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Mixed Education.

GREAT PUBLIC MEETING

HELD IN

CORPORATION-HALL,

LONDONDERRY,

ON TUESDAY, THE 6TH OF MARCH, 1860,

TO UPHOLD THE

PRINCIPLES OF UNITED EDUCATION,
AND OPPOSE DENOMINATIONAL
GRANTS IN IRELAND.

LONDONDERRY:

PRINTED AT THE STANDARD OFFICE.

1860.

Houses of the Oireachtas

Requisition of the Derry Branch

OF THE

ULSTER NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION.

WE, the undersigned, request that a Meeting be held in the Corporation Hall, Derry, to co-operate with the Ulster National Education Association, in upholding the principles of United Education, and opposing Denominational Grants in Ireland :—

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|--|--|
| R. A. Ferguson, Bt., <i>Custos Rotulorum</i> ,
County Derry. | J. E. Sampson, Colonel. |
| James Stewart, Bart., Fortstewart. | James Major, Q.C. |
| Barthw. M'Corkell, Mayor of Derry. | Robert L. Ogilby, D.L., J.P. |
| John Boyd, M.P., D.L., J.P. | Acheson Lyle, D.L., J.P. |
| James M'Ivor, D.D., Ex-F.T.C.D. | Saml. Vesey, D.L., J.P., County Tyrone. |
| James Byrne, Clk., Ex-F.T.C.D. | W. E. Willock, D.D., Ex-F.T.C.D. |
| Wm. M'Clure, Presbyterian Minister. | Thomas M'Clellan, Clk., A.M. |
| James Denham, D.D., Pres. Minister. | Hugh Boyd, J.P., Colonel, Ballycastle. |
| Wm. Edwards, Clk., Rector of Lang-
field. | James Crawford, Pres. Minister. |
| J. T. Macky, High-Sheriff, Donegal. | Matthew Wilson, Pres. Minister. |
| Maxwell Alexander, J.P. | John J. Bowen, J.P., Burt House. |
| W. S. Escott, Clk., Principal of Foyle
College. | Edward Bowen, Clk., Rector of Taugh-
boyne. |
| Robert G. Cather, A.M., Wesleyan
Minister. | R. V. Dickson, Ex-F.T.C.D. Rector,
Clogherny. |
| Robert Sewell, Independent Minister. | John Ferguson, J.P., Castleforward. |
| Wm. Haslett, J.P. | Edwd. Bowen, jun., A.M., Clk., Incum-
bent of Baronscourt. |
| Alexander Lindsay, J.P. | W. M. Major, A.M., Clk., Prebendary of
Moville. |
| J. C. F. Hunter, J.P. | Wm. R. Weir, Clk., Ex-Sch. T.C.D. |
| Daniel Baird, J.P., Chairman of Har-
bour Commissioners. | Hugh Norman, Clk., Incumbent of All-
saints. |
| Henry Darcus, J.P. | Jas. Smith, Clk., Archdeacon of Connor. |
| Henry Wiggins, J.P., Agent Worshipful
Grocers' Company. | Moses Leatham, Clk., Rector, Upper
Langfield. |
| W. C. Gage, J.P., Agent Worshipful
Fishmongers' Company. | T. Y. Killen, Presbyterian Minister. |
| William Ogilby, J.P. | Andrew Long, Presbyterian Minister. |
| John Humphery, J.P., Alderman, Gov-
ernor Hon. Irish Society. | Stephen Radcliffe, Clk. |
| Wm. Green, J.P., Agent to Hon. Irish
Society. | Francis Ellis, J.P. |
| Wm. Atkins, D.D., Ex-F.T.C.D. | Henry Danford, Clk. |
| G. V. Sampson, Clk., Rector Tamlaght-
anlagan. | J. A. Weir, Clk., A.M., Head-Master of
Raphoe Royal School. |
| Anthony Hastings, Clk. | John Stewart, J.P., Loughveagh House. |
| | Maben C. Motherwell, Clk., Rector of
Termonamongan. |
| | John Canning, Presbyterian Minister. |

- R. H. Dolling, J.P., Manor House, Kilrea.
 Butler M. Giveen, J.P.
 Robert Ross, Presbyterian Minister.
 H. P. Charlton, do.
 David Mitchell, do.
 Richard Smyth, M.A., do.
 James Donnelly, Wesleyan Minister.
 H. B. Monahan, Wesleyan Minister.
 Robert Knox, J.P.
 J. P. Baker, J.P., Capt. Royal Engineers
 Thomas Batt, J.P., Rathmullan.
 J. O. Woodhouse, J.P.
 J. G. Porter, Clk., A.M.
 Edward Atthill, J.P., Leck.
 Samuel Martin, Clk., Milford.
 Robert Macrory, Ardmore.
 Pechell Irvine, Moville.
 Robert L. Moore, Molenan.
 William J. Foster, Merchant.
 Joseph Cochran, Burnfoot.
 Robert Bond, Derry.
 John Allen, Town Councillor.
 A. H. Stewart, Secretary to Harbour Commissioners.
 Oliver Bond.
 John Conroy, Clk., Ex-Sch. T.C.D.
 James Corscaden.
 Wm. Huffington, T.C. Solicitor.
 S. J. Crookshank, Sub-Sheriff, County Donegal.
 James E. Nesbitt, Registrar, District Court of Probate.
 William Rogan, M.B.
 Joseph Williams.
 Samuel Gilliland, Alderman.
 James Carson.
 Edmund Murphy, Dunfanaghy.
 Jas. Gibson, A.M., Presbyterian Minister, Strabane.
- James Spencer Knox, Vicar-General.
 F. J. Porter, Presbyterian Minister, Donagheady.
 Wm. Scott, A.M., Presbyterian Minister
 J. Alfred Canning, Pres. Minister.
 Francis Pettierew, Pres. Minister.
 J. S. Knox, Lieut.-Colonel, Portstewart.
 J. J. Macaldin, M.D.
 Robert M'Crea, Grange.
 Hamill Smyth, Merchant.
 Charles Seaton, Blackpark.
 Henry Ridley.
 John Munn.
 James M'Knight, LL.D.
 James W. Doherty, Solicitor.
 Richard Anderson, Moville.
 Wm. J. M'Connell, Pres. Minister.
 George Tomkins, J.P.
 Wm. Dysart, Rector of Tamlaghtard.
 Josias Mitchell, Pres. Minister.
 John Adams, J.P., Ballydevi t.
 N. M'C. Brown, Pres. Minister.
 Charles Hamilton, Clk., Newtonstewart.
 Samuel Lawrence, J.P.
 Wm. Cather, Newtownlimavady.
 Henry Tyler, J.P.
 W. D. Smyth, Drumahoc.
 R. M' Morris, Presbyterian Minister, Manoreunningham.
 George Steen, A.M., Newtownlimavady
 John Holmes, J.P., Strandabrosney.
 Thomas Staples, Bart., Q.C., Lissan.
 John Kinnear, Pres. Min., Letterkenny.
 Thos. Witherow, Presbyterian Minister, Maghera.
 Bellingham Mauleverer, J.P., Maghera.
 J. Colthurst, J.P., Rector, Bovevagh.
 Alex. Barklie, Mullamore,
 J. B. Chapman, Rector of Omagh.
 Edward Hamilton, Clk.

At a preliminary meeting of the Requisitionists, held in Corporation Hall, Londonderry, on the 22d day of February, 1860, a Committee was appointed to frame Resolutions, and to name a day for the general meeting.

In accordance with the directions of that Committee, a meeting, to uphold United Education and oppose Denominational Grants in Ireland, is hereby called for Tuesday, the 6th day of March next, at twelve o'clock, in the Corporation Hall, Londonderry.

BARTHOLOMEW M'CORKELL,

Mayor, and Chairman of Committee.

In accordance with the foregoing requisition, a great public meeting of those interested in the National System of Education, was held in the Corporation Hall, on Tuesday, the 6th day of March, 1860, at the hour of twelve o'clock, for

the purpose of upholding United Education, and opposing denominational grants in Ireland. The meeting was one of the most influential ever held in the city of Londonderry. There was a large attendance of ministers of every evangelical denomination, and the laity of all persuasions. Amongst the ministers present were:—

Rev. Dr. Willock, Cleenish, Fermanagh; Rev. Dr. Niblock, Donegal; Rev. Dr. Denham, Derry; Rev. R. M. Swift, Mountfield, Omagh; Rev. Matthew Wilson, Derry; Rev. James Alfred Canning, Coleraine; Rev. Moses Leathem, Upper Langfield; Rev. William Major, Moville; Rev. William M'Clure, Derry; Rev. Richard Smyth, Derry; Rev. James Crawford, Derry; Rev. R. G. Cather, Derry; Rev. E. Bowen, Bogay; Rev. E. Bowen, jun., Baronscourt; Rev. E. Cochran, Rathmullan; Rev. W. Russell, Strabane; Rev. W. Monahan, Derry; Rev. A. Buchanan, Glendermott; Rev. T. Y. Killen, Ballykelly; Rev. S. Martin, Milford; Rev. R. Sewell, Derry; Rev. Edward Hamilton, Kileronaghan; Rev. W. Edwards, Langfield; Rev. John Conroy, Eglinton; Rev. S. Radcliffe; Rev. W. S. Escott, Foyle College; Rev. H. Danford, Rev. H. Norman, Rev. W. Scott, Rev. D. Mitchell, Bunerana; Rev. H. P. Charlton, Burt; Rev. F. Pettierew, Faughanvale; Rev. F. Smith, Derry; Rev. F. J. Porter, Donagheady; Rev. Henry Carson, Glendermott; Rev. R. M'Morris, Manorcunningham; &c., &c., &c.

On the motion of Robert Macrory, Esq., Ardmore, seconded by Robert Bond, Esq., Derry, the chair was taken by his Worship the Mayor.

The MAYOR said—Gentlemen, a requisition was handed to me, very numerously, and I must say very respectably, signed—one in compliance with which I assure you it gave me great pleasure in calling the preparatory meeting which was held in this Hall. At that preparatory meeting, gentlemen, a committee was formed to prepare resolutions to be submitted to a general meeting, to be held in this city. The resolutions, I believe, have been numerously distributed, and the object now of our present meeting is to form a Branch of the Ulster National Education Association, for the purpose of giving to that Association all the aid in our power to carry out the great and grand principles of National Education. I need hardly state, that since the National Education principle has been adopted in Ireland, many are the great and good results that have flowed from the system. (Hear, hear.) The morality of Ireland has improved much under it. No person who has given the least attention to it but must see the great results to the community generally arising from that system of education. It is not my intention to occupy the time of this meeting by making a long speech. I am perfectly well aware that there are gentlemen present better able to advo-

cate the principles than I could possibly do. The resolutions have been carefully framed, and I hope they will meet the views of the meeting. I would just say a little as to what has fallen under my own observation with regard to the schools in connexion with this city. I have had an opportunity of being present at the examinations in some of the National Schools in Derry, in connexion with the First Presbyterian Church, and under the management of the Rev. Mr. M'Clure; and for myself I may say I was surprised when I heard children of eight, twelve, or fourteen years of age giving such striking proofs of education. The system, I believe, is good; the rules of the schools are good; their books cannot be surpassed; their maps convey to the young mind ideas which can never be erased. Therefore I am, and have always been, an advocate for the National System of Education. (Hear, hear, hear.) I shall not detain you longer; but call on the Rev. Mr. M'Clure, who is one of the Secretaries, to read the numerous letters which have been received from gentlemen who have found it out of their power to attend the meeting to-day, and also to propose the first resolution.

The Rev. WM. M'CLURE, Derry, then rose and said—Mr. Mayor, the requisition calling this meeting has been, as you have said, very numerously signed by gentlemen of large property and great influence. Among the requisitionists there are two members of Parliament; the High-Sheriff of County Derry; the High-Sheriff of County Donegal; the Mayor of Derry; three baronets; thirty-eight magistrates and deputy-lieutenants; twenty-seven clergymen of the Established Church; twenty-four Presbyterian ministers; three Wesleyan ministers; one Congregationalist or Independent minister; and thirty-seven of the gentry and laity; there are eighty-one members of the Established Church; and about forty-four Presbyterians and others. The list of requisitionists might have been greatly increased if it had been thought necessary, as the public is much interested in the subject. Mr. M'Clure then acknowledged the receipt of letters of apology from a large number of clergymen and lay gentlemen, including the following:—

Sir Robert A. Ferguson, Bart., M.P.; Acheson Lyle, Esq., J.P., D.L.; Rev. Robert Hervey, Incumbent of Leck; Rev. Anthony Hastings, Rector of Kilmacrenan; Rev. John R. Brougham, Rector of Raymunterdoney; Rev. Thomas Stack, Rector of Upper Badoney; Rev. Stewart Marks, Cu-

rate of Merville; Alexander Barklie, Esq., Mullamore; Rev. Dr. Dickson, Rector of Clogherney, and Ex-F.T.C.D.; Rev. J. B. Chapman, Rector of Omagh, and Ex-F.T.C.D.; Rev. Charles Galway, Rector of Lower Badoney; Bellingham Mauleverer, Esq., J.P.; George Tomkins, Esq., J.P.; Francis Ellis, Esq., J.P.; Sir James Stewart, Bart., D.L., J.P.; Rev. M. C. Motherwell, Clk.; R. L. Ogilby, Esq., D.L., J.P.; Rev. Charles Hamilton, Clk.; John Stewart, Esq., J.P., Loughreagh; Rev. James Smith, Clk.; Archdeacon Connor; Rev. S. A. Weir, Royal School, Raphoe; Rev. William Scott, A.M.; Rev. J. G. Porter, Clk.; Henry Wiggins, Esq., J.P., Eglinton.

Mr. M'Clure read the following letters:—

“Osborne House, Torquay, 23d January, 1860.

“DEAR MR. M'CLURE—I beg to acknowledge, with many thanks, your kind communication of the 20th instant, and to assure you how cordially I approve of the objects of the ‘Ulster National Education Association.’

“Owing to my being a Commissioner of National Education, I do not think that I can with propriety take any active part in your proceedings, but I will thank you to assure your Committee, and the then assembled meeting, that the ‘good and righteous’ cause in which you are engaged has my complete approval. I say ‘good and righteous,’ for I am thoroughly persuaded that the *National System* has already been productive of great good to the country at large, and that it is founded on the righteous principle of ‘doing to others as we would they should do unto us,

“Believe me, my dear Sir, faithfully yours,

“Rev. Wm. M'Clure.”

“W. DERRY AND RAPHOE.

“Maison Borda, Place Gramont, Paris, France,
“17th February, 1860.

“SIR—I return the paper which you were kind enough to forward to me, with my brother's signature and my own. We heartily concur in the object of the proposed meeting in support of the principles of the National System of Education, and would deeply regret that any deviation should be made from that system as it at present exists. For myself, I may say that I have been connected with the National Board ever since it was first established, and have had the gratification to witness the great benefit it has conferred on the people of Ireland, and its gradual triumph over every opposition.

“I remain, dear Sir, yours truly,

“To the Secretary.”

“G. V. SAMPSON.

Mr. M'Clure then proposed the first resolution—“That those principles of the present National System of Education are just and wise, which, while throwing open its schools to pupils of all communions, and affording them the best secular instruction, are designed to give ample security that no unfair attempt shall be made to interfere with their peculiar religious tenets, contrary to the expressed wish of their parents; and that the operation of the system has been productive of great good to the country at large.” He said—It is with no ordinary feelings of satisfaction that I find myself associated with so many gentlemen of property and influence belonging to various denominations, in carry-

ing out an object so intimately connected with the happiness and prosperity of our country. We meet to support the principle of United Education, and to oppose denominational grants. It is an error to suppose that all who have signed the requisition for this meeting have, by that act, expressed their unqualified approbation of the National Board in every part of its arrangements and details. Neither the requisition we have signed, nor the laws of the parent association, warrant any such assertion. But there are certain principles maintained by the Government system which we are determined to uphold. (Applause.) One of these principles is, as stated in the resolution, that schools supported by the State should be open to pupils of all communions—in other words, that United Education is the system best suited to the circumstances of this country. A commission was appointed in 1812, and the Commissioners were then the Lord Primate, the Bishop of Cashel, the Bishop of Killala, the Provost of Trinity College, and the famous Lovel Edgeworth—all of them members of the Established Church. What was their opinion as to the course that ought to be patronised and supported? They reported “in favour of a system of education from which should be banished even the suspicion of proselytism, and which, admitting children of all religious persuasions, should not interfere with the peculiar tenets of any.” And they assert that “no other plan can be effectually carried out that does not make this a leading principle.” Surely it is quite obvious that, if the power of compulsion be once conceded to any one denomination, it must be conceded to every other. The National Board was founded on the principle of non-interference in 1831. Lord Stanley, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, addressed a letter to the Duke of Leinster, announcing the intention of the Government to establish a system which should afford, if possible, a combined literary and a separate religious education, and should be capable of being so far adapted to the views of the religious persuasions which divide Ireland, as to render it in truth a system of National Education. And here I may be permitted to say, that that eminent statesman, Lord Stanley—now Lord Derby—has laid the country under a lasting obligation by establishing and maintaining this system. It may not be everything we desire; but it is sound in its fundamental principles, and is, therefore, a great blessing to Ireland. We undoubtedly owe

him a great debt of gratitude. (Hear.) From the date of Lord Stanley's letter to the present day, the cause of United Education has been the object of repeated and virulent attacks, and a late pastoral, of which we all have heard, has been aimed at its complete overthrow and destruction. But it yet stands, and it is likely to rally around it new and influential friends. Mr. Cardwell, in his admirable reply has declared, that her Majesty's Government are determined steadfastly to adhere to the principles on which the National System of Education was first established; and I doubt not but that all agree in the sentiments expressed by Lord Carlisle, the present amiable and accomplished Chief Governor of Ireland, who when, in October last, addressing the professors and students of the Queen's University in St. Patrick's Hall, observed—"There are periods when the frank avowal of opinion is due from any seat of authority or centre of influence. I do then continue to think it most desirable that, in our great imperial community, where its citizens are to play united parts and discharge united functions—to live, in short, a united life—the preparation for it should be laid and learned in a United Education." (Applause.) It is often said by the opponents of the system, that it has utterly failed in the grand object that was in view—United Education. This, I believe, is not strictly correct. It is true that United Education has not succeeded to the extent that the framers of the system intended, and that was certainly desirable. But how could it completely succeed, with the numerous and formidable difficulties it has had to encounter? There are many districts in which the population is almost exclusively of one denomination. Again, in other districts there are schools under separate managers; or rival societies have their own separate and sectarian schools. This is more the case in towns than in the country, because in towns a sufficient number of any one denomination may usually be had to fill its schools. In the Derry district, which takes in a great part of the county Donegal, there are ninety-five National Schools—of these, thirty-seven are under Protestant management; upwards of sixty have mixed attendance, and that attendance is quite in proportion to the relative numbers of the different denominations. And if we take a wider range, and look at the denominations of managers and teachers of National Schools throughout the Kingdom, we will

find much more united action than we might at first be led to expect. The last published Report of the Commissioners furnishes the information, that there are of managers of the Established Church, 313; Roman Catholics, 1,277; Presbyterians, 420; others, 20; of teachers, there are of the Established Church, 578; Roman Catholics, 7,403; Presbyterians, 1,142; others, 79. Protestants have generally shown themselves more willing than Roman Catholics to carry out the system of United Education, as is evident from the fact, that, as patrons of schools, they often appoint Roman Catholic teachers; but I am not aware of a single case, in which a Roman Catholic patron has appointed a Protestant teacher. (Hear.) This is a pretty plain indication of what the consequence would be if the education of the country were placed in the hands of those who have lately made such demands—arrogant and unwarrantable demands. (Hear.) The National System then has not failed in promoting United Education to the extent that its opponents are accustomed to represent. On the contrary, wherever the conflicting influences to which I have alluded do not exist, and the various parties and denominations are on friendly terms and cooperate with each other, the system has had fair play, and the cause of United Education has been most effectually secured. (Hear.) The resolution goes on to say, that the principle is just and wise, which is designed to give ample security that no unfair attempt should be made to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of the pupils, contrary to the expressed wish of their parents. Mr. Cardwell announces with plainness, the desire of her Majesty's Government to give full effect to that principle of the system which provides for separate religious teaching, and respects in the case of every child the just authority of the parent. This is a principle with which no man, or body of men, have any right to interfere, except by moral suasion. It is a principle not only recognised by God Himself in the domestic institution, but repeatedly enforced in His Word. Our Lord Himself set the example of obedience to earthly parents. Who are we that we should attempt to set aside the right of private judgment, and compel a child to disobey the natural guardians of its infant years? (Applause.) The rights of conscience must be respected, even when conscience is ill-informed. (Hear.) No government can, with propriety, interfere with

these rights, and no system that does not fully recognise them is worthy of public confidence and support. (Hear, hear.) Lord Carlisle is equally happy in the expression of his views upon this point also. He says—"I will yield to none in respectful deference to the clergy of all our religious communions, but assuredly to none whatever of them can I, either in a public or private capacity, concede the right of denying to the laity, of which I am myself a member, the full power of acting upon the decisions of our own consciences, and of regulating the education of our own children." (Applause.) The last part of the resolution states that the operation of the system has been productive of great good to the country at large. (Hear.) A moment's reflection will convince us of the correctness of this statement. Look at the books that were used, and the kind of literary instruction given in the Hedge Schools in Ireland previous to the establishment of the National System. (Hear, hear.) For instance, in a list of books returned by clergymen to the Commissioners of Education in 1825, we have the following:—The Garden of Love; the Economy of Beauty; the School of Delights; Nocturnal Revels; the Life of Moll Flanders; Tristram Shandy, and others of a similar character. (Laughter.) Every scholar brought whatever book he could pick up from pedlars and hawkers, and as they all "rehearsed" at the top of their voices at the same time, the Hedge School chorus in those days was not unlike what we may suppose were the proceedings at the Tower of Babel. (Cheers.) One of the Commissioners saw in a school in the county Sligo, in 1824, a child holding a New Testament between two others, one of whom had the Forty Thieves, and the other the Pleasant Art of Money-Catching, while another not far distant was perusing the Mutiny Act, and all reading aloud from their respective volumes at the same moment. (Laughter.) Before the establishment of the National System, I have myself seen, within three miles of this city, a school taught by an old woman, who boasted that her pupils enjoyed peculiar advantages. It was held in a smoky cabin. The children were seated on turf, logs of wood, and remnants of broken stools. (Loud laughter.) Two classes were hearing the news from newspapers, nearly a year old; one party were reading the speeches of Mr. O'Connell at the Corn Exchange; and another were en-

gaged with Dr. Boyton's addresses to some association in Dublin on Church and State. (Renewed laughter.) Now mark the contrast. Every one knows the excellence of the books published by the Board of Education. The bitterest opponents of the system acknowledge their worth. (Hear, hear.) It is no small testimony to their value that they are very generally used in families and private schools throughout the Three Kingdoms. (Hear, hear.) They are used in the great majority, not only of Protestant schools, under the Council of Education in England and Scotland, but also in Roman Catholic schools. They have been adopted by the National Board in Canada, and are used in Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, and most of the other Colonies. They have been translated into three Continental languages for the purpose of being employed in schools established by other governments; and, finally, although they are not binding on managers of schools in Ireland, they are used in them all without, I believe, a single exception. The standard of education is vastly elevated. The young are becoming familiar with departments of science with which the former generation were utterly unacquainted. Let the system only have fair play, and knowledge will advance with rapid strides throughout the length and breadth of our land. Our fellow countrymen at home will be enabled to enter the field of competition, and carry off many a prize; and, when they go abroad they will be no longer hewers of wood and drawers of water, but be fitted for the highest offices of honour and of trust. With regard to Irish schoolmasters, in former times they were in a most degraded situation—ignorant themselves, they were incapable of imparting instruction to others; but now a new and superior class of teachers has sprung up under the auspices of the Board. The qualifications of many of them are of a high order, and they are admirably trained for the proper performance of their duties. They are becoming every day more respectable in station, identified with the people, and interested in promoting the peace and good order of the community. The advantages conferred on the country by the National System will be still more evident when we look at the gradual increase in the number of pupils from year to year. At the time the first report was published in 1833, there were 789 schools in operation, and 107,042 pupils. In the year 1858, there were 5,408 schools

in operation, on the rolls of which the average number of children was 519,664, and the total number of distinct pupils appearing on the same was 803,610. The average daily attendance at each school appears to have been about fifty. When we consider these facts, and take into account the kind of instruction afforded, who will deny that the operation of the system has been productive of great good to the country at large? On examining the reports of inspectors, I find that the managers of schools have, as a body, been sadly deficient in the discharge of their duties, seldom visiting the schools, and confining themselves to the mere signing of official documents. And yet, notwithstanding the bitter opposition of its enemies, and the slothfulness of its friends, the system has steadily advanced. (Hear, hear.) If it has done so much under such disadvantageous circumstances, what may we not reasonably expect it to accomplish when new life and energy will be imparted to it, when the clergy and laity of the Established Church—gentlemen distinguished by their social position and literary talents—when they will become active managers of National Schools, and vie with other denominations in spreading abroad the blessings of knowledge, and imparting that righteousness that alone can exalt our people among the nations of the earth? (Hear, hear.) What is wanted to secure success and the triumph of the cause is union among all classes and denominations. Protestants are about to be united, and many liberal Roman Catholics are favourable to the principles that we this day support. I think this conclusion may be fairly drawn from what has taken place the other day in the county of Cork. Mr. Deasy, the lately appointed Attorney-General, was opposed there by an Ultramontane and anti-National party, principally on the ground that he was an advocate of United and Non-Sectarian Education. And what was the result? Such is the state of feeling in that large county, where all the National Schools, with scarcely an exception, are under Roman Catholic management, that he was returned by a majority of 2,279. This, I think, is an evidence of the advance of freedom and liberality among our Roman Catholic friends. (Hear, hear.) Our meeting to-day is not intended to serve only a temporary purpose. Besides eliciting an expression of public opinion, important practical results may be expected to flow from it. Our association may receive

and consider suggestions of friends, such as giving prizes to deserving teachers, plans of intermediate education, and any other improvements that may increase the efficiency of the system, and enable it still more to elevate the character and increase the prosperity of our country. (Loud and continued applause.)

JOHN ALEXANDER, Esq., High-Sheriff of Derry, in seconding the resolution, said that the system had undoubtedly conferred great benefits on the country, and that these would be greatly increased when all classes joined in supporting it. We would then become one of the most enlightened communities on the face of the earth. (Applause.)

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The Rev. ROBERT G. CATHER, Derry, proposed the second resolution—"That it is the duty and interest of the State to inspect all schools receiving public aid—to determine what shall be the secular instruction imparted in them—to retain in its own hands the ENTIRE disposal of the funds voted for Educational purposes, and in the peculiar circumstances of this country to refuse all Denominational Grants." He said—This, Mr. Mayor, is an age of progress: and that it may be safe, it is perhaps necessary that it be one of conflict. Accordingly, we find everywhere light struggling with darkness—truth with error—education with ignorance—liberty with despotism—and true religion with superstition and idolatry. Ireland is the great battle-field of this momentous struggle, and it is in many respects the most interesting part of the field of conflict. On the Continent, the forces are too unequally matched, and all is dismay and confusion in the struggle. In America, truth seems so far at least in the ascendant, as to make the issue scarcely doubtful, with Divine blessing. But in Ireland—our own land—the forces, on either side, are more equally matched. For while the support of Great Britain, where our principles are firmly held and appreciated, nobly sustains us in the strife, still the majority of our countrymen are opposed to the principles of truth, progress, and constitutional freedom, and are every day more and more succumbing to the power of a fatal superstition, that is the blight and the curse of our beautiful and beloved country. This, Mr. Chairman, is a most grave and critical juncture in the strife; for the conflict is now becoming closer and more deadly: admitting of

no compromise, and evidently drawing to an issue that, on either side, must be final and decisive. In times which many here can remember, the leaders in this struggle were men of liberal education and great abilities, who were bound by national and social ties to their fellow countrymen, and who used constitutional, though often abused, means of seeking their ends—means which are open, and fairly available for all the subjects and citizens of a free country. Speeches, newspapers, societies, subscriptions, and even monster meetings (except as they were gigantic sins against the holy Sabbaths) were all British—manly and legitimate; expedients which could be met and dealt with by honourable men and equal terms. And furthermore, in the objects then sought by the great Roman Catholic leaders of the day, many Protestant statesmen and many eminent patriots concurred and co-operated. But, sir, how changed are all the conditions and parties of the conflict now. British politics have been abjured, under the guidance of Jesuitical ecclesiastics. Secret conclaves of the Roman Catholic hierarchy sit and vote, and issue their Popish pastorals, with arrogant, absolute, and determinate authority, in the secular as well as religious interests of British subjects. Political activity, on the part of their laity, is discountenanced and held in check, and the members of Parliament even are openly played off and danced by the spiritual power of the wily Irish Italian, who governs from the Vatican in Marlborough street, four millions of our countrymen. Now, sir, this I affirm cannot go on. The utter audacity of the party has, with regard to education, so overleapt all bounds, that all Protestants, and many enlightened Roman Catholics themselves, have aroused to resistance, and I feel certain that, as the *Times* said the other day, “If this course of blind infatuation proceed, the party may learn before long, and when it is too late to undo their mischief to themselves, that England will not endure to have the legislature of the country impeded and inconvenienced by the factious conduct of a small and priest-ridden minority.” The meeting of to-day, embracing as it does the wealth, the intelligence, and the numbers who constitute the true and overwhelming public opinion of the north-west of Ireland, will, I am sure, not separate without effectually entering its protest against the designs of the Ultramontane party; and rendering its warm support to the Government which, under most trying circumstances, has nobly refused to yield to the insolent de-

mands of the hierarchy—the direction of the most sacred, most important, and most virtual interests of this Christian and Protestant commonwealth. It is in this spirit—one of sincere admiration and sympathy with the course which the Lord Lieutenant and the Government have pursued—and of earnest determination to sustain it, that I rise to move the resolution which has been entrusted to me. Mr. Chairman, in the resolution there are two points of importance, to each of which I shall address myself for a moment. The first is, the circumstances of this country with regard to the question of National Education. The resolution affirms, and our meeting here to-day implies, that they are peculiar. What then are the circumstances which have brought us together? 1. The education of the people has been, as we have just heard, for nearly thirty years under the direction of the State; and, although extreme parties in the country have been dissatisfied with the system of National Education, it has for the very reasons which have displeased them, secured the growing confidence and support of the moderate and liberal-minded of all denominations and parties. 2. Of late years, Ultramontanism has been increasingly in the ascendant in the direction of the Roman Catholic Church in this country, and it has at length made an open and desperate attempt upon the National Board of Education, hoping not only to retain the lion's share of the spoils—that is, 80 per cent. of the grants for education and of the schools under the Board—but effectually to exclude from the control of this large number of schools the Government of the country. 3. The Government has nobly refused this audacious claim, and thereby entitled itself to the warm thanks and strenuous support of all who do not wish to see the education of the country perverted from a national into an anti-national channel. Under these circumstances we are met here to-day. The second point in my resolution is, that in these circumstances of the country it is the duty of the government to maintain in its integrity the existing system of Education, and to refuse all denominational grants. Now, sir, you will not think it out of place for me, as a Wesleyan Minister, here to say, that the Wesleyan body take the liveliest interest in this question. The Wesleyans have often been charged with being indifferent, or even opposed to education. Nothing could be more false or slanderous than

such an imputation. Mr. Wesley was himself a learned man; he was in reference to the education of the people, as to most other public questions, far in advance of his age, and took much pains in the publication of elementary books of learning. Then as a body the Wesleyans have been long and earnestly engaged in the work of education. Not only were theirs almost in every place the first Sunday-schools in Ireland, but they have had, for many years, in every part of the Kingdom, day-schools supported entirely at their own expense. It so happens also that I am able to show that, amongst those who were most anxious, and took a somewhat leading part towards the establishment of the system of National Education, was a Wesleyan Minister, even our own learned, pious, and patriotic fellow-countryman, Dr. Adam Clarke. [Mr. Cather here read extracts from a letter dated September 21, 1831, addressed by the late Dr. Adam Clarke to the Right Hon. E. G. Stanley, (the present Earl of Derby), in which the writer expressed his views on the subject of National Education.—His principles were almost similar to the fundamental principles of the National Board.] Mr. Cather continued—Now, from the foregoing it will appear that, in its leading features, the very system then sketched has been substantially adopted and in operation for nearly thirty years, with vast benefit to the country. Sir, the question may be asked, why has the Wesleyan body, after having so long stood out against the National Board, at length joined it? Well, if I were to give the answer of others, who pretend to know better than ourselves, it might be very unsatisfying to this meeting, therefore I will not trouble you with it; my own answer is, that misapprehension was the chief cause, and also that the political and ecclesiastical sympathies of the body being with the Established Church, has kept the Wesleyans aloof. To my individual feelings, this has been for nearly twenty years a subject of regret, and I am quite sure that our body now feels that it has been sadly misled, and a serious loser by the course which it has pursued, in imitation of others who are but little grateful for it. There is one consolation which I feel under the circumstances, and that is—that our Conference, so early as June last, after long investigation and years of anxious discussion, came by an all-but unanimous vote to the resolution to accept the grants of the National Board to non-vested schools. This was before the letter of the hierarchy

was heard of: and it was on that account all the more valuable, as a support to the principles of United Education, inasmuch as it could not be regarded as a mere political expedient, under the apprehension of a worse system of education. And, Mr. Chairman, I have a strong conviction that the adhesion of the Wesleyans, whose character for attachment to the Scriptures and to vital religion cannot be questioned, has saved the National Board, or been the chief instrument, under Providence, in emboldening the Government to reject the audacious attack of the hierarchy which came so soon after; whilst the concurrence of the English Wesleyans in our decision, and the subsequent adhesion of the venerable Primate, has demonstrated the soundness of our course. But, sir, this is not a mere denominational question at all; it is, as I regard it, one of *Christian statesmanship*. It seems to me to involve the gravest and greatest interests of this Christian commonwealth; and it is in this spirit that I feel it ought to be dealt with. We are not met here, although belonging to all the sections of Protestants, as members or Ministers of various denominations, but as Christian citizens, to look in the spirit of Christian equity and wisdom at this great and absorbing question. I should be ashamed of myself, if I did not, when speaking upon such a subject as National Education, embrace all my fellow-citizens in my good wishes and counsels. Looking then, sir, at the subject in this broad and comprehensive light, I have no hesitation in saying that I prefer the National Education System of Ireland to all others—that is, to the denominational system of England; to the compulsory national system of America, and to the State machinery system of the Continent. It is perhaps the best in the whole world. Let us now look for a moment steadily at the operation of the system. In Vested schools, united secular and separate religious education seems to me the simple recognition and embodiment, in fact, of the existing state of things in society; Roman Catholic customers buy freely from Protestant merchants, and *vice versa*; Roman Catholic work people serve Protestant employers, and *vice versa*; Roman Catholic tenants pay rent to Protestant landlords, and *vice versa*; Roman Catholic voters elect Protestant members of Parliament, and *vice versa*; but in their religious duties they are perfectly separate. Why then find fault with the Government for carrying out in the National Board what obtains in all secular life

around us? In Non-Vested schools, the Government has wisely conceded to those who, having built their own school-houses and keeping them in repair, are nevertheless anxious to have their inspection, and admirable school requisites, their grants, without interfering with the management of these schools, further than to secure the maintenance of the essential right of liberty of conscience to all the subjects of the Crown. On the whole, Mr. Chairman, the present system of the National Board seems to me to be eminently worthy of our support on the following great and general grounds:—(1.) It recognizes and preserves *the unity of the nation* against the attempt of those who would withdraw the education of the large majority of the people of Ireland from State inspection and control, and thereby seek to divide, if not alienate, their allegiance from the Throne and institutions of our country. (2.) It defends and maintains *the liberty of the nation* against the designs of those who claim and exercise, by the espionage of the Confessional and the terrors of superstition, the almost absolute control of the consciences and actions of their priest-ridden followers. Even intelligent Roman Catholics have strongly protested against the tremendous power grasped at by the hierarchy in their late pastoral. Sir Robert Kane, President of the Queen's College, Cork, himself a Roman Catholic, publicly said—"That although anything proceeding from such a venerable quarter must be received by Catholics with respect, yet that the ideal monastic seclusion which the pastoral advocated was utterly inconsistent with the practical duties of life, which they, as fathers and as citizens of a constitutional country, had to discharge." For the sake, then, of the dearest rights of British citizens, even those of parents over the education of their children, and of children with the concurrence of their parents, to learn the Word of God and whatever else they choose, let us heartily maintain the principles of the National Board. (3.) *It promotes the material interests of the nation*, by developing the natural intelligence of the people, and exercising their understanding. It has effectually stimulated the industry, and augmented the means of the masses of the people. It is also effecting a rapid social revolution, so that the Irish will, ere long, be no longer the worst fed, worst clothed, and worst housed nation in Europe, and the disgrace of the Empire. On the contrary, Ireland is now fast becoming one of the most improved and improving

countries in the world. (4.) *It is favourable to the Christian salvation of the people*, much more favourable than any substitute which is practicable; and I am persuaded, that if the Government steadily maintain it, the result will be that the greatness of the country—including the unity, the liberty, and the material wealth and prosperity of the people—will so increase, that the spirit of the nation will eventually rise superior to all the attempts of Jesuits and Ultramontanists to bind and fetter it; and that priestcraft, the curse and blight of this fair land, will, as in America, die a natural death in Ireland, even never to have a resurrection. And, sir, when priestcraft is dead in Ireland, Popery will not long survive throughout the world. It is a doomed system, and the signs of the times predict the time approaching, when

“Thus terribly shall Babel fall,
And never more be found at all.”

(Loud and prolonged applause.)

JAMES THOMPSON MACKY, Esq., J.P., High Sheriff of Donegal, briefly seconded the resolution.

The Rev. JAMES BYRNE, Ex-F.T.C.D., Cappagh, Omagh, proposed the next resolution, as follows:—“That while pledging ourselves to oppose any attempt to subvert the fundamental principles of the National System, we are, at the same time, not averse to such reasonable modifications being made in its present rules and practice, as (without impairing its efficiency) would facilitate the extension of its benefits to schools at present deprived of them.” He said—Mr. Mayor, I am sure that every one must have joined in the regret expressed by the first speaker at a circumstance to which this resolution refers, that the National System of Education has not hitherto been adopted universally in this country. Yet, when we consider some of the circumstances which marked its first institution, and its subsequent history, we may discover some reasons for the fact, though these may not render that fact less to be regretted. Among all the silent changes which time effects, there is none more remarkable than the gradual change which changing circumstances produces in public opinion. (Hear.) Though truth cannot change with time or circumstance, it may by these be brought nearer to the surface, and placed more within the reach of ordinary minds. I confess that it is this consideration which has always supported me in holding the opinion which I have ever held with reference to the National System of Education, in opposition to so overwhelming a

weight of authority in the church in which I am a minister. (Hear.) It was not that I underrated the worth or disregarded the judgment of all those able and pious men who held different opinions, but that I recollected how different the circumstances were when they formed their opinions. The National System of Education was established two years after the passing of the Emancipation Act. It was not to be expected, sir, that the habits of thought, formed during a long period of our history, could all at once be laid aside; or that the Protestants of this country could be prepared in two years to treat the Roman Catholic population with that respect to their conscientious convictions which the system required; or to apply to them the same considerate toleration which they had learned to practice towards each other. (Hear.) But if this was so with regard to other Protestant bodies, it was more especially the case with reference to the Church established in this country. Accustomed to regard herself as a co-ordinate power in the State, whose function it was to superintend the spiritual education of the nation, how could she feel otherwise than alarmed, almost insulted, when asked to accept a system of education, which, by treating all religions on the same general principles, seemed to abrogate her function, and to ask herself to consent to that abrogation? It was in truth one of the stages in the gradual departure of an old theory, which time and circumstances necessarily abolished in a free country. (Hear, hear.) Not that this theory constituted the reason on account of which the Established Church opposed the National System of Education; but this, and all the traditions of her history connected with it, combined with the old habits of Protestant feeling, which had been engendered under a different system of legislation, to place this subject before her under a very different point of view from that in which we now regard it. (Hear, hear, hear.) Now, sir, I maintain that no historical event, no historical character, can be rightly judged, unless relating to the circumstances of the time; and I claim for the Established Church the same rule of judgment in estimating the conduct of her prelates and clergy in reference to this subject—(hear, hear)—and let me add, that these circumstances and their necessary effect, have not had their due weight allowed to them in the appreciation of the motives and spirit which have actuated the Church. (Hear.) Let me ask, sir, how could it be otherwise than that a system, founded on

principles then so new, should have raised up against itself a determined opposition? How could it be expected that the various bodies of Protestants in this country should have taken any other view of that system, or assumed any other position than that of antagonism? or that the Established Church should not have been more determined and persistent in its opposition than any of the others? This, too, was a subject which enlisted the deepest feelings of which man is capable, and concerned the most momentous interest which he can contemplate. (Hear, hear.) That portion of the new system of education which created opposition was the system on which religious instruction was to be administered. An opposition on such a subject was sure to identify itself with the most sacred principles. And the longer the opposition lasted, the more sacred became its principles in the eyes of those whom it threw into a body organised for the purpose of carrying them out by every means which could enforce them on the public mind. There was in all this no faction—no obstinacy. It was the natural and necessary result of the circumstances of the time, acting on a body of men who were deeply impressed with the solemn importance of their duties and their deep responsibility for the due performance of them, and who were zealous for the honour of God's revealed will, which they supposed to be insulted, and for the salvation of the souls of men, which they believed to be imperilled. (Loud applause.) Doubtless there were from the first some who took more enlightened views; but it was not in the nature of things that these should be more than exceptions. I, therefore, sir, repel with indignation any imputation which may be cast on the honour of my church in consequence of her past conduct on this subject. (Applause.) On the contrary, there is much of which I am proud. I see in it devotion to high principle, zeal for the honour of God, and the salvation of man, a consistency in maintaining a principle which the gifts of power could not seduce, nor opposing difficulties turn from its path. (Loud applause.) I have said, sir, that such considerations may account for the opposition which the National System of Education has had to encounter, but cannot make us regret it the less. Alas! that all this zeal has been wasted in opposing a sound principle, and in counteracting the greatest boon which was ever conferred on the country. (Hear.) The resolution which I have the honour to propose, sir, declares that though

not averse to such reasonable modifications in the present rules and practice of National Education, as without impairing its efficiency, would facilitate the extension of its benefits to schools at present deprived of them, we yet pledge ourselves to oppose any attempt to subvert the fundamental principles of the National System; and I declare, for my own part, that my principal object in taking a part in this day's proceedings was, that I might have an opportunity of stating my full and entire approval of those principles, and giving my reasons for that approval. For, though it may be a matter of the most perfect indifference, what opinion a private individual may form on this subject, I cannot endure to hear this system represented as bad in itself, but accepted as the best that can be obtained, or denounced as essentially immoral and irreligious—(hear, hear)—defiling all who connect themselves with it—without declaring, when the opportunity offers, and, to the best of my ability, proving that it is, in the words of our bishop, the “good and righteous system,” and that its fundamental principles are the very foundation of toleration and freedom. (Applause.) Now, sir, the fundamental principles of the National System of Education are two-fold—regulating the mode in which we must deal with the child, and the mode in which we must deal with the parent. In reference to the former, it requires that, in the matter of religious instruction, we approach the child through the parent; and, in reference to the latter, it requires that we so far respect the conscientious scruples of the parent, that these shall not debar his child from sharing all the benefits of the moral and literary education given in the school. (Hear.) May I trespass for a short time on the attention of this meeting while I give my reasons for regarding these as the only right principles on which education can be conducted, and for calling on all here to pledge themselves to their maintenance. (Hear.) The first principle is that of the inviolable right of the parent to control and direct the entire education of the child—a principle which is written on every parent's heart, and which, in his own case, every parent would maintain as his inviolable right, conferred on him by that Being who gave to him his child. (Applause.) But, it is asked, are there no limits to this right? If a parent trains his child to vice and crime, should not his authority then be interfered with, and do not such cases prove that his

rights are limited? No doubt there are such limits, but to discover them it is necessary to consider on what the right is founded, and to deduce from thence the cases in which it can not be supported. Now, sir, I submit that parental authority rests on this foundation—that for the child there is no other authority—no duty but what arises from that authority. (Applause.) If, therefore, that authority be overthrown, the child is released from law, has no sense of obligation, hears no call of duty. No doubt the natural good and ill consequences of his actions, eliciting and forming the principle of prudence, and combining with casual affections which would spring up in his heart, would give an irregular education to his conscience; but the great elements of subordination, of self-control in obedience to recognised authority—of reward and punishment, as not only the natural but also the just consequences of conduct—the sense of conduct which this implies, as of good and ill desert. Where are these to be learned by the child? No where, except in the family ruled by the parents. In that little community are the virtues taught in their first principles, which are necessary for happy social intercourse, for peaceful and prosperous civil union, for that larger and more glorious society which, after having existed here in a rudimentary condition, shall hereafter exhibit the perfect development of Divine law and order throughout an eternal history. In that domestic circle, however humble it may be, the influences work which form the germs of all that is excellent in our nature. There the child transferred from the tender care of the mother to the more austere rule of the father, learns obedience, mingled with love. Under that lowly roof the sister elicits from him generosity and protection, the brother requires the recognition of equal rights and mutual forbearance, the happy associations of childhood form the love of home, and these principles expand as his mind grows, and as the circle which includes them widens. They become patriotism, charity, justice; and though the relations of mature life contribute important elements, the highest forms of duty are impressed with the domestic character. (Applause.) No principles of morality can be imagined more comprehensive and penetrating than the heartfelt recognition of God as our father, and of man as our brother. Thus the family is the appointed organ by which the moral sentiments are educated and conscience formed,

and if the independence of that little state be violated—if the parent, who is its ruler, be dethroned, and the authority of his will, which is its law, be abrogated—its subjects are released from all law and from all order, the formation of conscience is arrested, the sense of obligation is weakened, the formation of the moral sentiment is disturbed, and the child, so far as we can do it, is made an outlaw, and deprived of the sense of duty. (Loud applause.) It is on these facts which the Author of Man has involved in the constitution of human society that the authority of the parent is founded. What, then, are the limits of that authority? what the cases in which it is right that it should be set aside? I answer, they are only such cases of its perversion, as plainly tend to make the child an outlaw, and obliterate its sense of right and wrong. But, I ask, is the exercise of parental authority, to which the National System of Education requires us to submit, a case of this kind. I will be told that it is; that no more extreme perversion of it can be imagined than that in which the parent directly puts himself in opposition to the Divine will, and forbids his child to read that Book which it is the will of God that he should read. Now, this is a subject which demands a careful and reverential consideration. And that we may not err in our judgment of the parent's conduct, but judge fairly whether this be such a perversion of his rights as I have mentioned, we must analyze what there is in it which we, as Protestants, consider to be wrong. Does he, then, teach his child to oppose it—the will of God? No, on the contrary, he believes that he is obeying God's will; and, acting under that belief, his injunction is to the child an example of obedience. His reason for that injunction may be analyzed into a syllogism. "It is my duty," he argues, "to obey God's will, but it is God's will that my child should not read the authorised version of the Bible, and that I should forbid him to do so; therefore, it is my duty to lay that injunction on him." I do not mean that this argument is formed in the Roman Catholic parent's mind, though for distinctness I have thus analyzed his sentiment; but I maintain that so far as he has an objection it is a religious objection, and that a religious objection means an objection founded on a supposed religious duty, and that a religious duty implies a supposed ordinance of God, and recognizes our duty to obey it as such. What we then regard as wrong in the Roman Catholic parent's restric-

tion to his child resolves itself into an erroneous belief as to what the Divine will is. But does an erroneous belief furnish a ground for setting at nought parental authority? No for there is no assumption of a wrong moral principle which would tend to pervert or obliterate conscience, or annul obligation. But now, sir, let me ask what could be gained by attempting to abrogate the authority of this the only ruler who rules by Divine right? What would be the value of the Scripture lessons given under such circumstances? So far as there was a violation of parental authority, Scriptural instruction would lose its value. It is to our moral sentiments that God in His Word continually appeals. To what else, indeed, could an appeal be made in reference to conduct and duty but to the moral sentiments, and to the affections which give them their motive power. (Hear.) But so far as parental authority is set at nought, the sense of duty is contradicted and filial love is chilled, that affection which it is the object of Scripture to direct to God. With one hand we would cut down what with the other hand we sought to train. We would sound in the ear, indeed, the voice of God but we would, at the same time, so deaden the heart that there would be no echo within. (Hear, hear.) We would address the moral nature, and, at the same time so disturb moral ideas, that it could not respond. No doubt there is a time when the child grows into the youth, and when advancing maturity begins to release him from entire subjection to his parents; but observe how gradual this is. There is no rude shock given to the dignity of that power which he has hitherto obeyed, and we cannot venture an assailing it without incurring the guilt and producing the disastrous effects which must be connected with a presumptuous and irreverent violation of one of the most fundamental ordinances of the Author of Nature. Nay, I may add further, sir, that like all such fundamental ordinances on which society rests, this is put out of our reach, and cannot disturb it even if we wished to do so. The influence of the parent is so natural and so constant that the influence of the school cannot counteract it. The lessons communicated in the school in opposition to the parent's authority would be lost in the continual example of the opposite principles which prevail at home, and the reading of a chapter, though performed every day, would have little effect, except to confirm the habit of disobedience, and,

by producing a conflict of authorities, weaken the influence of both. But why make this recognition of parental authority an objection to the National System of Education, when in this country, at least, we are obliged by law to recognise that authority? We cannot enter the poor man's house and bring his child by force to our schools; and if, therefore, we wish that child to read the Scriptures, though the parent disapproves, the only way in which this object can be effected is by obliging the child to do so without the parent's knowledge. I will not ask this meeting whether such conduct would be worthy of Christians or of the Word of God; for every one who has imbibed the spirit of Christianity and the teaching of that Word knows that what is clandestine and surreptitious belongs to those who hate the light, because their deeds are evil. (Hear.) If, then, we cannot violate parental authority if we would, and if we ought not to do so though we could, why not accept the recognition of it as a natural duty, and acknowledge that, in requiring that it should be respected, the National System of Education has made its fundamental principles identical with those which lie at the foundation of society itself? (Hear, hear.) It will, however, be replied, sir, that no one would attempt thus surreptitiously to evade the influence of the parent's will; but that, if the parent will not adopt our view of his duty, we should not impart to his child that moral and literary education which we give to others. That even though the parent has a right which we cannot dispute, to direct and control the spiritual education of his child, we also have our rights and our duties—our rights to give instruction to whom we will, and our duties which call on us not to be partakers with other men's sins. (Hear.) Now, I say, sir, that we have no right to withhold a benefit which is in our power to bestow, unless the bestowal of it would involve some such ulterior sin; and, still more, is it a duty incumbent on the State to provide that its benefits shall be shared by all without distinction. It would, therefore, be a violation of duty on our part to withhold general education, and still more so on the part of the State to permit us to do so while it furnished funds for the purpose, unless some other rule of conscience obliged us to do it. In the present case it is alleged that there is such a conscientious principle which forbids us from imparting general without Scriptural instruction, be-

cause, in separating them in compliance with the parent's objection to the latter, we would sanction that objection, and so become partners in his sin; but, let me ask, is the Roman Catholic parent guilty of a wrong act in making that objection? On the contrary, I maintain that it is we who would be guilty of what is wrong in refusing to respect it. I need only allude to what I have already said as to the nature of a Roman Catholic parent's objection to his child reading the Scriptures in our schools. It is an objection which forms part of his religion, and which, therefore, he believes to be in accordance with the will of God, which he acknowledges it is his duty to obey. And though it is said that the parent himself has no such objection, but that he is influenced in this matter only by his religious teachers, I ask how is it that his religious guides have this influence with him? Plainly, because—and only because—it is part of his religion; or, in other words, what he believes to be the will of God, that he should obey their direction. Doubtless his feelings and his conduct may on this subject be inconsistent and uncertain, but which of us are influenced constantly and uniformly by our religious principles? So far as he has an objection to his child reading the Scriptures in our schools, that objection is part of his religion, whether it comes in the form of a general rule of religious duty in reference to this act, or a general rule of religious duty in reference to the obedience to be yielded to the priests of his church. If, then, it be grounded on a belief that, as a matter of fact, it is not God's will that he should permit his child to receive Scriptural instruction from us, what is his duty while that belief remains? I maintain, sir, that while that is his belief, his duty is to withhold the permission. And, in support of that assertion, I argue that all duty refers to perceived relations. I will illustrate what I mean by an example. Suppose that a child separated from his parents in childhood, grows up without having any intercourse with them, but after the lapse of many years meets his father in a foreign land and does not know him.—Would that youth owe filial duties to that man before he came to the knowledge that he was his father? No; we could not accuse him of violating parental authority, if he neglected to comply with that man's wishes, so long as he was ignorant that that man was his father: and for this reason that duty refers to perceived relations. (Hear,

hear.) Suppose that a youth discovers a letter written in his father's handwriting, and bearing his father's signature, but with no address on it, or any evidence that that letter was addressed to him, even though it was to him that it had been addressed, he would be guilty of no violation of filial duty in neglecting the injunctions which it might contain, so long as he did not believe that they had been intended for him. If he heard, by oral report, from one whom he took as his guide in the gravest business of his life, and whom he trusted in this way because he believed him to be his father's friend, that such and such were the wishes of his father, and that he believed most fully that report, even though it were false, it would be filial duty to yield obedience to it: and for this same reason that his full belief would put him in a relation to his father such as filial duty refers to. (Applause.) Now, I contend, sir, that for precisely the same reason, while the Roman Catholic believes it to be required by his religion that he should not permit his child to receive Scriptural instruction in our schools, he could not grant that permission without doing that of which he believes that God disapproves, and therefore it is his duty to withhold it. If it be otherwise—if religious duty exists before the authority on which it rests is admitted, which must be the principle of those who hold that the Roman Catholic parent violates his duty to God—let me ask, when do the duties peculiar to Christianity become binding in a heathen land, where it is introduced for the first time? If it be before the truth of Christianity is recognised, I think it could hardly be considered unjust to compel obedience to it by force. It is from the first the duty of all to apply carefully to each case the moral principles which they have, and if this be done negligently, and with an indifference as to whether they are right or wrong in the conclusions they come to, they are guilty. Let us, therefore, appeal to the Roman Catholic to consider well the view which he takes of the Divine will. Let us seek by every means in our power to deliver him from his error with respect to it; but in those efforts let no attempt be made to induce him to transgress what he believes that Will to ordain. (Applause.) I will say no more, sir, but to put to every fair man the question—would the Roman Catholic parent do a right act in allowing his child to do what he believed to be contrary to the will of God? This

could be done only to secure some temporal advantage, whether that was secular instruction or something else, and, if so, it would be the triumph of worldly prudence over conscience and religion. Now, sir, I maintain that he who induces a man to do that which is wrong, is himself a partaker in that man's guilt, and that the fundamental principle of the National Board, which requires that no disadvantage shall be suffered by any in consequence of conscientious views of religious duty, is the only principle on which we can abstain from soliciting to the breach of duty by the seduction of worldly interest. Let us, then, seek to include all in the good work of educating the active minds around us, and directing to good those impulsive natures which are so easily perverted to what is bad. Let us go as far as we can in seeking such modifications as may induce those to join us who still stand aloof. But I call on this meeting to pledge itself to maintain intact the fundamental principles of the present National System of Education. (Loud applause.)

The Rev. Dr. DENHAM rose and said—Mr. Mayor, it is with pleasure I second the resolution moved with singular clearness and power by Mr. Byrne. I feel, in doing so, that there rests on me a great responsibility, inasmuch as this is the most influential meeting I ever saw assembled in this Hall. The subject under discussion is one of the gravest importance, as regards our individual duty and the best interests of our country; and when I look over this room, and see so many of our rich and intelligent merchants, so many of the landed proprietors of the surrounding country, and such a number of the clergy of the Establishment and of other Protestant denominations, I feel that in addressing each man here I am addressing the representative of large masses—that each man here is a multitude. (Hear, hear.) In stating my opinion as to systems of education, I do not hesitate to express my conviction, that where the Bible is excluded, the training must be imperfect and defective. (Hear.) But, when I contemplate the Government as ruling over a mixed population, some of whom refuse to receive or use the Word of God, but from whom, as from others, the funds for education are raised, I ask myself what should the Government do in these circumstances? My reason tells me that as they rule *for* all, and receive the funds *from* all, so they are bound to do the best that is possible *for* all. (Hear, hear.) If all will not receive

the Bible, then I hold they should give the best secular and scientific education to such; for all truth is good—all light is valuable, tending to expand the intellect, and elevate the masses. (Hear, hear.) Surely the state of a nation civilized, though not Christian, is greatly preferable to that of mere savage tribes. The state of France is better than that of Turkey, and that of Turkey is better than the Bushmen of Africa. But if any assert our Government should not give a good secular education unless the Bible be received along with it, what is that but asserting that they should, under these circumstances, just allow the millions of our poor countrymen to remain in hopeless ignorance and barbarism? (Hear, hear.) It may be asked, should they not compel the children to read God's Word? I answer, never. Reason and revelation, with equal distinctness, reply in the negative. On the parent, as we have just heard most eloquently and clearly demonstrated, rests the responsibility of saying what his child shall learn, and what he shall not learn. God has commanded the parent to teach, and the child to obey his parent; and who, I ask, shall presume—shall dare to step in between, and say to the child, you should not obey your parent, but must obey me? Neither government nor patron may dare to do so. (Hear.) The mover of this resolution has been asked—"Are there not cases where, if a parent order a child to commit crime, the Government should interfere to prevent the child obeying, and to punish the parent?" Yes, the parent, in case of such complicity, should be punished. We admit that. What follows? Why, if the illustration or the argument be worth anything, or have any meaning, it goes this length—that, as it is wrong in a parent to forbid his child to read the Word of God, he should be prevented and punished for so doing. (Hear, hear.) In other words, we are by this landed back into those ages when liberty of conscience was denied, and persecution did her dreadful work. (Hear, hear.) See how, if we Protestants were in Spain, this principle would authorize those in power to throw us into the dungeons of the Inquisition, and keep us there till the loud and indignant shout of British freemen would compel our liberation. (Hear, hear.) Ah, our friends say, "we would not persecute—we would only refuse to admit the children to the school who would not read the Bible." I ask is that no punishment on the poor child and on the parent? To doom his family to utter ignorance, and

to forbid all hope of their being fitted to rise in the social scale, is, I conceive, one of the heaviest sentences which could be inflicted on any man—it is one of the severest forms of penal suffering. When some would not receive Christ nor His teaching, His disciples asked leave to call down fire on them; but He at once rebuked them and said, “Ye know not what spirit ye are of.” I think we should learn of the Great Master, and, in following His example, maintain the fundamental principles of parental responsibility and of non-compulsion in matters of conscience, ever maintaining that God alone is Lord of the conscience. (Hear, hear.) But, while we maintain these grand fundamental principles, we are not averse to any modifications of the system or its arrangements which can be shewn to be reasonable, nor do I think it at all unlikely the Government would grant such. To the Presbyterian Church, with which I have the honour to be connected, the Government did make concessions which we deemed important, and if any other modifications can be proved reasonable, or such as would satisfy or remove difficulties from the minds of conscientious men, I believe the Government is prepared to grant them. In the year 1833 the Presbyterian Church laid four propositions before the Government, by which we believed the rights of parents were guarded, and the liberty of children to read the Scriptures daily in the schools was fully maintained. In the opinion that these would secure all we could reasonably ask, we were confirmed by our deputation, when in London, submitting them for consideration to the Archbishop of Armagh, the Bishop of Exeter, and the Bishop of London. Their answer, after deliberation, was returned by the Primate, in writing, in these words—“That they highly approved of them (the propositions), and that should the deputation succeed in obtaining such a modification of the National System as was contained in these propositions, no Protestant could reasonably object to it.” (Hear, hear.) Such was the decided and favourable opinion given by those venerable Prelates. The Government at once acceded to these four propositions; but while a very large number of the members of our Synod believed the Board of Commissioners had also acceded, a small majority held the Commissioners had not done so, and the result was, that for a few years the Presbyterian Church stood apart from the National System of Education, and supported her own schools by voluntary

contributions. In 1840 it was intimated to us that the Board would be anxious to have an amicable arrangement with the Synod. Accordingly, a deputation waited on the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin, to whom he at once announced that the former objectionable query sheet and rules had been withdrawn. I read from the printed minutes of the Presbyterian Church as follows:—"A conversation was held respecting the modified rules of the Board. The deputation inquired whether these rules were to be considered as still binding on their committees and schools, and were informed *that the only rules considered binding would be their own* when approved by the Board. A form of application was drawn up by the deputation, which was at once granted, and an official copy of it returned to serve as a *model* application for all our schools." A large number of our schools became immediately connected with the Board, and I shall read a sentence or two from the resolutions of the General Assembly in 1841:—

"This Assembly, after a year's experience and observation, do unanimously express their full approbation of the arrangement under which Government endowment can now be obtained for Presbyterian schools through the National Board. Under that arrangement they are enabled to conduct their schools on precisely the plan of the late General Synod of Ulster's schools, which plan met approbation in all quarters; was spoken of as a model worthy of imitation in one of the houses of parliament; was admitted by the most eminent fathers of the Church of Scotland not merely to embrace the excellencies of her parochial system of Scriptural education, but also to contain some valuable improvements, and which, so long as it was unendowed by Government, met the most unqualified approbation of the whole Protestant community. The arrangement directly provides that the Bible shall be read as *much* and as *frequently* in school as the parents of the children, by a committee appointed by themselves, shall direct, with no other limitation than that said reading shall not supersede or impede the scientific and literary business of the school; and should said reading be less frequent or less in amount than it ought to be, it will manifestly be the fault of the parents and no consequence of the arrangement."

In point of fact, by the ordinary rules of the Board, religious instruction may now be given three times every day; and supposing the school to open at nine o'clock, and close at three, there may be half-an-hour after the school opens, half-an-hour in the middle of the day, and a whole hour before the school closes, spent in reading the Bible, if the patron and the parents so direct. Surely this is sufficient, and much more than is usually spent in any school, whether public or private, in religious exercises. (Hear, hear.) Of course *the times* for reading the Bible must be fixed—there must be *order* in the business of the school. We would not permit a servant to say, "you cannot have breakfast at the usual hour, for I

wish just at that time to read a chapter of my Bible." We would not permit a man to say at the time of prayer in our churches, "stop and read a chapter;" and should any one presume to do so in an Episcopal Church, he would be liable to an action and a severe penalty for "*brawling*," and so in school there must be a time fixed for this as for every other duty. (Hear, hear.) But who shall fix it—the child or the teacher? We think it should be the patron or the managing committee of the school. It is so in all our Presbyterian schools. Thus, without any compulsion or persecution on the one hand, we have perfect freedom on the other. (Applause.) In my schools I am neither required to give false religious instruction myself, nor to permit it, nor make any provision for its being given by others. Whilst I would not compel any child to remain who is desired by its parent to leave; yet be it distinctly remembered, I am not, and the teacher is not, required to exclude or put out of the school any child who chooses to continue during the reading of the Bible. (Hear.) Some conscientious men are, I believe, afraid to join the Board, under the idea that by doing so they would be giving their sanction and approval to all the regulations and principles of the Board. Now, without arguing the question as to whether these are all perfect, and what we would desire, I beg to say that I am not required, nor held to approve of all the arrangements of the Board, in virtue of my taking aid from it, any more than I am required to approve of all the arrangements of a railway company, because I use their carriages; or all the arrangements of a jail or lunatic asylum, because I receive pay, and teach Presbyterian prisoners or patients in them. (Applause.) Such modifications have been made by the Board as require from me and from my brethren no compromise of my Protestant principles, or my Christian liberty. (Hear, hear.) Others may desire some farther changes, and if they be only reasonable modifications, and such as will not trench on fundamental principles, I doubt not they will be granted; and, in conclusion, I beg to say that I rejoice in the prospect of soon seeing so many influential friends join the Board, that the Government shall be encouraged to resist all unreasonable and Ultramontane demands, and that our beloved country will be elevated and blessed by a united, liberal, and extended education. (Loud applause.)

Carried unanimously.

The Rev. J. A. CANNING, Coleraine, moved the fourth resolution—"That as much misapprehension exists respecting the principles and operation of the National System, and as to the evils of some of the changes which have been proposed, it is important that correct information upon these subjects should be diffused by occasional papers, public meetings, deputations, and whatever other means circumstances may render necessary." He said—Mr. Mayor, I have seldom in my life taken part in any public meeting with more real pleasure than I experience to-day. I feel that great interests are at stake in connection with the object of our meeting—interests which extend to generations unborn, and which are inseparable from the real prosperity of our country; and when I look upon the meeting and see the elements of which it is composed, and the classes which these elements represent, I cannot but rejoice that such a meeting should be held at such a juncture, and in the city of Derry. (Hear, hear.) The resolution which I have the honour of proposing, alludes to the ignorance and misapprehension which prevail in many quarters respecting the constitution and practical working of the National System of Education. My impression, sir, is, that the amount of ignorance and misapprehension on this matter is greater than many imagine. For myself, I must say that I have often met with an amount of ignorance respecting the working of the National System which not only astonished me, but which sometimes forced me to conclude that, to a large extent, the ignorance was voluntary, and, therefore, reprehensible. (Hear, hear.) My firm conviction, therefore, is, that just in proportion as all classes in the community shall become acquainted with the sound principles on which the National System of Education is based—principles which are essentially involved in all correct views of the rights of conscience, and of religious toleration—in the same ratio will the system be adopted and supported. (Hear, hear.) If whilst, therefore, in one point of view, I might be disposed to lament the necessity which exists for the formation of such an association as we are assembled to-day to organize, yet, in another point of view, I rejoice that our combination has been forced upon us by the arrogant demands of an ecclesiastical system which has been so often referred to to-day—demands which I sincerely trust will go far to

open the eyes of many in this land, who appear to have learned but little of the true character of that system from the history of the past. I rejoice, sir, that such an arrogant demand has been made; for I am convinced that it will demonstrate to all who are open to conviction, that no amount of concessions to this system, short of the complete surrender of the last shred of liberty and all the rights of conscience, will satiate its arrogance, or put a stop to its clamours for place and power. (Hear.) I look upon this last demand of Ultramontanism as one of the most stupid, as well as one of the most arrogant, it has ever made. It has fairly "let the cat out of the bag." (Loud laughter.) They must be very blind indeed who will not now see, that when the material wealth and the moral liberties, and the souls and consciences of the people, are all put under the complete and unquestioned control of that system, then, but not before, will it cease to cry give! give! My consolation in regard to this last demand of the Ultramontane party is, that the old adage is about to be verified respecting that party—"quam Deus vult puerire prius demontat." The formation of this association shows that its demands will be met with the scorn and determined opposition which they merit; and the rebukes which the party has received from those who are their own co-religionists will either teach them to moderate their arrogance, or irritate that arrogance until its yoke shall become so intolerable as to force all who would not sacrifice all the dignity and all the rights of our common humanity to unite in flinging it off for ever. (Applause.) Much has been said to-day, sir, respecting the religious teaching and training of the young, and of the relation in which a parent stands to his child in connexion with that teaching. With all the principles which have been advanced on this point, I most heartily concur. I may be permitted to say that very seldom in my life have I listened to a more able, masterly, and vivid exposition of the relative duties of parent and child in connection with this matter of religious teaching, than that which has just been adduced by the rev. gentleman who moved the third resolution. I confess that, for myself, I place far less stress upon the teaching of religion in schools than very many do. I believe upon this point some of my friends are disposed to regard me as hardly orthodox; yet I do not hesitate to say that *home* education, as to its duties and its

value does not, either in theory or in practice, occupy that place in modern educational arrangements which the God of Nature and the God of Education has assigned to it. (Hear, hear.) Hence it is that I look upon Sabbath-schools as indicating not the most healthy and perfect condition of the church, but rather as a necessary attempt to supply a defect. Upon parents God has laid the duty of teaching children the things which belong to their eternal peace; and is there not infinite wisdom displayed in laying the duty upon them? The only form in which God has been pleased to give the command would seem to imply this—The parent is to teach the child God's law, walking by the way, sitting in the house, lying down and rising up; that is, obviously, because a parent only mingles with children in all scenes where the affections of the heart are called forth, and because the parent alone is ever by the side of the child; therefore he alone can effectually teach and train up a child in the way in which he should go. (Hear.) I confess, therefore, sir, I am not a particular admirer of the system which is becoming every day more prevalent in this country, of incessantly pouring out our households into public meetings, to learn everything in masses, and to be enlightened three evenings in the week by resident philosophy and itinerant philosophy, whilst home influence and home education is almost completely jostled out of the commanding and all-important position which God has been pleased to assign to it. I think home is the place for religious instruction, and a parent the proper party to convey it. Whilst I say this I do not forget that under the National System of Education a greater amount of Scriptural knowledge is conveyed to the rising generation than ever was conveyed to the young in this country before. (Hear, hear.) I say this from my own knowledge and experience. Talk of reading Scripture in ordinary schools! Why, sir, I received a considerable part of the education of my boyhood at a school where every teacher was at perfect liberty to conduct matters as he thought right, and in that school I never heard a prayer offered up, and I never was asked to read God's Word, save and except when the Greek Testament was put into my hands as an ordinary school book. But I dare not trespass at this hour of the day upon the time and patience of this meeting. I again say, sir, I very heartily rejoice at the prospect which this meeting opens up to me and many other

friends of National Education. (Hear, hear.) I have for years deeply lamented the division which on this subject has existed among men who esteem and love each other, and I hail with delight the prospect now opened of enabling us to meet together again, relieved from this source of irritation and division. I never did regard the opposition given to the National Board by our friends of the Church Education Society as factious; I believe most sincerely they were thoroughly conscientious in that opposition. I am quite sure they are also prepared to admit that we were equally conscientious in the support which we gave to the system; and now both parties have but one path to pursue and one duty to perform—viz., to labour to make a system which is now a national institution the source of rich blessings to this land. The rev. gentleman resumed his seat amid loud applause.

ROBERT M'CREA, Esq., Grange, seconded the resolution, and said—As the meeting was rather protracted, he would not take up their time in making a speech. He bore unqualified testimony to the excellence of the National System of Education, the admirable workings of which he had been acquainted with for a period of thirty years.

Carried unanimously.

Rev. Dr. WILLOCK proposed the next resolution. He said—Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is not my intention at this late hour to detain the meeting with a long speech. I shall, therefore, confine myself to moving the next resolution, and making a few observations on some matters which appear to me to be of importance. The resolution which I move is—“That the Ulster National Education Association having been organized for the purpose of upholding the fundamental principles of the National System, and diffusing the information referred to in the foregoing resolution, is deserving of our support—and that a Branch Association in connexion with it be hereby established for this city and the adjoining districts.” It is scarcely necessary for me to say much in order to recommend this resolution to the meeting. I shall only give one reason why it should be adopted—namely, that if it be true, as the Lord Primate has stated, and I firmly believe it to be true, that “the National System is to be maintained as the only safeguard against the demands of the Ultramontane party,” then it is desirable that there should be a branch of that association, whose object is to up-

hold the National System in every city and town in Ireland; and, therefore, one in this ancient and renowned city. I heartily rejoice, sir, in the tone of this meeting, and in the manner in which the right hand of fellowship has been held out by the several speakers to those of our brethren who have heretofore kept themselves aloof from the National System. I hope that the recommendations contained in the Primate's letter will be generally adopted, and honestly carried out. As to that part of the letter in which he advises that whenever Church Education schools can be maintained in efficiency, they be retained under the Church Education Society; to that I for one, and I am sure the majority of this meeting, will not object. If any of the clergy find it more in accordance with their feelings to have schools independent of aid from the Commissioners of National Education, and if these schools are thoroughly efficient, they will answer all the purposes of education in their respective localities; and I do not see how we can object. The tax-payers, I am sure, will not. There is one danger, however, to be apprehended—many schools may pass muster which will not fully satisfy the conditions of being thoroughly efficient schools. Now, I would like to submit to this meeting what I conceive to be the conditions as regards secular education—I say secular education—which must be fulfilled before a clergyman can feel justified in depriving his parishioners of the advantages of the National System. (Hear, hear.) I shall take no high Utopian standard; the conditions will be moderate enough. I lay it down as a first principle, that the schools which he maintains for his parishioners must be as good as those National Schools could have been of which he deprives them. This, I think, is a self-evident principle. It is but justice, and with anything less the people would have a right not to be contented. My second principle is, that female education must be efficiently provided for, as well as education for boys. On this female education I could say a great deal, and I am sure that, even if I made a long speech, the better half of this audience would bear with me. (Cheers.) Female education has heretofore been too much neglected. In my own parish, for instance, (and I know the same is the case very generally elsewhere,) twenty-one miles long, and full of Fermanagh Protestants, there has been for the last thirty years, since the days of the Kildare Place Society, no female schools,

except two under Roman Catholic teachers, in connection with the National System. The consequences are manifest among the country girls, as they themselves acknowledge and deplore. I remember hearing a story of a man, which is most instructive. He was seriously considering which of two girls he would marry. One was handsome and had three cows, and the other was plain, as they say, but had four cows. Paddy resolved to marry the plain girl with the four cows. And when one of his friends remonstrated with him, and said—"You fool, why don't you marry that fine-looking girl, that would be a comfort to you to be looking at." "Troth," he said, "I'll do no such thing; there's not a cow's differ betwixt any two women that I know." (Laughter.) I suppose Paddy did not include the "quollity" in this opinion, but spoke only of the girls of his own rank with whom he was acquainted. I think, myself, that he is not always so unsusceptible of the charms of female beauty; and I am, therefore, sure this man must have been an old bachelor. (Loud laughter.) But the story is instructive, because it shows that as long as our country girls are not properly educated and their mental and moral capabilities duly brought forth by culture, there will be nothing to determine a country boy in the choice of a wife, but the amount of her fortune or a pretty face. I hear people complain a great deal of servants and that they are the plague of one's life. I never hear these complaints that I do not feel inclined to say—"You are served right." If, instead of squabbling and talking about education, you had interested yourselves more in the education of these servants, when they were children, you would have had better materials for making servants of now, and probably, in proportion, better servants too. (Hear, hear.) I am not so silly as to look on education as a panacea for all evils; but I have no doubt of this, that if we give our own country girls a better education; teach them things which may be useful to them in after life; cultivate their intelligence; refine their tastes a little, and impart to them good moral and religious principles, we will confer a great benefit not only on them but also on ourselves, and that the beneficial effects would be visible in even our own domestic arrangements. (Hear, hear.) For these reasons, sir, I consider that the second principle to be laid down is, that female education be provided for as well as that of males. Now, let me

ask, what annual amount will it take to fulfil these two conditions? A master of a National school—second of the second rank, which does not represent a very high qualification—will get £24 from the National Board of Education as salary. He will expect in addition to this some local salary—let it be £10. This will make £34. Some may think this too high; very soon I believe it will be higher; for in the new era of education on which we are about to enter, you may be sure that there will be a demand for good schoolmasters, and local salaries will rise in proportion. To this £34 you must add the salary of a mistress. A mistress, second of the second class—low enough, indeed—will receive £20 salary from the Board, and she will at least expect £6 local salary. What, then, I would ask, is the total amount which will be required? Taking in everything, about £60; and this is the amount which a clergyman must, as a general rule, raise, if he deprives his parishioners of National schools, and wishes to give them other schools equally as good. If his schools are National, some £16 or £20 will be sufficient as local salaries, towards making up which he will, in a great many cases, if not all, have the clerk's salaries. But wherever schools can be privately thus supported—and I am sure there are many places in which they can—the Primate's advice will be honestly acted on, in retaining Church Education schools. But great care must be taken that injury be no longer inflicted on our Protestant people by giving them anything less than this—an efficient education. (Hear, hear.) I shall now briefly direct the attention of this meeting to the rules of religious instruction whereby the regimental schools in her Majesty's service are regulated. They are an index of the feelings of the country on this subject. A soldier entering the army does so with the full persuasion that no effort will be made to interfere with his religious faith, or with his rights as a parent; and these rules, as based on these convictions, are, therefore, not only an index of public opinion, but also of the express wish of her Majesty the Sovereign of these realms. I quote them here to show how completely they fall in with the rules of the National System:—

“RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

1. “The schoolmaster will open the school at nine A.M., with the Lord's Prayer, with or without the addition of one or more collects from the Book of Common Prayer, or with one of the forms of prayer which may be expressly authorised for this purpose.

2. "He will proceed to give a collective Bible lesson, or to read and explain a short passage of Holy Scripture, which may be taken from the authorised or the Douay version.

3. "The attendance of adults at this instruction will be entirely voluntary.

4. "The parents of children who are not of the same religious persuasion as the schoolmaster, will be at liberty to send such children to school at the hour for commencing general instruction—viz., 9.30 A.M., and not at the hour for opening school; so that there may be no impediments to the advantage of religious instruction being extended to such adults and children as are desirous of receiving it.

5. "The same principle is to apply to infant schools.

6. "On two days in each week, of which Saturday shall not be one, there will be an hour set apart for specific religious instruction under clerical direction, in which the participation of the schoolmaster is to be voluntary. At these hours, the officiating chaplains to the forces, the Roman Catholic clergy, and the ministers of any denomination belonging to places of worship to which the troops are marched on Sunday, will be at liberty to attend; and to form separate classes of adults or children of their own respective persuasions, on a general notice given previously to the commanding officer, who will direct in what places they shall assemble their respective classes.

7. "No secular instruction, whether literary or industrial, is to be carried on in the same room during its employment for the purpose of religious instruction."

In conclusion, sir, allow me to say that no man can rejoice more than I do at the prospect which is now afforded—as far as at least, as the Protestant Churches of this country are concerned—of a termination of this unfortunate thirty year civil war. I am sure that every member of this association rejoices at it. If the advice given in the Primate's letter honestly acted on, a portion of the work of this association will be done: and it will no longer, in even the slightest degree, stand out in opposition to the Church Education Society. Its work, however, is not complete. It may yet be called on to resist the efforts of Ultramontanism to have a Catholic University, sectarian intermediate schools, and separate systems of elementary education. The Primate has correctly described the National System as "introduced at first as a concession to Roman Catholics, but as now maintained in its integrity as a safeguard against the demands made by the Ultramontane party—demands which," he thinks, "if conceded, would prove injurious to the interests of education, religion, and liberty in this country." If this be so, and there can be no question of it, this association will be called on to supply from its continually increasing ranks the soldiers who are to man the ramparts and defend liberal united education from the attacks of this enemy. For this reason, sir, I feel pleasure in moving that a branch

be established here in this ancient and renowned city.—
(Applause.)

J. FERGUSON, Esq., Castleforward, seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Rev. ROBERT SEWELL proposed the next resolution. He said—Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I am not, in the strict sense of the word, a National Board man. If it be asked, then—“why take part at this meeting, and in the preliminary arrangements?” I answer, because, with all its faults, and it has faults, and I could prove it, and am glad to find some of the previous speakers agree with me in this, yet, with all its faults, I believe it has done much good. I am here because an attempt has been made to set aside the principles of United Education. “Give us a separate grant that we may do what we like with it,” say some. Now, I am not here to advocate the curtailing of a single legitimate privilege any section of the community enjoys. I love the principles of civil liberty—I love the principles of religious liberty—I claim them as my birthright, and that of every man living in this country. Before I would give up either, I would sacrifice everything else; and to interfere with its enjoyment by others I look upon as high treason. Perish the hand that would in any way endeavour to wrest this privilege from us! (Hear.) But, sir, this principle of civil and religious liberty may be abused. The demands of the Ultramontane party, as I believe, are opposed to civil liberty; they are not consistent with the interests of the community. (Hear.) There is injustice in the demand. They say—“Give us a certain sum to do what we like with.” From whence is this sum to come? Why, of course, out of our pockets—from the taxes of the country. (Hear.) This is as much as to say—“We want to teach Roman Catholicism in all its purity—we want to train up good subjects of the Pope in Ireland; just give us what we require, and you may do what you like with the rest.” Now, sir, I say—no, never! If this is Roman Catholic liberty, it is not civil liberty—it is not British liberty. I say I oppose this, because of its injustice; and I would feel equally called upon to oppose it if the demand came from any other denomination—whether Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, or Independent. (Hear, hear.) Indeed, I believe the doleful results could hardly be calculated on. Much as the community are divided now, it

would be a thousand times worse than—the next generation would have nothing almost in common. (Hear, hear.) History, science, philosophy, and, for aught we know, perchance arithmetic, would be served up not so as to be wholesome, but so as to meet the whim, or fancy, or interest of whatever ecclesiastical cook might be in charge. Our population would grow up as alien to each other as if they belonged to so many different nations. The very idea is preposterous, to say the least of it. But this denominational grant system can never be made without invading the domain of conscience. (Hear.) You may compel me to pay for this separate and sectarian education, and I may do so; but I feel, at the same time, that it is a grievance, and there will be no end to heartburnings and discontent. (Hear, hear.) I am, therefore, Mr. Chairman, very hearty in my union with you in this matter. The object we have in view is to sustain the principle of unsectarian teaching, which is the fundamental principles of the Board—(hear)—and my greatest objection to the system is that, in the working, I fear this principle has been departed from. I hold, sir, that National Education should be united and unsectarian. (Hear.) It can only be united as it is unsectarian—and non-sectarian as it is united. (Hear, hear.) Believing this, sir, I consider it right that we should form in Derry a branch of the Ulster Association, and, believing that the gentlemen named in the resolution hold these principles, and are disposed to support them, I have great pleasure in moving that the following persons, with power to add to their numbers, be the Committee for the ensuing year:—

Sir James Stewart, Bart., D.L., J.P. The Bishop of Derry.	Rev. W. S. Escott, Principal of Foyle College.
Sir Robert A. Ferguson, Bart., Lieutenant.	Rev. Robert G. Cather, A.M.
Bartholomew M'Corkell, Esq., Mayor of Derry.	Rev. Robert Sewell.
John Alexander, Esq., High-Sheriff.	William Haslett, Esq., J.P.
John Boyd, Esq., M.P., D.L., J.P.	Alexander Lindsay, Esq., J.P.
Rev. James M'Ivor, D.D., Ex- F.T.C.D.	Henry Darcus, Esq., J.P.
Rev. James Byrne, Ex-F.T.C.D.	Henry Wiggins, Esq., J.P.
Rev. William M'Clure, A.M.	William C. Gage, Esq., J.P.
Rev. James Denham, D.D.	Robert Ogilby, Esq., D.L., J.P.
Rev. William Edwards, Rector of Langfield.	Rev. R. O. Dixon, Ex-F.T.C.D.
J. T. Macky, Esq., High-Sheriff, Donegal.	William Campbell, Esq.
	Samuel Lyle, Esq., J.P.
	William Green, Esq., J.P.
	Rev. William Atkins, D.D., Ex- F.T.C.D.
	James Major, Esq., Q.C.

Acheson Lyle, Esq., J.P.
 Rev. James Crawford.
 Rev. George Vance.
 Rev. Thomas Meredith.
 Rev. Edward Bowen, Rector of
 Taughboyne.
 Rev. John Canning.
 Rev. R. Smyth.
 James Corscaden, Esq.
 William Huffington, Esq.

Robert Bond, Esq.
 Samuel Gilliland, Esq.
 Robert M'Crea, Esq.
 William Cather, Esq., J.P.
 William M'Arthur, Esq.
 Thomas Batt, Esq., J.P.
 Francis Ellis, Esq., J.P.
 Rev. James C. Bass.
 Rev. W. M. Major, A.M., Preben-
 dary of Moville.

(Five to form a Quorum.)

WILLIAM M'CLURE, }
 WILLIAM EDWARDS, } Hon. Secs.
 ALEXANDER LINDSAY, }

Treasurer—JAMES E. NESBITT.

The Rev. Dr. ATKINS, Ramelton, seconded the resolution. He spoke briefly in approbation of the National System, and contrasted its advantages with the evils of the old system. Speaking of the advantages of United Education led him to refer to the school at which he had himself received his early education. The school was situated in the south of Ireland, and the teacher had a room set apart in which Roman Catholics and Protestants received religious instruction from their clergymen on separate days of the week. This was in 1830, and consequently before the National Board was established. One of his schoolfellows there was Mr. Michael Joseph Barry, who has published such liberal and enlightened views on the state of Italy—(applause)—while one of his class-fellows was Mr. Rickard Deasy, who has just successfully contested Cork county against the Ultramontane party. (Loud applause.)

Carried unanimously.

The MAYOR having vacated the chair, and the Rev. EDWARD BOWEN having been called thereto,

The Rev. WILLIAM EDWARDS, Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, proposed that the best thanks of the meeting should be presented to the Mayor, for his kindness in presiding, and for his proper and dignified conduct in the chair.

The Rev. W. S. ESCOTT seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The MAYOR having acknowledged the compliment, the meeting separated at about four o'clock.

(From the Londonderry Standard of March 8th, 1860.)

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION.

INFLUENTIAL MEETING IN DERRY.

DURING the last quarter of a century, there has been in Derry no assemblage approaching in any degree to that of Tuesday, in point of collective influence, power, and social weight, every section of the Protestant community having its representatives in attendance, and the firmest unity, both of sentiment and of resolute action, universally prevailing in regard to the intact maintenance of the National System of Education, so far as its fundamental principles are concerned. For this restored harmony of Protestant co-operation in the cause of free education, the public may thank the Ultramontane arrogance which the Roman Catholic hierarchy have been so unwise as to assume, at the bidding of the Pope's apostolic delegate in Ireland—that is, if intended evil, providentially overruled for its own discomfiture, can be legitimately deemed an object of moral gratitude. The clergy and laity of the Established and Presbyterian Churches, the Wesleyan Methodists and Independents, and, in fact, as we have said, the Protestant public in every one of its leading sections, with hardly an exception, were there, either personally or as requisitionists; while it is satisfactory to know that a powerful array of the enlightened laity, and, possibly, also a goodly number of clergy belonging to the Roman Catholic community, were there, virtually in hearty sympathy with the national objects contemplated. The "Church Education" difficulty having now been happily removed, the foundation of a defensive unity amongst the friends of social progress has been firmly laid, and no Administration, be its downward tendencies what they may, can dare hereafter to tamper with any of the essential principles of the National System, be sectarian urgency ever so pressing on the one side, or political destitution ever so clamorous for parliamentary nourishment upon the other. The resolutions adopted had been judiciously prepared, and the speakers did admirable justice

to the specific topics committed to their elucidation. The Rev. Mr. M'Clure, Rev. Mr. Cather, Rev. James Byrne, Dr. Denham, Dr. Willock, and the Rev. Mr. Sewell, gave addresses, unsurpassed in their several departments. We have not space for detailed comment, especially when the speeches delivered possessed so uniform excellence; but we may be permitted to refer to Mr. Byrne's philosophical, acutely reasoned, and really admirable argument, on the Divine right of Parental Authority, its responsibilities, and its moral limits. This is a point which has not been hitherto investigated in proportion to its depth and importance; and the argument alluded to goes emphatically to the very root of the educational question.

(From the Daily Express, Tuesday, March 6th, 1860.)

THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

WITH regard to the National System, we thought there was a possibility that two Christians might differ upon it and still be able to regard one another as honest and conscientious. The Archbishop of Dublin has always held the conviction that the National System is sound in principle. The Bishop of Derry pronounces it to be "good and righteous." Most of the Bishops, and many of the clergy, take the same view. The Rev. Mr. Byrne, in a speech which will be found printed *in extenso*, with his own corrections, in our columns to-day, has defended its principle on the main point of parental rights, with a power which Mr. Kingston himself must admire. Whatever may be thought of the system, every candid reader must admit that this masterly speech presents one of the most beautiful and perfect examples of moral demonstration ever delivered before any public assembly. There is not a single defective link in the voluminous chain of argument—not a fallacy can lurk in the light which he shed around the subject. As a moral philosopher, as a divine, as a logician, as an orator, that splendid performance reflects the highest credit upon him and upon the Dublin University, of

which he was formerly a Fellow. In close reasoning, in rigid demonstration, combined with large and commanding views, it reminds us of the great speech of Sir Hugh Cairns on the Conspiracy Bill. Amidst so much that is confused, loose declamatory, and intemperate, it is refreshing and encouraging to read a speech of such power and eloquence, so pre-eminently distinguished by a philosophic spirit, a discriminating judgment, and by the moderation and dignity which become a clergyman. It is true that the principles which Mr. Byrne has expounded and vindicated are elementary principles of Protestantism and of civil and religious liberty—principles which belong to the intuitions of the human mind, recognised in Scripture as binding upon heathens as well as Christians, and familiar with all who are accustomed to philosophic investigations; but they have been so strangely forgotten in this controversy that Mr. Byrne deserves the thanks of the Church for placing them in a light so clear and convincing.

APPENDIX.

ULSTER

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION.

THE Ulster National Education Association has been established for the maintenance and extension of United Education in Ireland.

The members of the association believe that the National System of Education has conferred many and lasting benefits on this country, and that the improved condition of the people of Ireland is, in a great degree, owing to the wide diffusion of religious, moral, and intellectual instruction, through the instrumentality of this system.

They have viewed with apprehension and regret the strenuous opposition which has been given to this system by some influential sections of the community. This opposition has retarded the education of the country, has kept a considerable number of the poorer population from sharing the benefits of the public grant for education, has exposed to constant risk the system of education which is best suited to the circumstances of Ireland, and has seriously interfered with its legitimate development.

The members of this association believe that many persons have opposed the National System, or have refused to take advantage of it, from ignorance of its principles and rules, or from misapprehension with respect to the facilities which it affords for religious and secular instruction. They believe that the opposition could be most successfully met, the ignorance of its principles and rules most rapidly dis-

pelled, the misapprehensions most easily corrected, and the extension of united education most effectually promoted, by an association of those who appreciate its advantages, and seek to preserve and extend them.

The Ulster National Education Association has been founded on the broadest basis. It will admit as members persons of all classes and denominations, who approve of its fundamental principles. It will carry out its objects by public meetings, deputations, the publication of papers and tracts, and such other means as circumstances may render necessary.

Although this association does not profess to speak the sentiments of any friends of United Education not residing in Ulster, distinguished persons have joined it from other parts of Ireland, whose assistance is thankfully acknowledged.

The first annual meeting of this association was held in the Music Hall, Belfast, on Wednesday, 11th January, 1860, Major-General CHESNEY in the Chair.

The following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

Moved by the LORD BISHOP of DOWN; seconded by the MODERATOR of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY—

1. "That this meeting pledges itself to the principle, that under any system of State Education established in this country, no pupil shall be compelled to receive, or to be present at, any religious instruction of which his parents or guardians may disapprove."

Moved by JOHN G. PORTER, Esq., D.L.; seconded by Rev. Dr. M'COSE—

2. "That the systematic and openly avowed attacks which have been made on this principle suggest the expediency of making vigorous and united efforts to maintain it in its integrity."

Moved by Dr. WILLOCK, Ex-F.T.C.D.; seconded by the Rev. ROBERT WALLACE—

3. "That the existing system of National Education, supplying, as it does, the best secular instruction, and, at the same time, affording to all classes ample opportunities of giving instruction in religion to the utmost extent, compatible with the rights of conscience and religious liberty, is the best suited to Ireland."

Moved by the Rev. Dr. COOKE; seconded by ROBERT LINDSAY, Esq.—

4. "That this meeting considers it the paramount duty of the State to inspect all Schools receiving public aid, and that vigorous opposition should be given to every proposal to carry on the education of the country by separate grants, or by denominational inspection."

Moved by JAMES HAMILTON, Esq.; seconded by WILLIAM MULLAN, Esq.—

5. "That considering the great importance of upholding the fundamental principles of the National System, and looking to the numerous misapprehensions which exist upon the subject, this meeting hails with satisfaction the formation of the 'Ulster National Education Association,' the leading objects of which are to diffuse correct information, to watch the movements of those who seek to undermine the existing system, and to oppose to the utmost any infringement of the principle of united education."

Moved by the Rev. WILLIAM BRUCE; seconded by THOMAS SINCLAIR, Esq., J.P.—

6. "That the following persons, with power to add to their number, be the Committee for the ensuing year:—

Right Reverend Lord Bishop of Down.	Rev. William Johnston.
The Reverend Moderator of the General Assembly.	Rev. John Hall.
Sir Thomas Staples, Bart., Q.C.	Rev. Robert Wallace.
Major-General Chesney, F.R.S.	Rev. R. G. Cather, M.A.
J. F. Ferguson, Esq., D.L., J.P.	William Coates, Esq., J.P.
J. G. V. Porter, Esq., D.L., J.P.	S. G. Getty, Esq., J.P.
Rev. Henry Cooke, D.D., LL.D.	William Dunville, Esq., J.P.
Rev. James M'Cosh, LL.D.	Thomas M'Clure, Esq., J.P.
Rev. Dr. Willock, Ex-F.T.C.D.	Thomas Sinclair, Esq., J.P.
Rev. C. P. Reichel, D.D.	Edward Coey, Esq., J.P.
Charles G. Knox, Esq., LL.D.	J. W. Stronge, Esq., M.A., M.B.
Rev. Thomas Knox, M.A.	George O. Wilson, Esq., M.A.
Rev. Henry Murphy, M.A.	Dr. Lynn, Armagh.
Rev. William M'Clure.	Dr. Wyville Thomson.
Rev. William Bruce.	Robert Patterson, Esq., F.R.S.
Rev. G. C. Smythe, M.A.	Joseph J. Murphy, Esq.
Rev. A. T. Lee, M.A.	William Bottomley, Esq.
	Robert Lindsay, Esq.
	James Carlisle, Esq.

Treasurer—WILLIAM MULLAN, Esq., Victoria-street, Belfast.

Rev. WILLIAM ANDERSON, M.A. } Hon. Secs.,
JAMES HAMILTON, Esq. } Belfast."

PROSPECTUS AND LAWS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

PROSPECTUS.

This association has been organized in the present crisis of the Education question, for the purpose of upholding the principle, that, under any system of State-Education, no pupil shall be compelled to receive, or to be present at any religious instruction of which his parents or guardians disapprove.

The systematic and openly avowed attacks which have been made on this principle, have suggested the expediency of some organization among its supporters; and it has been felt that these attacks could most effectually be met by an association of those who approve of United Education, and appreciate its advantages.

Regarding the existing system of National Education as the best suited

to the circumstances of Ireland, and as calculated to supply to all classes the requirements of combined secular and separate religious instruction, the association desires to uphold it, in its fundamental principles, and to resist any concessions which would encroach on its non-sectarian basis, or have a tendency to introduce denominational grants.

Since there is much misapprehension in the minds of many as to the nature of the principles of the National System of Education, and as to the evils of proposed changes, it will be a leading object of the association to diffuse correct information on the subject by occasional papers, public meetings, deputations, and whatever other means circumstances may render necessary.

This association considers it the paramount duty of the State to inspect all schools receiving public aid, and will oppose every attempt to carry on the education of the country by separate Boards, or by denominational inspection.

LAWS.

I. This association shall be called "The Ulster National Education Association," and shall be managed by a Committee, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary.

II. Any person approving of the principles on which the association is formed, may become a member on the payment of an annual subscription of not less than ten shillings.

III. An annual meeting of the association shall be held, due notice being given thereof, at such time and place as the Committee shall appoint; and at this meeting the proceedings of the preceding year shall be reported, the accounts presented, and the Committee and other officers appointed.

IV. No rule of the association shall be repealed or altered, nor shall any new ones be made, except at the annual meeting, or at a special meeting called for that purpose.

V. The Committee shall consist of forty members, and shall hold its meetings at such stated times as they shall appoint, five to constitute a quorum.

VI. All orders for payment, on account of the association, shall be signed in Committee, by the Chairman and two other members thereof.