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INTERMEDIATE
EDUCATION IN IRELAND:

A P A P E R

READ BEFORE

THE SOCIAL SCIENCE CONGRESS,

I N B E L F A S T,

1867,

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INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

THE great importance of this question induces us to give in full the following valuable paper read at the Social Science Congress by the Rev. Doctor MacIvor, of Newtownstewart :—

I have been invited to bring before this Congress a step in Irish Education which excites some local interest—the introduction of classics and French into our common National Schools. To describe the measure and its object will, perhaps, sufficiently set forth the reasons for it.

It is well known that with most of the outer machinery of education Ireland is well supplied. First, our National Schools, and, in competition with them, several denominational agencies—the Church Education Society, for example, and the Christian Brothers' Schools—offer everywhere to all classes of the people excellent primary instruction—not merely the three R's, as it is usual to call reading, writing, and arithmetic, but a considerable amount of sound and superior English. Next, the Royal Schools, the Diocesan Schools, many Endowed, and many private schools offer to day boys in their own localities, and to all who can afford to send their children from home as boarders—say to all persons of £500 a year income—as good classical and scientific instruction as could be desired. And finally, several universities, old and new, vie with each other in tendering collegiate and professional education, with all kinds of honours, emoluments, diplomas, and degrees. The Irish people, besides, are rather ambitious of book-learning, and by no means stupid; while the Empire, as if in special consideration to our Irish aptitudes, has lately thrown open most of its high prizes to public competition.

One might expect, therefore, that at least one branch of native Irish industry should thrive—that our youths would crowd the colleges, carry off a large share of imperial prizes, and rival Scotland, or excel her, in supplying professional men and educated adventurers to the British Colonies and to the world. This hope, however, has not been realised; and friends and enemies are obliged to report that Irish education, from end to end, is in a most unsatisfactory condition. With the exception of the Roman Catholic priesthood, fewer Irishmen reach the professions now than did in the days of our fathers. The colleges, instead of suffering from a plethora of students, threaten, some of them, to die of inanition. Many of the Endowed and Diocesan Schools, some even of the Royal Schools, are almost or altogether closed for want of pupils; and their endowments used for other purposes. And primary instruction itself, of which so much has been heard and hoped, is low, sickly, and unproductive. Of large towns I do not pretend to speak. There men's minds are active, and wealth and numbers can commonly obtain whatever they desire. But in the small towns and over the country the primary school, whether National or denominational, is, as I have said, poor, sluggish, and disheartening. The inspectors are able and anxious; the masters are mostly capable, and the books are excellent; but the attendance is thin and desultory, and ceases at an early age; and the people's pride in learning and zeal for learning have sensibly declined. The instruction offered is admirable, the instruction received is miserable; the books are extremely good, but the people do not learn them, nor care to learn them; and the school no longer competes successfully with either the labour-market or the idle-market of the country. The average age of children attending Irish National Schools is, in idle districts, decidedly under *ten*; in industrious districts, decidedly under *nine*. The number of schools which have a fifth-class or a permanent fourth-class is but a small per centage—of those which have a steady

and superior third-class (the whole number of classes being five) is not a very large proportion of the whole ; and, as this amount of school instruction is not enough for permanence ;* as the half-learned lessons of this early age, not being carried on, are generally more than half-forgotten before after life is reached, the result is that the Irish people are not taught effectively, even the first of the three R's ; and that not one-half of her Majesty's adult Irish subjects are now able to write their names.

No doubt, some other matters help to explain this anomaly ; but the main cause of it has long been patent to our country people, and now begins to impress the public. And it is simple enough. The intermediate links between primary and upper education have been un- luckily destroyed ; and their want of mutual connexion atrophies and injures both. In Ireland the three R's used to be not the end, but only the beginning of education. They were only the asses'-bridge to the domains of learning, and all who could were expected to go further. The old Irish village school, whether in or out of Auburn, however deficient in other appliances, usually contained the rudiments of classics, and imparted them to its own neighbourhood at the charge of £1 per quarter. This kept the gate open, and the high-road easy to all who were able and ambitious to as-

* "A very erroneous opinion I think often prevails as to the extent to which education as carried on in elementary schools leaves any permanent traces on those who have received it. It has been said that in after life though their knowledge may have lost its accuracy, yet that its substance is retained. My own experience, on the contrary, leads me to infer that in the majority of cases the knowledge gained at so early an age is almost entirely effaced under the deadening influences of a life of mere mechanical labour."—English Educational Report for 1864-5. Every practical educationist will endorse this opinion of Mr. Sandford.

cent; so that not only the possessor of £500 a year, but of £100 a year or much less—the country doctor, clergyman, or apothecary, the retired army or navy surgeon or lieutenant, or his widow, the thriving shopkeeper, farmer or artisan, could have his child, not indeed fully or elegantly educated, but his abilities tested, his tastes and calibre ascertained, and the first and most difficult steps imparted of that Course which, whatever be its proper place in the theory of education—a question into which I do not enter—has always been, and still is, practically, the easiest or only access to the academies, universities, professions, and high honours of social life. But now all this is changed. A system of primary schools, endowed by the nation, has overspread the country—and, partly from their possessing undoubted excellence in some respects, and chiefly from the prestige and material advantages of Government support, have virtually put down all other schools and made themselves—I speak still of small towns and country places—the sole vehicle of National Education. But they have hitherto imparted only English. Of course the want of something better was soon felt, and very many endeavours have been made to supplement or enrich the National School by inserting into it at local expense an intermediate element. But all such efforts until recently have been persistently frowned down by the authorities; and the general effect has been two-fold—

I. That the beginning of Upper Education, and therefore the whole of it, are virtually denied to all except large towns and rich people in Ireland. It is not merely negatively that small towns and country places do not receive it; but that, by Government interference*

* Many seem to forget this who ought not. Even *legislators* will say, “We don’t wish to interfere with intermediate education!” as if they had not interfered already, and with fatal efficacy. The evidence before the Endowed Schools’ Commission extorted this from the com-

in education, they are positively deprived of a privilege they once possessed and prized and very largely used; and

II. That the whole education machinery of Ireland is deranged and mutilated.

The obvious working of the Government scheme has been to divide education into two distinct sections, the upper and the lower, isolated from each other, and debarred from mutual influence. This severance robs each of its most vital elements; robs lower education of its means of rising higher, of its natural hopes, rewards, and dignity; robs upper of its country-feeders, its root-

missioners as the very first sentence of their summary:—"We are of opinion—I. That the establishment of a system of primary education by the Government *has had the effect* of greatly diminishing the resources, which though no doubt scanty and imperfect, formerly enabled the middle classes, to a certain extent, to provide a suitable education for their children."—Report p. 278, *et passim*. And this *effect* has gone on increasing since 1858. It is easily explained, of course, on economic principles; but it is the fact itself that must be insisted on. It is a *datum* or axiom of the case.

And our second axiom must, it seems, be dinned into people's ears—namely, that *the only way* of remedying this effect is to admit the intermediate element, fairly and honourably, into the village school. That small towns and country places should support *two* sets of institutions, one for classics and the other for *English only*, is only too ridiculous for statement; yet it is sometimes gravely proposed. How much *linen* would be sold in small towns and country places if the dealers in cotton, woollen, and other soft goods, were forbidden to sell linen? How much *wine*, if dealers in spirits and beer were forbidden to sell wine? How much *tea*, if general grocers were debarred the article? But there is no absurdity too gross for thoughtless doctrinaires.

fibre, and ascending sap; it thus cramps and starves and deadens both. The village school is now no longer the preparative and preliminary to any higher institution, and so it feeds none; neither endowed school, college, university, or profession. These all, therefore, languish in their turn. Upper education is circumscribed in area, dwarfed of its natural bulk, and defrauded of its most fresh and enterprising elements. Its unprosperous condition, then, is an axiom of the case. And the effect on lower education is still more signal. For the village school, instead of being a preliminary, is now an ultimate; and, *as an ultimate*, it has not sufficient prestige to sustain the enthusiasm of the people in pursuit of learning. The three R's, instead of being the entrance hall or porter's lodge to something nobler, are now themselves the education palace; and the people do not admire the edifice enough to make them seek its livery. The asses'-bridge which used to lead to far-off pastures of untold fertility now leads simply nowhere, and the people are asinine enough to leave the bridge alone and content themselves with thistles on the common. So-called "popular education," by denuding itself of those elements which justly made it popular—hope, ambition, and the lofty prize—has made itself unpopular, or at least non-popular; the people care not for it. As long as primary education was known to be merely the prime steps of that difficult pathway up the heights where society plants its honours; as long as it could make even of the poor man's son "a man and a gentleman;" could make him a doctor or clergyman, or knight, or bishop; a scholar, fellow, a professor of college; a lawyer, judge, chancellor, senator, a peer; and there were until lately few decent families in Ireland which did not reckon the not very distant relative somewhere among these grades—so long even primary education and the reading-made-easy, and the hedge-school and eccentric schoolmaster, were ennobled by their associations, and the people loved them well. But now that primary education is both beginning and end, and

is mere "primmery" education, they reckon it not worth obtaining. And there is little use in making it cheap, or even in offering it for nothing. Education always requires time and trouble, and unless good—that is, in the minds of the lower people, remunerative—is always costly at the price.

I hope I am not describing this general effect too strongly. If so, I should be sorry; for it is plainly a key-fact in education, and needs careful statement. Whether it be visible elsewhere, let others say; here it is patent and oppressive. The extent to which our people, or their better classes, have, within the last generation, lost their old pride and confidence in learning, and their ambition for it, and allowed the profession of a schoolmaster to fall into disrepute, is a startling fact for Irishmen. No doubt, the area of education, or at least of the three R's, has been extended; and in many a district previously ignorant, schooling, such as it is, is now common. This is a great advantage; if it be made a beginning merely, a very great one indeed. But the quality of Irish education over the bulk of the country, and the value set upon it by the people, have wretchedly declined. Districts which used to furnish an average of 5, or even 10 aspirants yearly to the universities, do not now furnish an average of one. Where the half-crown and five shillings a quarter were paid freely by English boys, and the pound a quarter by the Latin boys, it is now well known that to insist on even the board's payment of a penny a week would simply empty the schools. And I am satisfied that if either the National Board or the Education Societies, instead of asking payment, were to propose paying the children 1d a week, or 1s a week, or more, for continuing at school a year or two longer than they do, the offer would be generally declined. The advantages of schooling are no longer obvious. Even in the eyes of parents, the wages of labour, or the attractions of idleness, outbid them in the market.

The step which I have the honour of bringing before

this Congress is simply an endeavour to cure this state of things, in the natural and old-fashioned way, by allowing the intermediate element to insert itself into the National School in any locality where it is really required; that is where the master can teach it, where the parents desire it, and attest the reality of that desire by a sharp additional payment. We regard this sharp payment as of the essence of the question. For one of the objects aimed at is to raise the *status* of the master; and we believe that very few, if any, deserving children will be really injured by it. For (1) there will be generally be distant or local friends, only too glad to contribute the small sum required; and (2) there are abundant school endowments, latent or misapplied, which, it is believed, could easily be made available for so distinct an object. The Board of Education, in conceding to this intermediate element (1) permission, and (2) the same moderate premium or payment* which

* This payment might be dispensed with, or could be locally supplied, only for one consideration. If withheld, there would be no persuading either teachers or scholars that the concession was *bonâ fide*. They would not believe in it; or, rather, would positively expect to see it rescinded within six months—as in Newtownstewart Model School (1863), as in the Moyle evening school (1857), and as in 101 similar cases. No; it must be fairly and honourably acknowledged, like any other extra, or else we will have nothing to say to it. We have been sufficiently tantalised. No doubt the board's payment ought to be, and in time will be, supplemented by local endowments created or revived. Now that Government supplies the lower machinery of education, it is in this way that bequests and local patronage would be most natural and most effective. But the upper element must ~~pass~~ a recognised *status* in the schools; or there will not even be *place* for these additional endowments. Besides, this upper element is not a thing which can be "crammed" or improvised. It

they give to any other extra, such as music, drawing, or navigation—most wisely impose this further condition—that no boy shall be allowed to begin Latin or French until he has fairly reached the upper third or fourth class of their ordinary curriculum; that is, shall have attained the standard of the best English teaching commonly imparted in country schools. They also require that such pupils shall carry on their English to the satisfaction of the inspector. So that “the Latin boys,” wherever they are found, will be the nucleus of a much larger class learning superior English. It is not expected, of course, that all the National Schools, or most of them, will ever avail themselves of this permission. But it is believed that in the course of years a considerable per centage will—say, 1-10th or 1-8th of the whole; and the general result will be to convert 500, or 600, or 700 small-town-or-village-or-country-schools from being, as they are at present, “inferior

is of difficult attainment, and takes time and pains to grow. It needs a settled and firm position that can be reckoned on for years. This it cannot have in a National school, so long as the other extras are pressed and petted, while it receives only a grudging and capricious “leave” to be relegated first to the play-hour, then to after-hours, and then banished bodily from the school. I could tell some tales about it—to please whom? 1st, ~~some~~ ^{some} who don't know what education is, and find it tramping on their toes; and 2d, scarce wiser persons, who, for far off reasons, are afraid of it.

Members of Parliament have objected to the expense. But the same persons, probably, would not object to ten times the sum required, if they were satisfied that this is really a key-point ~~to~~ the education machinery, which needs to be restored. They vote freely for lower education, they vote munificently for upper education; can they desire to break down, in permanence, the cheap bridge which, *and which alone* can connect these two? To them, therefore, I have largely addressed myself.

English," into being "superior English and elementary classical" schools, at an average expense to Government of £12 per school per annum.

Obviously, such schools will be country feeders, and fresh extending fibres of our upper schools, and of *all* higher institutions.

As obviously, they will open or re-open to the diligent and self-denying of our Irish youth, not merely the large prizes which their fathers sought, but also the new prizes of the Empire.

And thirdly, they will educe and utilise, for the general good, one of the best classes of our Irish aptitudes, industries, and ambitions. I, for one, believe it, therefore, to be a wise and beneficial measure, and as such respectfully commend it to your sympathies.

As it has an immediate bearing, also, on some of the points specially appointed for consideration at this Congress, I should, perhaps, say some words on them.

"But," it is said, "this is only the point of the wedge; you ask a very moderate sum for 1867-8, £1,041. On your own showing, it will be £3,041 in 1869-70; and £6,041 or £8,042 in 1879-80, when your scheme is in full work. Once we begin the expense grows enormously." To which I reply—I have fairly described the *whole* scheme, so far as I think the Government *can* or ought to interfere. It can, *and must*, secure the basis; individual payments and local endowments can, *and will*, supply the rest. £6 or £8 per school, for each of three or four key-languages, pretty efficiently taught, is of the nature of payment by results; and the more the nation has to pay on this scale for *these* results, probably the more it will be pleased. No farther staff or building is required; and as to books, the mere recognition by the Irish board of the books requisite will be abundant payment to their authors. The board's difficulty will be selection. As to other intermediate education plans, see the concluding remarks of this paper.

For instance, one of the questions in our paper is how to improve the *status* and emoluments of teachers. And I observe that our measure, wherever it came into operation, would immediately increase the master's salary—say by 50 per cent., and improve his social *status* by, perhaps, 500 per cent.

As this is a homely question, allow me to make it homely. Take, then, a common country teacher—youngish, of the better class, and somewhat aspiring, like many of those we know. His *status* will be first of second class, or third of first, and his emoluments—salary from board, £32 or £38 per annum; pupils' fees for the year, £4 12s 9d; local endowments, the school-house, with or without a house and garden, and with or without £2 per annum from landlord or clergyman—in all, £40 to £50 per annum. And this is very much above the average earnings of either National Board or Church Education teacher. Add, now, the intermediate element, and note the difference—Board's payment for Latin, £6 or £8 per annum; pupils fees, as much more. Ditto for a Greek class every second or third year, say half as much. Add as much for the chance of French, or of an evening pupil or evening class, which these higher branches are sure to bring, and we have already almost doubled his emoluments. And this without reckoning the improvement of his grade and salary which would follow the improvement of his learning. But also another element comes into play. For the introduction of these higher branches quickly breaks the *level* of the system, differentiates* the schools according

*Another effect of this differencing it is important to notice. It would much increase the number of female teachers in small country schools. The older boys would attend the superior school from a circuit of four or five miles round, each deserting inferior schools. In such cases I have always found it best to replace the male teachers of the inferior schools by females. These are more effective for ~~male~~ children—keep them much *small*

to the wants of each locality, and graduates the emoluments in proportion. Our young teacher knows, within a circuit of ten miles, some large villages—500 to 1,000 inhabitants—and within twenty miles, some larger towns—1,000 to 5,000 inhabitants—in any of which, if he can secure the leading school and its classical repute, he may make his money position worth two, three, four, or six times what it is.

Then, as to his social *status*. Before, he was only a primmery master, National or Church Education, on whose position (I speak from personal knowledge) even the better class of cottier boys looks down. But now he is a classical teacher, whose pupils may be anything, who may be anything himself, or who might have been “had he not been unfortunate.” In fact, *ad superos proprius continget*, and the whole neighbourhood treats him with respect.

If asked for illustrations of the improvement prophesied, I will give those nearest to me. One of the masters of our Newtownstewart Minor Model School, having learned some French there, and being afterwards transferred, in usual course, to a much larger town, where a French class was required, taught it, and was paid by it, I understand, a sum equal to all the rest of his salaries put together. And, as to respectability—this young man, and his principal, and several other National teachers whom I know, contemplate, in the prospect of classics being recognised, taking out university degrees. They have made themselves competent, and only accidents have delayed their doing so. Indeed, some of them have not delayed.

nicer, teach sewing, and many of them singing, also; and their salaries are one-fourth less than males. I believe it would be a great advantage to the country if the lower 1,500 or 2,000 of the male schools were placed under female teachers instead of males; and the change would save the nation *twice the sum required for all the classical departments*.

Of course, before this audience I need not add that when a recognised service is thus differentiated, and its upper grades honoured and rewarded, the prizes affect, and virtually pay, not the recipients alone, but the whole "service," down to the last-joined ensign. It is not by the emoluments of his present position, but by the career which "his profession" opens to him, that the young soldier, or clerk, or clergyman, or doctor, is attracted and is paid. That the recognised schoolmaster should be denied the like stimulus and sustainment is an injury to him and false economy to the public.

The next point of the Belfast programme on which our subject bears is that of evening schools; and these our measure would affect materially. For, the night school, far more than the common day school, requires a good prestige and its master good attainments. The pupils of an evening school are not little children, but youth of more advanced age. And these are of two classes—Either (1) self-denying persons who use their day earnings, and the only time available, towards climbing a step in life—and these obviously require all the higher knowledge and experience they can procure; or else (2) they are youths conscious of their deficiencies, and seeking to repair them for present comfort, without the sustaining power of any far-off ambitions. Now, what this class chiefly wants is the prestige of the school, to protect them in their own esteem and that of their acquaintance, and make their attendance pleasant and respectable. If the establishment be merely a primary school, professing only the r's and h's, it is really trying to a young man's self-respect to go there after business hours, and be snubbed and shamed, perhaps, by little children reading the Second Book. Many a young man and woman I have known deterred or driven from school by just such considerations.

But if the nucleus of the school be the Latin or French class, and the master be a man of mark—say, in Belfast, an undergraduate honour-man of Queen's College, who, with or without an English assistant.

adopts this natural means of helping himself forward, the matter would wear another face. Attendance at such a place were both pleasant and creditable, and the night-school, thus energised and raised, ought to become, and, I believe, in large towns like this, would become an important institution.

Indeed, as individual examples make, somehow, the most vivid impression, I cannot forbear quoting one from the early life of a distinguished Briton, respecting whom we are all anxious at the present moment.

“The earliest recollection of my mother recalls a picture so often seen among the Scottish poor—that of the anxious housewife striving to make both ends meet. At the age of ten I was put into the factory as a ‘piecer,’ to aid by my earnings in lessening her anxiety. With part of my first week’s earnings I purchased Ruddiman’s ‘Rudiments of Latin,’ and pursued the study of that language for many years afterwards, with unabated ardour, at an evening school, which met between the hours of eight and ten. The dictionary part of my labours was followed up till twelve o’clock or later, if my mother did not interfere by jumping up and snatching the book out of my hand. I had to be back in the factory by six o’clock in the morning, and continued my work, with intervals for breakfast and dinner, till eight o’clock at night. I read in this way many of the classical authors, and knew Virgil and Horace better at sixteen than I do now. Our schoolmaster, happily still alive, was supported in part by the company. He was attentive and kind, and so moderate in his charges that all who wished for education might have obtained it. *Many availed themselves of the privilege; and some of my schoolfellows now rank in positions far above what they appeared ever likely to come to when in the village school. If such a system were established in England it would prove a NEVER-ENDING BLESSING TO THE POOR.*”

—Livingstone’s *Africa*, pp. 3 and 4.

I shall not say anything now of “the English poor,” or of the English Education System, which, like our

own, perhaps, is passing through a crisis and needs to be recast. But as, no doubt, some thoughtful Englishmen have favoured us with their presence here, I will apologise to them for an omission or an assumption throughout this paper. I have assumed that this Congress is familiar, as most Irishmen and Scotchmen are familiar, with the extent to which a certain amount of classics used to leaven our common teaching and the extent to which it converted school attendance into a *bond fide* industrial occupation. In some other countries schooling is a leisure or an accomplishment—an æsthetic appendix to one's line of life. Here it was itself a line of life—a recognised mode in which those who had capacity set it before them to earn their livelihood. To one son a man gave his farm or shop, or tried to get for him a commission; to another, or to all the rest, if they had brains, he gave "education." If they could not carry on the pace and actually reach a profession—if, in fact, they turned out "weeds"—they could, at all events, become philomaths in turn, or "Irish tutors"—a race more known and used than much admired, either on the stage or off it, for centuries in Europe. *Gens ratione ferox*, says Sir William Hamilton of them, rather wickedly indeed, quoting from Remi, their reputation in France—*gens ratione furens et mentem pasta chimeris*—"a race furious with reasoning and that on wild fancies feeds its mind." But the number of those who did not turn out weeds, but made good their way into a profession, would probably astonish many an Englishman. I may instance my own parish—a large mountain district, of few or no resident gentry; of a shrewd, manly population of small farmers and sturdy cottiers; and of no resources except agriculture, emigration, and the school. When I had occasion, ten years ago, to advocate this measure in print, I hazarded the statement that not less than sixty natives of it had reached the professions in the generation preceding the board's work. But when it was necessary, last year, to fight more sharply, and to quote

chapter and verse for all one said, I made more careful inquiries and wrote down the names; whereupon our list speedily grew to 160, 260, 360; the actual list sent in to the board contained 387; and 20 new names arrived before the board had given its decision. Since then I have heard of many others, and have no doubt but that exhaustive inquiries would raise our list to 600 or more. Yet there is no educational endowment in the parish, nor any reason why its people should excel—and probably they do not excel—many of the districts around. If, instead of taking the long, straggling parish, I had taken an equal number of square miles around my own house, we should have had a much larger list and twice the number of distinguished names. Take a second instance from the other extremity of the island. I received it the other day from an eminent Roman Catholic Prelate, and venture to read it in his own words:—

“There can be no doubt that the union of classics with English would be most useful, and is much required. Forty years ago many of our youth knew Greek better than English.” This is the Irish chimera. Now for its practical side. The bishop goes on:—

“In addition to the interesting facts you mention, I can say that the assistant classical teacher whom I have now teaching in the room below me had a school in a thatched cabin in the village of Ardfert for about thirty years. During that time he gave a classical education to 250 young men, who are now priests on the home and foreign missions, besides a considerable number who are in the medical and other professions. Of the many who passed through his school, he tells me that not more than six or seven remained at the plough—a proof that classical education is the upward path. One day, as I stood with this old man on ~~1st~~ ^{Brandons} ~~Briados~~ hill at Ardfert, and looked on the large plain around, dotted with good farm-houses, ‘See,’ said he, ‘I have taken a priest out of every brick chimney within your view.’ This man’s name is Pierce; he is an

A.B. of Trinity College, Dublin.”—(Private letter.) This beats Ardstraw handsomely ; and no doubt many a district both in north and south could vie with either of ours. And many a district in Scotland. The other week there appeared in the *Saturday Review* a review of Dr. Norman M’Leod’s account of the Isle of Skye, of which I read a paragraph :—

“The Island of Skye alone, since the beginning of the wars of the French Revolution, has sent forth ‘twenty-one lieutenant-generals and major-generals, forty-eight lieutenant-colonels, six hundred commissioned officers, ten thousand soldiers, four governors of colonies, one governor-general, one adjutant-general, one Chief Baron of England, and one Judge of the Supreme Court of Scotland.’ Dr. M’Leod remembers the names of sixty-one officers being enumerated, who during ‘the war’ had joined the army and navy from the farms which were visible from one hill-top in ‘the parish.’ ‘The civilisation which in one generation could produce so much,’ the *Review* proceeds, ‘was due to the Educational System, fostered by the National Church. The centres of enlightenment in each parish were the minister and the schoolmaster, who had both studied in the same Universities, but with different fortune in subsequently obtaining a living. The Scotch are certainly not without some grounds for believing in the rare merits of a system which has been equally successful with such different races as the Saxon and the Celt.’—*Saturday Review*, April 14, 1867, p. 478.

This distances Ardstraw, Ardfert, and Dr. Livingstone besides. We are all nowhere in comparison of Skye. And if I might be indulged in one quotation more, to illustrate why we Celts and Saxons alike attribute such results to schooling, I will read a few sentences from the letter of a Scottish clergyman, giving an account of his parochial school, that of Keith, in Banffshire, which I came across most casually. He assures me there is nothing very remarkable about it above the better class of Scotch parochial schools, but I confess

it always seems to me the very model of a successful industrial institution:—

“Population of the parish, about six thousand. Several other schools in it, in one of which, that of the Free Church, classics are taught quite as effectively as in the parish school. Average attendance at the parish school, 225; now, 242; attended both by boys and girls, both of the poor and wealthier classes. The course includes all the ordinary branches of both English and classical instruction. The staff is—one head master, who teaches classics and the higher English; salary, £225 per annum, thus made up—£70 from heritors or landlords, with an allowance of £10 for a house; endowments, £70; pupils’ fees, £75—one second master, who teaches English; salary, £80; partly from Government and partly from pupils’ fees; and three pupil teachers, £17 10s each, paid by Government; and this staff they find quite sufficient. ‘The two proofs,’ Mr. Annand writes, ‘of the efficiency of the classical department in our parochial schools to which you refer are these—The first I give in my schoolmaster’s own words—“From the time of my appointment in September, 1829, to March, 1862, the value of bursaries gained by scholars wholly educated by me, exclusive of those partly educated, exceeded the sum of all the salaries paid me during that time by £475 12s.” The other proof I had mentioned to you was that of three boys who had gained bursaries, one of whom had been but three years at classics, and the other two four. These were educated not at our school, but at Milner’s Institution, a free school at Tocharbers, the neighbouring parish to Keith.’” (Private letter.)

These quotations, which might be multiplied *ad libitum*, will explain to our English and our aristocratic friends the interest felt by some of us wild Irish in a matter which might seem, at first blush, one of those chimerical fancies on which Remi says we feed our minds, or else, perhaps, some new, dangerous, democratic project, placing Latin and Greek within the reach

of villagers. I have, therefore, put it forward from its lowest practical or almost fiscal side, as a creditable branch of native industry, which has been most heavily though unintentionally injured. The specimens I have noted both from Ireland and Scotland are no doubt favourable, or very favourable, specimens, but they are *bonâ fide* specimens taken almost at random; and could be paralleled in many a district of either country, excelled perhaps in some. They indicate a state of things in the continuance of which, or its renewal, we trust this Congress will feel an interest. Even if we possessed, like England and Scotland, coal and ironstone, and some great *established opening* into commerce such as Belfast is now creating for us, still we might, like Scotland, or like Belfast, retain some taste for upper education, and find it possible to make the school compete with ship and factory without injuring any of the three. But *until we have these others*, we country people think it hard to be deprived of one of our few traditional openings to anything above the plough—deprived at a large national expense, and in the name of National Education. If indeed we designed, or were likely to injure the education furnished by the State, there might be reason for confining nine-tenths of Ireland to an English instruction which neither the people of Ireland nor the people of England think worth the time and trouble of receiving, and so the talk is now of rendering it compulsory. But if we are certain to energise and elevate it, and make it more generally received, the only pretence of an open objection vanishes; and I, for one, believe that it is only needful to state our case to have it quickly rectified.

Especially, I repeat, as even for its lower purposes, the National Education System needs our help, and does not, and cannot, succeed without it. And we have shown the reason why. For the same specimens, I trust, as compared or contrasted with the board's results—as contrasted more broadly with the discourag-

ing* reports which crowd in upon us year after year, and from many a quarter, as to the state and prospects of popular education—will also vindicate our measure in this more general aspect, as being a just means of vitalizing lower education, of restoring to it prestige and popularity, and rendering it prolific of results—of converting it from some shallow pretentious finality into the rudiments of real learning, and expanding the R's themselves from three rough, insignificant letters into the large illuminated capitals which commence a page or a volume. It is always a mistake, as

*I will only cite one instance:—"In the year 1852, the colonels of the various militia regiments of the eastern counties did me the honour to furnish at my request a statement of the number of their men who could read and write. I published it in my report (1853-4.) This year I have been favoured with a like return by the kindness of the chaplain of West Essex, and it reports 259 out of 777 men can read and write. In 1852, the number was 201 out of 750, showing that some progress has been made in twelve years. It is still, however, to be regretted that so many men have not acquired the mere elements of education."—English Reports for 1864-5, p. 116, also p. 24. A short time ago, some of us, Tyrone clergy, on comparing notes were horrified to find that the ignorance of our own decenter classes almost approached this. Yet all the clergy, of all denominations hereabouts, have done their best for a generation to work both National and Church Education Schools up to their best capabilities. Primary education, offered as an ultimate, has no attractive power. Few receive it, and those who do possess the doubtful privilege of supposing themselves educated when they are not. "My education," said a master manufacturer to me once, rather boastfully, "My education was completed before I was ten years of age!" When a man of some culture and experience could say this, what is to be expected from Pat and Hodge?

we believe, to make education low, level, and uniform by way of making it popular. This does not succeed, notwithstanding vast expenditure; and it ought not, for it goes against the very genius of education itself and its inevitable working. Men's bodies are not all alike, still less so their minds; and education develops and magnifies these initial differences. It is, therefore, above all things, differentiating and discriminative. From its crucible one man emerges a creative giant,* another a pedantic pigmy: some are godlike heroes, other, with longer names, and equally read in Homer, are only frogs and mice. Its attractiveness, therefore, lies not in its Chaos but its Cosmos—not in its rude beginnings, but in the orderly creations it evolves, and in the higher life its higher days bestow. And its democratic element—for whatever is vigorous and progressive has a strong democratic element—resides not in the dead level from which it starts, but in the sweeping summons preached downward to the poor, that all shall follow her who can, and in the broad non-respect of persons with which she accords her prizes. She loves not, therefore, to make herself low and cheap; such cheapness is dear to both giver and receiver—nor to make herself low, level, and compulsory; such democracy seems most akin to union strikes and saw-grinding—but she renders her graduated prizes fairly accessible to all, and thus helps in every grade, not all promiscuously, but those to whom in every grade even a small help is a divine assistance—those who are striving to help themselves. Promiscuous giving, even in education, is costly, thankless, and almost demoralising. Prizes for merit are comparatively cheap, and

*Several rough-coated countrymen have said to me—"Sir, I was at school with the great M'Cullagh." The present generation of Derrymen went to school with Sir John Lawrence, Sir Henry Lawrence, and Sir Robert Montgomery. The present generation of Belfastmen went to school with Cairns.

educe our worthiest energies. For the lofty prize "all run," though commonly but few obtain. But in the race for learning, happily, as in the race for virtue, or in the race for Heaven, all are in fact rewarded, almost or altogether, in proportion to their efforts. Here every one that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh truly and earnestly it shall assuredly be opened. These are the principles of our measure : we fear they have been too much overlooked of late in the education movement. If the revised code in England, for instance, proceed, as it is said to do, upon the opposite hypothesis—if its object and effect be to discourage higher branches, and cut down the common education of the now politically important Englishman, to the Procrustean measure of the R's, it is a blunder in morals and politics, as well as in education. The Bursars from Keith parochial school; the 200 or 300 professionals from one schoolmaster in Ardfert; the 400 or 600 from 20 schoolmasters in Ardstraw—to say nothing of the brilliant hundreds of the Isle of Skye—what do they represent? Not themselves merely; these are only the prizemen, the successful groups of much larger numbers who went with them a certain way, of vastly larger numbers who went with them as far as they could. Now, whatever the opinions of the successful men might be—the failures—both those who tried to go the pace, and those who declined to try—had at all events learned a juster estimate of their own deserts and those of their neighbours, than to imagine that their present low condition was the fault of the clergy, or the fault of the landlords, or the fault of Government, or the fault of God. The discriminating power of any real education is itself a farther education, and an upper National education on the largest scale.

But I have abstained religiously from the general question of what is real education either for rich or poor. It is too late now to enter it; but, as a practical educationist, I cannot forbear adding one remark—without development. After boys have learned to speak,

read, and write their own language, I know of no subject so suitable for either their organs or capacities as the study of languages—I mean the attainment of languages as such, as distinguished from the study of the subjects treated of by the authors which may be used as text-books.

Indeed, I go farther, and add that for some years of a boy's life—say from ten or eleven to fourteen or fifteen—I know no other sufficiently large subject, or number of subjects, which are suitable at all. In fact “subjects” as such are not suitable for children, nor intended for them. They are suitable for that to which their exponents address themselves—the understanding public.

Fairy tales and travels, especially if wonderful, are suitable for children, but not for school instruction. Perhaps, in time, the natural sciences may become sufficiently certain, simple, and cheap to be available for the main teaching of boys of ten or eleven; and they try to make them so in parts of the Continent; but as yet they are not. The severer sciences are too hard: a little of them is good; much of them will certainly overstrain and injure. The moral and political sciences are still more difficult; they address the judgment, and presume information, experience, and reflection.

Then, what subjects can be given? The National Board being debarred from controversial history—that is, almost from all history—have tried logic, Christian evidences, and political economy. For education purposes they might as well impose Hamilton's *Metaphysics*, the *Essays and Reviews*, and the *Bank Charter Act*. The topics plainly transcend the capacities of children.

Whereas the exponent and instrument of all these subjects, and of all social communication and cultivation, itself one of the most wondrous and powerful of things—language or languages as such—especially the key-languages, which make easier the acquisition of the rest, and most especially the exemplar and scientific

languages, whose paradigms are full and regular, their etymology clear and entertaining, and their syntax balanced and suggestive—these are a large and near and worthy subject, suited to boys' capacities, and suited to develop them. The mere study of such exemplar languages, the tracing and classifying their relationships, is, in fact, *science made easy to nascent thought*; and as one follows on their line the other subjects and materials for them—grammar, geography, history, literary information and communion with its treasures are almost insensibly acquired.

Upper education, therefore, I presume to think, is right in still retaining them as its nucleus; and lower education, whether as a preparation for upper, or in order to be good and popular itself, cannot afford to neglect their rudiments.

The measure described in this paper passed the National Board in principle on the 18th December last, and was formally proposed by the board to Government on the 19th of June, 1867 (*vide* correspondence moved for by Sir Robert Peel, 25th July, 1867). Unhappily, the commissioners embarrassed their proposal by mixing it with another unconnected subject on which there is much difference of opinion—that of Mr. Fortescue's letter; and the Government, thus embarrassed, threw back both subjects for further consideration. The delay is to be regretted; but no sound proposal can suffer from examination. I therefore gladly accepted the invitation of the Social Science Executive Committee, and have read this paper at Belfast.

I should point out its bearing on the other plans or suggestions one hears of for improving Irish education:

1. Obviously, this measure must come first. Its operation will bring out whatever vitality or wisdom there may be in the others. The pupils must first be had. There is no use in founding scholarships or endowments until we have some means of creating pupils. In some places scholarships, and in many places endowments, are lying dormant at present for want of these; whereas, if, out of the 600,000 children attending them, the primary schools will yearly bring 1,000, or 1,500, or 2,000 boys as far as Virgil and Greek Testament—and they could certainly do so with the machinery contemplated—a large proportion of them would require better instruction than their village could give, and would seek it at the nearest diocesan, Royal, or Erasmus Smith's school. These would be vitalised in turn, and could be reorganised if needful, or others could be founded. Our plan, by giving the rudiments of upper education over a wide area—in fact, wherever it is required—creates the pupils. It thus begins at the beginning, and furnishes the material without which the others could not work.

2. Meanwhile, of course, the constitution of these upper schools should be looked after, all endowments scrutinised, and the proper machinery brought to bear for rectifying, redirecting, or augmenting whatever needs it. This is fitting employment for the important Committees formed in Dublin and Belfast (there *ought* to be others) to look after “Intermediate Education.”

Many of these endowments ought to be available for rewarding and improving village schools. And if the local objects could be made sufficiently distinct, so that men of means could be certain that their liberality was not thrown away, no doubt many other endowments could be obtained.

3. One foundation and endowment, however, is now required, to enable *teachers* of primary schools to go through college and obtain university degrees.

It was proposed some time ago to found "Whately Scholarships" in Trinity College, Dublin, for this purpose—"Entrance Scholarships, to be held by *bonâ fide* masters or assistant-masters in primary schools, during their university course." The definition of a "primary" school being one in which any well-conducted subject of her Majesty could procure instruction in the three R's at a sum not exceeding one guinea per annum—these being called "Whately" Scholarships, because it was proposed to take as the nucleus of the fund the sum subscribed for a college testimonial to the late Archbishop of Dublin.

Probably funds would be forthcoming for similar scholarships at Belfast, Cork, or Galway, to be named, say, after individual founders or distinguished subscribers—if the Queen's University would relax its rule of residence in favour of *bonâ fide* teachers, as suggested by Professor D'Arcy Thompson.