

**Day school education in the borough of Birmingham : our progress, position, and needs : a letter to George Dixon, Esq., mayor / by William Gover.**

**Contributors**

Gover, William.  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

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DAY SCHOOL EDUCATION 7  
IN  
THE BOROUGH OF BIRMINGHAM:

OUR PROGRESS, POSITION, AND NEEDS.

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A LETTER  
TO  
GEORGE DIXON, ESQ.,  
MAYOR,

BY THE  
REV. WILLIAM GOVER, M.A., F.G.S.,

*Principal of the Worcester, Lichfield, and Hereford  
Training College.*

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GEORGE DIXON, ESQ.,

*Mayor of Birmingham.*

DEAR SIR,

IN addressing to you the following remarks upon the state of Day School Education in Birmingham, and in venturing to suggest modes of action in order to make the means of instruction adequate to the necessities of the Borough, apology for so doing may be thought needful by the public.

If it be so, I hope sufficient warrant for my entering on the subject may be found in the coincidence that in 1846 it fell to my lot, as then Curate in charge of the populous district of St. Paul's, to join in movements for the extension of National Education in Birmingham through the aid of the Minutes of the Committee of Council of August, 1846; a second time, after that system had been expanding itself for ten years, to be allied with others in the Educational Enquiry of 1857; and now again, at the close of another decennial period, to have been asked by yourself, whilst you hold the highest office in the Borough, to state my views upon its present educational condition, prospects, and wants.

Not to revert to the House of Commons' Return in 1833, known as that of the Earl of Kerry, three Reports demand consideration in this enquiry. So far as the opportunities of a single individual allow, I shall endeavour to add a fourth brought down to the present time.

- (1) The first of the three Reports is that of the Statistical Society of Birmingham in 1838;
- (2) the second is the Report of Mr. Horace Mann on Education in the Census of 1851;
- (3) and the third is that of the Birmingham Education Society in 1857.

But before proceeding to extract statements from them, let me briefly lay down the limits within which the present investigation is confined: I shall afterwards notice some of the difficulties which lie in the way of instituting a comparison between the results of one enquiry and of another.

First then, no reference will be made to the numbers attending or the effect produced by Sunday Schools. And this from no underestimate of the work which they are performing. Manifold as are their short-comings and defects, the philanthropic educationalist must regard their efforts with at least sincere satisfaction, since they are so much added to more direct and organized methods of instruction: the Christian will rejoice from the heart whilst he reckons up that numerous host of teachers who, in the spirit of self-denial, consecrate the hours of the day of rest to this active service of the Church of Christ; he will be thankful for that direct influence for good which is brought to bear upon the taught by the personal character of the teacher; an influence which constitutes the real bond in these Schools; and from which spring their most valuable fruits. But we are now dealing with education as a subject, into which it is the duty of the State to enquire, and which it is as much the natural duty of the parent to supply as clothing and sustenance.

Neither is any account taken of education below the age of five. Whatever "destitution of means" the figures of an enquiry may indicate, to my own mind such figures prove nothing. Where mothers are at work in the factory, Infant Schools are a benevolent mode of undoing a part of the mischief caused by the demand for female labour; but where the mother is at home—to say no more where much more might be said—it is well neither for parent nor child that she should be relieved of duties, in which the voice and tendance of a mother, who (ignorant perhaps, yet) "is good to her little ones," are of higher moment than the most practised lessons on the gallery by the most skilled and admirable teacher.

Night Schools also are not without some reluctance excluded; partly because in the enquiries themselves, they are either not noticed or the information is vague and indefinite; partly because on account of the paucity of the scholars returned in them they can exert a power on the mass scarcely appreciable. They constitute,



in fact, the guerilla warfare against ignorance, capable of creating a diversion, but impotent to exercise a solid and permanent influence over the eventual fortunes of the campaign.\*

(1) First then, the Report of the Birmingham Statistical Society in 1838, with sedulous and patient labour, derived its information from 577 Day Schools in the Borough of Birmingham, leaving in the progress of the enquiry "not a street or court unexplored in search of Schools of every description." These Schools returned 14,480 scholars. Deducting from these 2,918 below the age of 5, and 218 above the age of 15; there remain 11,344 scholars between the ages of 5 and 15.

The total population of the Borough is estimated in the Report at 180,000; if so, 6.28 per cent. of that population was under education between the above ages.

A defect, unavoidable in a private enquiry, here meets us; what was the actual population between the ages of 5 and 15, and therefore what was the actual proportion of this number under education? We can only arrive at a result by comparison. The Census Tables of 1861 give the population of the Borough of Birmingham as 296,076, and the population between the ages of 5 and 15 as 65,438. The same proportion being fairly supposed to hold good, the number out of 180,000 between the ages of 5 and 15 would be 39,783; so that of this population the number under education, namely, 11,344, was 28.51 per cent., or rather more than  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

Here, however, graver defects in the Report of the Statistical Society meet us. There is no division of scholars into boys and girls nor any subdivision by ages, between 5 and 15. Yet the most sanguine educationalists cannot hope, the moderate do not wish, for the day school education of the working classes up to the age of 15. It is greatly to be regretted that the Return was not divided into the two quinquennial periods from 5 to 10 and from 10 to 15. The primary education of the common day school would fall within the first; the secondary education of the classes better off would be comprised in the second period.

Here, again, we must revert to the Census Tables and deduce an approximate result by comparison. The Census of 1861, as

\* *Vide* Note on Evening Schools, page 21.

quoted above, gives 65,438 as between 5 and 15, of whom 35,179 are between 5 and 10, and 30,259 between 10 and 15. In 1838, then, the numbers would be 21,387 between 5 and 10, and 18,396 between 10 and 15.

But now the Census Tables, both for 1851 and 1861, leave us at fault. Both give the number of scholars in each quinquennial period; but in the County of Warwick, inclusive of the Borough of Birmingham, and not in the Borough of Birmingham itself. The Education Census of 1851 further supplies the total number of scholars in the Borough of Birmingham, but without division of ages.

Using, however, the information respecting the County of Warwick in the Census of 1851, of the 11,344 scholars given in the enquiry of 1838, 7,385 may be taken to be between 5 and 10, and 3,959 between 10 and 15; or

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5 AND 10,

OUT OF 21,387 CHILDREN, THERE ARE ONLY 7,385 SCHOLARS,  
*i.e.*, 34·53 *per cent.*, OR ABOUT  $\frac{1}{3}$ ;

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 15,

OUT OF 18,396 CHILDREN, THERE ARE ONLY 3,959 SCHOLARS,  
*i.e.*, 21·52 *per cent.*, OR ABOUT  $\frac{1}{5}$ ;

are under education.

(2) Let us next consider what inferences may be deducible from the Education Census of 1851.

The population of the borough has now advanced to 232,841, and the number of scholars to 22,183.

The Census is taken at that epoch of great educational activity, which had in the preceding ten years added in England and Wales 5,454 new Schools to the means for the advancement of national education; or nearly twice as many as the whole number of Schools which were in existence at the beginning of the century, namely 2,876.

Comparing Table H., p. 101, with Table P., p. 125, we gather that there are 27,665 children between the ages of 5 and 10, and 23,796 between 10 and 15; and that the scholars between the same ages are 11,507 and 6,168 respectively; or



BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5 AND 10,

OUT OF 27,665 CHILDREN, THERE ARE 11,507 SCHOLARS;

*i.e.*, 41·60 *per cent.*, OR RATHER MORE THAN  $\frac{2}{3}$ ;

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 15,

OUT OF 23,796 CHILDREN, THERE ARE 6,168 SCHOLARS;

*i.e.*, 25·92 *per cent.*, OR LITTLE MORE THAN  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,

are under education.

(3) We next proceed to examine the results of the Educational Enquiry of 1857. And here I cannot but express my own regret that I was not at the time acquainted with that very valuable Report of the Statistical Society, with the examination of which this present investigation has commenced. I regret it exceedingly, because, though the form of the enquiry is different, more exact comparison might have been made had the limits of age in the two been similar; but in the former the limit taken is 5 to 15, in the latter 7 to 13.

The value of this enquiry, however—"which was taken from 55 groups of houses, inhabited by the working classes, in all parts of the Borough, comprising 1,043 families, and relating to 1,373 children"—is that it ascertains the proportion under education (not only between the extreme limits of 7 and 13, but) with more exactness than the Census by its quinquennial periods, even in each year of those ages when the child's life and school-life ought to be most nearly identical. Of these years, from 7 to 10 are those in which the largest number are at Day Schools; from 10 to 13 are the years in which the Day School should either not yet be left or the Evening School should most effectually supplement it. Yet the enquiry brings out that

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 7 AND 10,

OUT OF 753 CHILDREN, THERE ARE ONLY 417 SCHOLARS;

*i.e.*, 55·38 *per cent.*, OR LITTLE MORE THAN  $\frac{1}{2}$ ;

AND BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 13,

OUT OF 620 CHILDREN, THERE ARE ONLY 158 SCHOLARS;

*i.e.*, 25·48 *per cent.*, OR ABOUT  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,

are under education.

(3a) I record, for whatever they may be worth, without placing much dependance upon, the generalities of the Census of



1861; because no such care as was used in the Census of 1851 is therein taken to ascertain or define precisely what is to be understood by the word "scholar." Neither, moreover, does this Census give much specific information with respect to the Borough itself.

The numbers in the Borough of Birmingham are 296,076. Of these the population under 20 is 137,111, and the scholars 43,812; and again, 65,438 children are returned between the ages of 5 and 15, namely, 31,179 between 5 and 10 and 30,259 between 10 and 15; but of scholars no such division is given, except for the County of Warwick.

But, if the same ratio holds good for the Borough as for the County, then

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5 AND 10,

OUT OF 35,179 CHILDREN, THERE WOULD BE 23,920 SCHOLARS;  
i.e., 68 per cent., OR MORE THAN  $\frac{2}{3}$ ;

AND BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 15,

OUT OF 30,259 CHILDREN, THERE WOULD BE 13,755 SCHOLARS;  
i.e., 45.46 per cent., OR NEARLY  $\frac{1}{2}$ ;

an advance upon the state of education, as manifested in the Enquiry of 1857, which would be creditable enough, if it could at all be taken for granted that "scholar" indicated Day School education.

(4) Let us now endeavour to ascertain something with regard to the state of education in the year just ended.

Through the kindness of H.M. Inspector, the Rev. H. M. Capel, of whose deep interest in the subject it is needless for me to speak, I have been put in possession of the very exact and complete information which he has collected with respect to all the Schools visited by himself.

In the Day Schools attached to 35 Churches in the Borough of Birmingham there were present at inspection in 1866 13,803 scholars; their average attendance for the year indeed was only 10,239; the number present at inspection being 135 per cent. of the average attendance. Thirteen Schools under other Inspectors of the Committee of Council had in 1865 an average attendance of 2,452, which might thus be reckoned for 3,310 inspected scholars.

The Minutes of 1865 do not supply the average of two other Schools, but it is probably less than 300.

The scholars in non-inspected Schools, which would also come under Class III. in the Census of 1851, are not likely to exceed 1,200.

Thus—

Class III., which included 9,946 scholars in 1851, would therefore now				reckon	... 18,613
"	I,	"	288	"	" is supposed now to
				reckon	... 400
"	II,	"	1,642	"	" is now probably ... 2,220
"	IV,	"	1,156	"	" (in which I have no
				evidence of advance)	
				is set down at	... 1,200
or a total of 13,032				"	" is now, after 15 years,
				perhaps	... 22,433

The difficulty which here arises, and upon which trustworthy information could be gained only by setting on foot a similar enquiry to that of 1838, is to ascertain the number in private Schools. Comparing the Report of 1838 with the Census of 1851, these Schools would actually seem to have fallen from 544 to 388, and their scholars from 10,414 to 9,151, notwithstanding the increase of the population from 180,000 to 232,841. An event not, perhaps, to be wondered at, for on the building of Public Schools these private adventure Schools give place, like rush and mare's-tail to grass and cereals when drain-tiles are laid down. If, however, both population and scholars have increased in like proportion since 1851, then the population may now be estimated at 337,526, and the scholars in Private Schools at 13,265.

Thus, then, we estimate the present number of scholars in

PUBLIC DAY SCHOOLS AT	22,433
PRIVATE „ „	13,265
TOTAL	35,698

So also the population between the ages of 5 and 15 would be 74,599, of whom 40,104 would be between 5 and 10, and 34,495 between 10 and 15.



Again, if the proportion of scholars in the several quinquennial periods in the Census of 1851 holds good now, then, out of the total number of scholars, 18,518 are between the ages of 5 and 10, and 9,926 between 10 and 15, or

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5 AND 10,

OUT OF 40,104 CHILDREN, THERE ARE 18,518 SCHOLARS;  
*i.e.*, 46·17 *per cent.*, OR LESS THAN  $\frac{1}{2}$ ;

AND BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 15,

OUT OF 34,495 CHILDREN, THERE ARE 9,926 SCHOLARS;  
*i.e.*, 28·78 *per cent.*, OR LESS THAN  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,

are under education.

To gather up our conclusions. We infer—

(1) From the Enquiry of 1838 that

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5 AND 10,

OUT OF 21,387 CHILDREN, THERE WERE 7,385 SCHOLARS;  
*i.e.*, 34·53 *per cent.*, OR ABOUT  $\frac{1}{3}$ ;

AND BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 15,

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(2) From the Educational Census of 1851 that

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5 AND 10,

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AND BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 15,

OUT OF 23,796 CHILDREN, THERE WERE 6,168 SCHOLARS;  
*i.e.*, 25·92 *per cent.*, OR LITTLE MORE THAN  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

(3) From the Enquiry of 1857 that

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 7 AND 10, (THE PRIME AGES OF SCHOOL-LIFE)

OUT OF 753 CHILDREN OF THE WORKING CLASSES, THERE WERE  
 417 SCHOLARS; *i.e.*, 55·38 *per cent.*, OR LITTLE MORE THAN  $\frac{1}{2}$ ;

AND BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 13,

OUT OF 620 CHILDREN OF THE WORKING CLASSES, THERE WERE  
 158 SCHOLARS; *i.e.*, 25·48 *per cent.*, OR ABOUT  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

(3a) And without taking account of what seems to be so little reliable, the Census of 1861, but passing on

(4) to the data, partly exact and partly conjectural, for 1866, we infer that

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5 AND 10,

OUT OF 40,104 CHILDREN, THERE ARE 18,518 SCHOLARS;

*i.e.*, 46·17 *per cent.*, OR LESS THAN  $\frac{1}{2}$ ;

AND BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 15,

OUT OF 34,495 CHILDREN, THERE ARE 9,926 SCHOLARS;

*i.e.*, 28·78 *per cent.*, OR CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,

are under Day School education.

Such, after thirty years' trial, appears to be the result of our system and our efforts.



THE questions, then, that meet us for consideration, at the close of the above investigation into the progress and condition of education in this great Borough, are—what has the present system accomplished? what are its weak points? and how far can it be depended on as adequate to fulfil the requirements of the day and to provide education commensurate with the wants of the population?

The trial-time over which our enquiries have spread embraces 30 years; a period in which a generation has well-nigh passed away. The system of denominational education, aided by State grants, dates its beginnings before; it has been in full activity for the last two-thirds of this period.

For Birmingham, what has it fulfilled? Thus much it has done: it has kept education from retrograding; that is, it has, notwithstanding the rapid growth of population, kept pace in providing the same proportion of that increase with the means of instruction.

It has done more than this: it has gained upon the whole population. It has increased the proportion in Day Schools—

BETWEEN 5 AND 10, FROM 34·53 *per cent.* IN 1838, TO 46·17 *per cent.* IN 1866;

AND BETWEEN 10 AND 15, FROM 21·52 *per cent.* IN 1838, TO 28·78 *per cent.* IN 1866.

It has raised the intellectual attainments of the teachers; improved the methods of organization; humanized the maintenance of discipline; added largely to the material apparatus for the purposes of instruction; substituted as its basis the exercise of the intellect for the drudgery of a mechanical routine; and given thoroughness and solidity to the elementary knowledge imparted.

I doubt whether any School under the cognizance of the Inspector of Church of England Schools in this Borough, could be found in so low a state as that in which I recollect the old Central School at St. Martin's to have been.

Neither has the system failed in the higher and chief attributes of true education: its influence has been beneficial—if, alas! too short—upon the moral character. It has established a standard of truthfulness, of right dealing in school-life itself, before unreachd—almost unthought of. It has clothed moral precepts with Christian principles, and thereby has sent forth the child into the battle of the world with a quickened conscience; with clearer instincts of rectitude; with strengthened will and augmented power to resist temptation and to do well.

Nay, more, it has descended to the lowest depths; has caught up the little vagrant Arab of our streets, and folded him under the sheltering kindness of the Industrial School; or has snatched the lad, more sinned against than sinning, from thralldom to a course of crime, by the non-penal restrictions and wholesome watchfulness of the Reformatory.

Neither has its influence been confined within the sphere of the Schools which it has itself created: though not a measurable element of good, it cannot hardly be gain-said that the whole class of Private Schools, even the humblest, has been forced up to a higher level.

What are weak points of this system? Obviously, it does not plant its Schools where most wanted, but where the individual zeal of this or that minister must needs place them to connect them with his own charge. It leaves a district unsupplied for years, where there is no leader who takes a working interest in the subject, or where a congregation is too poor to have the cost and sustentation of Schools thrown upon resources already over-taxed.

At some parts of the Borough, schools lie so thickly together that one can thrive only at the expense of some of its neighbours; at other parts they overflow with scholars, for their utmost accommodation is too little for districts in which, year by year, dwellings are being erected by hundreds. In central districts, where dwell the most necessitous, and where the residents above the manual labour class are becoming fewer, from want of extraneous help a small School feebly lingers on in buildings designed for larger numbers; or, because the fees must be low in these quarters, reduction of expense is purchased by reduction in the staff and efficiency of the



teachers. In outlying districts a class better off by their readiness to pay higher fees outbids the poorer for the limited space, so that the latter are left untaught.

Last of all, the system yet comes lamentably short of supplying our wants. Still may it not be capable of developing a sudden strength adequate to all our requirements? But who will dare affirm, when in the first strength and zeal of a new movement it has made no further way, that we may leave it to go on till it overtake and equal our needs? Calm reflection upon what progress has been made in thirty years will lend small warrant for hope so sanguine.

Moreover, the more closely we examine the means, by which the schools in connection with our Churches have been augmented to their existing number, the more do we find to subtract from the total sum, before we can arrive at what is due simply to the efforts of religious zeal within the Borough. The first deduction must be made on account of the very large grants voted some years since from the national taxation by the Committee of Council. This amounted to no less than £1. 10s. for every 9 square feet of room provided, *i.e.* for every scholar. The next is that £500. was allocated, for school building, to each of four districts in Birmingham, being half the sum paid by the Railway for the lease of the ground, occupied by the old Central School near St. Martin's. The third is, that the Governors of King Edward's School, taking a wise view of the duties of their trust, and under the power given by the School Sites Acts, granted sites for the erection of Schools, where the location of their property enabled them to do so.

Lastly, the truth must be spoken out, however unpalatable it may be to a self-reliant and independent spirited community, that a great portion of the remaining means was furnished by the self-denials, not of those within, but of those without, our borders. The National Society (under the sanction of the late Archbishop of Canterbury) raised a fund exceeding £150,000. chiefly from landed proprietors, rural clergy, and dwellers in other towns, for the extension of education in the manufacturing districts. Of this charitable and alien help no inconsiderable share was apportioned to supply the deficiencies of Birmingham, which, however glaring, were not met, whether from inability or apathy, on the part of the inhabitants of the town itself.

Neither, in considering whether we can trust to the power of this system in the Borough for the future, must it be overlooked that, on the one hand, the cost of sites and of erection has become greater yearly, whilst on the other, all those who possess a moderate competency, or even secure a tolerable income, fly from the town itself to dwell in the purer air of suburbs or of villages of villas by railway sides. The separation of classes, however unavoidable, keeps pace with advance of wealth, with ideas of health or comfort; becomes a deadlier evil daily. The opulent fashion their own communities outside, the labouring or the necessitous classes are left to form societies solely by themselves within the town. It is almost in vain that ministers of religion seek to enlist, systematically at least, the sympathies of the richer, who live apart from, for plans of social good within, their densely-crowded courts: vainer far for them to ask the means of providing instruction for every child from the population which throngs around them, living from hand to mouth.

Time was when hopes were buoyant that even in great towns the Church of Christ, under whatever religious distinctions, might have proved a force active enough to have altogether accomplished this great task: the conclusion appears inevitable, that upon trial it has hitherto proved unequal to, for the future is not likely to overmaster, the labour of providing instruction for all.

Yet can we rest content, as members of a great State, as citizens of a great municipality, with the fact staring us in the face, that **LESS THAN HALF** our population of school age are being fitted by education for their future duties? Our place amongst nations; our competition with like foreign hives of busy industries: our wider national, our closer municipal life, will not suffer us longer to sit down and wait events, complacent and satisfied with things as they are.

But before advocating remedies let me (at the risk of seeming over particular) remind you that I am considering the subject solely from the point of view which has disclosed the condition of Birmingham. So far as other places may be in like condition from like causes, so far only would plans suitable to Birmingham be suitable for them. It were an egregious folly to attempt to apply the same plans universally; to small rural parishes as well as to great towns. In the country parishes, generally from the



efforts of the clergy, not unfrequently from the liberality of land-owners; often from the mutual friendship, at times from the divergencies of the two, Schools which may be counted by thousands have sprung up, each sufficient in its accommodation for the knot of people amongst whom it has been built. For the sustentation and fostering of these Schools, both where managers accept or where they hold aloof from Government aid, a generous help is freely forthcoming, from means not always ample; there is given to their management a gratuitous and watchful care, rendered from a sense of duty and for the work's sake. None, perhaps, more than myself has a right, nay, ought thus to speak; because, in the tiers of correspondence which accumulate upon my shelves, I can run over proof upon proof by scores. The policy would, indeed, be unstatesmanlike and disastrous, which, for the sake of some bureaucratic theory, should discountenance or drive off a willing agency, that can permeate our smallest parishes and search out the most secluded nooks of the land's ignorance.

But other great towns, it may be said, are in a similar, perhaps worse, condition than Birmingham. Neither with this have I aught to do. As addressing one, Sir, who holds the office which you sustain, we are considering as apart what is wanted for, what may be done in Birmingham; holding by our Saxon maxims of local self-government, and abiding by the homely proverb—"Let each sweep before his own door and the city will be clean."

Now there is but one way, by which means worthy the occasion can be supplied; by a Borough Rate, levied under an Act of Parliament.

The expenditure of this rate, whether in providing Schools or sustaining them, should be placed under an Educational Board, elected by the Town Council on the principle of the Free Libraries' Committee; each School, originated by the Board, being under the management of a sub-committee, responsible for its conduct and expenditure.

But it will be impossible to levy a rate, and yet charge fees for the education of the working classes. Precisely so: all Schools established or brought into connection with the Board must be Free: open, without cost, to every child above five years of age living within the Borough.

Well, then, you purpose simply to pull down in order to build up. You would overthrow the existing Schools which have done so much, in order to substitute an experiment untried in England. For, how can these sustain themselves against the Free Schools of the Board, or exist, their fees being withdrawn?

Not so. Nothing would be a more fatal mistake than to impair, much less overthrow, the present system in its religious character. From all the observations which I have been able to gather, I question whether, either in America or Prussia, Schools of the same grade obtain anything like equally satisfactory results, possess so high a tone, or exercise so wholesome and lasting an influence as our own inspected Schools, belonging to various religious denominations. Let these Schools impartially reap all the benefits of the proposal, upon their own voluntary acceptance of it.

Yet, if they surrender their fees, what recompense are they to receive? or how shall they successfully compete with those which are supported by the purse of the Board? They must have the same aid dealt out to them which the Board accords to rate-built Schools. This aid may be strictly defined. The State now supplies one-third of the cost of Day School education; parents' payments the larger, private subscriptions the smaller portion of the remaining two-thirds.

Provisions should be included in the Act by which, at least, the present amount of State aid should be continued; First, as guaging and rewarding the results of inspection; Next, because it would meliorate an unequal incidence of local taxation, which, Sir, has been pointed out by yourself: the Borough Rate seems to fall less equitably, because less inclusive of all kinds of property than the general taxation; a merchant's premises, rated at some hundreds, may return a far larger income to the owner, than a retail shop rated at as many thousands per annum. But especially because these dense manufacturing towns are the spots where the wealth of the land is created—not where it abides. The successful merchant, manufacturer, or tradesman retires to spend the secured fruits of his industry away from the din and smoke amidst which his fortunes were founded. "The hands remain," but the competencies which have been honorably acquired by the organizations of labour, like a Nile flood, enrich the land at large.



Then to the support of any School, whether established by the Board, or now, or hereafter by the exertions of religious bodies, twice the amount of the present State aid, and no more, should be allowed from the rate. Nor would there be need to repress or extinguish the local or religious interest felt in each particular School. There would be enough for its support; its efficiency might be raised, in any way its managers thought desirable, by extra gifts of its friends. The Schools of the Board would, in like manner, have their supporters. The character of the Schools connected with the various religious communities would remain unaltered: the Board should, indeed, have conceded to it the right to nominate some members to represent the Borough on each of their Committees; their choice being, of course, restricted to members of the religious persuasion to which the School belonged. In these Schools the Pastor should never surrender duties and privileges, secured whether by prescription or deeds of management; as of entering them when his other avocations allow, and of taking a part in instruction, unfettered and unembarrassed by nice-drawn distinctions between religious and secular.

For the Board Schools themselves these provisions might suffice:

- (1) "That it should be a School in which, besides secular instruction, the Scriptures are read daily from the authorized version." *Revised Code*, Art. 8 (b.); but that any parent should have liberty, by written notice, to withdraw his child from such reading; and
- (2) That certain daily times should be appointed, in which it should be lawful for the Ministers, or persons formally deputed by them, to give religious instruction to those children whose parents concur in their receiving the same.

It cannot be passed by in silence that Birmingham has special advantages for carrying out a comprehensive scheme of education for all classes, in the existence of a great Educational Trust, whose income is now £12,000 or £13,000 per annum; may amount to thrice that sum before the close of the century. On its connexion with the education of the town, I am, however, the less constrained to dwell, because the Town Council and the Grammar School Association, of which you are yourself the

Chairman, have already set forth before the Royal Commissioners the changes which they hold to be desirable and important in the election of Governors of that Trust; whilst the Grammar School Association have shown what extension of the objects of the School they have thought desirable in the papers they have issued. But one point it is necessary to refer to. The Association recommend the imposition of fees; a recommendation which I have publicly advocated. But it was distinctly on the ground of the existing injustice, that a favoured few of the classes better off should divide the funds of this wealthy Trust as a subvention to each in the free education of their children; whilst the artizan class was pressed by school fees constantly increasing in amount, and the class below this, again, was thus being excluded, more and more, from schools built mainly for them, and is being left destitute of education. Let all Schools be alike Free; open to every child within the Borough, from the highest to the lowest, whether by competitive or simple admission.

The State, as yet, does not extend its inspection beyond the children of the manual-labour class. The Education Board, then, should have power to appoint Examiners for all other Public Schools within the Borough, and receive their Reports. It should also appoint the Auditors of the accounts of all Schools, and receive and make public their examination of them.

Nor will it be sufficient only to provide and support Schools; the topic must also be considered—how far the provisions of such Act should extend, either to over-rule the apathy of parents respecting their children's education, or to restrain employers in their use of child labour? To what extent might it include powers in the direction of compulsory education?

I cannot say that further experience has convinced me of the desirability of exceeding the limits, which were sketched out in my paper on the Enquiry of 1857, read before the Social Science Association at its meeting of that year in Birmingham.

First, then, when Society itself stands *in loco parentis* it should discharge towards the child that duty of education which is one of "the three great natural duties of parents." Now the children within our Workhouse are provided with school education, not less than with food and clothing.



But when we enquire about the children without the Workhouse, we find there is but a halting solicitude in this respect for those for whom out-door relief is allowed.

The Guardians do not appear to urge, and parents in receipt of parochial relief are slow to claim school payments for these children. A meagre pittance of £10. quarterly suffices to defray the expenses of, or to register the warmth of, interest felt in the education of out-door pauper children throughout the Borough.

From a Return, with a copy of which you have kindly furnished me, I learn that from Christmas, 1865, to Michaelmas, 1866, £30 0s. 9d. was all that was paid in fees, and for 65 children only.

But the total number of children between the ages of 4 and 10 years returned as receiving out-door relief in November last was not less than 1,521. Where are the 1,456? Denison's Act does not work, because it is permissive only. The Borough Act should make it an imperative condition of relief that, above 5 years old, all those who are in health should be in attendance at School.

Next, there must be compulsory education so far as the class indicated by the Certified Industrial and the Reformatory Schools' Acts is concerned; that is, of children under 14, begging, wandering without settled place of abode or visible means of subsistence, frequenting the company of reputed thieves, or whose parents cannot control and desire them to be sent to an Industrial School; or of those under 16, being convicted of an offence punishable with penal servitude or imprisonment.

The Reformatory Act provides that, while in school, the parent, or other person legally liable for it, may be ordered, with enforcement by distress warrant, to contribute towards the child's maintenance. How inoperative this provision is may be gathered from the fact that, in the Report for 1865 of the Reformatory School for Birmingham and Staffordshire at Saltley, whilst the allowance from the Treasury towards the maintenance of convicted inmates is entered as £1,110 19s. 9d., the payments enforced from parents amount only to £43 8s. 10d. The obstacles to enforcing the payments, which have rendered the above provisions of the Acts so nearly a nullity, must be obvious enough.

The Certified Schools' Act consequently appears to have omitted such provision. Yet these institutions, unless carefully watched, are too likely to degenerate, as Foundling Hospitals, into easy methods of escaping the penalties of vice. They tend to relax rather than to strain more tightly the parent's sense of responsibility, when the burden of support, or the consequences of neglect may so readily be shifted from the shoulders of the parent, and thrown upon society at large.

With all Schools free, excuse will not exist for the parent; and where the parent's neglect is a proved cause of the crime of the child, or has led to its vagrant life, then the law should provide, as in cases of culpable neglect to supply food, that the parent should be punishable by fine or short imprisonment.

Bad parents we may not be able to reform, but we may so appeal to their selfishness as to induce them, for their own sakes, to look after their children's being at school; we may reclaim the children from growing up to idleness and vice by acting upon the fears of those, to whom they owe little besides their birth.

We come next, in regard to compulsory measures, to what has force given to it by the sanction of the law, and which falls, therefore, within the law's cognizance—the contract between employer and employed.

The principle of the protection of the child's future against the selfishness or the weakness of the parent on the one side, and the eager competition of trade on the other, has been embodied in the Factory Acts, with results which even their former most strenuous opponents allow to be eminently beneficial.

Let, then, the Act provide that the employment of children should be illegal before the age of 10, and that a certificate of having passed at that age in some standard (not lower than the third) should be demanded as the pre-requisite of labour.

Between 10 and 13 let it provide that the children work only half time, and be required to pass in at least one standard higher before full time is commenced. Alternate days of work and education, might, for Birmingham, be found preferable to the half-day plan.



The utter inadequacy of the Evening Schools to grapple with our growing population, as shown by the enquiries of 1838, 1857, and 1866, throughout an experience of thirty years, demonstrates the necessity of such extension of the half-time system.\*

By the above restrictions the idle class, within the years of School life, would be absorbed by the School; beyond, by the quickened demand for labour; the School and workshop together would thus almost embrace the whole population, and cut off at the source the supplies of the vagrant and criminal class.

No restriction, however, should exist beyond 14.

Nor do I fear that the efforts of the religious bodies would be relaxed, or their agency less powerful, by being relieved of the sole charge of furnishing secular education: rather, set free from burdens with which they are now overweighted, there would remain scope enough for the exercise of their zeal. So long as the world endureth, there will be found those who will give of their substance and their labour beyond all the law's requirements from the living energy of Christian faith. The Poor Laws have not stopped up the well-spring of holy charity, or made deaf the Christian's ear to the cry of the needy in his distress. Neither will the Borough Rate dry up the overflow of their liberality, who hold that, by education, the human race is elevated, and who esteem it a patriot's duty and a Christian's privilege to take a share in this god-like work.

So in France, beyond that taxation for education which is required from the Communes by the State, Infant Schools feel the genial support of voluntary levies.

Thus amongst ourselves, Nurseries rather than Schools for children under five, whose mothers are at work in the factories, might be fostered and superintended in adapted houses, instead of pretentious buildings, by the womanly sympathy of District Visitors. At the other end of the scale our rude Night Schools should become Evening Classes for those who were beyond the age of 13. The thirst for knowledge, excited before by elementary, might be supplied by secondary education and recreative instruction. Nor do I think the least valuable result would be that our Sunday Schools could hardly fail to share the benefits of more thorough organization and more effective teaching.

\* *Vide Note on Evening Schools, page 24.*

In conclusion  
this venture to  
meet with success  
stances are weighed  
they have not been  
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without distinctly  
of them. Your  
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of discussion.

For your con-  
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has been, more or  
"education, which  
"and pauperism."

March,

January, 1866

In conclusion I can hardly hope, that the views which I have thus ventured to set forth, in complying with your request, will meet with immediate acceptance from all; but the more circumstances are weighed the more reasonable, I believe, will they appear: they have not been committed to paper without earnest thought, or without experience. Still it would not be right for me to conclude without distinctly releasing you from any responsibility in respect of them. Your earnestness in this and kindred subjects I know full well; but distance and avocations have denied opportunities of discussion.

For your consideration, then, and on account of your office, I submit the above remarks; satisfied with the sacrifice of my favourite recreation amongst the Silurians of Herefordshire, or in the bed of the Malvern Straits, during the leisure hours of vacation, if I can do aught in that great town, with which so much of life has been, more or less, closely connected, towards "the spread of education, which is the most effectual remedy for improvidence and pauperism."

Believe me to remain,

Dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

WILLIAM GOVER.

MALVERN,

JANUARY, 1867.



## NOTE ON EVENING SCHOOLS.

- (1.) The Report of the Statistical Society in 1838 returns—
- |                                    |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 36 Evening Schools with .....      | 563 scholars; |
| of whom there are between 5 and 15 | 301 „         |
| above 15                           | 262 „         |
- and 21 Evening Schools (attached to Sunday Schools, open generally but one night in the week) with ..... 1,485 scholars;
- |                                    |       |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| of whom there are between 5 and 15 | 932 „ |
| above 15                           | 553 „ |
- so that out of a population between the ages of 5 and 15, estimated at 39,783, there are 1,233, or only 3 *per cent.*, reported to be in Evening Schools.
- (2.) In the Educational Census of 1851 “Evening Schools for children were not included, principally on account of “practical difficulties in the way of any satisfactory enumeration of them.” For Adults only 12 are returned for the County of Warwick, with 498 scholars. The return, then, in this Census is manifestly too imperfect to be of any practical value.
- (3.) The Educational Enquiry of 1857 shows that—
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| out of 1,373 children between the ages of 7 and 13,         |  |
| 44 only, or 3·2 <i>per cent.</i> , were at Evening Schools; |  |
- that is, comparing the results of the Enquiry of 1838 with those of 1857, the relation of Evening Schools to the population is stationary after a lapse of 20 years.
- (4.) The Inspector for Church of England Schools has informed me that he visited in 1866—
- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 12 Night Schools with .....                                  | 1,430 scholars. |
| The Minutes of 1865-66 give—                                 |                 |
| 3 under other Inspectors with an average attendance of ..... | 233             |
| Total in Inspected Night Schools ..                          | 1,663           |
- which, according to the proportion in 1838, would give ..... 1,001 scholars between the ages of 5 and 15.