

First annual report of the Williams Secular School.

Contributors

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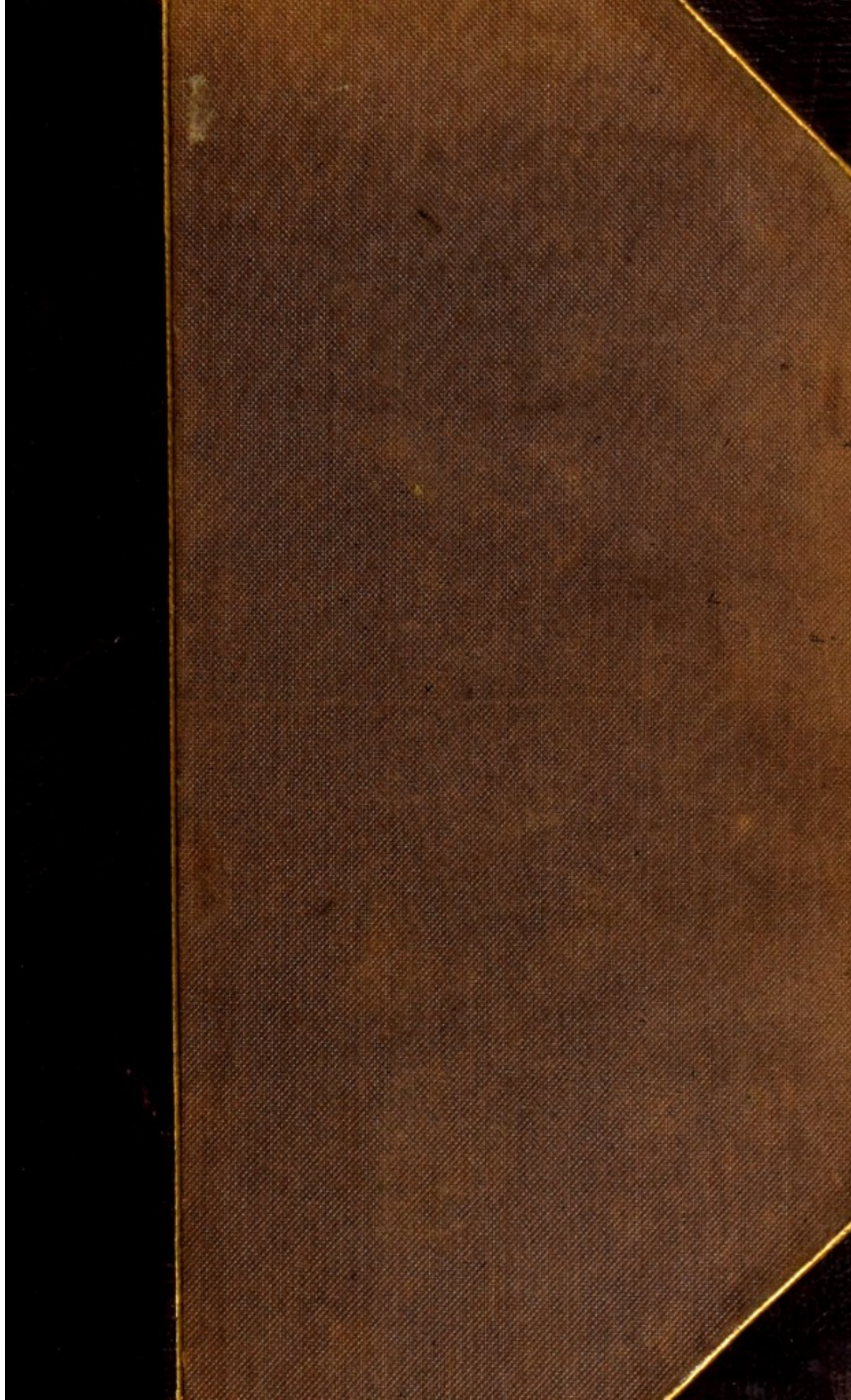
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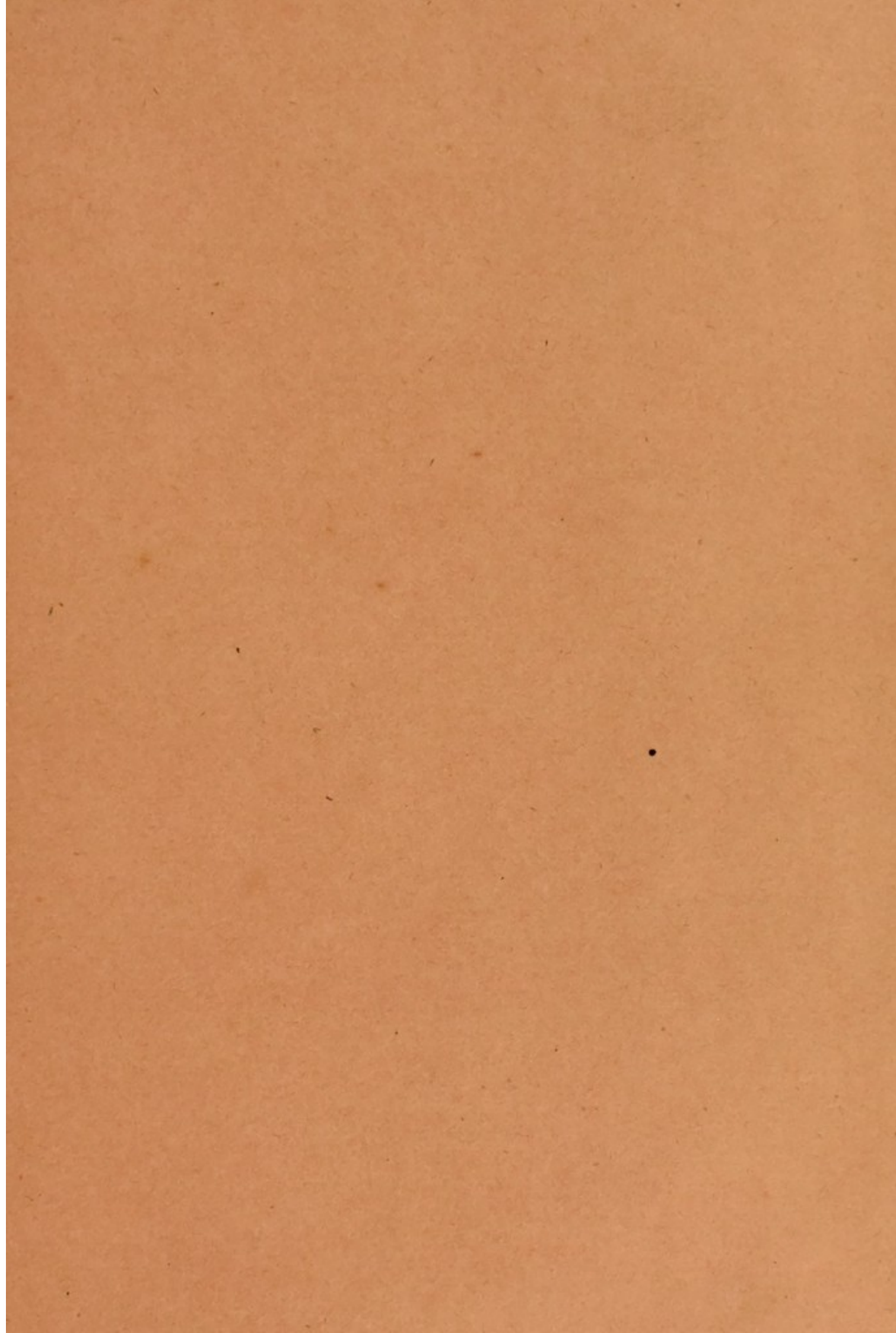
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Dr Charles Mackays poem
"The Souls of the Children".
at the end of 4th Report of Williams's
Secular School.

See three other pamphlets by G. Combe
bound in Collection marked, Phrenology

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Answer to attack on the -
Constitution of Man.

all the above by
George Combe.

Williams's Secular School in
Edinburgh. - Six Reports.

† What should Secular Education embrace.

mankind to do their duty ; and that nineteen-twentieths of their sufferings and sorrows arose from their own failures, in not acting in accordance with His laws. That was the kind of religion which belonged to a secular school. He conceived that every man had a right to judge for himself in forming his opinions on religious subjects, however widely these might differ from his own. He did not profess himself to be a sectarian, like the Pharisee who went into the temple to pray, and who thanked God that he was not like other men ; but he professed himself on this subject to be like the publican, who said, " Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." It was every man's duty to train up his children according to his own convictions of religious truth. The moment they yielded the right to every man to teach his own children, that very moment they surrendered the right to force their own religion on the consciences of their neighbours. (Applause.) They had suffered in this country to an enormous extent from the contentions of sects ; in proof of which Mr Combe referred particularly to the state of Ireland. He passed a high eulogium on the national school system of that country, and expressed his satisfaction that, notwithstanding all the opposition which it had met with, it had continued to progress, so that, at the present moment, there were more children at the national schools than had ever been at any former period. As regarded the school which they were about to institute, they had come to the determination to leave the Saturdays and Sundays for the teaching of religion by the pastors and parents of the children themselves. Such schools were common in the United States, in Holland, and also in Ireland ; and last, and most important of all, several influential gentlemen in Lancashire, copying the American system, had brought a great scheme of secular education before the public in that county, and intended to apply for a bill to authorise the community to tax itself for the support of these schools, which were to be under the management of those who paid the taxes. The Edinburgh school would be opened in the Trades' Hall, Infirmary Street, on Monday next, and the fee would be fourpence per week for each boy above six years of age, to whom it would be at first confined ; but the founders were decidedly of opinion that if the experiment proved successful, the two sexes should afterwards be trained together. He begged to say that Mr Simpson and himself were not alone ; and that the idea of the school had originated from Mr William Ellis of London, manager of the Mutual Marine Insurance Company, who had practically tested the system in the metropolis, and who had placed at his (Mr Combe's) disposal a sum of L.100 to assist in the establishment of the school. (Applause.) This amount had been supplemented by subscriptions from other parties ; and it was worthy of remark that some of these had come from Ireland. (Applause.) He concluded by expressing a hope that the school which they were about to institute would be the means of introducing an improved system of education into Scotland, of which she might one day be proud. (Mr Combe resumed his seat amidst the plaudits of the meeting.)

Mr SIMPSON then shortly addressed the meeting. He said it gave him great pleasure and satisfaction to hear the principles to which he had given utterance about fifteen years ago in this city, so much better expounded and enforced that evening by his friend Mr Combe. (Applause.)

Mr COMBE said that Mr Ellis had not only most liberally contributed to the school, but he had also supplied them with a most able teacher in the person of Mr W. M. Williams, whom he had now the honour of introducing to the meeting. (Applause.)

Mr WILLIAMS made a few remarks, in the course of which he stated that his design would be not so much to communicate a knowledge of words, as to communicate a knowledge of ideas to the boys that might be intrusted to his care. He bespoke their indulgence for a week or two after the commencement of the school, but after that period he hoped to have matters in such a state as would exhibit in a favourable light, to all who visited the school, the system of education which he intended to pursue.

The meeting then broke up.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

WILLIAMS SECULAR SCHOOL.

Man is approaching a more complete fulfilment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world. His reason being created after the image of God, he has to use it to discover the laws by which the Almighty governs his Creation ; and by making these laws his standard of action, to conquer Nature to his use—himself a Divine instrument.

Speech of Prince Albert at the Mansion House.—March 21, 1850.

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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE WILLIAMS SECULAR SCHOOL.

THIS School was instituted for the purpose of affording to the Children of the Working-classes of Edinburgh a useful Secular Education. It was framed on the model of the Birkbeck School of the London Mechanics' Institution, which has been eminently successful, and which has led to the establishment of several similar seminaries in the metropolis. It owes its origin to Mr William Ellis, of Champion Hill, Camberwell, a well-known, zealous, and enlightened friend of the Education of the People. It aims at training children to virtue and usefulness, by instructing them in the constitution of the things and beings which exist, their relations, and the consequences of their various modes of action ; and by accustoming the animal propensities, and moral and religious sentiments, to act in harmony with the intellectual faculties, in obeying throughout life the law of God inscribed in the records of Creation.

The object of the School thus includes the training of all the faculties—animal, moral, religious, and intellectual ; but in order to avoid the difficulties arising from differences of opinion among the various sects on points of Religious Doctrine, the department of dogmatic Spiritual Instruction is not undertaken, the teaching being confined to matters that are purely secular, or relating to this world and its duties only. This course by no means excludes the training of the religious sentiments : for reverence to the Supreme Being, and obedience to His will, may be efficiently taught, by presenting to the minds of children the evidences of His existence, power, and beneficence—the laws which He has instituted, as they are embodied in His Works of Creation,—and the temporal consequences of obeying or infringing them. As these points admit of inductive philosophical demonstration, comparatively few differences of opinion exist in regard to them ;

while they form a basis upon which further religious knowledge, imparted by its more appropriate teachers, may advantageously be founded. The Promoters of the School desire to leave to the parents themselves, or to such special religious preceptors as they may select, the teaching of doctrines relating to the Supernatural World; and it is here that they would draw definitely the line between Secular and Spiritual Instruction.

The School was opened, for boys only, on 4th December 1848, in temporary premises, No. 6 Infirmary Street. The average attendance during the first month was 32; and the numbers continued steadily increasing until the last month of the Session (July 1849), when they reached 60. In September 1849 the School re-opened, for both boys and girls, in the building, No. 1 Surgeon Square; and a female assistant-teacher, Miss Carmichael, was engaged. By the middle of October the number of pupils amounted to 160, about one-third of whom were girls. The average numbers have been maintained at about the same points, to the close of the year embraced in this Report.

As the constitution and objects of the School are still, in many quarters, imperfectly understood, it appears advisable, in this first Annual Report, to enter into a brief explanation of them. The subjects taught include English Reading, Grammar, and Composition; Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Book-Keeping, Drawing, and Vocal Music; Plain and Ornamental Needlework for the girls; also the elements of Mathematics, Natural History, Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, Social Economy, Physiology, and Phrenology.

In the organization of the School, the teacher has endeavoured, as far as possible, to combine the advantages of the monitorial and simultaneous systems, without carrying either of them so far as is customary with their exclusive partizans.

The monitorial arrangements are similar to those recommended by the British and Foreign School Society—the number of children in each class under a monitor averaging 9 or 10, and never exceeding 12. In this way the number under each monitor is kept so low as to be within his power of control, and the pupils can be so classified, in relation to their attainments, that what is intelligible to one is intelligible to all. By such classification as is thus practicable, the chief difficulty of simultaneously teaching large numbers is obviated—viz., that arising from some pupils being in advance of the rest, and answering every question, while the others are passive, or only mechanically repeating the answers of the more intelligent; or, on the other hand, from the more advanced losing time, and acquiring habits of inattention and idleness, while what they understand clearly is being made intelligible to the rest.

Reading is taught partly in the monitorial classes, and partly in large classes simultaneously. In the monitorial classes the books

used are very simple, and generally of a narrative and descriptive kind, such as the children can easily comprehend, and cannot fail to be interested in. Each child in turn reads aloud, the whole class following mentally, and correcting, if they can, when an error is made. When the class cannot correct an error, the monitor does so ; or if a difficulty occurs beyond the powers of the monitor, he appeals to the teacher. After about twenty minutes reading, the monitor questions his class on the subject of the lesson, and on the spelling and signification of the words that have occurred in it. During this exercise, the teacher is moving from class to class, supervising the labour of the monitors, explaining any difficulties that may occur in the lessons, and giving any other assistance that he may perceive to be needed.

In the collective lessons for simultaneous instruction of large numbers, the reading is made subservient to the systematic courses of instruction on the Moral and Physical Sciences, Natural History, Geography, &c. The teacher first reads aloud a sentence, and then all the class read it aloud together—keeping time by a slight exaggeration of the pauses. In these lessons elocution and English pronunciation are carefully attended to, and every effort is made to enable the children to grasp fully the subject of the lesson, by supplying them with additional facts and illustrations of a familiar, and, if possible, local character ; and by leading them to supply illustrations of their own, and practical applications of the knowledge they are acquiring. Spelling and etymology are connected incidentally with these lessons. Wherever the subject permits, and the means of the School will afford, objects and diagrams are exhibited ; and the teacher has found that the rapidity, accuracy, and stability of the progress of the pupils in any branch of knowledge, may be almost measured by the number of such illustrations that has been presented to them.

With the exception of the arithmetical tables, no lessons are set to the children to learn by rote. Wherever inferences or theories are involved, they are submitted to severe examination—the teacher suggesting difficulties and apparent objections, and requiring the pupils to do the same. In general, his object is to lead rather than carry them through a subject, by supplying, or, if possible, drawing from themselves, such suggestions and facts as may direct their minds to investigate and find their own conclusions, rather than to remain mere passive and submissive recipients of the statements of the teacher. By these means the intellectual faculties are vigorously exercised and developed, and the subjects taught are firmly fixed in the mind. It is hoped that the intellectual training thus commenced in the School will not terminate there, but that the children will acquire habits of investigation, and an independence and energy of intellect, which will induce them to continue through life the pursuit of know

ledge as their most valued recreation. Object-lessons are given daily to the younger children—generally by Miss Carmichael, sometimes by Mr Williams, and occasionally by one or another of the ablest monitors. These lessons are conducted so as to afford some general and rudimentary ideas on various branches of knowledge, and on the meaning and application of the ordinary words and scientific terms which the sensible properties of the objects illustrate, in order to prepare the children for those systematic courses of instruction in the sciences, which constitute the chief business of the advanced classes.

By presenting to the youngest children a piece of metal, of rock, of glass, of wood, &c., and examining experimentally its most obvious properties,—such as colour, texture, hardness, cohesion, odour, specific gravity, fusibility, &c., &c., and naming them by their proper scientific designations—which thus taught are more easily understood and remembered than less definite and accurate terms,—the pupils are prepared for the advanced classes, where the higher phenomena of nature, and the mechanical and chemical laws which regulate them, are studied.

In Geography all that is visible on the map,—the distribution of land and water, and of mountains, valleys, and plains, the courses of rivers, and the relative situations of the various countries and their chief cities; also the climate, plants, animals, and the most prominent customs and physical peculiarities of the people of different nations,—may be presented to the minds of children of from five or six to ten years of age, and rendered intensely interesting to them; and whatever interests a child is understood and remembered. When they have passed through this preliminary training, they are ready for the advanced classes, in which they are instructed in the relations of our planet to the heavenly bodies, and the forces which determine its movements among them; the structure of the earth's crust, and the changes it has passed through, and is undergoing; the constitution of the atmosphere and of the waters of the earth, their mutual relations and their influences on the solid foundations upon which they rest; the phenomena and laws of climate and meteorology; and the moral and intellectual characteristics, the social and political institutions, and general history of the inhabitants of different countries.

The object-lessons are also made introductory to Physiological and Moral Science. A bone, a skull, the whole skeleton, an anatomical diagram or preparation, is sometimes made the subject of an object-lesson to the younger children; and thus they become acquainted with the general structure, and some of the functions, of their own bodies, preparatory to entering upon a regular course of Physiology.

Rudimentary ideas of their own mental faculties are afforded, by leading them to enquire how they know that an object is brown, or hard, or odorous, &c.; and thus the organs and functions of the senses

and perceptive faculties are made, to a certain extent, familiar to them, and the subject of mental philosophy and the relations of their faculties to the external world, is opened, to be afterwards more fully unfolded in the advanced classes for Phrenology.

The comparison of a natural with an artificial object—a piece of flint, for example, with a piece of glass, or a tree with a table—serves as the basis of elementary instruction on the distinctions between raw materials and manufactured articles, on wealth and its production by labour, on the capital required for its production, on wages, profits, division of labour, interchange, commerce, &c.

Having, in this manner, conveyed to the minds of the children some simple, precise, and accurate notions of the forms and qualities of physical objects, the next aim of the Promoters and Teachers of the School is, to superadd a systematic knowledge of the structure and functions of the human body, and of the faculties of the mind. Physiology, illustrated by a human skeleton, by casts of the muscular system, and by diagrams representing the blood-vessels, the digestive and respiratory organs, and also the brain, spinal marrow and nerves, are used as the basis of explanations of the structure, modes of action, laws of health, and uses and abuses of the bodily and mental organs. Abstract terms and disquisitions are as much as possible avoided, and objects, facts, relations, and mental states, falling within the observation and consciousness of children, and elucidated by numerous and familiar illustrations, are chiefly relied on.

The success of the instruction in these departments exceeds the most sanguine expectations of the Promoters of the School, and shews that God who ordained the human faculties, adapted the remainder of Creation to them, with a wisdom and goodness which promise results of unspeakable importance, whenever adequate instruction in natural truth shall be generally and successfully conveyed to the opening faculties of the young.

Thus grounded in accurate ideas concerning the simpler elements and laws of the physical and moral worlds, the pupils are prepared for lessons on Social Economy, in which the natural laws which govern the production of wealth, the manner in which it has been and may be distributed, and the foundations of differences of rank, of civil laws and government, and of the general duties and arrangements of social life, are taught.

Hitherto, the progress of the advanced classes has been much slower than, it is hoped, it will be hereafter, owing to the want of due preparation in the elder children who have come from other schools, where a different system was followed, under which they had acquired the habit of reading and repeating mechanically the mere words of the lessons, without making any effort to examine and comprehend the subjects of them. Much time and training have been requisite to overcome this defect, and lead them habitually to think for themselves.

and investigate everything that is brought before them. This difficulty increases with the age at which the children are admitted to the school. The younger children enter at once into the spirit of the system, and their progress in every respect is most satisfactory.

Among other means which have been adopted for awakening the intelligence of the children, one may be mentioned, which was tried by the teacher as an experiment, and has proved successful. The children were directed to look about them wherever they went, to examine carefully the things and books they met with, and to try to find something they could not understand, and which might puzzle the teacher; to write a question concerning it, with their name appended to it, and hand it to the teacher, who, if he could, would answer it, and explain the subject to the whole class. This was tried shortly after the school opened; but it was not until the month of May following, that any of the children were induced to commence. When once begun, however, the questions became subjects of much excitement, and poured in very abundantly. Lessons have since been regularly given upon them, and they are found to interest the children more than anything else, and afford a powerful means of exercising their observing and reflective faculties, besides suggesting to the teacher a multitude of simple useful subjects, and common applications of great principles, about which the children's minds are already active, and their curiosity roused, and informing him of much that it is desirable he should know concerning their ideas and wishes, and the subjects which most occupy their minds, and those which fail to do so.

The physical training of the children is not neglected, though the want of play-ground seriously limits the efficiency of the school in this respect. Between the lessons the children are drilled in such calisthenic exercises as the circumstances will permit; and singing is also used as a means of maintaining the general vivacity and cheerfulness.

The principal difficulty the teacher has experienced has been in maintaining order and discipline, without resorting to corporal punishment, or other severe measures. It is easy to maintain silence in a school by the simple expedient of flogging any child who makes a noise; but to lead the children to control their own boisterous and desultory playful tendencies by the force of a conscientious feeling of duty, and an ever-active sense of propriety, requires some time, and much patient, careful training—especially when some of the children, from having been accustomed to harsh discipline, both at home and at the schools they have formerly attended, have been trained to base their self-restraint on the fear of corporal punishment alone, and have thus become, to a great extent, insensible to other motives. On this account it has been found necessary to have occasional resort to corporal punishment in extreme cases of disobedience; but it is hoped that there will shortly be established a general moral tone among the

children, sufficiently strong to obviate entirely the necessity of this most objectionable means of discipline.

Moral Training has always been maintained as the paramount object of the school. As already mentioned, the children are taught the laws of their own constitution, physical, intellectual, and moral, as deduced from the structure and relations of their bodily and mental organs, and from observed mental phenomena. It is shewn to them that these laws are not mere human inventions, but the positive institutions of the Creator; that the whole framework of external nature is built up in accordance with them; that not one can be violated by us without deranging the harmony of our own functions and relations to the world around us; and thereby necessarily producing immediate or remote pain and misery to ourselves and those we influence. This principle is studiously kept in view in all the lessons on the sciences. The children are shewn the evidences of design and unity existing in the structure of the universe; that not a particle of matter, however insignificant, can change its place but in accordance with the laws impressed upon it by its Creator; and thus they learn that every truth which science teaches is a revelation of God's will, which should be known by man, and serve to guide him in performing his part in the general scheme of Creation.

In the lessons on the Physical Sciences, they are taught the laws by which the Creative Intelligence is governing and sustaining the physical universe; in the Physiological lessons, they learn the conditions upon which He permits organized beings to enjoy life and health; and in the Phrenological lessons, although these cannot teach them what is the essential nature of thought and sentiment, they find an exposition of the organic conditions upon which the manifestations of the intellectual and affective faculties depend,—they learn that the moral as well as the physical world has been created with a fixed and definite constitution,—the laws of which we may study, and thereby learn much of the will of the Creator concerning our moral conduct. These laws, as far as the progress of science has as yet developed them, are taught, by examining the elementary faculties, the action of which produces all our *impulses, emotions, and ideas*,—how these powers may be abused and misdirected, and thus be in discord with each other and the world without; which discord is vice, and leads to misery—and how they may be rightly used and well directed, so as to be in harmony with each other and all things, which harmony is virtue, and tends to happiness.

The introduction of Phrenology, because of the prejudices still cherished against it, was considered by many as an experiment of questionable prudence, but experience has proved its wisdom and great utility. Without instructing children in their own bodily and mental constitutions, it is impossible to convey to them clear, useful, and practical notions of their own relations to the other objects and beings of

Creation, and to the Creator ; and to invest instruction in the works of God with that religious character which truly belongs to it. By enabling the children to understand their own mental faculties and bodily functions, and the objects of the Creator in bestowing these upon them, their religious feelings are brought, in harmony with the intellect, to bear upon all things, and to exert their elevating, purifying, guiding, and restraining influence upon daily thought and action.

The children take a deep interest in this instruction; so much so, that if their attention be flagging over an object, they are roused and excited to fresh life when its designs and uses, as instituted by the Creator, are unfolded. It is no longer a subject of pure intellectual contemplation, but becomes a key-note which rouses their sentiments of Wonder and Veneration ; and these, again, communicate new intensity and depth to their intellectual perceptions.

The moral training is not confined to the mere teaching of the principles of morality, but every effort is made to exercise and develope the moral powers of the children, by maintaining them in active operation in all the proceedings of the school. We desire so to regulate the conduct of the children that what they are taught in the lessons may at once and habitually be carried out in their intercourse with each other. Moral delinquencies are tried by a jury of the children, the teacher acting as judge. These trials are so conducted as to form practical moral lessons on circumstances which the children cannot fail to understand and appreciate, and aid in creating a sound public opinion throughout the school,—the operation of which is not confined to the occasion on which a verdict is pronounced. The offender, who thus receives condemnation from his own schoolfellows, feels both its force and justice far more deeply than if the teacher alone pronounced it ; and the jury themselves, in asserting the supremacy of justice, are exercising their own moral powers, and thus fore-arming themselves against the liability to commit similar transgressions.

The teachers have always endeavoured to give a moral tone to the whole proceedings of the school, by maintaining a scrupulous impartiality in their treatment of the children, by explaining to them the moral grounds upon which the school-discipline is founded, and freely permitting *their own* conduct to be questioned—making the government of the school, in fact, as constitutional as possible, and altogether based upon reason and the moral sentiments ; always avoiding the position of irresponsible despotism, which is assumed by some schoolmasters, and viewed by many parents as essential to school-discipline.

It is hoped that the children, thus made acquainted with the exquisite machinery of the physical creation, and of their own bodily and mental organism, and accustomed to regard the whole as the gift of the Omnipotent Father of all, will feel that the fulfilment of the conditions upon which He has made health, virtue, and prosperity to

depend, is a holy and imperative duty; and that wilfully to derange their own organisms by intemperance, and immorality, or to violate the laws of physical creation by recklessness and folly, would be acts of sacrilegious and unnatural ingratitude—a defilement of the living “temple of God”—as well as a certain cause of personal suffering to themselves.

The boys and girls are educated together in the same classes. When the girls first entered the school, there was some degree of excitement among the boys, and annoyance to the girls from their notice and attentions; but proper admonitions, and thoroughly engaging the attention of the individuals of both sexes in the business of the school, soon put an end to these irregularities, and the conduct of both speedily became in every respect satisfactory. The boys are trained in gentleness, deference, and self-restraint, by the presence of the girls; and the girls learn modesty, self-respect, and self-reliance, in their association with the boys. The girls are taught needlework and knitting by Miss Carmichael, the assistant teacher, at a separate hour each day; and it is not an uncommon occurrence for some of the boys to beg to be permitted to stay to their lessons, and to read a story-book to them while they are engaged in their peculiar work. As Miss Carmichael is constantly present, no interruption of the proper business of the hour takes place from this indulgence. Some of the boys also, from natural inclination, have asked Miss Carmichael to give them lessons in sewing and knitting, with which she has uniformly complied. These may be useful to them in future circumstances.

The school having been little more than one year in existence, the extent of its usefulness can of course be but faintly indicated by the visible changes at present wrought upon the children. Enough, however, has been effected to encourage the warmest hopes of its friends.

After the foregoing explanation of the principles on which it is founded, a few remarks on its practical effects may be added.

The intellect of the children has been awakened to so great an extent as to have effected, in many cases, a visible change in their manner and appearance—an earnest curiosity and a love of knowledge have arisen, and become a general characteristic of their minds. They evidently begin to feel that they are living and moving in a world which has been created by Divine power, and adapted by Divine wisdom to the nature of man. They perceive the direct influence on their well-being, of the knowledge imparted to them; while they have also learned that they live in a scene of wonders, where fresh beauties and harmonies are ever opening to those who look around with attention and intelligence. They observe, think, and read, spontaneously; in many cases with such earnestness and activity, as to require considerable vigilance, on the part of the teachers, to prevent over-exercise of the brain.

Their love of the school is remarkable. Instead of making their escape with the usual eagerness when the school-hours are over, a

considerable number is always found hanging about so pertinaciously, that the teachers have difficulty in sending them out, and enforcing observance of the play-hour. They endeavour to obtain books; and instead of going to play, will sometimes hide themselves in the back-rooms of the school to read them, or collect together in groups to discuss the incidents of their little world, or some wonderment which a lesson has suggested, but not yet solved.

The progress made in the various branches of study is highly satisfactory; and there is reason to believe that it is of a substantial character—that the children have made the subjects their own, and when they speak of them are expressing their own ideas, and not merely repeating by rote a lesson they have been taught. Appended are some reports of examinations which have taken place; but it should be understood that these examinations were too short to bring out more than a very small fraction of their intelligence.

The moral improvement of the children has been equally satisfactory. The animosities, quarrels, and fighting, so troublesome in some schools, have scarcely any existence among them. A scuffle will sometimes, though very rarely, occur in the midst of some boisterous game; but such a thing as a stand-up fight is an outrage against which the moral sense of the whole school would revolt; it would not be permitted by the other boys, even if two combatants were found ready to commence. They understand and feel, that such brutality is inconsistent with the moral attributes of a human being. This was not the case, however, at the commencement of the school; for, within the first three months, several trials for malicious fighting and wanton cruelty took place. Incidents are daily occurring which afford the most pleasing proofs of the friendship and kindness of the children to each other, and their affection to the teachers. At first, several cases of petty theft occurred: three boys were tried, convicted, and expelled for theft, under rather aggravated circumstances, within three weeks after the school was opened. These cases, and some others which occurred during the following month, were, by the trials and frequent allusions to them, made the basis of many moral lessons; and the children were directed at once to apply these practically, by scrupulously abstaining from the appropriation of anything not their own, and by bringing to the teacher anything, however trifling, they might pick up, or find lying about, in order that a strict search might be instituted to discover the rightful owner and restore it to him. This has since become a general practice; halfpence and farthings, pieces of pencil, marbles, buttons, toys, and trinkets of all kinds, are brought to the teacher daily, whether found in the school, or in the street on the way to or from the school.

It is worthy of remark, that in September last, when nearly a hundred new pupils were enrolled in about four weeks, it continually occurred that pencils, pens, halfpence, and other little things, the

property of the children or of the school, were missing, and upon inquiry it was evident that they must have been stolen. This annoyance lasted about six weeks or two months, just as was the case when the school first opened ; but it has now ceased.

In the first instance, as before stated, the offenders, upon conviction, were dismissed from the school ; in two more recent cases, the same sentence was pronounced by the teacher, but he consented to remit it if a majority of at least three-fourths of the pupils expressed a wish that it should be suspended, and would become bail for the offender by carefully watching him, and giving him all the moral aid in their power to resist the temptation to this ruinous vice. They assented to this with unanimous acclamation, and the effect, both upon the culprit and the general public of the school, has been excellent.

The school has at all times been open to visitors, many of whom have honoured the teachers with their presence, and thus means have been afforded of testing their professions by their performances. In the course of the year 1849, two examinations of the pupils took place in presence of the parents of the children and their friends, notices of which appeared in the newspapers. As a practical illustration of the manner in which the business of the school is conducted, extracts from these Reports are subjoined in the Appendix.

The Promoters of the School have the satisfaction of adding, that the merits of the system, and of Mr Williams as the head teacher, have been fully appreciated by the parents and the children. The latter expressed their approbation by publicly presenting to Mr Williams a handsome writing-desk, with a suitable inscription, as a testimony of their esteem.

The Promoters consider themselves particularly fortunate in having obtained the services of Miss Carmichael as an assistant-teacher. She was trained at the Queen's College and in the Normal Seminary of Glasgow, and since she joined the Williams Secular School, she has entered into the spirit of, and carried into practice, the principles on which it is founded, in a manner which has secured the esteem and affection of the children, the confidence of the parents, and the approbation of the Promoters.

An account of the Receipts and Expenditure of the School is annexed ; and while the Promoters return their sincere thanks to the Trustees of the late W. R. Henderson, Esq., and to the other friends who have so generously supported the school, they feel it a duty to call attention to the large extent to which the money has come from England and Ireland, and express the hope, that hereafter Scotland may give an increasing aid to the education of the children of her own labouring people.

GEO. COMBE, JAMES SIMPSON, *Promoters.*

EDINBURGH, 6th April 1850.

APPENDIX, No. I.

EXAMINATION OF WILLIAMS' "SECULAR SCHOOL."

(From the Scotsman of April 7, 1849.)

Mr WILLIAMS then caused the junior class to stand up, in order to shew the manner in which a lesson on objects was conducted. The boys were examined separately, and in succession, so as to make it apparent that each understood the particular object under consideration. The instruction embraced the physical properties of matter, and children of six and seven years of age shewed an intelligent comprehension of the meaning of such words as "elasticity," "fusibility," "transparency," "opacity," &c.—an object possessing the quality being in each instance handled and examined by the scholars. The answers elicited were always ready and accurate.

A second and more advanced class were minutely examined upon the elementary principles of mechanics. The boys explained, with much clearness, in answer to questions that were put to them, the different properties of the lever, the wedge, and the screw.

The third and highest class then underwent a most searching examination by Mr Combe in Physiology, particularly with regard to the bones, muscles, skin, heart, lungs, bloodvessels, absorbent vessels, the stomach, liver, intestines, and other digestive organs, and they shewed a knowledge of the local situations, general structure, and functions of all these parts. This was by far the most interesting part of the examination, and the pupils acquitted themselves to the admiration of all present, as was evinced by the frequent manifestations of applause. They were then examined on *the uses* of this knowledge. An infant and an adult skeleton, for example, were placed before them, and they were asked how the one grew to the size of the other. They described the absorption of the waste matter of the body by the absorbent vessels, and its discharge by the skin, bowels, bladder, and lungs; then the renovation of the textures by the deposition of new matter by the blood-vessels, bone being given to bone, muscle to muscle, nerve to nerve, &c., where wanted, in order to renew waste and complete growth. They next described how wholesome food, in proper quantity, is necessary to supply the blood with the elements of these structures, and pointed out the consequences to growth and to health of too little, too much, and of ill-chosen food; they described the necessity of fresh air to invigorate the blood, of cleanliness to prevent its being contaminated by dirt absorbed through the skin, and of exercise to preserve the circulation of all the vessels in a state of activity.

They were next asked who made all these vessels, bones, and other parts, and appointed their uses? They answered, "God."

“ Did God intend them for your happiness ? ” — “ Yes. ” “ Can you escape from the painful consequences of neglecting cleanliness, fresh air, exercise, and temperance ? ” — “ No. ” “ Why not ? ” — “ Because God has made the organs, and made them act as they do ; and they act well or ill according to our conduct. ” “ Are you thus living under God’s laws *here and now* ? ” — “ Yes. ” “ Do you need to die before you come into God’s presence and under His law ? ” — “ No ; we are under His law here, and He is now present executing His law. ”

The children read, sang, and shewed their drawing-books ; and after some interesting remarks by Mr Williams on his mode of employing the Monitorial System, the Examination was concluded.

APPENDIX, No. II.

EXAMINATION OF MR WILLIAMS’ SECULAR SCHOOL.

(From the Scotsman.)

On Friday, 27th July 1849, the pupils attending this school were examined ; and as the system followed is one which, in its main features, has frequently been advocated in our columns, we are happy to be able to report very favourably of their progress. The younger children, forty-two in number, were examined between eleven and one o’clock, when their mothers, and many other individuals interested in their improvement, attended. In the evening, from eight to eleven o’clock, the senior boys, nineteen in number, gave examples of the instruction they had received, and the school theatre (formerly Mr Lizars’s Anatomical Lecture-room) was crowded by an audience exceeding 250 persons. Mr George Combe and Mr James Simpson, the Promoters of the School, superintended the proceedings.

In the morning examination, the junior pupils were divided into four classes. The first or youngest class exhibited their attainments in reading, spelling, and the use of numeral characters.

The second class read a story of a lapdog which was pampered into inertness and ill-temper by over-feeding, and cured by exercise and plain food. They were then questioned on the meaning of the words, and the application of the facts to themselves.

The third class read a chapter descriptive of the various kinds of trees ; and, in answer to questions put to them, described the structure and physiology of the several parts of a tree, the adaptation of the root to the soil, the rising of the sap, &c. They described, also, the limbs and covering of animals as different from the structure of plants, and stated how both were adapted to their respective circumstances. The power, wisdom, and goodness of God in these structures and adaptations were next adverted to.

The same class went through an object-lesson on wool, and described its various qualities, its uses to the sheep and to man, and the processes of spinning and weaving. Their statement that wool grows on the sheep and clothes it, but that man is born without covering and must make clothes for himself, led to an exposition of the necessity of skill and industry to man.

The whole children next sang several songs.

The fourth class read a chapter on Physiology, and were examined in regard to the laws of digestion, and the advantages of temperance, cleanliness, exercise, pure air, and other conditions of health. All the bodily organs and functions were referred to God as their author; and conduct in conformity with their laws was stated to be obedience to the Divine will.

This concluded the morning examination.

In the evening, the senior division read the chapter "on Wages," from Mr Ellis's "Outlines of Social Economy;" and were then questioned on what constitutes wealth—its sources—the necessity of wealth to human enjoyment,—on capital and its sources, and the necessity of capital to the employment of labour,—on wages—the relations of capitalists and labourers to each other—the causes of high and low wages—and how high wages can be obtained. In order to obtain high wages, the working-classes, it was stated, must acquire skill, and practise industry and economy, and by these means gain capital for themselves; for by no human means can an ignorant, unskilful, spendthrift, reckless, labourer be rendered independent.

The pupils were next exercised in Mental Arithmetic, and we believe that few of the audience could keep pace with their powers of calculation.

The subject of Natural Philosophy came next in order. In the examination in April last they had shewn their acquaintance with the mechanical powers, and now they exhibited their enlarged knowledge of the elements of physics. Mr Williams made a drop of water form itself on the end of a glass rod, and fall to the ground. The boys were then questioned on the law of cohesion, which made it round; on the law of gravitation, which made it fall; on the nature of fluidity, which made it break when it touched the ground; and from these premises they ascended to the laws of the Planetary System, explained how the planets were round, how the planet Neptune was discovered, and how the phenomena of the double stars are accounted for. They deduced from these facts conclusions concerning the power, wisdom, and omnipresence of God. The laws of heat and evaporation were next expounded by the boys; and Mr Williams adverted to the recently-discovered spheroidal condition of fluids in contact with hot surfaces, as explaining the supposed incombustibility of the "Fire King," &c.

The boys next shewed their drawings and copy-books; and while the company examined these, they sang several songs.

The subject of Anatomy and Physiology was then resumed. As they had been examined at some length on this subject in April, they merely recapitulated the principal organs, such as the bones, muscles, lungs, heart, stomach, &c., and their functions. The bearing of this knowledge upon habits of cleanliness, temperance, and the other conditions

of health, was practically illustrated, and they then proceeded to the structure and functions of the brain and nervous system, or Phrenology. They mentioned the anatomy and functions of the spinal chord, the separate origins and uses of the nerves of motion and feeling, and the connection of these structures with the brain. They next answered on the functions of the brain, and pointed out the situations of the organs of the animal propensities, and the moral and intellectual faculties. An unmarked skull was then presented to them; and when Mr Combe touched one part of it after another at random, they named the cerebral organ which lay under that part, and never once failed to do so correctly. They also explained, in answer to miscellaneous questions, the uses and abuses of the faculties. To shew the nature of this examination (in which Mr Combe and Mr Simpson took a part, as they had occasionally done in the other subjects), we select a few examples:—

“What organ lies here?” (pointing to a place on the skull.)—
 “Combativeness.” What is the use of that faculty?—“To give us courage to meet danger and difficulty in the discharge of our duty.”
 “What are its abuses?”—“Fighting, opposing, contention.” “If other boys assail you, should you fight?”—“No; we should tell you.”
 “But suppose I am absent, what should you do?”—“Call to the police for protection.” “Yes; or to any gentleman who may be there, if you cannot see a policeman.” “Why are the police necessary?”—
 “Because there are people who steal and fight and destroy things.”
 “What is the advantage of applying to the police rather than fighting?”—“Because we should all make a bad use of our combativeness alike, and might be beaten, and no good would come to anybody from it.” “What good comes from the police?”—“The peaceable are protected and the bad punished.” (This referred to the instruction which Mr Williams had given to the boys to abstain from fighting with the pupils of a neighbouring school, who had assailed them; because, when both parties were apprehended and carried to the police-office, the magistrate had told them that as both had fought he could only punish or dismiss both,—the latter of which he did with a reprimand.)

“What organ lies here?”—“Veneration.” “What are its uses?”—
 “To produce the emotion of respect, reverence, and religious feeling.” “What are its abuses?”—“Idolatry, superstition, and respect for things and people that do not deserve it.” “What other faculties enter into religious feeling?”—“Hope and Wonder.” “Suppose any one were to tell you that religion was nonsense, and the invention of priests to keep the people in order, what would you say to him?”—
 “That there are organs for religion in the brain, that God made the organs, and that therefore God made man a religious being.”
 “When the Greeks and Romans worshipped idols, were they religious?”—“Yes; but they were superstitious—it was a wrong religion.”
 “How can we discover true religion?”—“By applying our intellectual and moral faculties to the study of God’s will.”

“What organ is this?”—“Ideality.” “What is the use of it?”—
 “It makes us love the beautiful and refined.” “Do you know any objects that please ideality?”—“Sir Walter Scott’s Monument—Mr Stewart’s Monument—the pillars on the Calton Hill—the front of the

Commerical Bank—the Princes' Street Gardens—the view from Arthur's Seat." (Each of these answers proceeded from a different boy, and was his own suggestion.) "Are there any other faculties for enjoyment like ideality?"—"Colouring and Wit, Time and Tune." "Do these show that God meant man to be merry at times and happy?"—"Yes." "What do some men drink whisky for?"—"To make themselves happy." "Do you know any other way of becoming happy?"—"Yes; to eat temperately of good food, keep the skin clean, breathe pure air, take exercise, follow some useful trade, and acquire knowledge." "Which of these two ways of becoming happy—the short-hand one of drinking whisky, or the one you have described, is the best?"—"The other way is best." "What does whisky do to the stomach?"—"It inflames its coats." "What does it do to the brain?"—"Irritates and stupifies it." "What does the other method of being happy do?"—"It improves the stomach and brain." "How are people next day after drinking whisky?"—"Stupid, ill, and unfit for work." "How, after the other way?"—"Strong and well, fit for everything they need to do."

These are mere specimens of the course of the examination, which embraced several other faculties, with their uses and abuses. The answers of the boys elicited frequent bursts of laughter and applause from the audience.

APPENDIX, No. III.

ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS OF THE WILLIAMS SECULAR SCHOOL.

(From 21st November 1848 to 31st December 1849.)

DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS.

William Ellis, Esq., Champion Hill, Camberwell,	£75	0	0
The Trustees of W. R. Henderson, Esq.,	54	3	4
William Hackblock, Esq., Denmark Hill, Camberwell,	50	0	0
Thomas Horlock Bastard, Esq., Chorley Dorsetshire,	6	0	0
Sir Walter C. Trevelyan, Bart., Nettlecombe, Somersetshire,	5	0	0
George Baillie, Esq., Warwick,	5	0	0
George Combe, Esq., 45 Melville Street,	5	0	0
Miss Cox, 25 Rutland Street,	3	3	0
Robert Cox, Esq., W.S., do.	3	3	0
Miss Douglas, Ainslie Place,	3	0	0
Mrs Leith Lumsden, Meggetland House,	2	2	0
Sir James Gibson-Craig, Bart, Riccarton,	2	0	0
Miss Carnegie, Dunccliffe,	2	0	0
James Simpson, Esq., Advocate,	1	1	0
William Ivory, Esq., W.S.,	1	1	0
John Oliver, Esq., High Street,	1	0	0
William Dunville, Esq., Richmond Lodge, Belfast,	1	0	0
Miss Dunville, do. do.,	1	0	0
Miss Stirling Graham, of Duntrune,	1	0	0
Misses M. and B. Combe, Edinburgh,	1	0	0
James Hay, Esq., Leith,	1	0	0
Stirling Lacon, Esq., 19s. 2d.; R. R. Noel, Esq., 1s. 8d.,	1	0	10
Miss Fitz-Hugh, Bannisters, Southampton,	1	0	0
A Friend,	1	0	0
Richard Carmichael, Esq., 24 Rutland Square, Dublin,	0	10	0
Mrs Carmichael,	0	10	0
Mrs Leith Lumsden, for prizes,	0	2	6

Carry forward, £227 16 8

Chorlton

Brought forward,	£227	16	8	
School-fees received during the above period from the children, at 4s. per quarter,	£56	16	6	
Less returned to two boys who were dismissed.	£0	5	0	
Deduct teachers' proportion of do. repaid by him,	0	3	4	
		0	1	8
		56	14	10
Amount received,	£284	11	6	

EXPENDITURE.

Salaries and proportions of fees to Male and Female Teachers and Monitors, from 21st November 1848 to 21st December 1849,	£103	1	3
Rent of School-house in Infirmary Street to 27th July 1849, and Halls for public meetings,	10	3	6
Fires and cleaning school,	9	15	2½
Paid for school-furniture,	48	8	9
School-books and stationery,	66	3	3½
Freight of do. from London, and portorage,	0	17	9
Apparatus, &c.,	7	13	5
Printing prospectuses, circulars, advertising, postages, &c.,	15	4	10
Sundries, towels, dusters, chalk, &c.,	1	3	0
Prizes to children,	0	18	7
	£263	9	7
Balance in favour of the School,	£21	1	11

Edinburgh, 6th April 1850.—I have examined the detailed accounts, of which the foregoing is an abstract, and compared them with the vouchers, and hereby certify that they are correctly stated, and sufficiently vouched.

GEO. FYFFE,
83 PRINCES STREET.

REPORT

OF THE

ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS

OF

MR WILLIAMS' SECULAR SCHOOL,

HELD AT EDINBURGH ON THE 29TH AND 30TH JULY,

AND THE 1ST AUGUST 1851.

EDINBURGH:

MACLACHLAN AND STEWART.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND COMPANY.

MDCCCLI.

Price One Penny.









