Union. The area of their farm is 7A. 1R.; rent, £2 2s. per acre; net profit by the agricultural training of 27 boys, £177 8s. 7d., or £6 11s. 4d. per boy. Profit per acre, £24 9s. 5d.

Proceeding northwards, we find equally gratifying results. For instance, the Ballymoney Workhouse farm contains 13A. 2R.; rent, £2 8s. per acre; net profit, £158; profit on the industrial training of each boy, £9 3s. 6d. Profit per acre, £11 14s.

2. The second class of Agricultural Schools, consists of Ordinary National Schools, having a few acres of ground attached to them, and in which is imparted to the sons of labourers, farmers, and others, elementary instruction in the science and practice of agriculture. The little farms are for the most part worked by the tiny hands of the juvenile labourers, who, under the fostering care of a vigilant teacher, are acquiring skill in the use of the ordinary farm tools. Those schools cost £5 each per annum for agricultural instruction. The total payments on account of this class in 1857 was £306 8s.



10d.; the number of pupils receiving agricultural instruction, according to the last return, was 1,009; average cost of agricultural instruction, per head per annum, six shillings!! Recently a cry has been raised against the enormous cost of the agricultural schools of this country; but those who have sounded the tocsin have overlooked that there are 2,488 boys daily imbibing sound views on their future calling, the staple industry of this country, the source of its wealth and prosperity, at the small annual cost of about 7s. per head, a sum not above a fifth of the interest on the amount annually expended, and for ever lost beyond hope of recovery, in punishing criminals of the same age. Prevention, says the old proverb, is better than cure; and in no case is the force of this truism more strictly applicable than in the rearing of the poor. It were presumptuous in me to dwell on this part of the subject, in a communication addressed to one who has studied it so closely as you have done; but I cannot forbear expressing my conviction, that you would add fresh laurels to those already acquired in your most able and philanthropic advocacy of the reformatory movement, (which led to the passing of your Reformatory Bill into an Act of Parliament) by advocating an extension of Ordinary Agricultural Schools; for depend upon it, that the school farm, by giving a healthy and invigorating occupation to the mind, and by stimulating by example and precept, the youth, to a sense of the real importance of a spirit of honest self-reliance, is the most powerful preventative of crime. And in this respect it presents to the financial reformer a means of diminishing, instead of augmenting, taxation.

3. The Model Agricultural Schools have an element not possessed by Ordinary or Workhouse Agricultural Schools, in having accommodation for a number of resident or boarding agricultural pupils, who may be said to undergo an apprenticeship to agriculture. Those young men, the sons of farmers, land-stewards, &c., have adopted the pursuit of agriculture as a choice; and intend to farm for themselves or for others. The Model Agricultural School Farms are larger than those attached to Workhouse and Ordinary Agricultural Schools. They are divided into two classes:—

1st. Those under the management of local patrons. With one or two exceptions, the teachers rent the farms from the patrons; and the payments made by the Commissioners are for agricultural books, and an allowance to the teacher for affording agricultural instruction, and for the maintenance of pupils. The total payments in 1857 was £574 3s. 7d.; Pupils, according to last return—

Boarders,	72
Day Pupils,	658

---

Total, 730

Average cost per head per annum, 15s. 8d.



2nd. Model Agricultural Schools under the exclusive management of Board. The farms are rented by the Commissioners, and the buildings have been, for the most part, erected at the public expense. These schools form at once the most important, and, consequently, the most expensive class of Agricultural Schools.

	£	s.	d.
The cost of their working and support during year ended the 31st December, 1857, was (exclusive of buildings and furniture), . . . . .	6,721	6	10
Increased value of Live and Dead Stock during the year, . . . . .	1,244	9	7
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	5,476	17	3

Pupils educated in agriculture, according to the last return:—

Boarders, . . . . .	116
Day Pupils, . . . . .	389
	<hr/>
Total, . . . . .	505

Average annual cost per head, £10 16s. 10d.\*

I have thus briefly submitted to you the peculiar organization of the several classes of Agricultural Schools, and also their actual cost and statistics. We are now in a position to consider concisely the question recently raised, in and out of Parliament, as to whether these schools should be abolished altogether. A pamphlet on the subject has been issued by the Financial Reform Association of Liverpool, of which Mr. Robert Gladstone, brother to the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the present administration, is chairman. The author of that pamphlet is, I am credibly informed, one of the editors of the *Irish Farmers' Gazette*, a person of undoubted abilities, who has written in that journal numerous articles condemnatory of those Agricultural Schools, which have given the press and the public unfavourable notions of them. The *Farmers' Gazette*, however, has all along been the steadfast advocate of agricultural education, and of the claims of Irish farmers to being instructed in the science of agriculture. The recent strictures of that journal must therefore be understood as having reference to the present administration of the system, rather than to the principles on which it is based. Indeed its most unfavourable criticism of the former must be regarded as the warmest advocacy of the latter. It matters little, in my opinion, who the author of the pamphlet may be, and I will dismiss it by refuting one of the author's strongest accusations; and in doing so, I will call in no other aid than the *Farmers' Gazette*.

\* The salaries and travelling expenses of the Agricultural Inspectors are not included.



The author of the Liverpool pamphlet says—

“The Model Farm system of the National Board of Education in Ireland is one of the grossest impositions ever perpetrated at the public expense. It is one of those useless sources of expenditure which it behoves every one who contributes a farthing to the public revenue to demand the abolition of. Members of Parliament must rouse themselves to a sense of the duty they owe their constituents, and not permit funds to be quietly voted for such a purpose year after year.”—p. 30.

The following passage is from the leading article in the *Farmers' Gazette* of May 17th, 1856:—

“The establishment of those Agricultural Schools has been attended with the most gratifying results, and any blow aimed at their existence must prove of incalculable injury to the country at large. Certain members of the House of Commons pretend to sneer at the various experiments conducted at the schools, but, with all due deference to their senatorial wisdom and dignity, we must take leave to say, that in the very experiments, and the deductions which arise from them, we have a strong proof of the highly beneficial nature of the system of Agricultural Education now established in Ireland.”

The same author, in the same journal, further says—

“We do not look upon any grant made for Agricultural Education in Ireland as any eleemosynary boon wrung from the kingdom at large, but as that to which we have an undoubted right as a portion of the British Empire.”

I should be exceedingly sorry to say a word against a journal which has so strongly advocated the cause of Agricultural Education in Ireland; and I bring forward these extracts as an antidote to the pamphlet of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association. That pamphlet inveighs, in the most unqualified manner, against the men to whom the system has been entrusted. But, granting that the officers, of which I am one of the most unqualified, are not equal to their respective duties, it appears to me as unfair as it is illogical to argue that Parliament should deprive all future generations of Irish farmers of a suitable amount of instruction in their business, because a few men (including myself) who at present fill certain offices are not, in the opinion of others, the right men in the right places.

I will not presume to say that the system is perfect; but I cannot forbear remarking that many of the charges brought against it have no foundation whatever. And in support of this statement, I will notice two of them.

The first of these charges is of a financial nature. The pamphlet of the Liverpool Reform Association, and the *Farmers' Gazette* laboured to prove that in the five years ended 1855, “the Commissioners (of National Education in Ireland) appointed for administering the funds set apart by the nation for the education of the poor



in Ireland, has withdrawn, *without any authority from Parliament*, nearly £20,000 from the funds intended for the maintenance of other educational objects, in order to support a pet project of their own." This is a serious charge, which I am prepared to prove has not a shadow of truth. The author of the pamphlet makes out the "*unauthorized excess*" by falling into the fallacy of comparing the Parliamentary estimates, *not* with the actual cost of maintaining the Agricultural Schools, but with the total disbursements. In this comparison the *critic overlooks altogether* the following items, which we must place to the credit side of the Commissioners' account:—

Received during the five years ended 31st December, 1855—			
For sales of farm produce at Model Farm, Glasnevin,	-	-	£5,257 18 4
"                    "                    at other Model Farms,	-	-	4,797 11 5
From local parties towards the erection of the buildings of Local			
Model Farms, - - - - -	-	-	7,840 3 5
			<hr/>
			17,895 13 2
To which add excess of live and dead stock at the			
termination of the period, viz. :—			
At Glasnevin, - - - - -	-	-	£977 19 1
At other Model Farms, - - - - -	-	-	5,643 11 9
			<hr/>
			6,621 10 10
			<hr/>
			£24,517 4 0

The writer in the Liverpool pamphlet omitted — either intentionally, or, what is more probable, under the influence of an "error of judgment" — to give the Commissioners credit for £24,517 4s.; so that, instead of the Parliamentary grants for the maintenance of the Board's Agricultural Schools being £20,000 under the actual cost of these schools for the five years ended with 1855, these institutions cost in that period about £4,500 less than the sums voted by Parliament.

The second of the charges brought against the system of Agricultural Education is, that "its promoters cannot prove that it has produced the slightest good effect in furtherance of the object it was professedly intended to serve;" and that, "if blotted out to-morrow, its disappearance would as little retard the general improvement of Irish Agriculture, as its existence has promoted it." This statement is as false as it is reckless. For, as the *Farmers' Gazette* of May 17th, 1856, says, "the establishment of these schools has been attended with most gratifying results, and any blow aimed at their existence must prove of incalculable injury to the country at large." The same truth has been forcibly announced by Mr. Robert Chambers, who, after examining the system in 1857, stated in his *Edinburgh Journal*, that "there cannot be a doubt that the teaching and example of those agricultural schools is greatly conducive to the material prosperity which Ireland is now beginning to enjoy."

Impressed with these convictions, the Chemico-Agricultural



Society of Ulster, resolved, in November, 1857, "that the Society desires to express its anxious hope and expectation that abstract views of economic science will not be permitted by the government of this country to interrupt the progress of agricultural instruction at the Albert Institution, and the local establishments under the care of the Commissioners of National Education, which, in the yet unimproved and backward state of agriculture in Ireland, is so well calculated to contribute to the promotion of national prosperity."

But there is evidence more cogent and convincing than these opinions, true and telling as they are. Are we to be told that no fruit results from the germs planted in the minds of the 4,000 boys who are annually instructed in the principles of husbandry in our agricultural schools? Are you to be told that the 150 boys who are annually imbibing in the agricultural schools of the county, which you represent in parliament, correct views on the rotation of crops, the cultivation of the various farm plants, and the breeding and management of stock, will not, as they merge into manhood, and become the future cultivators, exercise a mighty influence in developing the capabilities of the fertile fields of Cork? Such a supposition is at variance with common sense, and with the history of agricultural education in that very county. Three well-managed agricultural schools have been in successful operation in the county of Cork for several years. Fifty agricultural boarders had resided in these schools up to the 31st July last, most of whom are now farming creditably and successfully in their native county. The silent but certain influence these disciples of improved husbandry are exercising in the county, many of them to my own personal knowledge, eludes the calculation of the most astute statistician. Allow me to direct your attention to one of these schools—that at Farrahy, near Kildorrery. The Rev. Mr. Brady, nephew of the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and late rector of the district, has collected the most overwhelming evidence in support of the great—indeed I may say extraordinary—revolution produced by that school. "My tenants," says Mr. R. C. Bowen, J.P., have improved their system of agriculture by observing that pursued on the model-farm." "The advantages derived from the example of good husbandry, carried on at that (Farrahy) farm," says Mr. J. Bayley, an extensive land agent, "are incalculable, nor could any one estimate them."

Mr. Brady cites the following striking case, which is a practical commentary on the Liverpool pamphlet:—

"Patrick Mahony is a Poor Law Guardian, a member of Kildorrery Dispensary Committee; has a shop in Kildorrery, and farms over 150 acres, besides having lately taken on lease 1,150 acres of inferior and mountain land; his son was trained in the Model Farm, and subsequently at Glasnevin; declares he would not be able to farm so largely without the knowledge obtained from the school by himself and son; states that it was in consequence of the knowledge displayed by his son regarding land and its treatment that he obtained the lease of the



1,150 acres; says that before the establishment of the school there was little sign of green cropping, only a few turnips, and no carrots or mangels among the farmers; has levelled fences a good deal; house-feeds in winter, and will do so in summer also, for the future, as his son will superintend the farming business; has found the improved system very profitable; knows that many farmers came from a distance to see Smith, and is sure that they adopted plans similar to what they saw; knows that the neighbours take advice from Smith; says that the boys of the industrial class spread a variety of information through the neighbourhood, being able to teach their parents the method of dibbling in seeds and drilling, tending stalled cattle, &c.; has put his potatoes in drills this year; never had carrots until this year."

Speaking of this school, the Editor of the *Cork Examiner*, (an ably-conducted journal), after a minute examination of its entire arrangements and effects, observed, in 1857, that its "value is not confined to the education of pupils—it is the means of education for the entire district of country. The neighbouring farmers strive to imitate what they see has been so successful, and many a drained and subsoiled field have been the result of a hint taken from the Model Farm. \* \* \* No more striking example of its influence could be adduced than in its having helped to familiarise the minds of the people with the rotation of crops, and to uproot the mischievous tendency of the exhausting system, which had been so common."

You will, I have no doubt, feel gratified that the wave of improvement in agriculture is thus being wafted over the surface of the great county with which you are so honorably, usefully, and intimately connected.

These facts, (and, if necessary, a great mass of similar ones could be adduced), refute for ever the insinuation of the Liverpool pamphlet, and as conclusively prove that the system of agricultural instruction established by the Board of National Education is the most powerful agency at present at work in promoting the agricultural progress of this country. For the County Cork is not an isolated one. I am proud to say, the system has there taken deep root. Its history in Cork is written in the memory of the agricultural classes as well as in blue books; and in no part of Ireland are its effects more marked and appreciable. But even Cork has not yet had its full complement of *agricultural boarders*, of whom there have been educated, since the establishment of agricultural schools in Ireland, 2,088, and of whom only 50, or less than one-fortieth of the whole, have been educated in the agricultural schools of Cork. There have been trained 2,038 boarders belonging to the other 31 counties, many of whom are aiding in the same work of progress as those of whom the Rev. Mr. Brady has amassed such accurate, reliable, and faithful accounts. It is true that a few of them may have emigrated, and that a number may not be directly engaged in agricultural pursuits; but even assuming that only two-thirds of the total number trained as boarders



or as apprentices to the new and improved school of agriculture are engaged as farmers, agriculturists, agricultural teachers, and land stewards, we have an average of 45 of those apprentices now practising and promulgating the views and practices taught them by the State. Forty-five well-trained agriculturists—men versed in the true science of the business of farming, and practically conversant with modern improved practices, in each County in Ireland!!! Will they exercise no beneficial effect on Irish agriculture? Have they exercised no effect on the rapid progress made by Irish farming? It appears to me quite unworthy of an association of educated men to propound insinuations such as these—insinuations which, if well founded, would force upon us the conclusion that the human mind was incapable of being improved by education. For if the sound scientific instruction in agricultural chemistry, &c., afforded to the farmers' sons in our agricultural schools produces no good, all scientific education having a practical object is a delusion and a farce—the education afforded in mining, and engineering schools, and kindred institutions, would be only a waste of time and money. If the education afforded the 2,088 boarders, and the day pupils (who probably exceed 50,000) of the Board's agricultural schools, since their formation has exercised no effect on the art of husbandry in Ireland, then, indeed, must it be concluded that there is not in agriculture—at least in Irish agriculture—any vitality, any element capable of being developed or improved, or any branch capable of being illumined by the light of science.

I have reasoned in this strain, to lay bare the glaring absurdity and inaccuracy of the statements made in certain quarters regarding the Agricultural Schools of the National Board.

I have in this communication studiously avoided saying anything about the administration of the system. Whether it is capable of improvement or modification you will learn from the Commissioners themselves, with many of whom you are on terms of close personal friendship.

I have also, I trust, avoided using a word or expression calculated to give offence to any person; and have thus aimed at the discussion of the subject in a purely statistical manner.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

THOMAS BALDWIN,

GLASNEVIN, 9th July, 1859.

(Lecturer on Agriculture.)