Penny dinners and the best means of dealing with children who are are ill-fed and who do not pay : prize essays / issued by the Central Council for Promoting Self-supporting Penny Dinners.

PRIZE ESSAYS

ON

PENNY DINNERS.

LONDON SCHOOL DINNERS
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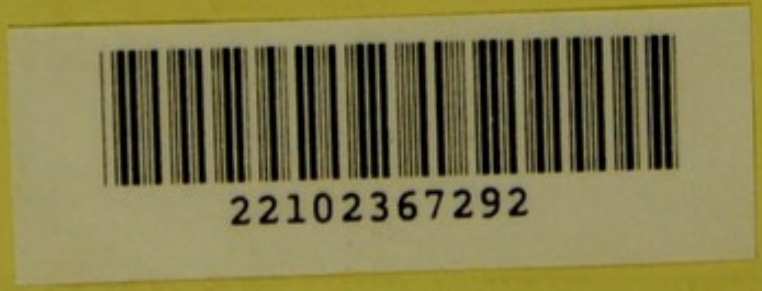

PENNY DINNERS:

AND

THE BEST MEANS OF DEALING WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE ILL-FED AND WHO DO NOT PAY.

Prize Essays

ISSUED BY THE

CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING SELF-SUPPORTING PENNY DINNERS.

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1886

CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING

SELF-SUPPORTING PENNY DINNERS.

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CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

IN the spring of 1885, the Central Council for Promoting Self-supporting Penny Dinners issued to the Managers of all the Elementary Schools in the Metropolis a circular, of which the two following paragraphs formed a part.

> "The Penny Dinners are intended primarily for children attending Elementary Schools whose parents, although in a position to pay, are unable, from various causes, to provide them with food sufficiently nourishing, varied, and ample.
>
> "Whilst however, no dinners should be supplied without payment, so as to preserve the self-supporting system, exceptional cases will be found where the parents are unable to find the necessary pennies. But it is very desirable that no (free) tickets should be given except after the most careful inquiry by managers, teachers, visitors, and others best acquainted with the circumstances of the children.

How best to deal with these "exceptional cases" was a question that had soon to be faced by the Council. By the generosity of one of their members, Sir Henry Peek, Bart., they were enabled to offer prizes to the value of £90 for the best answers to the following questions.

"What are the best means of dealing in connection with Penny Dinners with children who are ill-fed and who do not pay?

"(1) Those whose parents or guardians are indigent.

"(2) Those whose parents or guardians are careless and negligent.

"(3) Those whose parents or guardians are vicious and intemperate, and whose inability to pay arises from these causes. Under this head, the limits of penal legislation and charitable effort should be specially considered.

"By what means can these cases be properly investigated and decided upon?"

The Right Honourable A. J. Mundella, M.P., Hugh Birley, Esq. (Manchester School Board) and the Rev. Harry Jones, M.A. (Prebendary of St. Paul's), kindly undertook the duties of adjudicators, and awarded:—

The First Prize of £40 to Mr. H. Gardner.

The Second Prize of £30 to Mr. C. F. Bearsley, M.A.

The Third Prize of £20 to Mrs. J. Foster and Mrs. Tait, equally.

An additional prize was also allotted by the Council to Miss Tabor, whose essay did not comply as to length with one of the conditions of the competition.

The Council refrains from commenting upon the various and varying views enunciated for which they do not hold themselves responsible. The problem is a difficult one that needs to be considered from all sides, and it is hoped that this pamphlet may be of use to the many friends of school children who earnestly desire their physical and mental welfare.

Some interesting and valuable statistics of the Dinners at Rousdon, for a complete period of ten years, have been kindly supplied by Sir Henry Peek, Bart., and will be found at the end of the pamphlet.

Persons desirous of starting Self-supporting Penny Dinners will find some useful information in a pamphlet on the subject, issued by the Council, and published by Messrs. Alexander & Shepheard, 21, Furnival Street, Holborn, London, at 1d. each, or 8d. per dozen; postage 2d.

The Council will feel much obliged if any of the readers of this pamphlet who have practical experience in supplying Penny Dinners will forward a report of their operations, especially as regards those children who from any cause do not pay, to the Hon. Secretary, Camden House, Hungerford Road, London, N.

"DE PROFUNDIS" ('85).

FIRST PRIZE ESSAY,

(ABRIDGED)

WRITTEN BY

Mr. H. GARDNER,

GIFFORD STREET BOARD SCHOOL, CALEDONIAN ROAD, LONDON.

In order to deal with the subject in view, the less theory the better. I intend, therefore, to show what has been done recently in a difficult neighbourhood, and to point out what remains to be done.

About three years ago I was inducted into a very large school under the London Board as Second Master. A new Head Master had been appointed a short time before. The whole place seemed to be stuck in the mud and it was part of my duty to help to lift it out of the mire. The first day's experience horrified me. The dirty state of the children—picturesque, I will admit, from a Murillo point of view—was shocking.

My pupils greeted me with an ominous scowl; in fact, this scowling propensity struck me as a distinctive feature of the locality. Almost every boy's forehead was scored with lines from the constant contraction of the brows. Afterwards, when I discovered the deep poverty of the district, it seemed to me that the constant grinding of want was acting like a glacier in furrowing their foreheads. I found that I was literally fallen amongst the Ishmaelites; that every boy's mind, if not hand, was against me. I was regarded as their natural enemy.

But difficulties are made to be overcome. I found we had some excellent managers, practical and sympathetic—men who have spent and are spending their lives in trying to ameliorate this land of Ishmael. I enquired of them if there were any reasons for long hair and dirt. They told me there was no occasion for dirt and if I could remedy this state of things the better for everybody.

Another thing struck me the first week, I could only get in one-half the school fees, the other half remained unpaid. All the answer I could get was "father's got no money." The London

Board provide certain forms for this disease of not paying. I use the word disease advisedly for it is a disease of an epidemic nature. These forms involved a great amount of clerical work, and the result was most unsatisfactory. In many cases I felt sure that no attempt was made to pay, and that the children were being trained up by their parents as rogues. It was part of the Ishmaelitish feeling —the world againt them and they against the world. I will anticipate my narrative by saying that the Board reduced the fees from 2d. to 1d. per week about a year after my induction.

In an angle formed by the Great Northern Railway Line on one side and an embankment bearing the North London Line on the other, lies our district, that might aptly be designated from the general character of the inhabitants—Micawber's Island. It consists chiefly of several great blocks of industrial dwellings named after a late statesman, although there is nothing there suggestive of primroses. Opposite the great blocks lies our great Board School containing over 2,000 children. Close by are one or two parallel streets, notorious for years for their rowdy character, and where one of these intersect with *our* street is a large public-house with a policeman or two, permanently stationed outside—the poison and the antidote.

The Model Dwellings are arranged in five flats, let out in rooms or in suites. They are well arranged and there is every convenience for living in comfort and decency. They were built some years ago as a speculation in the room of a number of tumble-down cottages which, with that strange perversity that often attends such places, was named Stroud's Vale—but it was certainly not a vale of health or verdure. But for various reasons the social status of the neighbourhood has sunk lower and lower. Rents have had to sink with them, so that now single rooms may be had as low as 2s. 6d. per week. I am sure there is nothing cheaper in London considering that the single rooms are large and convenient. There is one strange anomaly connected with them—the highest rents are required for the highest flats. But the whole aspect of the place, inside and out is horribly ugly. It makes one's eyes ache to look at the monotony of bricks and glass, and it makes one's heart ache at the idea of living in such a desert.

By the courtesy of the superintendent of the buildings I have been able to gather a good deal of information with regard to the occupations of his tenants. Most of the men are odd-jobbers, able to turn their hands to anything as they say, or in other words—unskilled workmen. There are also a great many widows with families. Later on in my experience I tabulated the result of an enquiry throughout the schools, and at the lowest estimate 10 per cent. of our scholars are children of widows. Accidents on the railway, where many are employed as porters, shunters, carriage-cleaners, &c., cut off a good many of the bread-winnners every year. Sickness brings down a great many—generally the consequence of getting wet. The low rents attract widows from other parts and once there, there they remain for there is no lower level.

For many months I kept up an incessant warfare against long hair as the most salient point and succeeded in reducing the greater part of my flock from a leonine to a shorn-lamb aspect. The virtues of soap and water were preached daily, if not from the house-tops, yet from the top-floor of our building. By good-natured ridicule, especially by imitating the way the children looked at me from under their eyebrows I got rid of the furrows on the foreheads. The planing influence of civilization was getting in its work but occasionally there would come a relapse. Sometimes I sunk in despair and cried inwardly "Why trouble yourself?" "What is the good, why not swim with the stream instead of against it?" One day in particular I well remember and must relate it only to show what good may be effected by sympathetic managers. There had been some particularly savage displays of barbarism on the part of two new pupils just captured by the Board Visitors. The worst of it was the greater part of the class evidently relished these displays and sympathised with the offenders. I was in very low spirits when the Chairman of the Managers, now Archdeacon of Brisbane, entered the room. I confided my trouble to him. I even said that I despaired of ever making a permanent impression, but he replied with a smile "keep pegging away, I can see a great alteration here; the order is better, faces are cleaner, hair is shorter—never despair! There's a great deal of human nature in boys, and if you keep on as you have begun, you are bound to succeed." After all it was not much he said, but it was the turning point with me. I pegged away and by the end of the year I had won a great moral victory and the results of the Annual Inspection were eminently satisfactory—"excellent work had been done in a very difficult school."

Having cleared the ground thus far, I can now go on at once to the institution of Penny Dinners in London. I believe in consequence of Sir Henry Peek's successful and famous experiment in feeding school children at Rousdon, Mr. S. D. Fuller commenced operations in March, 1884, at Gifford Hall, a convenient place, opposite the schools. I joined Mr. Fuller the first day and have attended there every day down to this moment of writing so that I have had 19 months practical experience in the working of Penny Dinners. The method finally shaped itself into this: a certain number of tickets were handed to me by the caretaker of the Hall before nine in the morning. A boy distributed so many tickets to each teacher in the building, and at a quarter before ten he went round again and gathered up the money and the unsold tickets, so that by 10 o'clock he could run over to the Hall and announce the number sold. As soon after twelve as I had finished my school duties, I went over the way and assisted in waiting upon the children. This system is still continued with the exception of announcing the number of tickets sold by 10 o'clock. Like most other things the number of diners average themselves.

The one thing that struck me most forcibly was that the children to whom the dinners would do the most good were those who had

not the necessary penny. Let us take an instance, say a railway porter with five children, wages 20/- per week, and let us spend it for him—

Rent of two rooms	4	0
Firing and light	1	6
Three meals a day for five children at 1d. each	8	9
Total	14	3

there will remain 5/9 to keep the man and his wife for a week. Supposing the man's meals cost on an average 9d. per day, this will absorb 5/3, leaving 6d. for the support of the wife and all the incidental expenses of housekeeping. It is evident that there must be financial reform somewhere, so we will move the family into one room at 2/6 per week and we must cut down the meals of the children. Of course I am reckoning as if the man and his wife were teetotallers, which, as a rule, they are not; and also the wages of railway porters, &c., are more usually 18/- per week than 20/-. There is no prospect of improvement for he belongs to the great army of unskilled labour and if he falls there are hundreds ready to step over his body into the ranks. One of our mothers said to me "I cannot afford a penny a day for each of my children, a penny-worth of bread makes dinner for two."

If the question of living be so difficult to the railway porter, what must it be to the widow? How they and their children live, is a mystery to me and I dare say a mystery to themselves. Having well considered the matter, I felt bound to act up to my convictions. I laid my facts before our managers, and certain of these gentlemen supplied me with various small sums of money to be spent in the purchase of tickets which were to be distributed as I judged would do most good. I was thus able to relieve about a dozen children per day. How these were selected will appear in the narrative. At this point, our indefatigable managers, Mr. Benjamin Clarke and Mr. Forbes Clarke, stepped in and offered to take charge of the Penny Dinners and to relieve Mr. Fuller of all responsibility. With these gentlemen I was in entire sympathy and it was at once agreed that an effort should be made to solve the problem of how to assist those who could not pay the penny.

Messrs Clarke were so fortunate as to secure the voluntary services of a naturalised German— a baker with a large and successful business—Mr. Zissell, who has devoted his week-day evenings and Sundays for the last 15 years to Sunday School and Mission work. Mr. Zissell took charge of the buying department and the preparation of the food, bringing to bear in the matter those qualities which have made him a successful man of business. He made several important economic changes, issued bills and attracted attention. One change he made in particular is well worth noting, he increased the quantity of food sold for a penny and for two or three weeks there was a daily loss but the number of diners increased so much that the loss was soon wiped off and a small surplus remained after everything was paid.

About the same time I was transferred from the highest to the lowest class in the school. The Government Inspector for Finsbury had certain ideas with regard to the instruction of children not qualified for examination. His leading idea was that the lowest class requires the best teacher. Unfortunately, as I thought, I was selected to carry out his idea. A class was made up for me of about forty children, ranging in age from 7 to 12 years, scarcely any of whom knew a letter. A more wretched, miserable class I never saw. Rags and dirt were plentiful, but the most distressing part was the lack of intelligence. In a few days I found that the task I was expected to accomplish under the present circumstances, was hopeless. One-third of the children were suffering from want of food. Their staple diet seemed to be dry bread judging from what they usually brought in their hands at nine and two. About one-third of the class usually claimed to have had no breakfast and some of these '*impransi*' went without dinner. "It is all nonsense" says a friend, "how can they live without eating?" Quite true, only I found afterwards that a good many families lived on one meal per day—a loaf about 6 p.m. Another peculiarity of the class was that about one-quarter had impediments of some kind in their organs of speech. On this point I consulted a doctor and he gave it as his opinion that without there was some organic defect, this peculiarity was a symptom of underfeeding.

Again, I found that these children had many of them had some training in the Infant Department, and had also been for some months, if not years, in the Boys' Department, yet scarcely knew a letter. In fact some of their late teachers assured me that it was impossible to teach them anything, as they were naturally deficient in intellect and, illogically, defied me to make any impression on them because *they* had tried and failed.

The first week or two, in spite of all my efforts I made no impression whatever. The only thing was to commence again, I made a list of my forty pupils and under heads, as below, commenced to gather particulars from the children themselves, thus:—

Name.	Age.	Parents.	Children.	Address.	Rooms Occupied.
John Jones	9	Father. Labourer. Out of work 2 months	5 1 at work	2, M Block B. Buildings	1 at 2/9 per wk.

This table I handed to the Board Visitor for confirmation. To make assurance doubly sure I took my list to the relieving officer of the district (Mr. F. Dickenson), I found him a most intelligent sympathetic man and he offered to assist me in any way possible. Some of the families on the list were in receipt of parish relief and others had been. He was thus able to turn to his books and verify my particulars. I had thus at least a dozen cases certified by the relieving officer and the Board visitor as suffering extreme poverty. Some were the children of widows, but others occupied a kind of debateable ground according as the father or mother got a day's work or not. The whole of the forty or fifty children were

very poor, all insufficiently fed and badly clad. When our Inspector arrived in January this list with its particulars was laid before him and he expressed himself as highly pleased with it. The Board visitor was there to vouch for its correctness and it simplified matters exceedingly. Each name was taken in detail and finally the whole were passed as "exceptions."

Having mastered all accessible facts concerning the outside life of my ragged army I found myself in a dilemma. Here was the whole machinery of education at a stand-still for want of a little animal oil. Why not give it? "Oh! dear, no," said a friend "you will "make paupers of them." Alas! one-third of them were already paupers. "You are going against the principles of social and "political economy, you are relieving the parents of their responsi- "bility." "What good?" says another, "why trouble. It has "always been so and will be so to the end." Theoretically I agreed with the objectors but *I* had to teach, I *must* produce results. The London School Board insists on good results and quite right they should.

Armed with my facts and tables I laid the whole case before our indefatigable managers. My idea was to give a penny dinner to each child that I considered in need. They agreed to find the money for me, so that I was able to give each hungry pupil a good dinner, *i.e.*, compared with the dry bread or nothing style.

In selecting the needy cases I adopted the following plan, I thought it best to assume a position of unbelief in order to prevent imposition. As the children came into school in the morning I asked these questions:—(1) Have you had breakfast? If the answer were "no." (2) Not even a bit of bread? If they admitted "only a little bit," they were passed on, but if they denied even the little bit, then (3) Open your mouth. By a slight glance I could see the state of the teeth. If any particles of bread adhered to the interdental spaces the claimant was passed on to his seat. If there was no appearance of food—I am ashamed to confess—I pretended to see a crumb on the front of the jacket and brushed it off so as to get an admission of the "little bit." I have no doubt that I was cheated sometimes, but it is better, in my opinion, to be imposed upon occasionally than to let the whole body suffer for fear a small fraction may go wrong.

I am afraid to say how soon the result of the one good meal per day began to show itself. The effect of a nutritious dinner for three or four consecutive days was evident. When I saw one of my bad cases, a child without animal spirits who had never to be cautioned about conduct, finish his soup and then deliberately hit his next door neighbour over the head with his spoon, I was delighted. The soup was getting in its work, there was hope now, for a boy without mischief is not a boy, such as we love, and such as *we* have been.

Now good digestion should wait on appetite, so I supplemented my experiment in feeding by teaching all the nursery rhymes I could get hold of. Appropriate action accompanied the singing or

reciting. "You are wasting time" said a friend. "Inspection day is coming." "How are you going to get results?" Somehow it did not occur to him that I was hastening slowly, that I was making school-life pleasant, that I was improving the memories and educing intelligence. To him the legend of Simple Simon was a tale and nothing more, to me it was a mine of intellectual wealth. To see little chaps with pockets full of holes hunting for an imaginary penny was highly amusing both to them and to me.

The next event in carrying out this attempt to teach the "unteachable" was a visit by a deputation from the Congregational Union. They were very much interested in my class, and attracted by my experiment. They published a long account of my class in the *Christian World* newspaper, which drew so much attention that it was reprinted in a pamphlet form and scattered broadcast through the land.

The seed rapidly brought forth fruit in the form of subscriptions from all classes of society. The fund was in charge of the Rev. Andrew Mearns, of the Memorial Hall. He remembered us in our distress, and sent two of his professional visitors—enquiry agents—who made a house to house visitation of all cases of alleged poverty that we could point out. Some hundreds of homes were visited, and the report of the two spies that had seen the nakedness of our land was, that 95 per cent. of the cases were genuine distress, so far as they could judge.

Being so far satisfied, Mr. Mearns commenced a series of free breakfasts at Gifford Hall. Fifty tickets were given away each evening to what we considered the worst cases; that is, say, 50 amongst 2,000 children! The experiment was a success; money continued to flow in, and the number was increased to a hundred. This, I know, has nothing to do with Penny Dinners, but it enabled me still further to extend and improve my work. I tried the effect of a good hot breakfast of bread and milk and a Penny Dinner combined upon three children in particular.

One was a boy of seven, with a high forehead. He usually sat all day, perfectly still, dull and listless. I thought that, perhaps, there might be something behind the high forehead. Could it be brought out? The father was a little man—a mason's labourer, he called himself—with six children.

They occupied two rooms in the Buildings. The man was out of work, and had been so for months; the mother went out washing. The home was neat and clean, and the superintendent of the buildings gave the family a very high character. They would not apply for parish relief; there was no suspicion of drink; their rent was punctually paid out of the mother's earnings, and they lived how they could. I found on one occasion that the dinner for eight on the Sunday was 4 lbs. of potatoes, bought for 1d. in the Caledonian Road. By questioning the children separately I found that all they had with the potatoes was salt. The little boy was also insufficiently clad—in fact, he was dressed in divers colours, picturesque, no doubt, but summeresque as to texture, and totally

unsuitable for cold weather. This was the boy that in answer to my question, "What do you mean by a holy place?" answered, "Where the draught comes in." I wrote a short descriptive account of him in the *Christian World*, which attracted considerable attention, was read from many pulpits, and a quantity of good clothes was sent for him. I took the liberty of handing over the surplus clothes to his brothers and sisters. When I took him in hand his idea of the alphabet was that it consisted of A's and B's, all that were not A's were B's, and *vice versa*. The combined effects of warm clothing, breakfast, and dinner, had a marvellous effect on the boy. Like Jeshurun, he waxed fat and kicked; he grew pugnacious; his intellect developed wonderfully; and an account I published of his altered state was commented on in a leading article of the *Daily News* for October 14, 1884. To make a long story short, I may say that the result of four months of this experiment was, that the boy mastered his alphabet and learned to read easy sentences fluently. He lost the inability to pronounce the letter "r," and instead of saying that he had had a piece of "bed" to eat, was able to say bread distinctly.

Mr. Mundella himself questioned the boy and heard him give correct answers to words spelled to him. The case I have given, and other cases to follow, are well-known ones, as the experiment was closely followed by our managers and other gentlemen interested in the food question and the Penny Dinner movement.

The second case I have to bring forward was a boy nine years of age in a state of "windowed and loopholed raggedness," also with an impediment in his speech. He had been most regular in attendance for years. The object of his regularity was to secure a prize for punctuality. Not that he could read more than a letter or two, but then the pictures were his delight, and it was all his own. The family consisted of a father—mother dead—three boys and one big girl, all living in one room, and in receipt of parish relief. The father was in an advanced stage of consumption—a most intelligent man who had been a compositor, but had been laid up for some years, a hopeless invalid. They had no relations, and, as Lady Dufferin sings, "The poor make no new friends." It would certainly have been better for the man and the family to have been in the workhouse, for the children were in a frightfully dirty and neglected condition. However, the man would persist in retaining his one room and liberty, and they contrived to exist on the parish allowance. I gave the little boy a halfpenny one day, out of curiosity as to how he would spend it. Next day, I found that he had taken one of his brothers with him to a cheap baker's half a mile away, and they had bought and shared the "haporth" of bread between them. The children lived on bread alone—a piece each twice a day was the usual dole.

My first step was to get a word with the big sister, to try her hand with the boy's clothes, and to get his hair cut. She only laughed at me and talked about "making a fuss," but I returned again and again to the charge till I got the boy made comfortable

and decent. Hot breakfasts and Penny Dinners had much the same effect on Dick as it had on the other boy, except this—that Dick became highly pugnacious, and I found I had created a small Frankenstein. Hitherto his usual demeanour was blank stolidity, varied by snatches of sleep.

His usual whitish, muddy-coloured face began to take on ruddy tints; he was wide awake now, and made light of the difficulties of the alphabet, as each letter soon had a local habitation and a name. The same results followed as in the first case. In four months he had gained flesh; he was more active than I could have imagined, and instead of listlessly lounging against the play-ground wall, he was tearing across the yard and whooping with the best of them. He learned to read and write, and was very quick at figures. He lost a good deal of his impediment of speech, but not entirely. In fact, by January, I had the most sanguine hopes of him, but there came a sudden blow—the father died. There was no one to take the children, so they went into the workhouse school. I made two attempts to see him, but visitors were forbidden, for fear of introducing infectious diseases. However, I met the boy in the street recently, marching with the other boys; he looked fat and strong. The master in charge told me that Dick was prospering well, but still retained the impediment of speech. I shook hands with Dick, and he pocketed my penny.

The third case was the family of a widow. The father had died about a year before I knew them. I had the particulars concerning them from the relieving officer. The widow's friends had bought her a mangle, but directly she had obtained some work two of the four children were taken ill with small pox; and in the long battle with disease and poverty the mangle was sold, and the woman had to apply to the parish for relief. They allowed her 4s. 6d. per week and two loaves of bread. Half-a-crown of this money paid her rent. "But why don't you send her into the House?" "She won't go. She reasons that if she could get a little washing to do she could keep out of the workhouse."

I had two of her boys—one 9, the other 11. Both were extremely pale and dirty, and their clothes like the Irishman's breeches, "a lot of holes tied together." The elder one, like a recollection of better days, had some idea of his letters, but not so the younger one. I tried with a course of Penny Dinners. In a week a great improvement was visible. I saw the mother and got her to wash the children, although I must admit I had to find the soap. Then I saw Mrs. Forbes Clarke, one of our lady managers, and interested her in the family and my experiment. She found them some capital clothes, and very soon my pupils were made comfortable, respectable and decent; in fact, there was a slight suspicion of the "swell" about them. They made astonishing progress with their lessons, and the elder one was questioned by Mr. Mundella. My facts were borne out to the letter. He heard the boy repeat the Lord's Prayer correctly; and in reply to the enquiry as to who had taught him his prayers, the boy gave my name. Mr.

Mundella endorsed what I had done, and advised me to keep on and gave us a handsome sum to continue our experiments.

With regard to the children, they disappeared; and, in answer to our enquiries, we were told they were ill. We found out some time afterwards that the clothes had been pawned, and we recommended the relieving officer, for the sake of the children, to insist on the family entering the workhouse. The experiment in this case was, in one sense, a failure. On the other hand, it might have been a success. It seemed to me that the woman had gone down under repeated blows of adversity, and I thought she only wanted a little help to restore the hope of better days that seemed beaten out of her. The value of the Penny Dinners was demonstrated, and the woman had another chance given her.

There was another case which also comes under the head of dealing with the indigent.

Not many mornings after I had taken charge of the class, there came a tap at the door, and a short red-haired man handed me a couple of slices of bread in a piece of newspaper, saying: "Please give that to Clifford, he had to go to school this morning without his breakfast as I had none to give him." Of course I did as requested. The consequence was I got into the habit of asking the euphonious Clifford each morning if he had had his breakfast. My friend the relieving officer did not know the family, but the Board Visitor did. He complained that the man sometimes kept his children at home if he had no breakfast for them, and was a little indignant about it. "Does the man drink?" "No I believe he is a teetotaller." "What is he?" "A saddler by trade, but an unfortunate fellow who can get very little work. He is a widower with three boys, 7, 9 and 11, and he does everything for them, washing, sewing, mending and darning.

Now, here was a case of clear indigency. The little Clifford did not know his letters, but still he was cheerful in his ignorance, and did not seem to mind it. I put him on my list, and gave him a Penny-Dinner ticket when the family exchequer was low. There was one decided merit about the father, the little fellow always came to school clean washed, with closely cut hair. His shining morning face, and mottled skin, were a pleasure to look at. I became interested with the family, and had a talk with the father as to his inability to procure work. The poor fellow said nothing, but held out his two hands. I was pained to see that both hands were very much distorted, "through rheumatic gout" he said," and the consequence was he could get no regular employment, because he was not sufficiently quick with his hands. The little work he did get was such as he could do at home at his own leisure. Now, as far as I could judge, this was a typical case, where a little help, especially in winter, would be appreciated. I spoke to my friend in need, Mrs. Forbes Clarke. She went at once and saw the family, and made her own independent enquiries, and the result was that Clifford had some fresh clothes, and exceedingly smart and proud he looked. Every care was taken

of the things given, and I believe some are in wear still. When I knew the family at first, the elder boys had that peculiar Ishmaelitish look so characteristic of the district. The struggle for existence had already soured them; but since a little interest has been displayed in them, the softening influence of little deeds of kindness has melted away the old looks, and I am always greeted with a pleasant smile. I had forgotten to say that Clifford made excellent progress with his lessons, and was mighty in word and deed as a reciter of the tragedy, "Oh, my little sixpence."

Well now, what is the moral of all this? I will answer in the words of Her Majesty's Inspector. "These children have been lifted over the initial difficulty of education, they have received a start in life that they would not have had, if it had not been for the teacher's experiment."

Those whose Parents or Guardians are careless or indigent.

I remember one particular case that comes under this head. A little fellow of eight, he was very short, stunted in fact, very pale and looked delicate. He had some idea of his letters. Some days he was quite intelligent, and on others the reverse. He often asserted that he had had no breakfast, and there was no dinner in prospect, but I could get no satisfactory reason. Sometimes he would confess to having had a particularly good dinner, and the next two or three days little or nothing. One afternoon he said there was no dinner at home. "Why not?" "Mother had only a penny." "What did she do with it?" "I fetched her a pennorth of beer." Now we all have heard of the "intolerable quantity of sack to a haporth of bread," but here it was all sack and no bread. It seemed to me at the time an almost inexcusable want of feeling on the part of the mother. A penny spent in bread would have given them all a little. The father was a labourer, and at that time was in work. From what I could gather it seemed that an undue proportion of the men's wages went in drink. A variegated, I may say, sumptuous repast on Sunday, the remains cold on Monday, and the rest of the week a scramble. What is to be done in a case like this? I was afraid to send for the mother and lecture her, remembering Dogberry's advice to the watch "The ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when it bleats." What did I do then? Well, sometimes I gave him a dinner ticket, especially if there were signs that food was scarce; as I said before, when he was dull he was hungry, and then I helped. If I did wrong I am sorry for it, but it seemed to me that if something were not done the child would become an invalid. The first attack of illness would carry him off, through his want of stamina. The number of children's funerals about our district seems to me very large. So many of the little ones are deficient in stamina, that small ailments, which ordinary well-fed children would easily pull through, are fatal. I think if more food could

be given to the children, it would save the parish the expense of so many funerals.

I have already pointed out the remarkable number of widows living round us. The reasons for this have been given. The widow and the fatherless I consider our especial charge The battle of life with them is never ending. They nearly all try to get a living by washing, charing, or needlework. Where the family is large and the children young, they are obliged to have parish relief. Where the family is not so large or so young, and the woman has not had all spirit crushed out of her, she may try to earn a living independent of the parish. The difficulty then is what to do with the children when the school is closed, or after school hours. Many have their dinners given them, usually two pieces of dry bread. It would be a great boon to the children of this class if they could have a Penny Dinner. Here, of course, comes in the question of expense. Supposing there are three children, it would cost threepence per day. This money would have to be provided in the morning. The difficulty is that the money earned by the woman is spent in the evening in necessities, and there is nothing left in the morning but the remains of the previous night's loaf. Again, the three can be provided with two pieces of bread each for one penny. This I know, from common every-day experience, is one of the chief reasons that the Penny Dinners are not attended by the class which needs them most. It must also be admitted that the difference between the prices of the bread and the cost of the dinners goes in beer. The great object now is to persuade the parent to give up her beer for the sake of the children, or drink less of it. The pint of beer and piece of bread and butter is unfairly divided, the beer lords it over the bread.

Vicious Parents.

One of our teachers introduced a boy to me as a candidate for a free dinner. The teacher spoke highly of him although he was a rough customer to look at. His clothes were in tatters—his shirt in rags—his hair long and tangled and his boots were naught. To all outward appearance he was of the gutter—guttery. A wastrel with ninety-nine chances in a hundred of going to the bad, if he had not already gone. Yet strange to say he had a good character. A dinner was administered and then I extracted his tale. He was as needy as the famous knife-grinder, but had this advantage, he had a tale to tell. His father was a sieve-maker by trade and kept a shop close by. There were a number of children in the family all in the same condition. It was the old tale over again, the father spent every penny in drink. However it was quite evident I ought not to spend the money entrusted to me in relieving the children of a man who kept a shop. That evening I went to have a look at the shop, on the "*solvitur ambulando*" principle. Certainly it was a shop, with a very wretched oil lamp in the

window—it looked as woe-begone as the children. There were two sieves for sale and a beggarly account of empty boxes. It was the apothecary's shop over again. The chief difference being that instead of selling poisons to the public, he imbibed the poisons himself in a highly diluted form from the "public" over the way. I had an insane idea of buying a sieve, but what I should do with it, or what use could be made of it was utterly unknown to me. I tried the door but it was fast, so I turned back home. Here is a typical case that is at the bottom of one-half the misery of London. The other half may be summed up thus—sickness, widowhood, want of employment, and lack of special knowledge. By the latter I mean the state a man gets into who has becomes an odd-jobber.

It will require very slight reflection on the part of any one to see that the Penny Dinner movement including those who can pay and those who cannot, is only a part of a great social problem. There are many hopeful signs at the present moment that this problem will be dealt with in the new House of Commons. This plan or that may be recommended; some will, perhaps, be workable, and may partially succeed, but in order to deal with the question we must go down to the roots of the difficulty. Every year there are some 10,000 boys in London leaving school to go to work. In 20 years' experience of school work I have not known 20 boys leave school with the intention of learning a trade, without it was the intention of following the father's business. In a 4d. a week school they invariably went as office boys; in my present, 1d. a week school they go as errand boys. On arriving at 16 years of age they naturally want more wages, and the usual answer is, "We must have a fresh boy from school in your place." Consequently, there is always to be seen about our streets a gang of "hobble-de-hoys," lads between 16 and 18 with nothing to do. They are a nuisance to society in general, and a puzzle to the philanthropist in particular. They are too old to learn a trade—they must sooner or later take to some form of unskilled manual labour. Some of them every day fall into the hands of the police, and so they commence their career as men by an acquaintance with the inside of a prison. The main body, as I said, are absorbed into the army of unskilled labour; and it is from this class that most of the children spring who stand most in need of Penny Dinners, and are unable to pay for them.

I heard the Bishop of North Queensland in an address to young men a few years ago say "We want young men in Queensland, there is room enough for almost any number *of the right sort*. The first question asked of an immigrant is 'What can you do?' If the answer is 'Oh! anything,' it is a bad sign. We don't want men who can do anything, we want those who can do something. 'Well, can you ride a horse?' usual answer 'I don't know, but I think I could stick on.' Yes, but we don't want men whose energies are entirely taken up with sticking on, we want those who really can ride."

Recently we had a visit from a gentleman from Victoria. He is

a native of London, but has been away for 30 years, and has been over here for some months studying England as he said "above and below the surface." He had visited all the chief watering places, and places of fashionable resort as "above the surface," and came to our Penny Dinners as "below," He came a good many times. The gentleman from the land of gold had a golden heart, and was anxious to relieve some of the misery around him. The children got to know him and assailed him on all sides for pennies. I was obliged to interfere, as the sturdiest beggars came off best, and he used to say "I want to invest a 1s. or so in dinners, select me some good cases." On one occasion in particular I chose a boy I knew to be in want, the mother, a widow, had gone out to work and had left nothing for the children, and had locked up her room. The boy was served with a dinner and disappeared a minute after. The old gentleman shook his head "Ah! we have been taken in." We came out of the hall together, and in a doorway close by was our runaway sharing his dinner with his little sister. We looked at each other but said nothing, but we thought a good deal. On his last visit before returning to Australia, he said to me "we could find land and a good living for as many people as are in England now, but we have less than a million. All these wretched miserable people living round here in one or two rooms, we could take them all, but they must be able to turn their hands to something definite. Men who can handle tools are what we require, but the cost of transportation is the great difficulty." This, of course, leads to the question of state-aided emigration, but there I will leave it.

I have more faith in the possibilities of the young than in the improvement of the adult. I was struck lately by the case of a boy who remained in school long enough to pass Standard VII. His hand-writing was excellent, and his knowledge of arithmetic was advanced and solid. He left school and went to chopping wood, I see him now and then carrying out bundles, I feel that, at present, his education is wasted.

It is an admitted fact that evening schools are a failure. It seems to me that what we want now are evening schools such as Professor Stuart has so successfully established in Cambridge. Since compulsory powers were granted to the School Board of the kingdom, the need of evening schools to teach reading, writing and arithmetic has diminished.

What we want are evening technical schools of an elementary description. Perhaps the word technical is too indefinite to convey my meaning, the word "trade" would be better, "Trade Evening Schools." I am confident that if classes could be started in our neighbourhood, and in all such localities where boys who have left school could learn the use of the plane and chisel, to mould or carve, or to use tools of any description, it would soon take away from us Mr. Ruskin's national reproach of unhandiness.

Professor Stuart's difficulty was in procuring room. There need be no difficulty in London. The real "hill difficulty" is the

procuring of plant. It is a national matter, and should be paid for at the national expense. It is the want of familiarity in the handling of tools that is daily increasing the number of unskilled labourers, consequently the prospect in the future as regards children needing food and unable to pay is gloomy in the extreme. There will always be a mass of poverty arising from sickness, vice and intemperance, but there is now a great mass of preventible poverty arising from our defective social state, and I consider it incumbent on the Council of the Penny Dinners to look to the future.

England may be justly styled the "land of machinery," yet the greater part of the people are totally unfamiliar with machinery. The fact is that such things as machinery ought to be part of each school's apparatus. Every boy ought to understand the construction—let us say—of a sewing machine. He ought to be able to take it to pieces and put it together again. One of the chief amusements of our district—one that never flags—is watching the trains. The attraction of moving power is fascinating, but the children do not understand why the train moves. Let a teacher try a lesson on the steam engine with diagrams, or better still, a working model—there will be no occasion to ask for attention—the lesson would be drunk in by eyes and ears, and would never be forgotten. When I think of the time wasted in teaching grammatical curiosities and niceties, and consider what might be done in its place of practical value that would give the boys a chance in life, I feel in despair. It takes months of hard work to teach the elder boys to write "they were" instead of "they was." They hear the latter constantly, and will continue to hear it till it has become too familiar to them to be eradicated. We are daily engaged in rolling up a stone that always rebounds, and if it did not rebound, what good then?

The old style of apprenticeship for seven years is passing away, a shorter term has been substituted, but it is almost impossible to apprentice a boy now to a trade without a premium. Amongst our class of children it is just as impossible to raise the premium. They must go to work at the earliest possible moment to assist the family exchequer. Carrying parcels or going errands is the chief occupation, and as I have already said, so it goes on till about 16 years of age, when fresh boys from school take their places. Now suppose a boy had been attending a "Trade Evening School" for two or three years, he would have got some insight into one or more trades, and would certainly be handy with tools. He could offer his services in twenty different directions. It is well known in the City that an advertisement for a light porter will bring a thousand applicants for £1 per week, but for a packing case maker will not bring a dozen, although better wages are offered.

Some few years ago, one of my pupils left school and took up his father's trade, a whitesmith. The father is an inventive genius who has brought out several ingenious and successful machines. His ironing-machine is at work at the Inventories. One time I

called on him and saw his machine which he described with an inventor's pride. What struck me was a remark he made. Pointing to a rod that was performing some eccentric revolutions he appealed to me "Isn't that motion beautiful?"

Now I had had another of this man's sons for some years. Both were clever clear-headed lads, with a special taste for arithmetic. The elder one served an apprenticeship to me as a pupil-teacher and became a first-rate mathematician, but I used to complain he had not a spark of the divine fire in him. There was no imagination, and no striving of mine could extract a glimmer of poetry. Perhaps I was foolish to expect it from the son of a man who can see beauty in the motion of an eccentric rod. But how many undeveloped geniuses are there in the boys around us, mines of wealth, may be, to our country?

The young whitesmith devoted his evenings to science and together with two other old pupils of mine used to attend my class for electricity—they made a trio of young fellows that England might be proud of. They were all practical men, one a gunsmith and the other an engineer. They were fond of discussing the practical and theoretical sides of their various, but allied, crafts. I was not surprised to hear they all intended to emigrate. The whitesmith went to the United States and at the age of 22 was made foreman of the largest engineering works in Chicago. The gunsmith at the same age was made foreman of the shop where he had served his apprenticeship as the master said he could not afford to lose him. The third I have not heard of lately but he will come to the top wherever he goes. These three cases of learning trades are accounted for at once—they have followed their father's businesses. England cannot afford to lose such young men, for speaking with an intimate knowledge of a large district, there are none to equal them and few to follow in their footsteps. What I am driving at is this, I want the children of our unskilled population to have a chance to get into such lines of life and to be lifted out of their wretched surroundings.

Some years ago I had a boy under my charge named Fred. He was with me from 7 years of age to 13 and for all that was a shocking bad scholar, but I had the highest respect for the boy—we were "ever the best of friends." He worked desperately hard, he did his best but made no progress. His father said to me, "I know you have done your best for him, the boy is deficient in ability and I don't know what to do with him. He is 13 and ought to be making a start in life." What was to be done with the boy I could not imagine, but it so happened I commenced a series of lessons in chemistry and electricity, all experimental. Fred. was fascinated by them—he constituted himself my assistant-demonstrator. I found he was repeating the experiments at home, one or two burns betrayed him. He began to make electrical apparatus for me. I have his galvanometer still—a most ingenious piece of workmanship. In 12 months the boy was a better manipulator than myself. The father saw an advertisement for a boy as apprentice to

a mechanical dentist. He took the boy with him. "Do you know anything of chemistry—of electricity?" "I do," said the lad. "Then come this way and let me see you use this battery." They took the boy at once without a premium and in a short time his wages were much increased beyond the agreement—because he was worth it. It seems to me that we had been looking for a round hole to fit a square boy. Fred used to walk from his place of business in the evening down to South Kensington to study scientific works and then walk home across London. For some months before the Polytechnic closed, his business was to prepare the chemical and electrical apparatus for Professor Gardner's experiments. He is grown a fine tall young fellow now, and is captain of a bicycle club. Often as he glides past me on his road to work I think to myself, whatever would have become of you if we had not found out your particular bent. Now in our great building we have scores of boys as dull as Fred. The prospect before them is an incessant battle to keep body and soul together, but I have not the least doubt if means were put at our disposal we could discover some mechanical geniuses whose lives might become profitable and pleasant to themselves and others and England might reap the benefit of their possible inventions.

I have written more on this subject than I intended, but I cannot leave it without adding some apropos extracts from Professor Stuart's speech last session :—"There is no doubt that the children of the lower classes get much less benefit from our elementary schools than children belonging to the better classes of society. The reason of this was hunger. The children of the poorer classes attending our schools in the East-end of London, the number I believe in some schools was quite one-tenth of the whole, were insufficiently fed and insufficiently clothed. One of the principal things to be observed about the poor was their want of 'handiness,' and it was his object to make the children of these people a little more 'handy' after they left the primary Elementary Schools. In this connection he had made an experiment some time ago at Cambridge. It grew out of a similar movement at Cambridge, where they endeavoured to provide handicrafts for the sons of the rich, and in which the necessity for giving some handicraft education to those richer young men who were emigrating to the colonies was one of the strongest reasons for undertaking the experiment. Feeling it to be a necessity in the case of the rich, he was struck much more with the necessity of a similar experiment in the case of the poor."

The Professor proceeded to give details. One fact to be noticed is that they could not find room for the number of applicants. "The articles made were sold to pay expenses." "The children might be described as those of unskilled labourers of Cambridge, and some of them were employed during the day in running errands, an occupation that might sharpen their wits but failed to give the general handiness *so necessary for emigration and for success in life*. The object of the training was to make them handy at

home, and *to facilitate their acquiring a trade if opportunity should offer*." Among the things taught were carpentering, rough carving, french polishing, japanning, and soldering." (Just imagine the delight of the Bishop of Queensland at the arrival of a ship-load of such immigrants.) He goes on to say "There was nothing alarming in the socialistic aspect of the question. *It was the duty of the State to endeavour to render its population capable and efficient.* He accepted so much of socialism as would produce *a population efficient, enterprising and self-reliant.*" "By doing what was proposed for the working classes we should only be paying them a debt we owed them in respect of advantages of which they had been deprived, by being left too much to the natural evolution of things. They had been deprived of their naturally fair share of the advantages produced for the nation by the nation, because of their incapacity, and in this they were too largely the victims of our imperfect institutions."

It seems to me that in order to grapple fairly and honestly with any of our social problems, of which the Penny Dinner movement is perhaps the most pressing, especially that part of the movement concerning children unable to pay, whilst relieving present distress, the philanthropist is bound to look ahead to see if something cannot be done to lessen the number in the future who shall be unable to pay. There is no one I am sure, but will applaud Professor Stuart's words, "produce a population efficient, enterprising and self-reliant." Therefore, to help in this direction, I have written at this length, advocating Trade Evening Classes, for I am certain that by them, in a few years, the number of children belonging to unskilled labourers unable to pay will be sensibly diminished.

I will now turn to a fresh case of poverty, caused by intemperance. Perhaps there is no need of fresh cases, but this case presents some peculiarities, and from them something may be learned. We had three boys in our school, the eldest, William, was under my charge. He was a fine-looking lad, big, strong, and ruddy, but he was particularly quiet in class, and whatever he did was done with the utmost nicety and exactness. In short, he was a treasure. Do not imagine he was a milksop, far from it, he was king of the playground at "foot-it." In fact he was so much in earnest about it, that he used to take off his boots to it, and I use to pity his mother on account of the darning in prospect.

The father was a short red-bearded man, with a wooden leg, and thereby hangs a tale.

As a young fellow he had gone out to the Cape, and took part in one of our wars against the Boers. He was shot in the leg, and it had to be amputated. The daughter of a Dutch Boer took pity on him and married him. Why they came to London I cannot tell, but the man took up the business of cab-driving. They were poor, but not in want. The children were always clean and tidy, and were all real nice boys. One morning I saw tears trickling through the fingers of my model boy. I got out of him that his father had

not been home all night, that his cab had not been returned to the yard, and they were afraid some accident had happened to him. Day after day no tidings, I scanned the daily papers for the discovery of a dead body with a wooden leg, but to no purpose, and I did not find out for a fortnight that the man had been locked up for being drunk in charge of his cab, and, as this was not the first time, he had lost his licence. The mother came to see me, but she could speak very little English, and the boy translated what I said into Dutch. Of course the sins of the father were visited on the children. The elder boy was hungry, but was too proud to confess it. We managed to keep the family going for some time by giving them tickets for the Penny Dinners, I don't know what they would have done without them, but I was obliged to give the eldest boy his ticket on the sly, as he would not accept it openly. I have been told that I was pauperising those boys, and that I was relieving the parents of their responsibilities. The family were obliged to seek parish relief for some time, but now the father has started business on his own account as a wood-chopper.

William has passed his Standard VI., and gone to work as an office boy, but the second boy, Christian, a splendid little fellow, with wonderful eyes—ox-eyed—is often kept from school to push the barrow in which the wood is taken round the streets. Some months have elapsed since I wrote an account of the family for Mr. Mearns at the Memorial Hall. It was published without names in the *Christian World*, and, after all this time, a gentleman at the Cape has seen the account, and wants to help the daughter of the Dutch Boer and her family, for blood is thicker than water. He wants to set them on their legs, fortunately the man has only one, so it will not cost so much. I have made some enquiries in the vicinity, and from all accounts, the father has seen the folly of his ways, has drunk the dregs of poverty, and now I propose to buy him a donkey and cart, and give him another start in life. We only propose one condition, that is the children must be kept regularly to school, so that their chances in life may not be spoiled. The man has been punished, but the wife and children much more so, and I fail to see how it could be prevented. What we want is a small sum of money, to be applied for the relief of such cases, to tide them over a difficulty. We have an average of two or three bad cases per week. The people come with their troubles to the schoolmaster. They imagine that the teacher must have some sympathy for them, because their children are in the school. We had two cases last week. A woman came with a baby, it looked as if it were dying, the eyes were glazing over, and the woman declared that it was dying for want of milk. Her tale was this, her husband had gone to Tilbury in search of work, and had been taken ill and was laid up in bed. There were seven children, and they had parted with everything to buy food, and were now *in extremis*. Of course, the master had to put his hand in his pocket, and tickets were sent for the Penny Dinners. Three little girls came, they were ghastly thin and emaciated, their lips an ominous

blue, but a change is already taking place, although "One of the Crowd" does not think the dinner sufficient, yet it is sufficient for these, and I say again, what could we do without them. Three children are relieved at the cost of threepence per day; could the threepence be more profitably or so well invested?

The second case was a man who declared that he, his wife and five children were starving, that he had been ill, and all their goods had been seized for rent, and they were all sleeping on a truss of straw. The master put on his hat and saw that it was true, he gave the man a shilling, and an hour or two afterwards he was seen drunk. Here was a problem that could only be solved by the Penny Dinners. We gave orders that the children should have a dinner each day. I went to the teacher of one of the girls and asked her to be good enough to give a ticket each day to the girl in her class, she replied, "I have only one ticket to give, and I have seven bad cases in my class alone."

These kinds of cases are occurring every week and they are a serious drain on the master and on the teachers, for I find over and over again that if they have no tickets to give they are giving pennies out of their own pockets to relieve those who are in the greatest distress. I caught a teacher giving a boy a penny on Friday night for a boy's breakfast on Saturday morning. His excuse was that the boy's mother was laid up with rheumatic fever, she was a widow and the boy had been living on carrots for a week. I turned up the boy's sleeve and found his arm in very fair condition, and after asking the boy's age I tried his weight and found it reasonable, so I advised the teacher to let the boy keep on with the carrots for another week and then report.

My next case of vice and intemperance—a typical case—is that connected with the family of an itinerant fishmonger with four children. I first made acquaintance with the third boy, about eight years of age. He was very ragged and dirty but his head was a mass of brown curls and he would not be a bad-looking boy if it were not for a decided cast in his eye. He was given to me as a hopeless case, and a 'hard case' I found him. Sometimes he had breakfast and sometimes not. His explanation of the latter was short and sharp, "Father got drunk and spent all his money." Now and then the boy went to sleep in school. There had been a drunken row, and the children had been kept awake most of the night. Sometimes the man comes home in a drunken frenzy and turns his wife and children in the streets all night, Of course the man beats his wife, that goes without saying. Last winter the family was without shelter of any kind for three or four days and nights. The man has been in prison several times for being drunk and assaulting the police. The eldest boy has a stolid look and although I have known him for two or three years I have never seen him smile. Life has been to serious for him to see anything to smile at. The mother is a decent woman, and I know nothing against her except that when twins were born last January she cried because one of them died a fortnight afterwards. Our

manager, Mr. Benjamin Clarke, could add many more details than I know. He sent the second boy into the country for a fortnight recently, and he has been an authority on agricultural matters ever since his return. Mr. Clarke wished to send the eldest one, but finding the boy had no clothes he had him down to the Sunday School Union and bought him new boots, two new shirts, and an old coat and then sent him back to me with a letter containing a sovereign for purposes connected with the mission. I found I had to give him 5/- to spend in more clothes. I am sure that not many men would have trusted the boy with so much money to carry or spend. The boy himself told me to "mind what you are about, there's money in that letter." The next day I found that his mother had bought him a pair of trousers, some socks, and a flaming red and blue cap for 3/- and he had 2/- remaining to pay his fare.

I have forgotten to say that when things were bad with the family we were foolish enough to send them over to the Penny Dinners. The chances are, or rather I may say were, that those boys would turn out badly. If they went wrong and landed in a reformatory, or in prison, could it be wondered at? According to my view, although it may be mistaken, I think Mr. Clarke deserves the highest praise. His method of dealing with the matter has a double effect. It shows the boys that some people sympathise with them, that they belong to the great human brotherhood, and it has a softening effect which will bear fruit in the future. That fortnight in the country will make an indelible impression, and will very likely influence all their lives in keeping them in the safe paths that Mr. Clarke points out. Now, with regard to the man himself, no words can be too strong for him. Some of Mr. Clarke's friends have subscribed a few pounds towards helping the wife. She says it is her ambition to have a mangle; but what is to be done with the husband? The only sensible plan would be a separation, only the worst of it is that however ill-used a woman may have been, she has generally some remaining fondness for the brute.

If we consider what means are possible, by existing or by future legislation, to deal with such men, there will remain the difficulty, if the husband is imprisoned the family must starve. Would the country be willing to make an allowance to the family whilst the man is kept in prison? Again, if a separation order can be procured in a case like this, and the man ordered to make his wife an allowance of so much per week, he could claim the custody of the children, and the remedy would be as bad as the disease. The man has lost his character, and all self-respect. Prison has no terror for him, for familiarity has bred contempt. For myself, I see nothing for them but to give the boys a chance in life by means of a Trade Evening School Let it be understood that I do not for a moment imagine that the possession of a trade will keep anyone temperate, but what I mean is, let the rising generation have a chance in life, as at present, nine-tenths of them have none. My wife suggests that these brutes should be treated to a dose of cat-o'

nine-tails for they are in reality garotters. They knock down their wives and rob them and their children of food, and should therefore be treated accordingly.

Now that I am in the depths it is only one step to a lower deep still, fact leading the way. In the last case, poverty proceeded from the vice of the father; but, in the present case, both father and mother drink, and the children are neglected in a double ratio. The boys, with faces more like dogs than the "human face divine," although of quite tender years, are thieves and desperate truants, sleep out at nights, and are everything that is bad. One boy has been sent to a reformatory, and the two we now have are rapidly preparing for the same place. After a long bout of drinking the father was laid up by illness, and the boys asked me for free dinner tickets. I was advised to refuse, but wanting to gain experience, and thinking a little kindness might not be thrown away, I tried them for two days with dinners, on condition of regular attendance. The third day they had their dinners, and played truant after that for a week, and since then they play truant the greater part of every week. It is evident that some authority should step in and take them from their parents; but the law is very slow, and the School Board authorities are viewed with distrust by the magistrates, so there is nothing for it but to stand by and see the children getting more and more hardened in crime. They are a nuisance to us and to themselves, and the country will have to keep them all their lives, for they will prey on society at large. I could point out 30 cases like these, children who will always be a burden to the ratepayers. What is wanted is a quicker process of law. The school registers will show the number of attendances made in any given time, and the parents should be called upon to explain. Of course there would be a great cry set up about the sacred rights of parents, the sanctity of home, and such like phrases, by well-meaning people; but each case could be taken on its own merits, and instead of letting the children run wild for years, and then, when the mischief is done, putting them into a reformatory, the remedy should come earlier.

I am afraid I have been transgressing from the subject in hand, but a little reflection will show that the whole subject is the good of the children, of which the supply of food is a part. I should not give a ticket for a free dinner to any child, however poor, without regularity of attendance. If tickets are given, there must be a corresponding duty in return, which parents and children must thoroughly understand. Thus the helping of the extreme poor will also raise the percentage of attendance, for the irregularity of school children, in spite of all the School Board machinery, is one of the greatest evils of the present day, as testified by the unanimous wail of the inspectors in the last blue book issued recently by the Education Department.

At this stage I should like to make some remarks on Mr. Fuller's article on Penny Dinners in the September (1885) number of the *Contemporary Review*. He devotes a paragraph to my experiment

with the dull children. He says of me: "As an experiment he gave some dinners, and it soon became possible to notice and measure the progress made. In a fortnight, so fast was the convalescence, dull, apathetic children were rapidly becoming very intelligent. Such arguments and facts are not to be lightly disposed of, and opposite views need to be supported by a strong case; but it is impossible to overrate the importance of a right conclusion upon a question which may possibly, and probably will, affect every scholar in the country. If it once be granted that all those children must be fed whose parents do not give them sufficient food, the State can alone supply their wants." I am glad to see that Mr. Fuller and I are approaching each other gradually, although it must be borne in mind that giving dinners to these children was the rock upon which we split and drifted apart. Now, is there no way of compromise? "Halfpenny dinners," says Mr. Fuller, "cannot be made a commercial success." But I think that some of the difficult cases would be glad to contribute a halfpenny where the penny was too much of an obstacle. One of our great difficulties has been the collecting of school fees. They got in arrears to the extent of £200 in one year at our schools alone, so the Board very sensibly lowered the fees to one penny per week, in the hope there would be no arrears. For all that there are many cases that cannot afford to pay one penny per week; how is it possible for them to pay 1d. per day for dinner alone? A glance at the register will show the children in arrear, and those whose fees have been remitted for certain periods after investigation by the Board. That is, the Board admit, in many cases, that the parent or parents are not able to afford a penny per week for a child's education. Again, there are the children of those who are in receipt of parish relief. A Penny Dinner to them is a boon indeed. Mr. Fuller mentions "a widow in receipt of parish relief living in one room with her four children, working with her sewing-machine for a shop in a poor street . . was able to pay 4d. per day for her four children's dinners." The widows for whom I have been working and pleading for the last 12 months have no sewing-machines; in fact, I believe the possession of one would debar them of parish relief. They exist by manual labour, only there are so many of them in the same line that they cannot get sufficient of it to live decently. I came across a case last winter, in bitter weather, of a family that made 14 lbs. of coal last them a week, and when, through the liberality of the Memorial Hall, I was enabled to give them a ticket for half-a-cwt., they were too much astonished to say "Thank you." The father had been laid up then for 22 weeks with his right arm paralysed, and the mother could only get one or two days washing per week; thus, the greater part of what she earned went for rent, but for all that they had not applied for parish relief, as the father lived in hopes of recovery by means of galvanism applied daily to him at the hospital.

Through the last few months we have been supplied with a number of free dinner tickets, through the kindness of Mr. Mearns.

Also a certain number of free tickets have been distributed to neighbouring schools for the relief of necessitous cases. I believe these are given by the Penny Dinner Central Council. Fifty tickets are our daily portion, *i.e.*, about sixteen in each department. In the boys' school we have ten classes of varying size, so there are about 1½ tickets per day at the disposal of the teachers. For this we are truly thankful, but like the questioning Philip, I say, "What are they among so many?" This experiment of giving away tickets I have described, and the results, but on the whole, I am sorry to say, there is a want of discrimination on the part of the teachers. I have tested cases almost every day, and an alteration must be made in the plan of selection, or rather, I should say, want of plan. One day I found two fat boys with free tickets, father in full work, and their pathetic appeal was they had only bread and cheese at home. It need hardly be said that they were sent away at once. Another day I found a boy eating a free dinner, whose father kept a shop and was on his rounds with a horse and cart of his own. To-day, a well-dressed girl, the instant I looked at her, said, as if she knew she had no business there, "Father's work is rather slack." These tickets are given by private benevolence, and we are bound to see that the most is made of them, or else the whole thing is a delusion, and working positive harm. My remedy is this. Whenever a free ticket is given, it should be entered on a sheet in this form :—

Name.	Address.	Age.	No. of Children in Family.	Occupation of Parents.	How many Rooms.	Rent.	In Receipt of Parish Relief.	If Father out of work— How long?

These sheets could be ruled for each class, and filled up as a weekly return, to be forwarded to the Central Council. Of course it will entail trouble, but the advantages are so obvious, and the teacher will be the one to benefit by it most, that I am sure no right-minded person would object. In a short time a very valuable body of statistics would be at hand. No relief should be allowed to any school without these returns, for the school would reap the benefit, that would more than compensate for the trouble.

There is another point that wants attention. A gentleman, deputed by the Council, should visit the dinner centres occasionally, and test some of the free ticket cases independently of the teachers. Again, it would soon be found that certain names would appear on the list regularly. These would need to be revised every week or two, as there might possibly be a change of circumstances. I have known some hard cases of men out of work, with large families, whose children have been relieved, and the family tided over a difficulty, continue to receive free dinner tickets, even after the father has obtained work. Hence the need of revision. One boy

asked for a ticket because his father had been or was out of work, and in answer to my usual question, how long? answered, " all day yesterday." On another occasion, a boy had a pitiful tale about his father being out of work for years, and did nothing but sit at home. It was a doleful picture of a man who had lost all hope, only I found out by accident, that the man kept a shop, and sat indoors waiting for customers, and did not do badly. Of the value of relief to widows, I will give a recent case. A big lad was put into my class lately, he was nicely dressed, and had very nice manners. I have not had such a boy for years. He was particularly anxious to learn. After he had been with me some weeks, he ask me to give him a dinner ticket, I was very much surprised, and spoke, perhaps, a little roughly to the lad. I saw the tears come into his eyes, and as school was over, I took him on one side, where no one could hear, and with downcast face raining sorrow in the dust, he told me his tale. His father had been a railway guard, but was killed a year ago on the railway at Ardwicke, near Manchester. The mother was left with five children, of whom he, a boy of twelve, was the eldest. By subscriptions amongst the man's mates, and a little money from a burial club, the widow had started a shop in the neighbourhood of Manchester, but it had not succeeded. They had come to London and gravitated, as so many widows do, to our district. Her friends had made a last effort and bought her a mangle, but they were strangers in the district, and so far had got no work at all. I comforted the boy as well as I could, he is a splendid boy and bids fair to become a fine man, physically and morally. Could any one turn a deaf ear to an appeal like this—is it naught to ye that pass by? The boy has had a free dinner each day since then, but acting on the revision plan, I had a little chat with him last Friday, and he says that work is now coming in, and his mother will be able to do without tickets after another week or two. It may be objected how would you have managed if there had been no Penny Dinners? The same idea occurred to me when the dinners were first started. I went round to each teacher and I found that nearly all of them had two or more pensioners a day; in fact, these cases, in the poorer parts of London, are a sad drain on the slender pockets of assistant teachers.

Coming out of the dinners three days last week I met a boy, who saluted me with "Hallo! Mr.——." It was a boy with ruddy cheeks and open mouth. I failed to recognise him, but that flaming blue and red cap was familar. It was my friend the elder Mc—— just returned from the country and he has actually learned to smile, although I must admit it was rather a broad smile. I was compelled to shake hands with him on the spot. He had had a real good time. "I earned 10d. by helping the people I lived with to cut chaff, and I brought it home and gave it to mother and she gave me a penny for myself," and then the smile came again. Of course there was no credit in earning the money, none in bringing it home and giving it to his mother, but the credit was on his mother's side

in giving him a penny for himself. This is the boy that I thought was marked out to be a pest to society. But he is being humanized and civilized to such an extent that I expect we shall be proud of him. Will it be argued that a free dinner now and then has pauperized and demoralised him? on the other hand I consider the money has been well laid out and will return with compound interest.

If we had a hundred tickets per day at our disposal that is for four days per week—400 in the week—at a cost of about £2 per week we could grapple, with success, an enormous difficulty—for we could relieve a whole neighbourhood. Mr. Fuller has an idea that this kind of thing would affect every school in the country but it is not so. The nearest schools to us charge 3d. per week fee, and one or two even 4d., and have no arrears. It is evident that these children can want no relief and the number of schools like ours are, I hope, not very numerous. Ours is also an exceptionally large school, so that the average cost would not be so great.

The next question is where is the money to come from. I can answer this by the light of experience. In connection with Mr. Gates and Mr. Mearns of the Memorial Hall I wrote a series of descriptive pieces, published in the "Christian World" concerning poor children and their homes. During the year nearly £4,000 have been contributed by the charitable public to help to feed the poor children of London.

I am sure that if a series of appeals were made by the Central Council—backed up by the statistics sent to them from the schools, weekly—there would be no lack of funds. The great aim must be to keep down expenses. Printing and postage would be the heaviest items, as for all the rest the machinery is ready, the whole body of teachers and board visitors would, I am confident, gladly help the good work.

There is one little point to be remembered in connection with the Penny Dinners, they ought to be advertised. If they are to succeed as a speculation they must be advertised by means of handbills every month or so; for people grow apathetic and it will need a fillip now and then to prevent stagnation.

I tried one little experiment which deserves notice. Last winter when the weather was very cold, and work exceedingly scarce, and the number of applicants greater than we could relieve, I used to gather up the remains of the soup on soup days and give to some of the hungry ones. Many of the very little children found their pannikins of soup more than they could manage so that I fed many on their leavings. Unfortunately on pudding days there is not an atom left. I have never seen the smallest scrap left on a plate, so that my waiters on providence had to go without.

With regard to the Trade Evening Schools, no one knows more about the machinery of education than Mr. Mundella, and if he would take up the scheme it would be sure to succeed as the time is ripe, and Social Legislation is to be the order of the day.

"Sic Vos non Vobis."

Recommendations in Second Prize Essay, written by Mr. C. F. Bearsley, M.A., *School House, Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire.*

The Head Master should keep in a "Dinner Register" a record of the names of all the children attending the school, and place distinguishing marks against those—

(1) Who regularly take the dinners.

(2) Who are well fed at home.

Full inquiries into the home circumstances of the remainder should then be made by the Head Master's colleagues and friends, so as to complete the classification into those—

(3) Whose parents are indigent.

(4) Whose parents are careless and negligent.

(5) Whose parents are vicious.

Dinners should be provided for children whose parents are indigent, and paid for "either by parish relief or by private charity." Such children might also be supplied at reduced family payments.

Gratuitous dinners should be given to the children of careless, negligent, vicious and intemperate parents, so often only "as may be expected to demonstrate their benefit."

Careless, negligent parents, should be visited, and persuaded to supply their children with the dinners.

As regards vicious parents, "in cases of proved systematic neglect the relieving officer should be empowered by fresh legislation to ask for, and the magistrate to grant, a 'Dinner order,' similar to the 'Attendance order' issued to parents failing to educate."

All the children should be examined "perhaps twice a year" by a medical man, "with the view of ascertaining if their general health is such as to fit them for the work of school, and to indicate the children who show symptoms of underfeeding."

Although the above "scheme in its essential features can be worked by anyone with sufficient zeal and industry, it can be best worked by a head master, who has peculiar facilities for the task, as well as special incentives to it."

"Mens Sana in Corpore Sano."

Recommendations in Third Prize Essay, written by Mrs. James Foster, *Stourton Court, Stourbridge.*

To meet the circumstances of parents who, whilst able to pay something, are not in position to find a penny for a dinner, family tickets should be issued at a reduced price, or half price charged, and the deficit made up from charitable funds.

Children of (*a*) persons whose poverty is not the result of idleness or vice, and of (*b*) careless and negligent persons should be supplied with dinners free or at a greatly reduced price, but, where possible, means should be found to enable children of the latter class to earn their dinner ticket.

The children of persons who "are vicious and intemperate but not criminal" would probably attend school more regularly if the hope of a dinner free or at a reduced rate were held out to them. The parents also would have a greater inducement to send them.

Children of persons "absolutely vicious and criminal" should receive a dinner free or at a reduced price, but dependent in great measure on their own good conduct and attendance.

As regards investigation, children who "have free cards given them for school" are probably fit recipients of dinners free or at a reduced price.

A committee should be appointed to obtain all necessary information from School Board teachers and officers, District Visitors and others, and also to seek out those deserving poor who refrain from revealing their sufferings.

"A Penny saved is a Penny gained."

Recommendations in Third Prize Essay, written by Mrs. Tait, *St. Edmund's Rectory, Salisbury.*

When the parents are indigent, a fact easily ascertained from the Board of Guardians, or School Board, or by the method of investigation followed by the Charity Organization Society, the State should deal with the children, as, by the compulsory clause of the Elementary Education Act, they may not earn their own living.

Such a system would be economical as, by the aid of good food, children would be able to pass the fifth standard two years earlier than underfed children, and thus be enabled to earn something at the age of 11, instead of having to wait until they reached the age of 13, and so save the school rates.

Indigent parents in receipt of out-relief would have their allowance reduced, and free dinners provided for the children.

Parents, indigent through being temporarily out of work, should be required to make personal application, and the dinners should be granted for not longer than a week at a time.

Children of careless or negligent parents should not receive free dinners, and if in town (not country) schools they did not pass at the Inspection their parents should be fined. A portion of the teachers' salaries should also depend upon the per centage of passes.

Children of vicious or intemperate parents should be sent, when possible to Day Industrial Schools. Otherwise they should be helped by charity with free dinners, and thus given "the start in life involved in a good education," such help to be conditional upon their attending at school regularly and punctually, and upon the parents co-operating, *e.g.*, by taking and keeping the pledge. Parents thus reached and reformed should be assisted, if it were possible to raise them permanently to the level of self support.

To carry out the above a certain number of elementary schools "in the poorer parts of London, and in large towns" should be constituted "dinner or feeding schools," voluntary as regards attendance at them, but "compulsory as regards dining, all children attending them being expected to dine there." Children from other schools should be allowed to come for dinner, and the dinner committee should be paid by the School Board for all the dinners supplied, and have its kitchen on the premises. The dinner fee for children of indigent parents would be recovered by the School Board from the Board of Guardians, and for children of vicious parents would be defrayed out of charitable funds.

"IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?"

An additional Prize Essay, written by

MISS MARY TABOR, *Malvern Link.*

THE question, "Can it be done?" asked so incredulously by practical people when the Penny Dinner question took its first hold of the public mind, has received its full and satisfactory reply. Experience, drawn from many thousands of dinners provided and consumed, has proved conclusively that, certain conditions being present, a wholesome, toothsome, and abundant meal, can be provided for our Elementary School children, at a cost, for cooking and material, of a fraction less than one penny per head. The steady swarms of little customers, collecting day by day with their pennies in their hands, round the various Penny Dinner centres, prove with equal conclusiveness that in the provision thus made a real need has been met; and, also—for the children of the poor, even in their hunger, have their prejudices and predilections in the matter of their food—that the tastes of the consumers have been consulted.

As a matter of commissariat and finance then, the Penny Dinners may be regarded as a proved success. On the one hand, thousands of children through its agency are now being well and comfortably fed, who would else have had no mid-day meal at all; at best a slice of sapless white bread with a scrape of dripping on it, no fit meal for a growing child, or a mess of cold and tasteless scraps, brought with them from home in the morning, and dignified by the name of dinner. And, on the other, the accounts of the managers reveal the fact that financially speaking, where the penny is forthcoming, the Penny Dinner pays.

Whether from the purely educational point of view it may claim attention also, as being a legitimate and not unimportant branch of our Elementary School curriculum, has been decided too. Where these dinners have been systematically and continuously provided, a marked improvement among the ill-fed masses, especially of the poorer class of children, has been the invariable result; and that not in their physique alone, but in their capacity for receiving instruction, in the greater ease with which they pass their standards, and, of course, also in the larger income which, by the increased Government grant, they assist in earning for their respective schools. Eating heartily and regularly of wholesome food, we find children once puny, dull, and listless, picking up

strength and spirits with astonishing celerity. The cry of "over-pressure" which, in nine cases out of ten, is but another name for under-feeding, vanishes. The brain, nourished by a more vigorous body, is equal to its tasks; play has a zest unknown before; the teacher's work is lightened, and, at the same time, the percentage of passes rises, to the manifest advantage of the school finances.

The well-known instance of the Rousdon Schools, where, for ten years, under the auspices of Sir Henry Peek, the experiment has been carried out with scientific accuracy, shows with what entire success, as to physical, mental, and even moral results, the system, on a self-supporting basis, may be worked; and that in a remote and scattered country district, and under what might seem the most unpromising conditions. Practical experience, carried out on an extended scale, proves, in short, that wherever the plan has been tried—in the slums of London, in the poverty-stricken quarters of our large towns, or, as at Rousdon, and elsewhere amid the scattered population of our agricultural districts, the Penny Dinner is an undoubted boon. Indeed, to those who have had much to do with its actual working, the wonder is that such a simple and effective form of co-operation had not been set on foot before.

We may lay aside then as finally settled, all question as to the need, advantage, or possibility of supplying Penny Dinners, on a self-supporting basis, to the poor children of our Elementary Schools. The real problem to be faced is that with which we have here to deal, viz.—What to do with regard to that large proportion of still poorer children, numbering many thousands in all, out of the three or four millions in our schools, who need the dinner, but who do not pay for it?

Given the dinner on the one hand, the hungry and penniless child on the other, shall it be fed or sent empty away? Is the coin to be inexorably claimed, and the little applicant dismissed, fasting and weary from its morning's work, to fast again till school is over, to tug with hunger and with lessons too, to trudge back afterwards, perhaps, through cold and slush, a long mile or more to its squalid home, and there pacify its stomach with a scanty crust, till it forgets itself at last in sleep? Must this be done, or shall we feed the child, and let the penny take its chance?

Among the beneficial results of the Penny Dinner movement we must rank as not the least that it has brought home to us the existence of a vast and hitherto unsuspected mass of chronic hunger, of ill-feeding and under-feeding, among the child population of our large towns especially. There are Board Schools in London where in bad times according to Mr. Marchant Williams, one of the School Board Inspectors, and his report is confirmed by others, fully one-third of the children come breakfastless to school, and where one child in every four often gets no mid-day meal at all. These are exceptional instances, no doubt, but it is a matter of fair calculation that in London alone as many as 50,000 children are often in want of at least one good meal a day. The Penny Dinner system, by providing wholesome meals at a cheap but remunerative rate, has

lessened to an appreciable extent the magnitude of the evil. But worked as it is and must be on the self-supporting basis, it has been powerless as yet to reach that undergrowth of famished want—children suffering through the parents' poverty, fault, or vice, which, hidden out of sight, like the dry rot in the timbers of a house, will by and by, if left unheeded, affect the stability of the whole national edifice. For, be it remembered, these hunger-bitten, ill-nourished children of to-day, will, twenty years hence, those of them who are still alive, be the stunted feeble men and women, the sickly fathers and mothers of the generation next to come; broken-down labourers, starving seamstresses, mechanics always out of work; many of them the inmates of hospitals and workhouses, many more, for poverty is too often the parent of vice and crime, in prisons and penitentiaries; at best, unless they had exceptionally vigorous constitutions to begin with, or had lived under exceptionally good conditions after the starvation period was over, suffering in one form or other that physical deterioration which lack of due nourishment during the period of growth must of necessity entail.

The parents of these children may be starving too, unable through honest poverty to furnish the child with even the penny that the dinner costs; or the child may be unfed through neglect or carelessness at home; as for instance, where the house or the room, for too often there is only one, is locked up when the parents leave in the morning for their work, and the child with no provision made for it, is expected to play about and look after itself while out of school, until it is time to return to supper and to bed; or lastly, it may be, and in the majority of cases it probably is, that vice and drunkenness on the parents' part are at the root of this semi-starvation on that of the child. The little pittance that should have been for its support has been wasted in vicious self-indulgence, or melted away in the publican's till. "The children's bread has been given to the dogs."

But whatever the cause may be, the result, so far as we are now concerned, remains the same. The child is starving or ill-fed, and cannot bring the penny for a dinner. What are we to do?

The problem is a difficult one, no doubt. There could hardly otherwise be such conflict of opinion upon it as we find existing among those who have given attention to the subject, and who, in many cases, have themselves taken practically in hand this task of feeding the children of the poor. But insoluble, even in the present imperfect state of English law, it need not be, provided a few guiding principles are kept steadily in view.

These principles, on which the whole solution of the problem rests, are—

I. The two-fold responsibility of the parent—to the child, and to the state.

II. The rights of the child.

III. The rights and duties of the state.

I will say at once, wherever we have a starving child at school,

starving through no fault of its own, and at the same time a Penny Dinner centre in connection with the school, the child must be fed, the dinner must be paid for, and a *nexus* must be found between the two.

Some *nexus* there must be. Humanity, Christianity, political economy itself, read by the light of common sense, all declare that to let a child of tender years stand starving before our eyes, pinched and flaccid for want of food—food, the very sight of which is actually sharpening into fresh keenness the cravings of hunger unappeased, is a thing impossible. We cannot do it. As Mr. Mundella said justly, speaking on this subject before the House of Commons, "We must draw the line somewhere. We draw it at a starving child." And yet it is equally impossible, looked at under the same light at once of humanity and common sense, to feed each hungry child gratuitously.

The latter plan is not without its advocates. Free Dinners for starving children, like Free education for all, is a favourite scheme with eager but shallow philanthropists, and it must be owned that plausible and even powerful arguments may be adduced to support it. It would not, in the first place, cost so very much; whether the dinners were provided by the state, the rates, or by private charity. A hundred thousand children could be fed on the Penny Dinner plan every school day in the week, for a little over £2,000 a week. The State spends three millions annually on elementary education, exclusive of the amount raised by rates, contributions to voluntary schools, and children's pence. The Board Schools of London alone, built since the Education Act was passed in 1870, have cost not less than fifty millions sterling, about £17 for each school place; and it is estimated that the capital sunk during the last ten years in the erection of voluntary schools, Church of England and denominational, throughout the country, amounts to at least fifteen millions more. In the face of figures like these, an additional sum of £100,000 or so, spent annually in providing a daily dinner each school day in the week for even a hundred thousand children, would be comparatively speaking a trifling addition to the gross national expenditure.

Or to put the argument in another form, it is urged that the country provides for educational purposes in the form of taxes, rates and voluntary contributions six millions sterling, or thereabouts, annually, a sum equivalent to thirty shillings a head on an average, for the education of every child of school age. If the child, through the physical suffering and depressed vitality consequent on habitual under-feeding, is unable to profit by the costly and complicated machinery set in motion on its behalf, surely, it is urged, the nation might find it worth while to add this fractional £100,000 a year to its present expenditure, and by regular feeding secure to the whole of this hungry mass the physical stamina which alone can make it possible to work the young brain to purpose; if indeed, the brain of an underfed child can be worked at all without injury to the already debilitated frame. To spend

with one hand, it may reasonably be urged, and to withhold with the other, is under such conditions to waste the whole.

For, it may be further said, whether the parents of the child are too poor to find the daily penny for its dinner, or whether it suffers from their neglect and carelessness, or worse still from the vice and drunkenness which keeps them steeped in poverty to the lips, the fact in every case remains the same—the child is starving for want of food. And as every medical man will tell us, to attempt to teach a starving child, or to make its brain hold even the minimum of information which the Code requires, is like trying to carry water in a sack.

It is all true, and yet, I repeat emphatically, the dinner must be paid for. The penny must be forthcoming, though the child must not be left unfed. A Free Dinner, offered in permanence to every child who brought a credential of hunger as its only pass, would be no real boon. It would but tend to root more deeply within the nation's vitals the evils of which this semi-starvation of masses of the children in our schools is an outward and visible result. The dinner unpaid for, received as a matter of right or custom, would be no more a lasting good, even to the classes that need it most, than the comfort from a whiff of chloroform would be to the sufferer from a broken leg, if the surgeon who administered the dose, content to see his patient out of pain, walked off and left the limb unset.

And this for two reasons.—1. A free dinner, given indiscriminately and without inquiry to the children of careless, vicious, or drunken parents, would be simply a premium on misconduct. The money saved to such people by the partial maintenance of their children, would be only so much the more to be wasted on their own vicious self-indulgence. With a free dinner, and possibly free education too, provided for their children, even that small deterrent which parental responsibility imposes would be removed, and idle or vicious parents would themselves be "free" practically to cast their families as a burden, partially at all events, upon the state, without being compelled as now to do so in *formâ pauperis*, or to receive immunity from payment of fees as an act of grace on the part of self-supporting members of the community.

2. Even to parents struggling themselves with indigence and hunger, free dinners for their children, given in permanence and unconditionally, would bring no permanent relief. There is, and until the economic conditions of unskilled labour are greatly altered and improved, there will always be an indigent class, a "residuum," whose earnings never more than suffice to supply them with the barest necessaries of existence. Whatever sum a family can be kept alive upon, to that sum wages, in this lowest stratum of society, are sure to sink. If the children are gratuitously provided for, the necessities of this "residuum" are to that extent diminished, and the choking competition for employment among the members of this unskilled class will force down the rate of wages by the same amount.

The way for either public or private charity to give real aid in lifting these poverty-stricken masses out of their wretched slough, is not to supply them with the necessaries of existence, in the form of food or shelter, or even as a right, with that minimum of education for their children which parents are now required by law to find the means for. A wise benevolence will rather bestow upon them advantages which they could not procure themselves, or would not if they could, make the effort to procure. Paths and wash-houses, free libraries, open spaces for health and recreation, these are the real boons to the poor; above all, public provision for the education of their children, in excess, and far in excess, of what the children's fees alone could provide. Not more than one-sixth of the current expenses of the London School Board, it may be remarked here, are met by the children's fees. The rest is a gift from the nation to its poor. It is by aid of a permanent kind in this form, and not by a gratuitous supply of the barest necessaries of life, to be claimed as a right by all alike, that the dead weight of chronic indigence among the lowest classes of society is to be reduced.

The missing link, the *nexus* between the dinner and the starving child, is to be found, I believe, not in a system of free meals for all who need them, Penny Dinners without the penny, to be established by law, or set on foot by voluntary effort; but in machinery, or through the aid of machinery already existing, viz., the School Boards and school attendance committees of our Elementary Schools, and the Boards of Guardians. By the judicious and rigorous use of these agencies in connection with the Penny Dinner centres, we have it in our power, I venture to think, even in the present imperfect state of the laws affecting children, to effect a very considerable amelioration in the condition of those whose ill-feeding is the result of vice, intemperance, or culpable neglect on the parents' part.

At the same time, I am bound, after careful study both of these laws themselves and of their actual working, to express the conviction that until they are to a certain extent amended, the impediments interposed by them in the way of any systematic and extended efforts to secure the physical wellbeing of children whose ill-feeding is owing to the neglect and misconduct of the parents, rather than to their poverty, must render such effort a matter of great and needless difficulty and delay.

I will endeavour presently to point out in what direction amendment is desirable in order to secure, where necessary to do so, the rights of the child against parental misconduct or neglect; and also to meet the case of children whose parents through no fault, but from poverty alone, are unable either to feed them properly at home, or to supply them with the penny needed for a dinner at school. Before proceeding, however, to the details of what I trust may prove a practical solution of the problem in hand, let us lay a little deeper the foundations on which, as regards these half-starved children in our Elementary Schools, our whole procedure must be based.

Now, whether there be one such child, or one hundred thousand in our Elementary Schools, in which we must bear in mind, the whole, or nearly the whole working-class population of the country between the ages of five and thirteen are collected, we must lay it down as an axiom that a child habitually underfed, or so ill-fed as to make healthy growth impossible, is being by some one to that extent defrauded of its rights. Let us be clear on this point. In a civilised community—we will put aside all question of a Christian State—in a civilised community, I repeat, which cannot kill out of the way its burdensome or useless members, every child, until of an age to support itself, has a right to at least the minimum of clothing, shelter, food and training, required to fit it for becoming and continuing throughout its after-life, a self-supporting member of the community, able to produce not less than it consumes, and discharging in its turn, as a citizen and parent, the duties which it owes to the community of which it forms a part. Short of this, in the interests of the community itself, we cannot stop. If we do we shall find ourselves committed to the worst form of communism; that, namely, by which the industrious are compelled to toil for and support not only those who cannot, but also those who will not work.

Granting then, as the foundation of our argument, that every child born into the nation possesses as its birthright this claim to the minimum of clothing, shelter, food, and training, needed to prepare it for securing in due time its own support, the next step towards the solution of the problem before us is to enquire, who are the natural guardians of the child, responsible to it and to the community, of which, as well as of the family, every child is an integral part, for its existence, sustenance, and general well-being?

To this we reply, the parents, undoubtedly; and of these, the father, in a pre-eminent degree. If a man takes upon himself the responsibility of adding another unit to the sum-total of the population, he binds himself in doing so to provide to the extent of his ability against the community receiving thereby the dead-weight of an additional burden, to be supported by it for an indefinite term in a poor-house, hospital, or prison. The maintenance and education of his child are a debt due from every parent to the community of which both himself and it are a component part; due from him until such time as the child is able to support itself. It is a debt also from the parent to the child, which, without will of its own is launched upon the world, and if a parent refuses or is unable to discharge the obligations he has himself incurred, society, as trustee both for the child's interests and its own, is bound to step in, and itself secure them against the neglect or impotence of the natural guardian. And further, if the parent, with whom the first responsibility rests, is able, but through neglect, improvidence or vice, fails to discharge his obligations towards the child, and through it to the community towards whom in its person he has contracted them as well, then to that extent he must be required to stand aside, and allow society, or its deputy, the Law, to take his place,

giving to the child its due, and requiring repayment from the parent to itself.

In this respect the theory, and unfortunately in cases such as these, the practice too, of English law, based as it is on the old Roman law of *patriæ potestas*, has been too much that of the absolute right and property of the father in his child, to the almost entire exclusion of any rights on the part of the child, or of any duties, except as to pauper children on the part of the State. We are only now beginning to recognise the fact that the child belongs, not to the parent alone, but to the community as well; and that the nation, not less than the parent, has rights and duties in relation to it which cannot with impunity be neglected or ignored.

The first real step towards recognising the joint responsibility of the parent and the State in regard to children not actually paupers, was in the passing of the Education Act of 1870. That Act undertook to provide the machinery needed for the efficient elementary education of every child between the ages of five and thirteen, leaving it no longer to be furnished by voluntary effort mainly, or in default of this by such substitute as the antiquated "Dame school" could supply.

But a greater step still was taken, and a more important principle was recognised, when the Act of 1876 made it incumbent on the parent to avail himself of the means provided, and declared it to be his "duty" to educate his child, pains and penalties being attached to refusal or neglect. The law of the responsibility of the parent for the welfare and future well-being of his child, as well as for the preservation of its life—though that responsibility extended only to his causing it to receive instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic—was for the first time definitely laid down.

"Whereas it is expedient," says the preamble of the Act, "to make further provision for the education of children, and for securing the fulfilment of parental responsibility in relation thereto, and otherwise to amend and to extend the Elementary Education Acts, be it enacted"——. And then, having cited the title, extent, and date of commencement of the Act, it plunges at once *in medias res*, and declares: "4. It shall be the duty of the parent of every child to cause such child to receive efficient elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and, if such parent fail to perform such duty, he shall be liable to such orders and penalties as are provided by this Act." 39 & 40 Vict., c. 79, s. 4.

The duty of the State with regard to children thrown upon its charge as paupers had been, before this, in Poor Law Acts and elsewhere, acknowledged and defined, and legislation, regulating the employment of children in factories, &c., had also recognised the partial responsibility of the State for their safety and well-being. But in the preamble, and in this 4th section of the Education Act of 1876, the principle of parental responsibility, and the duty of the parent to the child, in its positive and not merely negative aspect, was, I believe, for the first time defined and enforced, though in one department only, by English statute law. Future legis-

lation will, doubtless, extend this legal responsibility of the parent till it embraces the physical as well as the educational well-being of the child. Nothing, perhaps, will do more to inform public opinion in the matter, or to awaken the conscience of the nation to the need of putting pressure on Parliament in the direction of more stringent provision for the proper maintenance of children by their parents, than the facts which the Penny Dinner movement has brought to light, and the difficulty of dealing with them caused by the present condition of the law.

In the meantime, there is no wisdom in waiting till the stream runs by before we attempt to cross. Having laid down for our own guidance the three principles, of the responsibility of the parent, the rights of the child, and the rights and duty of the State, let us see how far we can apply them, under existing conditions of the law, in connection with Penny Dinners, to the case of children who are ill-fed, and who do not pay.

I. Where the parents or guardians of the children are indigent.

The defects of the law are least apparent here, and the difficulties in the way of dealing on fairly sound economic principles with the majority of cases coming under this head are not, I think, insuperable.

We must accept the fact that with the existing depression of trade on the one hand, and a plethora of unskilled labour on the other, there are many parents, willing to work, and anxious to do well by their children, who are, nevertheless, honestly unable to provide them with a sufficiency of food. In other cases, parents are ill and cannot work, and the children have to pinch while the bread-winner is laid aside; or the family may be dependent on the mother for support, and the care of an infant or sick child may prevent her for a time from going from home to work. In these and similar cases no fault beyond those of thriftlessness and ignorance, perhaps, are chargeable to the parents; and if by struggling on they can keep themselves off the parish, or out of the poorhouse, their sturdy or even sullen pride may be respected. But the children suffer grievously, sometimes, and with irreparable injury to health, while the parents are waiting for "times to mend."

The teachers in the schools know where this semi-starvation of the children is at work. In truth, chronic under-feeding cannot well be hid. The dull lack-lustre eye, the heavy brain, the pinched and pallid aspect, point out only too clearly to the experienced eye, which the dinnerless children are. And in many cases the teachers, who usually are tolerably well acquainted with the circumstances of the children, and the character of the homes whence they come, know whether the suffering of the child is owing to the misfortune or the misconduct of the parent. Where this is clearly ascertainable, and especially if the poverty is of a kind that may be tided over if temporary assistance is forthcoming, the case will best be met, not by a free dinner to the child whenever it presents itself for one, but by a system of "Dinner-orders," issued to the

parent, renewable for periods of a week, a month, or longer if desirable, and for which application would be made by the parent to the managers of the dinner centre, in the same way as application for remission of fees on the ground of poverty is now made to the school managers. This, of course, implies that the managers of the respective Dinner centres have funds for such dinner orders, as well as the means of ascertaining the character and circumstances of the applicants.

The advantages of this plan over indiscriminate relief are: I. That it excludes idle, worthless, and vicious parents from profiting by charity in the person of their children. II. That it keeps the fact of parental responsibility in view, by requiring the parent to make personal application on his child's behalf. III. That to a certain extent it provides a check upon the conduct of the parent; since the issuing of the dinner-order depends, not on his poverty alone, but on his satisfying the managers of his fitness to receive it. IV. That dinner-orders thus regularly given may enable an indigent parent to tide over his difficulties, without either going on the rates, or injuring his child by insufficiency of food. V. That the meals procurable by such an order can be appropriated by none but the child for whose benefit it was issued. VI. That the order can be withdrawn where the poverty is seen to be of such a chronic and hopeless nature that it can be met only by admission of the family into the poor-house.

The only circumstances in which the practical working of this plan would be at fault, would, I believe, be in cases of the latter class, where parents, though sunk in hopeless indigence, yet obstinately refuse to enter the union, preferring to exist in a state of semi-starvation rather than submit themselves to the restrictions of the "House."

No one would wish to discourage the honest independence of the poor. But whether or not a parent asserts the "liberty of the subject" by choosing deliberately to starve himself, when relief under reasonable if distasteful conditions is at hand, assuredly his liberty ought not to extend to the starvation of his helpless child, or the ruining of its health for life. Society, in its own interests as well as in those of the child, should have the power to interpose, and prevent the future man from suffering in the person of the child; nor would it be difficult, I think, to devise legislation that might meet the case.

Funds, of course, would be needed, if this plan of issuing dinner orders to indigent parents were carried out to the extent required for meeting all the cases under this head. It is estimated that there are on average 60,000 children in London alone, who are in need of at least one good meal a day. If we class one-half of these cases under the head of honest indigence, we shall have about £30,000 a year as the sum needed to provide them all with dinners for the five school days in the week. If Penny Dinner centres were generally established and systematically worked, in connection with every Elementary School, it ought not to be

difficult to raise a voluntary fund sufficient to meet these cases, and to leave a surplus for others that we shall have to consider presently.

What I would suggest, however, as a preferable, or at least a supplementary plan, would be that provision should be made by law, enabling indigent parents to apply for such dinner orders to the Guardians of the Poor, in precisely the same way as they now apply for remission of the school fees; such grant, like the payment of fees, not being deemed to be "parochial relief." This, however, could only be generally available if, as we may hope will soon be the case, such dinner centres were established within reach of every Elementary School, or were a recognised part, legally or by voluntary action, of all such schools.

The next question for consideration is how to deal, in connection with Penny Dinners, with children who are ill-fed and do not pay, and whose parents or guardians are careless and negligent.

Here again it will be necessary in the first place to discriminate between the various kinds and causes of negligence on the parent's or guardian's part. Negligence may shade off on the one side into mere thoughtlessness and ignorance, or on the other into culpable or even criminal neglect. Take, for example, the case already referred to, common among the labouring poor, where the parent or parents leave home in the morning, going, perhaps, some considerable distance to their work, not to return till night. Unless there is an older child to leave in charge of the house or room, the children attending school must as a matter of course be locked out during the day. Perhaps they take something with them to eat in the interim, a hunch of bread, or such scraps as may be left from the morning meal. If there is nothing, or nothing to spare, and no coppers are at hand for the children to buy a mid-day meal, the careless or hurried, the over-worked or worried parent, bids the children "clear out," locks the door, and leaves them to wait for their next meal till the door is unlocked and the supper loaf brought in at night. The children will not be actually famishing, it is true, by that time; and they may have as much bread then as they care to eat; but young children cannot fast with impunity throughout the day; and to require them to exhaust the unfed brain by school-work in addition is to intensify discomfort into suffering, and entail upon them serious injury to health if the process is frequently or habitually repeated.

Or again, the parents, and this too is a common case, may be thriftless as well as careless of their children, living from hand to mouth, in work one week and spending all they earn, the next starving till something turns up again, and then again wasting what might well be spared. Such parents cannot justly be classed as "indigent," for their earnings, if carefully economised, would suffice to keep them out of want; yet their children are fed and starved alternately, and in fact suffer more keenly from the actual sense of hunger during these starving periods than others do who are accustomed to live habitually at starvation point.

Often, however, the neglect to supply children with proper food may be traced to sources more culpable than mere thriftlessness or carelessness. Cruelty, or parsimony amounting to cruelty, are at the bottom of much of that ill-feeding of children which the Penny Dinner system has brought to light. Children of school age, eating but earning nothing towards the cost of their "keep," are not unfrequently looked upon by the improvident or idle parent as a burden to be lightened as far as possible by any, even the most discreditable means. Children in such cases, ill-fed and under-fed by unnatural parents, or unprincipled guardians, may stave off hunger with a mess of cold potatoes, or the scant slice from a baker's loaf served out to them, but they cannot feel nourished and at ease on such poor and insufficient fare. No wonder the poor little things pinched with hunger, and fagged with lessons learned upon an empty stomach, present themselves without their pennies for a share in the steaming savoury school dinner; only if the rules are strict, and strict, alas! they must be, to be sent back hungry and reluctant, to the wretched fare doled out at home.

Careful inquiry must discriminate, of course, between these various sources of under-feeding, from which children in such cases suffer. But I confess that the difficulty is great in the existing state of the law, of dealing with them in such a way as not to do harm with the one hand, by perpetuating or tending to perpetuate the causes of the evil through the very means used by the other in mitigating its effects. To feed the children of the thriftless and improvident, when starving time arrives, is in reality to encourage the improvidence and self-indulgence of the parents, and so to remove perhaps the one incentive to forethought and self-denial which they possess. To feed the children of those who will not work except under compulsion of actual necessity, is but to increase the amount of idleness in which it is possible for them to indulge; for of course, up to a certain point, such parents are compelled to work, if they would avoid either the restrictions of the poor-house, or starving outright together with their children. Again, to feed the children of those who scant them needlessly of food at home is to put a premium on cruelty and selfishness. Yet in every case above enumerated it is scarcely possible, except under grossly exaggerated conditions of neglect, to impose any legal check on the failure of the parents or guardians to provide their children with regular and sufficient food.

Not so if the parent neglects to provide education for the child. The law is stringent here, and provision is made in every possible way for compelling and enabling a parent to educate his child. Yet food, in sufficient quantity to maintain a growing child in health, to build up its frame, and to keep it from the gnawings of hunger, is surely a prior necessity even to instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, in fact, the instruction itself cannot well go on without it. A child may develop into a healthy, self-supporting, law-abiding man or woman, though brought up in ignorance of these rudiments of knowledge. It cannot grow up into vigorous

manhood or womanhood, nor be fitted physically for becoming a self-supporting member of the community, the parent of children healthy and vigorous in their turn, if its vital powers have been exhausted and depressed by prolonged and habitual under-feeding during the period of growth. Physicians who have given their attention to the subject, declare emphatically, that during the first decade of life the child's physical development is of supreme importance, and that its intellectual development during this period should be a secondary consideration. During the years next following, and this in all ranks and classes, the same authorities affirm that the development of body and brain, the physical and mental faculties should receive attention in the same degree. Later on, according to the destination in after life, intellectual or technical training will predominate over the physical; unless, as of course must largely be the case among elementary school children in rural districts, or the lowest class in towns, manual labour of a kind more or less unskilled is taken to immediately on the term of school-life closing. Moral training, it need not be said, the cultivation of the heart and conscience, goes hand in hand with both from the first dawn of self-consciousness in the child, until the period of education by others ends.

The importance of the point at issue must be the excuse for the length of this digression. I wish to establish the fact that the physical development and well-being of the child during the whole period of school age, are of equal, and for part of that period of prior importance, to its intellectual development. And as a corollary to this, that if the State, in the interests jointly of the child and of itself, so far interferes with the absolute right of the father as to require him to educate his child efficiently, it ought also to interfere, if need be, to require him to feed it sufficiently for the purposes of nourishment and growth; and should make the same provision for the enforcement of "parental responsibility" in this respect, as in the other.

It is difficult to see how this conclusion is to be avoided; more especially when we recognise the fact that in the case of starved and ill-fed children, the Education Act, admirable as it is, does for want of some corresponding "Sustenance of Children Act," actually defeat its own end by causing that delicate organ, the brain of a young child, to be worked under unfit conditions. As well work a spavined horse, as exact mental exertion in any continuous form from the flaccid brain of a half-starved child. Indeed, the very dulness and inertia which characterise children in this condition are nature's own mode of fortifying herself against the evil. She lessens the output in every possible way, so as to economise to the utmost the scanty store of vital force, prompting the child, as its instinctive defence, to that "masterly inactivity" which the teacher seeks mistakenly to overcome. Sleep and warmth are the best conditions for these under-fed children in our elementary schools. Whether they must needs be under-fed, in cases coming under the head of parental carelessness and negligence, is a question to be

met, as a preliminary step, by legislation, rather than by voluntary effort.

Still something may be done on behalf of such children, with the means now at our disposal, and that without infringing economic laws, or intensifying the evil in the attempt to palliate it.

Where the Dinner centre is in connection with an Elementary School, it may be presumed that the children availing themselves of it are in attendance at the school, and as a rule therefore, the nature of the homes whence they come will be more or less known to the teachers. For our present purpose we may divide the children into three sections, comprising, first, those who regularly take advantage of the dinner thus provided, and who pay for it; next, those who are sufficiently fed at home; the third section, with which we are now concerned, consisting of those who from time to time present themselves for dinner without payment.

It is the latter, the character of whose home surroundings it is necessary for us accurately to determine. As to their hunger, that is not a matter to need investigation.

Where a child, known to the teachers to be either occasionally or habitually under-fed, from causes coming under the head of carelessness or negligence, applies for dinner without the payment, the best course to pursue on a first application, if the child cannot otherwise procure a meal before afternoon school is over, will be to give the dinner free, and then by an officer or other person appointed for the purpose, to make immediate and strict investigation into the circumstances of the case.

If the parents or guardians are properly appealed to, or, if they are assured that further negligence on their part will entail inconvenient publicity being given to the case, or if they have previously applied to the guardians or school manager to have the child's school fees remitted, and fear to have the remission withdrawn, or finally, if the case is one of culpable, amounting to criminal neglect, so that if followed up it could be dealt with by a magistrate, then in all probability fear of the consequences would induce them to comply with the alternative offered, and allow the child to have its dinner at the school or dinner-centre, paying for it weekly in advance. In bad cases, where there would be real hold upon the parent if compliance were refused, the whole week's dinners should be insisted on, and the child should not be left to the risk of alternately fasting and feeding, if it came to school sometimes with payment for a dinner there, and at others with the excuse from the parent that it would be fed at home. Under all circumstances the condition of a child who had once applied under stress of hunger for a free dinner should be sharply watched, and inquiry from the child itself, as well as investigation on the spot, should be repeated if under-feeding is suspected again, and the school dinners have been discontinued.

It is to be feared however, that let inquiry and investigation be as searching as they will, cases under this second head, as under the first, will still remain, which cannot under existing conditions

be dealt with as they ought; English law, as regards parental responsibility, except in relation to the education of children, is lamentably defective. "It is now well established" says Chief Justice Cockburn "that except under the poor laws there is no legal obligation on the part of a father to maintain his child, unless indeed the neglect to do so should bring the case within the Criminal Laws." "The Poor Law Amendment Act, 1868," section 37, which is the only statute bearing on this subject, runs thus:

"When any parent shall wilfully neglect to provide adequate food, clothing, medical aid, or lodging for his child, being in his custody, under the age of fourteen years, whereby the health of such child shall have been or shall be likely to be seriously injured, he shall be guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction, and being convicted thereof before any two Justices, shall be liable to be imprisoned for any period not exceeding six months, with or without hard labour, as such Justices shall decide; provided that such Justices may suspend the sentence until further notice if the offender enter into his own recognisances, with or without one or more sureties as the Justices may think fit, to come up for judgment when called upon; and the guardians of the Union or Parish in which such child may be living shall institute the prosecution and pay the costs thereof out of their funds."

Some doubt exists as to whether any person other than the guardians can legally institute proceedings in a case of this description; but where the officers of a Penny Dinner centre in connection with any Elementary School meet with a child who is underfed to such an extent that it cannot receive the "efficient instruction" required now by law, without serious injury to health, it is certainly competent to them to report the case to the Guardians, whose duty it will then be to prosecute.

Any person, however, official or otherwise, may on his own responsibility, lay an indictment at Common Law against a parent or guardian thus offending, but in this case it is necessary to prove that injury to the child's health has been already caused, and that it has been serious. The delay, expense, and difficulty of procedure, are also greater in Common Law proceedings, as the case must be tried at the Sessions before a jury, instead of at a Police Court before a magistrate by summary jurisdiction.

Under the "Poor Law Amendment Act," however, and through the intervention of the Guardians of the Poor, it ought not to be difficult, if the law as it exists at present be reasonably interpreted and strictly enforced, to obtain a conviction against any parent who wilfully neglects to provide "adequate food" for his child, For, as any physician experienced in the treatment of children will certify, it is not possible for a child who is suffering from neglect and under-feeding to receive "efficient elementary instruction," on the lines laid down by the Code, or, indeed, for the brain, under such conditions, to be compelled to work at all, without serious injury to health being either caused or "likely to be caused."

It is not clear, however, whether on the same grounds a parent

is not liable to be proceeded against under the Education Act itself. For if, without reasonable excuse or unavoidable cause, the child is sent to school in a state precluding it from receiving instruction, except at the risk of serious injury to health, or even of endangering its life, the parent cannot be held either to provide efficient instruction for it, or to cause it to receive such instruction, and becomes, therefore, liable to the penalties imposed. It has been held that a parent who sent his child to school, but without the school fees, did not "cause it to receive instruction" within the meaning of the Act, although the child was admitted and taught. And it is probable, if the question were raised in the Law Courts, that the parent who, without reasonable excuse, sent his child unfed, and therefore unfit for work, to school, failed also to fulfil the obligations of the law.

It is possible, also—but I do not advance this with any certainty beyond suggestion only—that by legal process the managers of a Penny Dinner centre might recover the cost of a dinner from the parents of a child who was underfed, and unable otherwise to procure a meal, and to whom they had supplied it. And this on the grounds by which any tradesman can recover payment from a parent for "necessaries" supplied to a minor; the term "necessaries" being construed according to the means and station of the parties concerned. Food supplied to a half-starved child who cannot otherwise procure it is certainly a "necessary," let the parent be as poor as he may. Were this point once actually established, the costs in which the defaulting parent would be mulcted would form a strong deterrent from culpable neglect in supplying his child with food. The owner of an impounded animal that has been neglected for twelve hours can be sued for the value of food supplied to it after that period. But, as a matter of fact, recent legislation has made it less difficult to punish a man for starving his horse or dog, than for starving his own helpless child. "Had it been a dog," said a magistrate who had been applied to in a case of parental cruelty, "I could have helped you; but it is only a child, and the law is powerless to assist."

Lastly, there is the case of children whose parents or guardians are vicious and intemperate, and whose inability to pay arises from these causes. Here, again, we find ourselves faced by difficulties both economic and connected with the administration of the law. It may be held, in the interests both of the child and of the State, that a vicious or intemperate parent is not a fit person to have the unrestricted control and training of his child. Its moral training he is manifestly unfit for, and when brutalised by drink his physical control may seriously endanger both its health and life. What concerns us here, however, is rather the negative aspect of the case—*i.e.*, when, on the one hand, the vicious or intemperate parent, though he may be in the receipt of fair wages, consumes them all upon himself, leaving his child to starve; or, on the other, is unable, through his own misconduct, to procure employment, with, of course, the same result. In such cases, the law, I think,

if strictly enforced, is sufficient very materially to modify the evil.

The various modes of dealing with cases of parental carelessness and negligence, are of course equally applicable here. But in addition, there are provisions of the law with regard to the children of vicious and intemperate parents, which need only to be more strictly and extensively enforced.

Under the "Industrial Schools' Act, 1866," section XIV., it is provided that—

"Any person may bring before two justices or a magistrate, any child apparently under the age of fourteen years, that comes within any of the following descriptions, namely:—

1. That is found begging or receiving alms. * * *

2. That is found wandering, and not having any home or settled place of abode, or proper guardianship or means of subsistence."

Other clauses include the case of children found consorting with reputed thieves or prostitutes. And the justices or magistrate before whom a child is so brought, if satisfied on enquiry that it comes within any of these descriptions, may order it to be sent to a Day Industrial School, that is to say, a "school in which industrial training, elementary education, and one or more meals a day, but not lodging, are provided for the children."

And by the Education Act, 1876, section XIII., it is provided, that—

"Where the local authority (meaning the School Board or School Attendance Committee) are informed by any person of any child in their jurisdiction who is stated by that person to be liable to be ordered by a Court under this Act to attend school, or to be sent under this Act, or the Industrial Schools' Act, 1866, to an Industrial School, it shall be the duty of the local authority to take proceedings under this Act or the Industrial Schools' Act, 1866, accordingly, unless the local authority think that it is inexpedient to take such proceedings."

The term "alms" is defined as "anything given for the relief of the poor." An unfed and penniless child therefore, begging at a Penny Dinner centre for the food which it cannot otherwise procure, may within the meaning of the Act be deemed to be "begging for alms"; and if so, it is competent to a magistrate, having regard to the interests of the child, to order it to be sent to a Day Industrial School; and the order may also provide that the parent shall contribute to its maintenance while there a sum not exceeding two shillings a week.

It may be that the mother, and not the father, is the parent to blame for the semi-starvation of the child. Cases are constantly coming before the courts in which the mother, during her husband's absence, has sold or pawned everything in the house for drink, leaving her children in the meantime to starve. Nothing can be more deplorable than the lot of children in such circumstances; the father, perhaps, working at a distance is obliged at times to be away for days together, while the children are worse than motherless at home. Here also, the best, and indeed almost the only practical

course to pursue, is to procure an order for the child to be sent to a Day Industrial School. This can be done without bringing any charge against either the parent or the child, under section XVI, clause 4 of the Education Act, 1876; which provides that upon the request of the local authority, *i.e.*, School Board or School Attendance Committee, and of the parent of the child, and upon the undertaking of the parent to pay a sum of not less than one shilling a week, the managers of a certified Day Industrial School may receive such child into the school. It is probable that a parent in such straits at home, and unable in any other way to help himself or his child, would be willing to co-operate with the school authorities in thus partially securing proper food and supervision for his child. At all events, the father under such circumstances would doubtless, if the question were put to him, be ready to find the weekly fivepence that would secure comfortable meals for the child at the Penny Dinner centre.

Whether the term "proper guardianship," in Section XIV., clause 2, of the Industrial Schools Act, 1866, can be so construed as to provide for the removal to a day industrial school of a child under the very improper guardianship of intemperate or vicious parents, by whom it is ill-fed at home, is a point to be decided; as also whether a child in such circumstances, left as it sometimes is for a whole day or longer, without food other than it can pick up for itself in the streets, may be regarded under the same clause as being "without visible means of subsistence." If decided thus, a magistrate in either case might order the child to be sent to an industrial school, or to a day industrial school. In the former, a child is taken wholly out of the parents' control, away from the neglect and evil influences of home, but with the disadvantage of an admixture of the criminal element in its new surroundings. In the case of a day industrial school this element is absent, but the child is only partially maintained, and is not removed entirely from under parental control.

It may be added here, that should the terms 'found begging or receiving alms," or "being without visible means of subsistence," bear the above construction, there is no reason why the provisions of the Act should not also be put in force in cases coming under the second head, where children unfed, through the carelessness or negligence of their parents, apply for food at a Penny Dinner centre without the means of paying for it.

It will probably be found that in the extension of the day industrial school system we should have our best safeguard for neglected ill-fed children, who are under questionable or evil influences at home. To remove all such children entirely and at once from the parents' control would be neither practicable nor desirable. Even a bad home, except in the very worst of cases, is not altogether destitute of humanising and educating influences. In its comparative freedom, blended with privation, the child acquires a certain faculty of self-help and independence less easily learned in the mechanic round of a public institution, but in-

dispensable when it has to trust, as by-and-bye must be the case, to its own resources for support. There are very strong reasons, in the interests both of the child and the state, for causing such children, wherever it is possible, to be sent to a day industrial school, which may shortly be detailed.

In the first place, the child itself, by the industrial training which, in addition to elementary instruction, it receives, is prepared to some extent for that struggle for existence into which it must inevitably be forced, so soon as its term of school life is over. A child of twelve or thirteen, turned adrift on the world obliged to pick up a living as it can, with a bad home, with vicious or intemperate parents, spending everything they can lay hands on upon themselves, pressed at once without industrial knowledge of any kind into the choking mass of ill-paid unskilled labour, is in truth in a sorry plight. He cannot get employment, for he can do nothing except that labour of untaught hands which thousands as needy and helpless as himself are hustling him for the chance of securing for themselves. The ill-feeding and semi-starvation of childhood have deteriorated his physical stamina, the tendencies of vicious or intemperate parents, inherited too probably by the child, have nothing now to prevent them from developing. His wits have been sharpened by the education he has received at school; and if he cannot find honest work, or do it if found, what is there for him but to live by these?

A girl past school age is in even worse case than a boy. Helpless and untaught in everything belonging to housework—the only thing as a rule that a girl of thirteen can earn her own living by, she either cannot get into service at all, for what mistress, even the poorest, would think her worth her "keep?" or being found useless, and in the way, is driven about from one "place" to another, giving satisfaction to her employers in none, till she sinks at last to the lowest, but not, alas! the worst paid occupation of a girl in her position, and finds her living on the streets.

Such children, boys or girls, untaught before they leave school in anything they can earn wages by, and uncared for afterwards, have no reasonable chance of doing well. The wonder indeed is, not that there should be such ceaseless reinforcements of the helpless, idle, dissolute, or criminal part of the population, that dead weight of misery, poverty, and vice, which the rest of the community find themselves compelled to support, but that there should not be more recruits to this wretched contingent than there are.

If the unfed, neglected, ill-born children, who form the material whence this mass of pauperism, vice, and crime, is being continually evolved, were drafted wherever it was possible into day industrial schools, or something equivalent to them, the evil influences of their wretched homes would be reduced to a minimum, at the minimum of cost to the community, and the minimum of interference with the parents themselves. Among the scattered

population of a rural district the system would be more or less inapplicable, but nothing need prevent its extension where most it is needed, among the neglected and poverty-stricken masses of our larger towns. The present inquiry, I venture to think, will not have been set on foot in vain if it should lead to more effective measures being taken for dealing with a class of children who, more than any other perhaps, appeal to the State, as a matter both of duty and of its own interest for help.

Provision is made in the Education Act, 1876, for the establishing, building, and maintaining of a certified Day Industrial School, by a school board (the consent of a Secretary of State, and not of the education department being required), if, "owing to the circumstances of any class of population in any school district a school in which industrial training, elementary education, and one or more meals a day, but not lodging, are provided for the children, is necessary or expedient for the proper training and control of the children of such class." And towards the expenses of children sent as suggested in the previous pages, Parliament may contribute a sum not exceeding one shilling per head per week. The parent of a child thus sent must also contribute a sum not exceeding two shillings per week, as ordered by the magistrate, and payable to the school authorities in aid of their expenses; and if unable to pay it, he may apply to the guardians for the remission in whole or in part, as in the case of school fees.

How cases coming under the various heads of poverty, negligence, vice, or intemperance, on the part of parents, may be properly investigated and decided on, is a question demanding careful consideration. It is not too much perhaps, to hope, that in time we may have an amended or extended Education Act, making it the "duty" of a parent to cause his child to receive, not only efficient elementary instruction, but also a sufficent mid-day meal, either at home or at school; such a meal as shall enable the child to receive instruction in the afternoon with benefit instead of detriment to its growing frame. If the means that are used for enforcing attendance at school were extended to the enforcement of this, and if further, the same provision were made for the payment of dinner fees, where a Penny Dinner centre existed, that there is now for the remission of school fees, where poverty can be proved, the machinery now existing would be at once and every where sufficient for our purpose. Or a short "Sustenance of Children Act," with similar provisions, applying to all children under the age of fourteen, making it the duty of certain officials and the right of any person, to put the Act in force through a Court of Summary Jurisdiction, enabling parents, on proof of poverty, to apply to the Guardians for Dinner Orders, to be presented at certain centres by the child in whose name they were issued, would meet the case. Unless voluntary effort be greatly extended, something of the kind will have to be attempted, and that not so much to meet the case of actually indigent parents, since charity doubtless, would be sufficient here, as of the much larger number

of parents who through their own carelessness, intemperance, or vice, fail to provide their children with sufficient food.

Meanwhile a plan similar to that laid down by the Education Act of 1876, for enforcing school attendance, will probably be found as applicable to the purpose in hand as any that can be devised. Let the Central Council for Promoting Penny Dinners, in connection with Elementary Schools, stand for the School Board or School Attendance Committee in London or elsewhere. Then the managers of the respective Dinner centres would correspond with the managers of the several schools. These managers would depute a responsible officer, one of their own number or otherwise, to be paid if needful, to whom the work of investigation would be entrusted. Where the authorities and teachers of a school co-operated heartily with the managers of the Dinner centre, as in the majority of cases no doubt they would, the knowledge possessed by them of the character and circumstances of the children's homes, would greatly assist and lighten the labour of investigation. When the evidence bearing on a case had been collected by this official (or by a local committee appointed for the purpose), it would be laid by him before the managers, or before a sub-committee composed of two or more of their number, upon whom, in conjunction with the investigating officer, the task of deciding on the case would devolve.

If indigence on the part of the parent were proved, it would be competent to this sub-committee to issue a Dinner Order for a stated period, and the parent might be notified to make application for it. If the child's ill-feeding was the result mainly of carelessness, arising from ignorance or want of thought on the parent's part, or from any other preventible cause, instructions could be given to the officer to take steps accordingly. But if it arose from culpable neglect, vicious conduct, or intemperance on the parent's part, bringing the child within the scope of the Industrial Schools Act, then it would be the duty of the Committee, acting under Section XIII. of the Education Act, 1876, to inform the local authority of the case, and move it to take action upon it within their powers. Or the Committee, if they thought fit in preference, could give information to the Guardians of the Union or Parish in which the child lived, whose duty it would be, under Section XXXVII. of the "Poor Law Amendment Act, 1868," to prosecute the parent for neglecting to provide the child with food.

Pending inquiry, the child, in all cases, as said before, would be supplied with its dinner on application free, either unconditionally on its part, or on the teacher of the school at which it had attended in the morning, certifying that it was in want of food; the one inexorable condition attached to a free dinner being strict inquiry subsequently into all the circumstances of the case.

In villages or small towns, where the circumstances of the school population were tolerably well known to the clergyman or others connected with the management of a Penny Dinner centre, the work of investigation would be comparatively light. In the

crowded quarters of large towns, or where the population had little admixture of those able to give help rather than needing it, it would probably be found necessary to employ a paid officer, competent to undertake the task. Indeed, the expense of investigation would probably, in some instances, be even heavier than that of the dinners which were given free. In any case, to do the work aright will require the outlay to a considerable extent of either detailed personal effort, or of voluntary funds, or, in part, of both. Also, there must be a clear conception of what we really want to do. Feeding the children who present themselves, hungry and penniless, where a dinner may be had, is but a means to a further end which must equally be kept in view—viz., the well-being of the men and women that by-and-bye these children will become. This end it is that we must fix our eyes upon, and moving steadily towards it we shall find the path which seems to us now so crooked and entangled, widening and defining itself beneath our feet.

To quicken the sense and enforce the duty of parental responsibility is a nearer aim in the same direction, to be also rigidly kept in view. The Penny Dinner system, carried out on the lines here laid down, in connection with our Elementary Schools, and especially if strengthened by the alterations suggested in the law, would furnish us, perhaps, with the most efficient machinery for this purpose that under existing circumstances could be devised. Much already has been done for the State, the parent, and the child, by the existing Education Acts. They have tended, as nothing else has done, to foster in parents the sense of proud possession in their children, as distinct from that of irresponsible or selfish proprietorship. The child at school, whose progress is an object of effort and desire on the part of teachers and managers, even on that of the awe-inspiring inspector himself, forms a link between the parent and the class above him—a class into which the child himself, setting his feet one by one on the rounds of the educational ladder, may one day rise. Nothing can be more touching, to eyes that can see aright, than to note, even in the coarse apparel of a child at school, the tokens of motherly care and decent pride in her little one's appearance. The neat patch on the worn-out shoe, the clean pinafore, the scrap of bright ribbon that ties the little urchin's collar, all tell their tale of the unseen providence at home; the patient mother's love, whose humble toil, displayed in these efforts to make her child look well, may, in truth, like the poet's flower, bring "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

It is to this pride of the parent in the child, to this hope and effort for its future, not less than to laws and the organisation for enforcing them, that the State must look for the leverage by which it shall lift itself, as one generation succeeds another, to a higher and yet higher level of national prosperity, and of progress, comfort, and content, in every, even the humblest home. The family, not the individual, is the unit of the nation, and parental responsibility is the principle on which the family is based. This responsibility the State may assist and supplement, but cannot

supersede. To provide free food, or even free education, for every child whose parent may prefer that another and not himself should bear the burden of its maintenance and up-bringing, is to undermine the foundations of the home. It is too sadly true that a minority exists among us, parents honourably poor, willing to work for their children's bread, but for whom work does not exist, parents who cannot unaided, meet in full the charges that nature has laid upon them. Such parents it is at once our duty and our interest to assist, and the managers of a Penny Dinner centre will do their part by issuing free dinners to the children, as do the managers of a school by remission of the fees. A higher duty also grows out of this: that is, to ascertain if possible the economic causes of distress of this description, and so resolutely to attack those causes as by degrees to eliminate from our midst the distress itself; if not entirely, yet so far that private charity may suffice to meet all cases of poverty arising either from sickness, misfortune, or from honest inability to find work to do.

But another, and not less pressing duty, is to see to it that legislation is strengthened for the relief of children who are suffering from the neglect or the culpable poverty of those who are bound by nature, and who ought to be bound by law, to maintain and bring them up aright. The true political economist cannot too strenuously insist on this. We are spending five or six millions a year on national education. We have a right to see to it that the children of the poor receive the full benefit of the nation's gift, that it is not wasted by the parent's fault, like water spilt upon the ground.

Our school population may be regarded as our national Savings Bank. What we put in to day we shall be drawing out with interest in ten or twenty years to come. At present, as we have seen, we are putting in five or six millions a year, in the form of elementary education, hoping that as a nation in a few years we shall be reaping the results. A daily dinner, in addition to the school curriculum, given to a child who is habitually ill-fed or under-fed at home, would probably increase the value of our investment by at least twenty per cent in the course of as many years, perhaps by a good deal more. If, instead of a broken-down labourer or a sickly mother of children sicklier still, the nation will possess a capable artisan or a busy buxom housewife, it is worth our while, from a merely business point of view, to provide in such a case for the physical, as well as the mental development of the child. On the Penny Dinner system this can be done, is being done in fact, on strictly economic lines, for many thousands of children whose parents gladly pay the daily penny that the child may have a better meal at school than it could have at home. By improved legislation in the direction indicated, by extended application of the provisions already made by law, especially as to Day Industrial Schools or some modified form of them, and by the exercise of a willing, wise, and painstaking charity, we may hope soon to reach in the same way each one of the thousands more

who are suffering, through their parents' poverty or fault, for want of wholesome and sufficent food. With our eyes opened as now they are to the magnitude of the evil, surely the reproach will not rest upon us long, that in this, the richest country in the world, we have amongst us, not here and there a child, but thousands of children in our schools and homes who "daily cry for bread and have it not."

Particulars as to the Position of the Parents of the Children attending

ROUSDON SCHOOL, DEVON, *Midsummer*, 1886.

Parent.	Children in all dependent.	At School regularly.	Position.	Wages and Emoluments equal to per week.	Pays Rent.	Pays for Mid-day Meal per week.	Arrears.
1	2	1	Widow	.. ..	..	5d.	Not a penny since the School was opened in 1876.
2	1	1	Farm labourer	10/- and wood	1/-	5d.	
3	3	1	,,	10/- and wood	1/-	5d.	
4	1	1	,,	13/- and wood	1/6	5d.	
5	4	4	,,	12/-	1/6	1/3	
6	2	2	Road contractor	.. ..	1/6	9d.	
7	2	2	Labourer	10/- and wood	1/-	9d.	
8	3	2	,,	10/- and wood	1/-	9d.	
9	4	3	Shepherd	16/- and wood	1/-	1/-	
10	5	3	Mechanic	.. ..	2/-	1/-	
11	4	3	Labourer	13/- and wood	1/6	1/-	
12	3	2	Shepherd	16/-	1/-	9d.	
13	6	5	Schoolmaster	.. ..	..	..	
14	6	4	Mechanic	.. ..	2/6	1/3	
15	3	2	,,	.. ..	1/6	9d.	
16	4	3	,,	.. ..	1/-	1/-	
17	5	3	Carpenter	16/-	1/-	1/-	
18	6	5	Stockman	16/-	1/-	1/6	
19	5	4	Labourer	10/- and wood	1/-	1/3	
20	5	3	,,	16/-	1/6	1/-	
21	3	2	,,	10/- and wood	1/-	9d.	
22	3	3	,,	13/- and wood	1/-	1/-	
23	2	2	Farmer	.. ..	..	10d.	
24	4	3	Mechanic	.. ..	2/-	1/-	
25	4	3	Road contractor	.. ..	1/6	1/-	
26	9	6	Farm bailiff	18/- and wood	..	1/9	
27	3	2	Coachman	.. ..	..	9d.	
28	5	4	Labourer	10/- and wood	1/-	1/3	
29	7	5	Coastguard	.. ..	..	1/6	
30	4	1	Grocer	.. ..	..	5d.	
31	1	1	.. ..	.. ..	..	5d.	
32	4	1	Farmer	.. ..	..	5d.	
33	2	2	Labourer	10/- and wood	1/-	9d.	
34	2	1	,,	16/-	1/-	5d.	
35	1	1	Stationmaster	.. ..	..	5d.	
36	4	2	Labourer	13/- and wood	1/-	9d.	
37	1	1	Coastguard	.. ..	..	5d.	
38	2	1	,,	.. ..	..	5d.	
39	1	1	Labourer	10/- and wood	1/-	5d.	
	136	96					

Size of Families.				Attending School.					Weekly Payments.	Total Receipt.			No. of Children.	Average per Child.
									s. d.	£ s. d.				
6	Families with	1	child, 6	12	Families sending	1	child each	pay	0 5	0 5 0			12	5d.
7	,,	2	,, 14	9	,, ,,	2	children	,,	0 9	0 6 9			18	4·5
7	,,	3	,, 21	1	,, ,,	2	,,	,,	0 10	0 0 10			2	5
9	,,	4	,, 36	9	,, ,,	3	,,	,,	1 0	0 9 0			27	4
5	,,	5	,, 25	4	,, ,,	4	,,	,,	1 3	0 5 0			16	3·75
3	,,	6	,, 18	2	,, ,,	5	,,	,,	1 6	0 3 0			10	3·6
1	,,	7	,, 7	1	,, ,,	6	,,	,,	1 9	0 1 9			6	3·5
1	,,	9	,, 9											
—		—	—	38	,, Average 2½			,,	0 10	1 11 4			91	4·13
39	Families	Av. 3½	133	1	,, Schoolmaster	5		,, free					5	
				—										
				39	,, Average 2½			,, Av.	9½	1 11 4			96	3·92

Materials composing the Mid-day Meal provided at ROUSDON SCHOOL, DEVON, *for ten years, from Harvest,* 1876, *to Harvest,* 1886, *at Average Prices paid.*

				£	*s.*	*d.*
1	Apples ..	3,159 lbs.	at 1d. per lb.	13	3	3
2	Bread ..	7,088 ,,	,, 1¼d. ,, ...	36	18	4
3	Currants	1,708 ,,	,, 4d. ,, ...	28	9	4
4	Cabbages ..	2,910 ,,	,, ½d. ,, ...	6	1	3
5	Carrots & Parsnips	2,076 ,,	,, ½d. ,, ...	4	6	6
6	Dates ..	48 ,,	,, 1d. ,, ...	0	4	0
7	Flour ..	28,494 ,,	,, 1¼d. ,, ...	148	8	1
8	Figs ..	82 ,,	,, 3d. ,, ...	1	0	6
9	Gooseberries	70 ,,	,, 1d. ,, ...	0	5	10
10	Honey ..	94 ,,	,, 6d. ,, ...	2	7	0
11	Jam ..	1653 ,,	,, 3d. ,, ...	20	13	3
12	Lard & Dripping	143 ,,	,, 5d. ,, (average) ..	2	19	7
13	Marmalade	6 ,,	,, 5d. ,, ...	0	2	6
14	Meat ..	3,784 ,,	Beef at 5d., and 1,892 lbs. Bacon at 7d. per lb.	134	0	4
15	Milk ..	696 gals.	skim. at 8d. per gallon ..	23	4	0
16	Onions ..	1,085 lbs.	at 1d. per lb.	4	10	5
17	Potatoes ..	14,727 ,,	,, ½d. ,, ...	30	13	7½
18	Peas, Beans & Lentils	1,989 ,,	,, 1d. ,, ...	8	5	9
19	Pearl Barley	9 ,,	,, ,, ...	0	1	10½
20	Pepper and Salt	249 ,,	.. ..	3	10	6
21	Prunes ..	80 ,,	,, 3½d. per lb.	1	3	4
22	Rice ..	4,306 ,,	,, 1½d. ,, ...	26	18	3
23	Rhubarb ..	2,840 ,,	,, 1d. ,, ...	11	16	8
24	Raisins ..	1,034 ,,	,, 4d. ,, ...	17	4	8
25	Suet ..	2,131 ,,	,, 5d. ,, ...	44	7	11
26	Sugar ..	3,224 ,,	,, 2d. ,, ...	26	17	4
27	Sago ..	162 ,,	,, 3d. ,, ...	2	0	6
28	Spice ..	4½ ,,	,, 2s. 8d. ,, ...	0	12	0
29	Treacle ..	2,109 ,,	,, 2d. ,, ...	17	11	6
30	Turnips ..	1,266 ,,	,, ½d. ,, ...	2	12	9
		86,530 lbs.		£620	10	10
		696 gallons.				

Total Dinners, 179,183. Cost of Material, 148,930 Pence.

Milk has for some years been discontinued, the children not liking it.

The elder girls assist in preparing the dinners, waiting, washing up, cleaning the schools, &c. ; the dinners themselves as will be seen are simple as regards preparation, varied and nutritious, and what is most important not beyond home means.

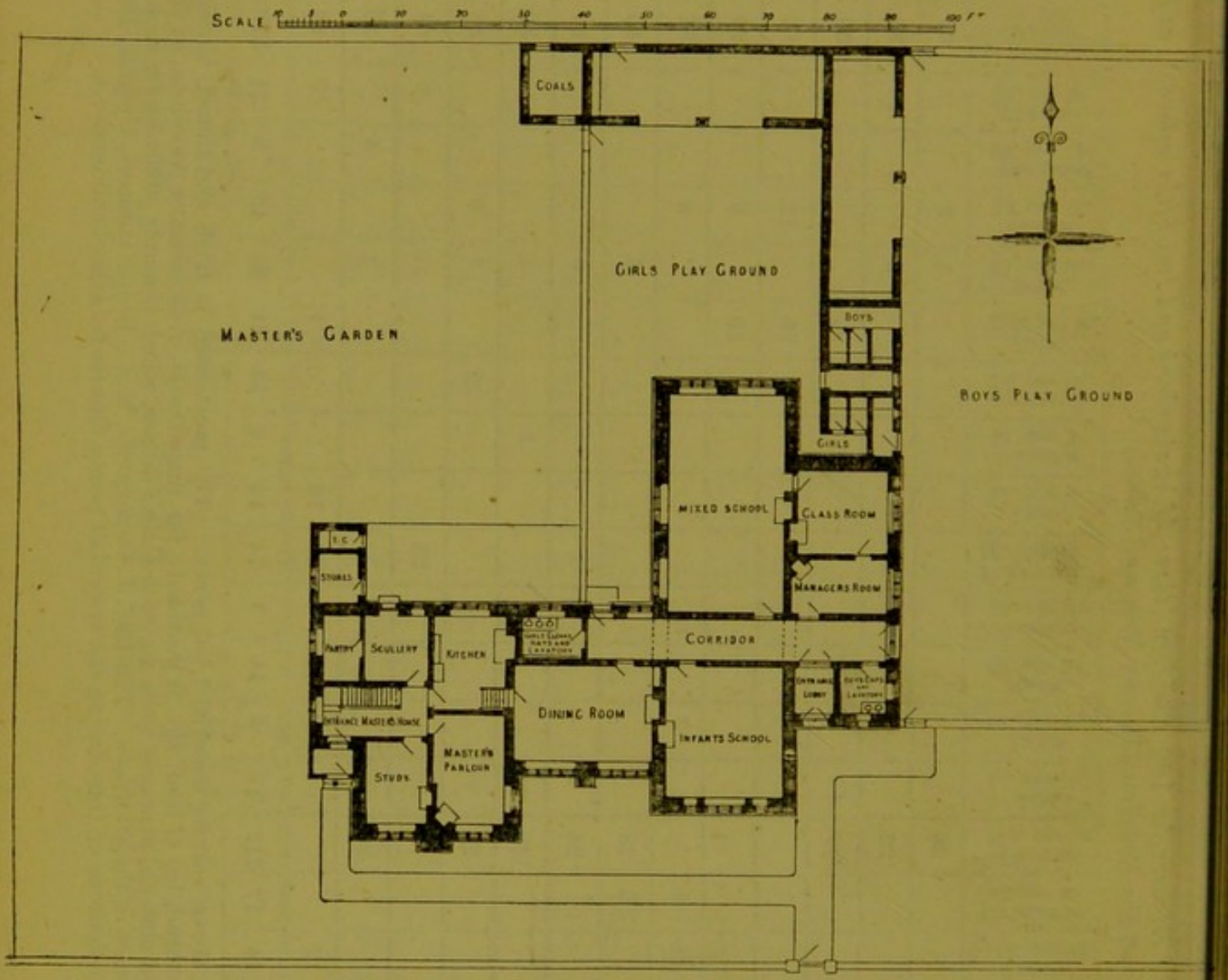
Variety and Particulars of some of the Dinners for 100 *Children* (*three-fifths standard and two-fifths infants*), *as given at the Rousdon* (*Devon*) *National Schools.*

Rousdon School.	Apples, 1d. per lb.	Bacon, 7d. per lb.	Beans, 1d. per lb.	Bread, 1½d. per lb.	Currants, 4d. per lb.	Flour, 1½d. per lb.	Jam, 3d. per lb.	Lard, 5d. per lb.	Meat, 5d. per lb.	Onions, 1d. per lb.	Potatoes, ½d. per lb.	Peas, 1d. per lb.	Raisins, 4d. per lb.	Rhubarb, 1d. per lb.	Rice, 1½d. per lb.	Suet, 5d. per lb.	Sugar, 2d. per lb.	Treacle, 2d. per lb.	Turnips, ½d. per lb.	Total Weight in lbs.	Cost of material in pence.
Apple Puddings	28					28										3	8			67	94
Beef Puddings						28			10		28					3			16	85	122
Boiled Rice and Jam ...							10								20					30	60
Boiled Rice and Rhubarb.														30	20		12			62	84
Boiled Rice and Sugar ...															20		9			29	48
Bread Puddings				32	8			3									8			51	103
Currant Puddings ...					9	28										3				40	86
Jam Puddings						28	9									3				40	77
Raisin Puddings						28							8			3				39	82
Rhubarb Puddings ...						28								28		3	9			68	96
Roly Poly Meat Puddings.		9	7			16					23								9	64	106
Suet Puddings and Treacle						28										3		8		39	66
Soup				12					8	1	23	10			1				7	62	83
Total 1,300 dinners ...	28	9	7	44	17	212	19	3	18	1	74	10	8	58	61	21	46	8	32	676	1,107

The 1,300 (all hot) dinners, as shown above, cost for material 1,107 pence. The meat used is fresh and tinned, alternately; it is always given in soup. For fresh meat, oxhead, leg of beef, &c., is provided; for tinned meat, Australian or American, as the market offers best value and variety. The uncooked material averages 8 ozs. for each child's dinner, which is amply sufficient for such a school. One main advantage is the securing attendance in the afternoon. The Rev. J. Curgenven, M.A., Rector (address, Uplyme, Devon) will be happy to answer the enquiries of any one desirous of introducing the system of penny dinners for school children.

PLAN OF ROUSDON SCHOOLS.

The only alterations experience has shown desirable are that the Dining Room and Kitchen should be rather larger.



	Year.		Children on Books.		Average Attendance.			Grant Earned. £	s.	d.
Jan.	1877	..	95	..	86	Four months' Grant	..	21	9	8
	1878	..	94	..	80	One Year's ,,	..	69	14	0
	1879	..	90	..	77	,, ,,		73	19	0
	1880	..	89	..	76	,, ,,		71	10	0
	1881	..	84	..	81	,, ,,		77	15	0
	1882	..	91	..	77	,, ,,		83	2	0
	1883	..	90	..	81	,, ,,		86	2	0
	1884	..	79	..	74	,, ,,		79	6	0
	1885	..	92	..	82	,, ,,		89	1	7
	1886	..	96	..	80	,, ,,		85	17	6

No discount to farmers, nor any rebate to children (who always on Monday mornings pay their full week in advance) on account of partial absence.

The average attendance shown above is from the registers which (in accordance with code) are closed daily at 9.45; on unfavourable mornings, such is the attraction of the dinner, that from a dozen to over twenty will often make their appearance before noon, all these are consequently at their lessons in the afternoon, which otherwise they would not be.

PRINTERS: SIR JOSEPH CAUSTON AND SONS, LONDON.

Extract from Speech delivered by the Right Honorable A. J. Mundella, *in the House of Commons, on Thursday, July 26th,* 1883.

My attention has been much attracted to two phases of this question; one has reference to what has been said about the alleged overwork of the children; and the other has reference to the wretched homes in which the mass of the children live, and the question of under-feeding. I am bound to say the question of under-feeding, as far as I can gather, is by far the most serious question of the two. Mr. Marchant Williams, one of the Inspectors of the School Board of London, has, from his own interest in the question, been making very careful inquiry into the condition of all the thousands of children at present attending the School Board schools in London. There is an impression among many people that education in London has not reached the class for which it was intended; that we are not dealing with the poorest classes; and that the School Board of London is not bringing under the system the very poorest, most wretched, and most miserable among the outcast population. I cannot conceive a more mistaken notion, for anyone who takes up Mr. Marchant Williams's Report, and who will visit the schools in Whitechapel, Finsbury, Marylebone, Walworth, or Bethnal Green, will be somewhat astonished at the wretched character of the surroundings of the children, and the wretchedly-fed children who are to be found in those schools. My attention was first called to the question by an accident, which I will shortly relate to the Committee. I was referred to a school in the country which is doing marvellously good work, and which has had surprisingly good results among a scattered population, and I wanted to know how those results were accounted for. I made an inquiry of the Inspector with respect to that school, and I will state to the House the result. It was a rural school in Devonshire. [An hon. Member: Whereabouts?] It is on the Coast, at the village of Rousdon; and the results of that village school have been very startling. In 1880 there were on the books of the school 89 children; the average attendance was 76; 79 were eligible for examination; and there were passed 98 per cent. in reading, 96 per cent. in writing and spelling, 98 per cent. in arithmetic, 56 per cent. in geography, 79 per cent. in grammar, 8 in literature, and 5 in domestic economy. That was rather a heavy programme; but, at the last inspection, which came off some two or three months ago, I find the following was the result:—There were 84 children on the books; the average attendance was 81·6; 81 out of the 84 were eligible for

examination, and there passed 100 per cent. in reading, 100 per cent. in writing and spelling, 98 per cent. in arithmetic, 100 per cent. in geography, 87 per cent. in grammar; while 14 passed a good examination in literature, and 11 passed well in domestic economy. Order, discipline, singing, and needlework were reported good, and the school was classed "excellent." It is impossible that there could be a better school than that.

MR. W. E. FORSTER: Was it under a master and mistress?

MR. MUNDELLA: Yes; there are both a master and mistress.

MR. W. E. FORSTER: Is it a board school, or what?

MR. MUNDELLA: It is a National School, which was set up a few years ago by an hon. Member of this House, who, finding the success of the schools of the neighbourhood lacking, the labourers wretchedly fed, the population poor and scattered over extensive districts, devised the means for getting better results than could ordinarily be obtained. He found that the children were poor and ill-fed, and that they could not walk two, three or four miles a day, bringing with them wretched morsels of food for dinner, with satisfactory results. Well, my hon. Friend who set up the school perceived that something must be done in the direction of feeding the children, as well as educating them, and he solved the difficulty in this way. He said—"I will supply the children with one sufficient meal a-day on the five days a-week they attend the school, and that meal, for material, shall not cost more than a penny a head." My hon. Friend is a thorough business man, and he has kept an account of every penny spent and received, and the result is not uninteresting. I hold in my hand a record of the quantity of food supplied. The account of the expenditure was carefully kept to the utmost farthing; and, at the last examination, it was found that the total number of dinners given to the children was 110,221 from October, 1876, to December, 1882, at a total cost of 107,406 pence, and they were good full meals for every child. If anyone doubts how it can be done, I have here the items of flour, suet, meat, potatoes, bread, rice, sugar, and every other article consumed in the dinners supplied in that school, the total number of which was 110,221, at a cost of 107,406 pence for seven years. The average of solid food per child was about eight ounces. It could be fairly said that 10 dinners, including cooking expenses and wear and tear, did not cost more than 1*s*. The girls assisted in the cooking, which was part of the *curriculum* of the school. I thought I ought to inquire from Her Majesty's Inspector what his opinion was as to the experiment made in this rural school, and Mr. Howard writes—

"I believe that Sir Henry Peek's experiment has turned out a very great success. What strikes one at once in coming into the school is the healthy, vigorous look of the children, and that their vigour is not merely bodily, but comes out in the course of examination. There is a marked contrast between their appearance and their work on the day of inspection, and those of the children in many of the neighbouring schools. The mid-day meal is good, and without stint. It acts as an attraction and induces regularity of attendance. In fact, the number on the register is 84, and the average attendance, above 81, speaks for

itself; but, besides that, the dinners supply physical material, by which better brain work can be done. The examination hardly does justice to the condition of the school; it gives the number of classes; but does not give the quality. In the accompanying sheets I have put down some statistics."

I will not give the statistics; but Mr. Howard shows that four out of five of the children passed easily. He goes on to say—

"Their work is most thorough; but, without regular attendance and intelligence to act upon them, much of it would be thrown away. As to the regular attendance, I find there are some children who have been in attendance 400 times a-year. It is not amazing, therefore, that this satisfactory result should have been produced."

The Inspector adds that—

"It is a real pleasure to examine the Rousdon School. Before the school was started, the education of the children of the neighbourhood was as low as in any part of the district."

He goes on to describe what was the real condition of the children in the neighbourhood. I do not bring this forward for the sake of complimenting the hon. Baronet opposite the Member for Mid Surrey (Sir Henry Peek); but I want to point a moral, and to show the connection between education and properly feeding the children. This Rousdon School proves that children properly fed, and attending school regularly, not only enjoy a good *physique* and good health, but that they prosper in their education also. There is no over-pressure on those children, and it proves that there is no over-pressure where there is regular attendance and good feeding. The great difficulty we have to contend against is the lack of these two essentials. Let me refer the House to the case of the Jews' Free School, Bell Lane, Spitalfields. It is a school where the teachers have to grapple with enormous and unheard-of difficulties. There are about 3,000 children, who come in with a very imperfect knowledge of the English language, speaking a *patois* of two or three European languages, and most of them having some knowledge of Hebrew. The average attendance is 95 per cent, and the work done is amongst the highest in England. They pass a heavier *curriculum*, and in a larger number of classes, than any other school. The school is in every way excellent. Then, how is it done? I myself asked how it could be done among such a wretched population. The children, when not at school, are employed in selling newspapers, or cigar lights, or lucifer matches. They are poor Jews' children put to earn something directly the school hours are over, and it is surprising what the enterprize of these people is. But considerable influence is exercised by the benevolence of the friends of the school, who not only pay great attention to the wants of the children generally, but also present gifts of clothing, and in other ways help the children to attend the school. I am afraid that, in this respect, the Jews are very much better than the Christians. In the West End, the Jews do their duty thoroughly by the children of the East End Jews. I wish I could see the West End Christians doing the same by the East End Christians. I have here a statement with regard to three other schools. The first is the Saffron Hill School, Farringdon Road. It is a school supported by 313 families,

182 of which, or 58 per cent., live each in one room only. There are others who live two in a room; and so they go on, living one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and even ten in a room. Fifty-eight per cent. of the children of the Saffron Hill School in the Farringdon Road come out of those wretched homes of one room. The Golden Lane School is supported by 487 families, 400 of which, or 82 per cent., reside in one room only; 21 per cent. have six persons and upwards in a room. The Tower Street Schools, Seven Dials, are supported by 339 families, 289 of which, or 85 per cent. reside in one room each; eight of these families have nine persons in a single room; and so they range, from one to eight, nine, and ten persons in a single room. I am taking advantage of Mr. Marchant Williams's figures in regard to this question, and he reports upon a considerable number of schools. In the Drury Lane School the percentage of attendance is very excellent. The average attendance is 86 in the boys' department, 86 in the girls', and 71 in the infants' department; 52 per cent. of the children come from families living in one room only; 3 per cent. from families residing in two rooms; and 12 per cent. live in more than two rooms. The Vere Street School, close to Clare Market, was examined by Mr. Matthew Arnold, and he states that the way in which the boys recited a poem showed that they were extremely intelligent children, and that they had thoroughly mastered what they had learned. Nevertheless, 75 per cent. of those children belonged to families who reside in one room only. Many of the children are the offspring of the criminal and vicious classes. The children are to be pitied, and are sometimes found faint from want of food. Indeed, in many cases, persons have gone out to buy bread for the children, in order to enable them to stand the school labour. But if anybody supposes that these children are better out of school than in, it is the greatest possible mistake in the world. It is the one bright spot in the child's existence; it is his only place of happiness and comfort, and he is under good sanitary regulations while he is at school. He is warm, and well fed, and is subject to cheerful exercises, including singing and physical training, which are most enjoyable to him. Indeed, the children cry when their mothers want to keep them at home, and they cry also when the holidays come. There cannot be a better proof of what is being done by bringing the child into the school. I have only given the Committee facts with regard to three or four schools; but I could give a great many more, and I could show that all over London a fearful state of things exists, and that it behoves people with human hearts and ordinary minds to do something in order to help the children to attend school. I must say that my friend the hon. Baronet who sits opposite, the Member for Mid-Surrey (Sir Henry Peek) has set an example which ought to be taken up all over London. There is no country in which so little has been done to help the children to go to school as in our own country—I mean to help them with food and clothing. Great sacrifices have been made by benevolent societies in America to rescue thousands of children

from the streets of New York and elsewhere. Indeed, the results of those efforts have been something which we, in England, could hardly realize; but we now see that 10 dinners can be provided for 1s.; and if the West End would only do a little more in charity for the children of the East End thousands of these children might be saved from broken health, and induced regularly to attend school.

From "The Lancet," *August 4th,* 1883.

Sir Henry Peek, Bart., is one of those large-hearted men who find their highest pleasure in benefiting whole classes of the population, and who work hard in private to secure the success of any enterprise they undertake. With his well known acumen he has struck right down at the root of the so-called "overworked" question, and recognised—we might almost say discovered—the real efficient cause of the evil, while other philanthropists not less interested or in earnest, but not so practical, have been lopping with sensational vigour at the topmost branches. Sir Henry Peek, looking with a keen business eye into the condition of the scholars of a national school of which he is patron, has perceived that they are, as a rule, underfed. Unfortunately this is *the* cause of the educational difficulty throughout the country. Children are generally "better clothed," as the phrase goes, than they were twenty or thirty years ago, but they are not properly or adequately fed. Social reform has been very much a whitening of sepulchres as regards the poorer classes. Police regulations have compelled parents to spend more money on the clothing of their children, but it has done nothing to improve the quality or to increase the quantity of their food. They look more respectable, according to our conventional notion of what constitutes "respectability," but they are just as hungry as, and therefore not happier than, they were before society, in one of its hyper-philanthropic moods, took their condition seriously in hand.

The Education system is *not* overworking children, but it is demonstrating that they are underfed. It would, indeed, be a boon to the country if all school patrons were as astute as Sir Henry Peek, and withal as sagacious in finding a remedy for the evils they discover. With admirable tact Sir Henry has devised a system of cheap dinners for children. The parents pay five pence for five dinners in each week, so that they are not pauperised or released from their responsibility; and for this small sum the children have an excellent midday meal. It is needless to say that the "attendance" at school is found to be well-maintained, and the children are better, healthier, and happier than the children of other schools. This is a movement so praiseworthy that we cannot allude to it except in terms

of warmest approval. We do not hesitate to affirm that Sir Henry Peek has shown school managers generally how to cut the Gordian knot of the education question. Do not reduce the number or difficulty of the lessons, but increase the quantity and improve the quality of the food.

That good feeding is necessary for brain-nutrition does not need to be demonstrated, or even argued at length. The brain is part of the body, and—referring to our recent remarks on "Overwork in Connexion with Education,"—it must be evident that the position in which education places the brains of underfed children is that of a highly exercised organ urgently requiring food and finding none, or very little. These children are *growing*, and all or nearly all the food they can get is appropriated by the grosser and bulkier parts of the body to the starvation of the brain. If their brains were not stimulated by intellectual work they would be simply left undeveloped. As it is, they struggle for food with the other organs of the body, and every part of the organism is reduced to a condition favourable to disease. Other things being equal, a growing child with a hungry brain is worse off both in mind and body than a dullard. If the organ of mind were not at work it would not be so urgent in its demand for food, and even a poorly fed child might grow in body generally; but being mentally active and underfed, it can neither be healthy in brain nor in muscle. This is a matter of great moment, and ought to be carefully considered by all who have the care of the young. It is cruel to educate a growing child unless you are also prepared to feed him. Brain-nutrition makes a larger demand on the supplies than general nutrition, and it requires that its special needs shall be satisfied immediately. This is why fish is so useful to brain workers, because it is completely digested in less time and with less trouble to the stomach than most other articles of food. Children are generally provided with excellent powers of digestion and assimilation, but these faculties are useless without food. Children who are not adequately supplied with nourishment soon begin to look exceptionally sickly if they are made to work with their heads, whereas if only working with their bodies they may be fairly well on comparatively little.

Particulars as to the Position of the Parents of the Children attending

ROUSDON SCHOOL, DEVON.

Parent.	Children in all dependent.	At School regularly.	Position.	Wages and Emoluments equal to per week.	Pays Rent.	Pays for Schooling and the Mid-day Meal per week.	Arrears.
1	1	1	Farm labourer	14/-	0	5d.	Not a penny since the School was opened in 1876.
2	5	2	,,	13/-	1/6	9d.	
3	1	1	,,	10/- and wood	0	5d.	
4	8	5	Schoolmaster	.. ..	..	..	
5	1	1	Farm labourer	10/-	0	5d.	
6	4	3	,,	10/- and wood	1/6	1/-	
7	5	4	,,	16/-	1/-	1/3	
8	4	3	Mechanic	.. ..	..	1/-	
9	4	2	,,	.. ..	1/6	9d.	
10	4	3	Coastguard	.. ..	..	1/-	
11	5	3	Farm labourer	13/-	1/6	1/-	
12	2	1	,,	10/- and wood	0	5d.	
13	4	4	Shepherd	16/-	0	1/3	
14	2	2	Widow	.. ..	1/6	9d.	
15	4	4	Carpenter	16/-	2/-	1/3	
16	3	3	Farm labourer	13/- and wood	0	1/-	
17	3	2	,,	16/-	1/6	9d.	
18	2	2	Mechanic	.. ..	1/6	9d.	
19	2	1	Farm labourer	13/-	1/6	5d.	
20	2	2	,,	13/- and wood	0	9d.	
21	5	4	Mechanic	.. ..	..	1/3	
22	4	2	Farm labourer	16/-	1/6	9d.	
23	2	1	,,	14/-	0	9d.	
24	4	3	,,	13/- and wood	0	1/-	
25	4	2	,,	10/- and wood	0	9d.	
26	1	1	,,	16/-	1/-	5d.	
27	2	2	,,	16/-	2/-	9d.	
28	3	3	,,	16/-	1/-	1/-	
29	2	1	Widow	.. ..	0	5d.	
30	2	1	Farm labourer	14/-	0	5d.	
31	2	2	Farmer	.. ..	..	10d.	
32	2	2	Farm labourer	14/-	0	9d.	
33	2	2	,,	15/-	1/6	9d.	
34	5	4	Mechanic	.. ..	..	1/3	
	106	79				£1 6 5	

As above there are at present (July, 1883) 79 Children on the Books, and we can depend upon an Average Attendance of 73 both morning and afternoon, though the majority live over a mile from the School House. Absence in the afternoon is of very rare occurrence; and, as the children, one and all, prefer school to home, the periodical holidays find no favour with them. The charge is 5d. per week for one, 9d. for two, 1s. for three, and 3d. each beyond three of the same family. No discount to farmers for their children. The Government Grant for the year ending March, 1883, was £86 2s.

Materials composing the Mid-day Meals provided at ROUSDON SCHOOL, DEVON, *from October*, 1876, *to December*, 1882.

		£	*s.*	*d.*
Flour ..	16,978 lbs. at 1½d. per lb.	106	2	3
Suet ..	1,268 ,, ,, 5d. ,, ...	26	8	4
Meat ..	3,273 ,, ,, 6d., 7d., 7½d. and 9d. per lb. ..	83	3	4½
Potatoes ..	7,556 ,, ,, 1d. per lb.	31	9	8
Onions ..	675 ,, ,, 1½d., and 227 lbs. at 1d. per lb.	5	3	3½
Bread ..	4,694 ,, ,, 1½d. per lb.	29	6	9
Treacle ..	1,407 ,, ,, 2½d. ,, ...	14	13	1½
Rice	2,652½ ,, ,, 2d. ,, ...	22	2	1
Sugar ..	1,134 ,, ,, 2½d. ,, and 694 lbs. at 3d. per lb.	20	9	9
Milk	696 gals. at 8d. per gallon	23	4	0
Peas, Beans & Lentils	627½ lbs. ,, 1½d. per lb., and 172 lbs. at 1d. per lb.	4	12	9¼
Currants ..	1,053 ,, ,, 4d. ,, ...	17	11	0
Cabbages ..	1,450 ,, at 1d. ,, ...	6	0	10
Turnips ..	548 lbs. at 1d. per lb.	2	5	8
Apples ..	1,264 ,, ,, 1¼d. ,, and 790 lbs. at 1d. per lb.	9	17	6
Carrots ..	766 ,, ,, 1d. ,, & Parsnips, 196 lbs. at 1d. per lb.	4	0	2
Pearl Barley	9 ,, ,, 2½d. ,, (as a trial only)	0	1	10½
Jam	478½ ,, ,, 3½d. ,, and 416½ lbs. at 4d. per lb.	13	18	4¾
Lard ..	104 ,, ,, 6½d. ,, ...	2	16	4
Rhubarb ..	1,072 ,, ,, 1d. ,, ...	4	9	4
Sago	162 ,, ,, 3d. ,, ...	2	0	6
Raisins ..	658 ,, ,, 5d. ,, ...	13	14	2
Pepper and Salt	130½ ,, ...	1	16	9
Spice ..	4½ ,, at 2s. 8d. per lb.	0	12	0
Prunes ..	23 ,, ,, 3½d. ,, ...	0	6	8½
Gooseberries	70 ,, ,, 1d. ,, ...	0	5	10
Honey ..	18 ,, ,, 1s. ,, ...	0	18	0
		£447	10	5½

Total Dinners, 110,221. Cost 107,406 Pence.

Average of Solid Food per Child, almost 8oz, which is more than the little ones can consume.

Variety and Particulars of the Dinners for 100 *Children (three-fifths standard and two-fifths infants), as given at the Rousdon (Devon) National Schools during the Summer Months.*

	Apples, 1d. per lb.	Bacon, 7d. per lb.	Beans, 1d. per lb.	Bread, 1½d. per lb.	Currants, 4d. per lb.	Flour, 1½d. per lb.	Jam, 4d. per lb.	Lard, 7d. per lb.	Meat, 6d. per lb.	Onions, 1d. per lb.	Potatoes, 1d. per lb.	Peas, 1d. per lb.	Raisins, 4d. per lb.	Rhubarb, 1d. per lb.	Rice, 2d. per lb.	Suet, 6d. per lb.	Sugar, 3d. per lb.	Treacle, 3d. per lb.	Turnips, ½d. per lb.	Cost of material in pence.
Apple Puddings	28					28										3	8			112
Boiled Rice and Jam							10								20					80
Boiled Rice and Sugar ...															20		9			67
Bread Puddings				32	8			3									8			125
Currant Puddings					9	28										3				96
Jam Puddings						28	9									3				96
Raisin Puddings						28							8			3				92
Rhubarb Puddings						28								28		3	9			115
Roly Poly Meat Puddings ...		9	7			16					23								9	121½
Suet Puddings and Treacle ...						28										3		8		84
Soup				12					8	1	23	10			1				7	105½
Total lbs.	28	9	7	44	17	184	19	3	8	1	46	10	8	28	41	18	34	8	16	529lbs.

The 1,100 (all hot) dinners, as shown above, cost for material 1,094 pence. The meat used is fresh and tinned, alternately; and it is always given in soup. For fresh meat, oxhead, leg of beef, &c., is provided; for tinned meat, Australian or American, as the market offers best value and variety. The uncooked material averages (it will be seen) over 7½ oz. for each child's dinner, which is amply sufficient for such a school. One main advantage is the securing attendance in the afternoon. The Rev. J. Curgenven, M.A., Rector (address, Uplyme, Devon) will be happy to answer the enquiries of any clergyman desirous of introducing the system of penny dinners for school children.

Letter to the Editor of "The Newcastle Daily Chronicle," *from the* Rev. W. Moore Ede.

A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT.

THE PENNY DINNERS FOR POOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Sir,

. As I believe some account of an experiment I have recently tried in connection with the St. Mary's National School here will interest your readers, and may lead to its being tried in other elementary schools, I send you the following account of an attempt I have made to provide penny dinners for poor children.

Some few weeks ago, when I received a pamphlet headed with the question, "Can a sufficient mid-day meal be given to poor school children at a cost for material of less than one penny?" I felt disposed to reply, Most certainly not! I found, however, that Sir Henry Peek, M.P., claimed to have accomplished the feat at a country school of from 70 to 80 children, situated on his estate at Rousdon, in Devonshire, where mid-day meals have been provided since October, 1876, at a cost of 107,406 pence for 110,221 dinners, with an average allowance of solid food of 8 oz. per child.

According to the information given in the pamphlet the result of this provision of food was better health of the scholars, more vigorous vitality, which made itself manifest in improved educational results.

The Government Inspector (Mr. Howard) reported:—

> "What strikes me at once in coming into the school is the healthy, vigorous look of the children, and that their vigour is not merely bodily but comes out in the course of examination. There is a marked contrast between their appearance and their work on the day of inspection and those of the children in many of the neighbouring schools."

Mr. Mundella, speaking of the results attained by the Rousdon School stated in the House of Commons that—

> "It is impossible there could be a better school,"

And attributed the result to the securing to the children at least one good, wholesome meal a day.

Notwithstanding these testimonies, I was still somewhat incredulous, and therefore went to inspect the school myself. A finer, healthier set of children than those of Rousdon School I never saw. The mid-day meal, which I had expected to be a miserable allowance, not more than sufficient to satisfy half the appetite of a healthy child, I found

to be liberal in quantity, so that all, or almost all, got as much as they could eat, and an examination of the dinner account showed that the average cost was really less than one penny per head.

What can be done in Devonshire can be done on Tyneside, so I determined to try the experiment in our National School. As we have about 1,000 children in our school, I felt that number would be unmanageable. Inquiry made it clear that about 80 per cent. of the children were well cared for at home, but that the remainder were very scantily fed, their customary dinner being a piece of bread and a cup of tea, and many often did not get that. I, therefore, reserved the privilege of dining at school to those who were children of widows, or whose fathers were out of work.

The following is the result of the first week's experiment.—

MONDAY—SOUP AND BREAD.

	s.	d.
1 Ox head (7 lbs of solid meat and bone) ..	2	6
7 lbs. Potatoes	0	3½
2 lbs. Onions	0	2
2 lbs. Rice	0	1½
5 lbs. Bread	0	8
Dinner for 51 children	3	9

TUESDAY—RHUBARB PUDDING.

Flour, 28 lbs.	3	2
Suet, 3 lbs. at 6d. ..	1	6
Sugar, 7¾ lbs. at 2d. ..	1	3½
Rhubarb, valued at 1s...	1	0
Dinner for 91 children	6	11½

WEDNESDAY—RICE WITH JAM OR TREACLE.

Rice, 30 lbs.	3	3
Jam, 7 lbs.	1	10½
Treacle, 10 lbs.	1	10½
Dinner for 112 children	7	0

THURSDAY—SOUP.

	s.	d.
1½ Ox heads (11½ lbs. meat and bone) ..	3	9
Ham bones	1	0
Pea flour, 7 lbs... ..	1	0
Rice, 6 lbs.	0	8
Onions, 4½ lbs.	0	4½
Potatoes, 7 lbs.	0	3½
Bread, 14 lbs.	2	0
Dinner for 117 children	9	1
And a surplus of 44 quarts of strong soup, which was sold to parents at ½d. per quart	1	10
117 Dinners, net cost	7	3

FRIDAY—ROLY-POLY PUDDING.

Flour, 36 lbs.	3	10
Bacon, 14 lbs.	3	0
Suet, 2½ lbs.	1	3
Dinner for 108 children	8	1

During the week 479 dinners were provided, at a cost of 396½ pence, thus leaving a balance of 6s. 10½d. as profit.

The profit is quite sufficient to pay for the cost of fuel and for the labour of cooking, for some of the girls in the school assist in the preparation of the dinner and in the washing up afterwards, and thus get a good practical lesson in domestic economy.

This financial result has not been obtained by placing the children on short allowance. They have had each day as much as they could eat; for, unlike Oliver Twist, they have been allowed to ask for more as often as they pleased. One boy was heard to boast that he had sent in his plate eight times, and five helps were common.

Of the educational result there has not as yet been time to judge, but it must lead to improved results and an increase in the Government grant; for it is evident, as the *Lancet* says, that the position in which education places the brains of underfed children is that of a highly exercised organ urgently requiring food and finding none—or very little.

The parents of the poorest class cannot, and do not, provide adequate food for their children, and as a consequence they grow up weak and sickly, a source of weakness rather than strength to the community, and in their turn perpetuate a succession of weekly and feeble children, and so the evil intensifies with each generation.

Parents can and will make an effort to procure the pence necessary to provide their children with such dinners as I have described, and they tell me they consider these penny dinners a great boon—"one of the best things that ever was."

Why should not a system of penny dinners be established in connection with all our National and Board Schools, at any rate those in poor districts?

The scheme would be absolutely self-supporting. All that the charitable public would need to do would be to subscribe for the first cost of fitting up a simple cooking apparatus, a store room, and a supply of plates, basins, spoons, &c.—*i.e.*, from £9 to £13 for each school.

The dinner money can be collected on Monday morning in the same manner as the school pence by the master of each form, who, knowing something of the circumstances of each pupil, would only

place on the dinner list the names of those whom he knew to be children of parents who were badly off.

If this plan were adopted extensively, we should be able to deal, as far as the children are concerned, with the distress which we are all dreading will come upon us with the approach of winter, for we should have an organised system of dealing with all the poor children of school age, and the charitable public could pay for the dinners of those whose parents were utterly unable to procure the fivepence per week. The less charity is resorted to the better, and whatever is done in that direction should not be done by the masters or managers of the school, for that would excite jealousy and ill-feeling on the part of those for whom they do not pay the fee. Just as the School Board remit the school fees in cases of proved inability to pay, so the charitable public, either through the School Board or by means of some special organisation, might pay to the school the dinner money of those whose inability to pay was satisfactorily proved.

In conclusion, allow me to say that I shall be glad to receive criticism publicly or privately, and any suggestions for the improvement of this experiment will receive my careful consideration. I have given the result of my first week's experiment, and I anticipate that much better results, both as regards dietary and finance, can be obtained than those I have achieved in my first week's experiment.

Yours, &c.,

W. MOORE EDE.

Some additional information gathered by further experience will interest some of your readers.

I attempted last week to get the whole of the money for the week (*i.e.*, fivepence) paid on the Monday. I thought that many would be able to pay fivepence on Monday who might not have a penny on Thursday or Friday, and also the payment in advance would facilitate the arrangement of the quantity of food required for each day. Experience proved that the parents, especially those who live in the most reckless hand-to-mouth way, and whose children are worst provided for, would not part with 5d. at one time. A penny a day is nothing, but 5d. at once is a different thing, and not to be thought of!

The calculations of cost given in my letter which you published were based upon the ordinary *market* prices, not retail prices of the goods. By an oversight, I put down the cost of 2 lbs. of rice at 1½d.; it should have been 3d. It may be well to explain that the

14 lbs. of bacon consisted of "shank ends," which are often sold very cheap. The bones were put into the soup, and 1s. was debited for the cost. The meat was served up in a roly-poly pudding, and entered as costing 3s.

We extended the bill of fare which I gave last week by the addition of two dishes, both of which were very popular, viz., fig pudding, with sweet sauce, and peas pudding. The first-named proved a trifle extravagant, as dinner for 80 cost 90 pence. But those of us who can remember our own youthful gastronomic feats, will not be surprised that with such a bill of fare as fig pudding—and a very good one, too—the children proved they could consume more than a penny-worth.

The following extract from our parish magazine will give all that I have to say further on this subject at the present time :—

> "The result which has been achieved is due to the economy which comes from supplying a large number, and purchasing the best articles at wholesale prices. There is no intention of making a profit beyond what is just sufficient to pay the cost of cooking and fuel, any further profit will be devoted to the improvement of the dinners.
>
> "The object which the Rector has in establishing these dinners is to assist parents in these bad times, by enabling them to get a cheaper meal for their children than they could provide at home, and to do this in such a way that the parents may not feel they are receiving a charity.
>
> "As those who are in regular work ought to be able to provide for their families, the Rector has drawn up the following—
>
> RULES FOR PENNY DINNERS.
>
> "I.—Only children of widows, or those whose parents are out of work or on short time, will be allowed to dine at the school.
>
> "II.—Any child wishing to dine at school must give his dinner money to the teacher of his class at the beginning of school.
>
> "III.—No credit will be allowed, nor will money be taken at the dinner hour.
>
> "IV.—It is very desirable that, when possible, the money for the whole week should be paid on Monday in advance."

Yours, &c.,

W. MOORE EDE.

The Rectory,

Gateshead, *June* 3, 1884.

Letter from the M.P. *for the* Scotch Universities.

Stracathro, Brechin, N.B.

1*st September*, 1883.

Dear Sir Henry,

I have much pleasure in responding to your request for some information as to the Dinner which is given during the winter months in the School of Farnell, in this neighbourhood.

Let me state that Farnell is a small country parish, with an area of about six square miles, and a population of about 600. There is no village in it, and the population is pretty equally distributed over

its area in farm-houses and cottages. The school is in a central situation. The only thing exceptional in the circumstance of the parish is that it contains Kinnaird Castle—the seat of the Earl of Southesk. The Earl's family and establishment contribute considerably to the population, but do not contribute in the same proportion to the number of children requiring the accommodation of the parish school. I may add that the people of the parish, with the exception of those at Kinnaird Castle, are mostly farmers and working people.

Some years ago it occurred to the parish minister, the Rev. T. A. Cameron, that the school children suffered a serious hardship during the winter months in not having the opportunity of getting a comfortable hot meal during the school day. Many of the scholars came some distance, leaving their homes about 8 a.m. and not getting home again until about 5 p.m.; and all the refreshment they had in the way of food was the "piece" of bread and butter which they brought with them. He observed that in inclement weather the attendance was irregular. He was of opinion that the children would attend more regularly, and be better fitted to resist the effects of bad weather and to profit by the instruction in school, if, during the winter months at least, they had a good hot meal at mid-day.

Lord and Lady Southesk entered heartily into the proposal, and the result was the institution of what may be called a school soup kitchen, which has now been in successful operation for five winters.

By private gifts and subscriptions the "plant" of the soup kitchen was provided. It consists of a boiler, erected in a wooden building which serves as the teachers' washing-house, a couple of large tin cans, one or two ladles and other utensils, and 120 strong tin bowls. The bowls cost about £3. Mr. Cameron estimates that the whole necessary "plant" for a similar school may be obtained for about £7.

The children bring their own spoons. A Farnell Scholar has regularly his spoon in his satchel along with his books. All that is supplied by the kitchen is the soup. Such of the children as eat bread with the soup bring their own bread, but a number take the soup without bread.

The rotation of soups is pea soup, potatoe soup, and Scotch broth. In all of these vegetables are largely used, and pieces of meat are boiled down. The soup is made both palatable and nourishing.

The children pay the usual school fees for their education. The soup dinner is something extra, and a separate charge is made for it. The charge is ½d. each child, but where there are more than two scholars of the same family only 1d. is charged for the family. Each child receives as much soup as he desires. He is not restricted to a single bowlful.

During last winter, from 1st December until 9th March, the average daily attendance at the school was 114. The average daily number served with soup was 110, showing that nearly all the scholars availed themselves of the hot meal.

The receipts for the winter were £10 7s. 3d., and the expenditure

for the dinner was £10 1s. 11½d., as per abstract subjoined, leaving a balance in hand of 5s. 3½d. To this expenditure, however, two items must be added in order to ascertain the full cost of what was given—(1) gifts of vegetables, meat, &c., which were received from parishioners, to the value of about £10, and (2) a sum of £3 5s. which was paid by the School Board in wages to the cook.

The dinner or soup is served as follows: At the proper hour the principal teacher tells off a number of boys and girls to fetch the soup from the cooking place, in pails, and to bring in the tin bowls. The teachers then, assisted by the elder scholars, serve out the bowls of soup to the scholars, who come up for it in regular order and retire with it to their seats in the school-room. The younger scholars are served separately in the infants' class room. Mr. Cameron writes—"There is no confusion. I have never heard of an accident. The whole 120 scholars have taken their dinner in less than twenty minutes from the time the soup was brought in. As the children finish their dinner they retire to the playground. When all have finished, the windows are opened and the rooms aired; and by the time school work is resumed there is not the faintest trace of dinner, or any smell to indicate that the school had been used as a dining hall."

And now as to the results of the institution of this dinner:—

I may mention that the general circumstances of the parish remain very much as they were five years ago. The population has remained stationary in number. The school is under the same teachers. All the difference is that there is now the hot soup in winter.

The following are the statistics of the school, comparing the school year 1878—the year before the dinner was instituted—with the school year last ended:—

	1878.	1883.
Number of pupils on roll	150 ..	195
Highest weekly average	101 ..	135
Average for the year	90 ..	113
Number presented in standards ..	88 ..	97
Do. passed in reading.. ..	80 ..	82
Do. do. writing	86 ..	89
Do. do. arithmetic ..	84 ..	92

The grant earned by the school in 1878, was £89; in 1883, it was £99.

It will be remembered that the dinner account showed a small balance of profit—5s. 3½d.—but that gifts of provisions had been received to the value of about £10. That cost to the parish has therefore, been met by the additional grant of £10 earned by the school. There was also a cost to the School Board of £3 5s. for the cook's wages, but this may be held to be covered by the additional fees from the increased attendance of scholars. In other words the dinner is given without cost to the parish.

The only cost to the School Board is the payment of a wage of 1s. per day—£3 5s. last winter—to the woman who acts as cook, the elder girls in rotation assist the cook, and in this way get some practical lessons in domestic economy.

As to the benefit to the children, Mr. Cameron writes:—"There can be no doubt of the physical advantage to the children—seen in the absence of any serious epidemic or illness among them, from which other schools in our neighbourhood have not been free, and in the buoyancy of their spirits. This latter is awanting for some time, so the teachers tell me, after the dinner is stopped."

I believe that the reduction of charge where there are more than two scholars of one family is felt to be a mistake. Now that the rule has been introduced it is not easily altered. But in this respect the Farnell example need not be followed in other places. The reduction of charge is not necessary; and besides, it gives somewhat of a charity appearance to the dinner, which it is desirable to avoid.

I think, too, that it would be an improvement if the spoons for the scholars were, like the bowls, part of the common "plant."

If there is any other information on the subject which you would wish to have, it will give me the greatest pleasure to procure it for you.

Believe me, Dear Sir Henry,

Yours very truly,

JAS. ALEX. CAMPBELL.

Sir Henry W. Peek, Bart., M.P.

WINTER 1882-83.

Expenditure.

Beef	£2	3	3
Sheeps' Heads (2)	0	1	2
Dripping	1	0	0
Barley	0	16	3
Potatoes	0	15	0
Peas	1	16	7
Carrots	1	0	10
Onions	0	19	8
Pepper and Salt	0	3	5½
Coals	0	14	4
Soft Soap	0	0	7
Soda	0	0	11
Tin Can	0	2	3
Towels	0	3	0
Carriage and Sundries	0	4	8
	£10	1	11½

From "NEWCASTLE DAILY CHRONICLE," *June* 16*th*, 1884.

A MODEL SCHOOL.

THE PENNY DINNERS AT ROUSDON.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.]

In an out of-the-way corner of South-East Devon—within half a mile of the sea—may be found a little building which seems destined to exercise a powerful influence for good. It stands on the estate of Sir Henry W. Peek, at Rousdon, and is a gift from the worthy baronet to the poor people around him. Though he represents Mid-Surrey in Parliament—and all his business connections lie elsewhere—Sir Henry is a Devonshire man by birth, and has a genuine admiration for his native county. Having purchased the property some 14 years ago, he began a series of operations which quickly changed its appearance. There was no attempt at restoration. The hall and the church—which had long been crumbling to decay—were at once razed to the ground, and on their sites arose a group of many-gabled edifices that are quite as useful, and far more picturesque, than those they supplanted. Grey flint walls, Purbeck stone dressings, and bright red tiles from Bridgwater, are the leading characteristics of the new homestead, and, as the dainty structures are seen above the tall cliffs which overhang the green waters of the channel, they irresistibly call to mind the "artist haunts" of vastly different lands. Everything is now as perfect as money and attention could ensure. The boundary walls and lodges are in harmony with the main buildings; the paths and pleasure grounds are trim and well arranged; and the surrounding country—with its wealth of fern and wild flower—forms a not inappropriate setting for the charming residence which Sir Henry has copied from Tudor times.

The school is in strict keeping with the other erections. It is placed just outside the chief entrance to the estate, and stands quite alone. Externally, it is a thing of undoubted beauty—with its canopied bell-turret, its dormer windows, its steeply slanting roofs, and its neat surrounding of well-kept garden ground. Already its laurel edges are interwoven with honeysuckle, and its walls profusely decked with roses and other climbing plants. It is more like a villa residence than a country school. Except for the gravelled play-yard, and the well-sheltered swings and vaulting bars, there is nothing to indicate the purpose for which the place is used. There is no cluster of cottages alongside—as is usually the case—and little else can be seen but the adjacent lodge gate, and the miles of smiling country which stretch away to the northward. At the first glance, it seems as though an immense sum of money had been expended for a very doubtful purpose. Not only is there no village visible, but there is really none in the parish. The people live in dwellings that are far apart from each other, and at such a distance from the central mansion as to render regular daily visits to its vicinity extremely problematical. But Sir Henry Peek was not to be deterred by ordinary obstacles. The district, in an educational sense, had been shamefully neglected, and the kindly baronet was determined to find

a remedy. Having erected the handsome school we have indicated, he took steps to ensure its being well filled. It was not only necessary to provide a competent teacher, suitable class-rooms, and a spacious recreation ground, but it was desirable that the children should be furnished with a good mid-day meal, and sent on their homeward journey in comfort. To a wealthy man the supply of all the requisite food would not have caused any great strain on his resources. This, however, was not what Sir Henry desired. He wanted to benefit his neighbours without pauperising them. He had furnished the school—making the interior fittings as perfect as the exterior design was pretty—and the scholars must pay for everything they got there. The tuition, of course, was the first consideration, and this, it was conceived, should be absolutely free to all comers. But to render it free it was necessary that a good grant should be earned from the Government. To earn a good grant the little ones would have to attend more regularly, and give greater heed to their lessons. To insure this increased attention they must at least be relieved from the gnawings of hunger; they must no longer be subject to the short-commons of the home larder; and the scant piece of dry bread—which was too often all they could procure—must be replaced by a plentiful supply of properly varied food. It was from some standpoint like this that the question was regarded, and hence arose the necessity for that system of penny dinners which has since been such a prominent feature of the scheme.

Those who desire to follow Sir Henry Peek's example will naturally want to know how the Rousdon experiment was started, how it has progressed, and how far it has realized the expectations of its founder. As we have already pointed out, the school was properly fitted to begin with. That is, there were suitable boilers in the kitchens, there was a sufficiency of crockery and cutlery in the racks, and there was a master anxious to do his best for the novel undertaking. With these trifling exceptions, the institution had no special facilities for the intended work. A simple announcement was made that the place was ready for the reception of pupils, and that all who came could have one adequate daily meal for a penny. As many of the expected scholars resided two or three miles away, and most of them over one mile, the importance of this arrangement was at once apparent to the people. It saved shoe leather, it guaranteed attendance in the afternoon, and it cost less even than the wretched morsels which had hitherto been drawn from the home store. As a consequence, the little people were drafted to Rousdon in great force. Farm labourers—who received only 12s. or 14s. a week—managed to send as many as four members of their families to be taught. Shepherds, coast guardsmen, mechanics, and even farmers followed suit; and it then became evident that, despite the scattered character of the district, there would soon be more applicants than the space at command could accommodate. All were treated alike when accepted; but a preference was shown, of course, for the children of the poorest. Though it was originally stipulated that the price for the dinners should be 5d. a week, and that the amount should be paid on each Monday morning, it was found, in practice, that the rule was capable

of considerable relaxation. As a matter of fact, the "penny dinner" at Rousdon does not cost a penny. It thus happens that, although the fivepenny charge is adhered to where only one member of a family attends, there has been a reduction to succeeding members. Two children, for instance, may have their dinners for 9d. a week, three for 1s., and four for 1s. 3d. There is no discount in the case of farmers, as they are said to be very well qualified to pay the full rate. But even with all the deductions, the scheme has been a financial success. From the commencement of operations in October, 1876, to the end of December, 1882, there were 110,221 dinners provided, at a cost of 107,406 pence. This shows that 2,815 dinners were given for nothing. Had all these yielded the stipulated penny, then there would have been a sum of £11 11s. 7d. remaining, as a set off against the outlay incurred over the boilers and other accessories.

But it has been urged that Devonshire possesses advantages which could not be secured in larger towns, and that private munificence has had much to do with the extraordinary results achieved. This is a fallacy. Sir Henry Peek denies that the dinner scheme has been helped by him in any way. He insisted, at the beginning, that there should be no back payments, and there has never been a single farthing of arrears. This has enabled the managers to arrange with certainty for each day's supply, and to avoid all wasteful and unnecessary outlay. Not having been assisted by private enterprise, therefore, the question arises whether there has been any favouritism from the traders. The answer is again in the negative. All the articles have been bought in large quantities, at wholesale rates, just as any other purchaser could have got them. Meat has ranged from 6d. to 9d. per lb., and suet 5d. Flour and bread have cost 1½d. Rice is set down at 2d., sago 3d., and prunes 3½d.; while treacle, sugar, and jam have varied from 2½d. to 3½d. Currants have been bought at 4d., raisins at 5d., and lard at 6½d. Apples were secured at 1¼d., rhubarb and gooseberries at 1d. Potatoes, onions, and vegetables generally, have been grown in a garden attached to the school, but they have always been charged to the dinner account at the rates which were certainly higher than could have been got from customers outside. Milk is undoubtedly cheap at 8d. per gallon; but it is about the only article the townspeople could not secure at the figures we have named. Of the £447 expended, as much as £106 went for flour, £83 for meat, £31 for potatoes, £29 for bread, £26 for suet, £23 for milk, £22 for rice, £20 for sugar, £17 for currants, £14 for treacle, and £13 each for raisins and lard. This gives a fair idea of the material used in the gross. It may be of service, however, if we specify the whole of the items required during the last week in May :—

Monday: Jam Pudding.—24lbs. flour, 2lbs. suet, 7lbs. jam. Sufficient for 84 children.

Tuesday: Soup.—1lb. onions, 9lbs. bread, 1lb. lentils, 30lbs. potatoes, 1lb. rice, one 6lb. tin of Australian meat. Sufficient for 84 children.

Wednesday: Rhubarb pudding.—24lbs. flour, 8lbs. sugar, 2lbs. suet, 24lbs. rhubarb. For 86 children.

Thursday: Rolly-polly meat pudding.—14lbs. flour, 30lbs. potatoes, 7lbs. bacon. For 84 children.

Friday: Raisin pudding.—24lbs. flour, 7lbs. raisins, 2lbs. suet. For 85 children.

It will thus be seen that 423 dinners were secured at a cost of 418 pence, and that the quantity provided was sufficient to allow each child an average of 8oz. of solid food per meal. How highly the warm repast is appreciated may be gathered from the fact that there were only three absentees during the week in question, and that nothing short of serious illness ever keeps a child away. Considering the distances to be traversed, and the rough weather to be encountered, this fact alone speaks volumes for the success of the entire scheme.

There is still another phase of the question which should not be lost sight of. A cry has been raised of late against overwork in public schools, and it has seemed to be well founded. According to the *Lancet*, however, "the education system is *not* overworking the children, but merely demonstrating that they are underfed." If this is the case—and it would appear to be so from the results at Rousdon—there is little doubt as to the direction in which the money of philanthropists should henceforth flow. As we have indicated, the material to be worked upon in Devonshire was at first rather unpromising. The scholars were the poorly-clad and miserably-fed offspring of agricultural labourers, and they knew absolutely nothing. While their bodies were growing, their brains were hungered, and they were thus "worse off than dullards." But with the advent of better food there quickly came a change. There was greater regularity in attendance, and the little ones were more robust in health, more ruddy in appearance, and happier in every way than they had ever been before. Not only did they gain bodily strength, but their minds expanded, and they were better able to understand the lessons they were taught. So marvellous was the improvement, indeed, that in 1880 there were 79 children, out of 89, eligible for examination. And what did they accomplish when before the inspector? As many as 98 per cent. passed in reading, 96 per cent. in writing and spelling, 98 in arithmetic, 56 in geography, and 79 in grammar. Eight of them did very well in literature, and five in domestic economy. This was an extraordinary performance when all the circumstances are considered. But, as may be supposed, there was a still further improvement by 1883. Of 84 children then on the books, 81 were submitted to the examiner, and there passed 100 per cent. in reading, 100 in writing and spelling, 98 in arithmetic, 100 in geography, and 87 in grammar; whilst 14 got creditably through their "little go" in literature, and 11 in domestic economy. Order, discipline, singing, and needlework were described as good, and the whole school classed as "excellent." When these figures were quoted in the House of Commons, in July last, there was not a member in attendance who failed to endorse Mr. Mundella's assertion that "it would be impossible to find a better school." The high opinion of the Vice-President of the Council is shared by Her Majesty's inspectors. They say it is a pleasure to visit Rousdon; that four out of five of the children always pass easily; and that the examination, difficult as it is, hardly does justice to the condition of the establishment. This would be extremely satisfactory in itself, even if there was not a more pleasing consideration to follow. The Government grant earned last year was a trifle over £86. Every

farthing of this goes to the schoolmaster, and with free house and garden, constitutes his stipend. For the parents, the result is not less gratifying. Having earned such a liberal grant there is nothing to be paid for fees, and hence it happens that the four bairns of a farm labourer not only get 20 dinners for 1s. 3d., but have their entire education free. This surely ought to prove an additional inducement, if one were needed, for an extensive trial of the dinner system amongst the poor and needy of all districts.

In the face of such results, it is scarcely necessary to say another word in support of our "model school." We may just add that the class rooms are spacious and airy, that the play-grounds are places in which real enjoyment can be secured, and that the cloak-room could, with advantage, be imitated by every school in the land. After their long walks in the mornings, the outer garments of the little people are not unfrequently wet, bedabbled, and dangerous. In the cloak-room, however, the clothes are ranged on pegs immediately above a series of hot-water pipes, and, by four o'clock, they are as dry and comfortable as they can be made. A wash and brush up, in a conveniently placed lavatory, is the last duty of the day, and the children then hasten to their homes—brighter and happier, after a hard day's work, than most other scholars are when they begin. It has been our good fortune to see them both at work and at play, and we can confidently assert that a bonnier, cleaner, or more healthy-looking lot of youngsters we have never seen. Their physique is admirable, their intelligence undoubted, and there is an air of quiet confidence about them which success seldom fails to inspire. They were romping outside when the dinner bell rang, and it is but justice to say that the readiness of the response cleared the yard with truly marvellous rapidity. It was a raisin pudding day, and as this is always a favourite dish, there was the usual anxiety to make acquaintance with the steaming slices. But there was no lack of discipline. Once inside the corridor, the children were formed in line, marched to their seats, and, having sung grace very sweetly, began operations in earnest. The food was abundant, it was decidedly toothsome, and a most enjoyable repast was made. Everybody looked pleased and satisfied, and a merrier company could scarcely have been seen than the one which, a few minutes later, was again exercising lung and muscle in the playground. The dinner is cooked by the schoolmaster's family; but it is served by some of the senior pupils. The older girls also take a share in arranging the tables, washing up after the feast, and keeping clean and tidy the room in which they dine. It is in every way a good work that is being carried on, and those connected with it are deserving of all honour. Sir Henry Peek should receive the thanks of poor children all the world over for the noble effort he has made to improve their condition. Mr. Burgess, the schoolmaster, is equally entitled to commendation for the hearty manner in which he has striven to solve a difficult problem, and to ensure an undoubted success. But it is the scholars, perhaps, who most richly merit praise, for the earnest, persistent, and admirable efforts they have made to reap the full benefit of their grand opportunity.