SCIENCE.—SUPPLEMENT.

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PRIMARY EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.

Two of the functions which almost every modern state has been obliged to assume, whether in other respects its policy is *laissez faire* or state interference, are the support of its helpless poor and the education of its ignorant youth. Both of these matters were attended to in the Europe of the middle ages by the church, which, on account of its large endowments and its literary stores, was perhaps better fitted to relieve misery and spread the light of education than the state as then organized. England formed no exception to this rule. The early English monasteries could find almost the only reasons for their being, in the fact that the poor and helpless found, under their hospitable roofs, shelter and support, and that the children of the neighboring districts obtained the instruction they so sadly needed in the schools connected with them. These schools were established at about the same time that Christianity was adopted by the English people. Such a one was the school established in 680 by Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury. Later, schools were likewise provided in almost all the cathedral towns. These schools were employed by the clergy to keep their hold on the people; and with the reformation there naturally came a change in the educational system, which reflected that which had taken place in the relations between church and state. The laity were to have a share in the management of the schools, which were, however, to be supported in somewhat the same way as before.

The intention of the leaders of the reformation was to appropriate for school maintenance a large share of the property of the monasteries; but the king's friends were able to secure most of this property for themselves. Such schools as lived through this stormy period at all, or such as were founded soon after, had to subsist on private charity. A great many schools were founded as the immediate result of the reformation, but they were mostly grammar or higher schools, whose influence was necessarily limited; and it was not until considerably later that any attention was paid to primary education, — the only kind of education that can interest the masses of the people. Attempts had indeed been made to make some provision for the education of the children of the poor. Statutes had been passed in the sixteenth century under which schools for poor children were to be maintained by the clergy in each parish. But the great inequality in the distribution of the income of the state church — an inequality which all the expedients that have been devised have not done away with — gave the great majority of parishes barely enough for ecclesiastical needs: little, therefore, could be spared for the establishment of an efficient system of primary education. Parochial schools did exist in the richer parishes, it is true, but they were of a very poor character, and were supported by means of school-fees, or by the revenue of foundations; but in the larger number of the rural districts no schools at all were to be found.

But what the church had neglected to do was taken up by private associations, beginning with the latter part of the last century. In 1781 Robert Raikes founded the first Sunday schools; in 1803 was founded the British and foreign school society, managed by the dissenters; in 1811, the National society, the organ of the state church; in 1837 the Ragged-school society had its origin; and in 1850 there was formed by the large factory-owners the Lancashire public-school association. The two great names in this period are those of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster, — the one a churchman, the other a non-conformist, and each the founder of the school society recognized as the agency of the religious body to which he belonged. To these two men, it has been said, England must "allow the credit of conceiving some sort of scheme for popular education, and of submitting proposals by which it might be carried out;" and it was through the societies founded by them or their followers that state aid, when it was finally given, was distributed. This began in 1832, with an appropriation of twenty thousand pounds. For several years before that, attempts had been made to secure state aid, but they were frustrated by the jealousies of the church and non-conformists. The "church was alarmed at any thing which seemed to trench upon what she naturally thought to be her appointed task. The dissenters dreaded what might add to the impregnability of the church's strongholds."

With this appropriation in 1832 begins, then, the assumption by the English state, of the duty, which is now universally recognized, of educating its ignorant youth. The period between 1832 and

the present time we may divide into three sub-periods.

First, the period of the pure subsidy system. Each year the appropriation was increased, until in 1860 it was thirty times as great as in 1832. It was originally intended that this appropriation should be distributed by the treasury department; but in 1839 this duty was transferred to the education committee of the privy council, which then began to take the form of an executive department for educational affairs. The principles which were to guide the committee in the distribution are found in a treasury minute of 1833, and were, 1°, that the sum granted was always to be expended in the building of schoolhouses; 2°, no grant was to be made unless one-half of the cost of building was met by voluntary contributions, and unless the application for the money was recommended by the national or the British and foreign school society; and finally, 3°, populous places were to have the preference in the allotment of the grants. When the subsidies were increased in amount, these rules were somewhat relaxed; so that, for example, teachers who had passed the committee's examination might be paid from the grant.

It will be noticed from this that all connection between the schools and the state was voluntary on the part of the schools; but, so long as this connection lasted, the school was subject to state inspection. Under this system great material progress was made, as is seen from the reports of the committee of the council of education. The most important for this purpose is that contained in Parliamentary papers, 1864, vol. xlv. This report marks the end of this first sub-period, and shows that during it the inspection districts had increased in number to sixty, that 4,628 schoolhouses had been erected, and that from 1839 to 1864 £7,400,000 had been expended. But the quality of the education given in the schools was very poor. The teachers originally had no pedagogic training whatever. The monitorial system of teaching, as developed by Bell and Lancaster, had been adopted. By it the pupils taught each other under the nominal supervision of a teacher. Instruction was principally in religious matters, since the schools were mainly sectarian; and though secular instruction was thus given a disproportionately small share in the system of education, yet no sound religious instruction was given to counterbalance this disproportion. This may be seen from the following written answers, from children of average intelligence in an inspected school, to the questions, 'What is thy duty towards God?' and 'What is thy duty towards thy neighbor?' "My duty toads God is to bleed in Him, to fering and to loaf withold your arts, withold my mine, withold my sold, and with my sernth, to whirchp and give thanks, to put my old trash in Him, to call upon Him, to onner His old name and His world and to save Him truly all the days of my life's end." "My dooty toads my nabers, to love him as thyself and to do to all men as I wed thou shall and to me; to love, onner, and suke my farther and mother; to onner and to bay the Queen and all that are pet in a forty under her; to smit myself to all my gooness, teaches, sportial pastures and marsters," etc.

To remedy a system which could lead to so lamentable and at the same time so grotesque results, a trained staff of teachers had to be obtained. This was done by establishing training-colleges, to which school managers were to send students, and from which they were to receive back teachers, to be paid in great part by the state, and provided with certificates granted by the state, which thus guaranteed their efficiency.

In 1851 as many as twenty-five of these training-colleges were established. But the establishment and maintenance of these institutions necessitated a great increase in the parliamentary grants, which in 1852 reached the sum of £160,000. As the greater part of these grants went to the schools founded by the national society, the agency of the state church, which did most of the educational work (during the years from 1839 to 1864, out of £7,400,000 the church schools had received £4,450,000), the dissenters became very much alarmed. They claimed that the grants were an artifice for increasing church revenues. In the course of this dispute there arose, for the first time in the history of English education, a party which advocated the adoption of a state "secular system, administered, irrespective of religious belief, by local and elective bodies;" while the dispute itself led to the appointment of what is known as the 'Commission of inquiry of 1858.' Though the plans proposed by this commission were not adopted in the form in which they were submitted, still they were the point of departure for the new movement, which we may say begins with the Revised code of 1863.

The second sub-period, then, is the period of the Revised code. The education department had been getting ready to revise its system. To do this, an abstract of all of its regulations was made in 1858. In 1860, Mr. Lowe, the vice-president of the committee of council, draughted the regulations in the form of a code, arranged in chapters according to subjects. It now fell to him to embody in his code the suggestions contained in the report of the commission of 1858. This he did by revising the code, which was thereafter

known as the 'Revised code,' and by which the relations between the state and the educational system were to be regulated. The Revised code went into operation on July 1, 1863. The principal change introduced was the provision calling for an increase in the requirements which must be fulfilled in order to obtain a portion of the grant. For instance: it provided, that, to obtain a share of the grant, a school must be held in approved premises, and must be under the charge of a qualified teacher, who, though licensed by the state, was to be paid by the school managers; the attendance of the children must reach a certain specified minimum number; while their attainments must be proved by individual examinations in reading, writing, and arithmetic. A point in which this revised system differed from the former one was, that while, under the latter, the grant was either totally given or totally refused, it might now be given in part, the amount granted depending on how well the required conditions were fulfilled.

The immediate effect of the adoption of this Revised code was the falling-off of the grants; since the education which the children had received under the old system was so poor, that very many were unable to pass the standard examinations. Mr. Lowe's cynical remark — that "if the new system [i.e., the system of the Revised code] is costly, it shall at least be efficient; if it is inefficient, it shall be cheap" — was thus shown to be a correct forecast of the effect of the code. But while in this way the faults of the old educational system were demonstrated, complaints were made that school managers, in their efforts to comply with the provisions of the Revised code, in order to obtain large grants, pressed the children too hard, and limited the instruction given to the subjects required for the standard examinations. The purely educational result of the code was thus the reduction of the general intelligence of the pupils. To obviate this difficulty, an amendment to the code was adopted in 1867, which gave a special grant if certain new conditions were complied with, such as the teaching of subjects not required for the standard examinations. This and other amendments improved the code, so that, in its final form, it may be said to have been a success as far as it went. The grants increased after it was fairly in operation, amounting in 1869 to about £800,000. Accommodation was offered in the inspected schools for nearly 2,000,000 children, while about 1,300,000 were actually in attendance. But, as will have been noticed, the code did not at all change the voluntary character of the system. The actual motive power of the schools came from the 200,000 persons whose voluntary subscriptions started, and with the aid of the state supported, the schools. There was no legislative provision that would prevent the possible decrease or absolute cessation of such voluntary subscriptions; and in such case the whole educational system, built up by so many years of earnest effort, would vanish into empty air. Again: the problem of what and how religious instruction should be given, came to the front with special force, since almost all the state-aided schools were denominational or sectarian schools: therefore when the reform bill of 1867 was passed, by which the suffrage was greatly extended, it was felt that a corresponding strengthening and widening of the educational system was necessary. This led to the passage of the elementary education act of 1870, which, with its amendments, now regulates the primary education in England.

This brings us to the third sub-period, that of the present primary educational system. The main characteristic of the elementary education act of 1870, is, that though it was intended to supplement the previously existing system, yet it imposes on the various localities the legal duty of providing a sufficient amount of school accommodation in public elementary schools; i.e., in schools where the ordinary school-fee does not exceed ninepence a week, in which no attendance at religious instruction or at religious worship is required, in which a sufficient instruction is given in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and which is open to the inspection of the education department. Where a sufficient number of such schools does not exist in the district (which is made the unit for school administration, and is practically equivalent to the poor-law parish), the education department itself may, on the refusal of the district to act, form a school board to carry out the provisions of the act. If the district proceeds to the formation of such a board voluntarily, it may do so. These boards are composed of from five to fifteen members, chosen in the incorporated towns from those registered on the borough list, and in the parishes by the rate-payers; i.e., those who pay local taxes. Each elector has as many votes as there are members to be elected, and may distribute his votes as he wishes, massing them all on one candidate, or scattering them among as many candidates as he has votes. The intention of this clause in the act is to provide for the representation of ecclesiastical minorities; for, as we have seen, one of the great problems to be solved in the adoption of the educational system was the reconciliation of the different religious sects. The boards elected in this way have charge of the management of the schools which they establish,

and have the power to make by-laws by which children from five to thirteen years of age may be compelled to attend school. This is the only provision in the act of 1870 relating to compulsory attendance, which was thus made absolutely dependent upon the will of the school boards. In the localities where no such board existed (i.e., in localities supplied with a sufficient amount of proper school accommodation), compulsion was impossible, while in those possessed of a school board it was in the power of the board not to adopt the necessary by-laws.

The expenses of the schools established by the local boards were to be defrayed from a school fund provided for by the act. This was to consist of school-fees, of parliamentary grants, and of a compulsory local rate. As much of the expenditure was of a permanent character, the school board was given the power to borrow money on the security of the school fund.

The whole educational system was kept under the control of the education department, which inspected all the state-aided schools, revised the accounts of the school boards, and could enforce the execution of the law by means of its power to step in and do any work that had been omitted by a defaulting district, at the expense of such district.

Such were the leading features of the act of 1870, whose main purpose, it has been said, "was to establish a fixed and statutory local authority where the casual efforts of local benevolence and zeal had failed;" and this purpose was in the main accomplished. Both the statutory and voluntary agencies increased greatly in number. School accommodation nearly doubled between 1869 and 1876. In 1876 the schools cost £3,500,000, of which £750,000 came from subscription, £370,000 from local rates, and more than £1,500,000 from the parliamentary grants.

One point for criticism and amendment yet remained, — the attendance was very small: indeed, it hardly exceeded 2,000,000. This subsequent statutes have attempted to remedy. The most important of them are the elementary education acts of 1876 and 1880. These made it the duty of the parent to have his child educated in the elementary branches, and also placed new restrictions on the employment of children when it might interfere with their education. They added a new local authority, called the 'School attendance committee,' which, as well as the school boards, must pass by-laws requiring compulsory attendance; and they gave the local school authorities more extensive powers for the enforcement of attendance in case of neglect, and for the encouragement of regularity among those children who professed to attend. The result of these acts was, that in 1885, when compulsion was in operation throughout the entire country, the average attendance was over 3,400,000; there was accommodation for more than 5,000,000; while the parliamentary grant had reached £2,867,000, the subscriptions £756,000, the local rates something more than £1,140,000, and the school pence £1,791,000. The schools thus cost, in all, for their annual maintenance, £6,550,000 in 1885.

From this short sketch of the history and present position of English primary education, we see that its characteristics are, 1°, universal compulsory attendance; 2°, obligatory maintenance of proper unsectarian schools by the various localities; 3°, supervision of the whole system by the central organization, — the education department, — which has power to step in and remedy the neglect of recalcitrant localities.

As a result of the fact that these elementary education acts are simply to supplement a system of schools existing at the time of their adoption, the present elementary schools of England fall into three classes. The first class is composed of the denominational schools, as they are called, supported by the school societies, and existing independently, as before, in all towns and places in which foundations, private subscriptions, and the large resources of the school societies, are sufficient to provide the school accommodation required by law. About one-third of all the school-children in England attend these schools even now. The second class is composed of schools denominational in name, and connected with church societies, but supported only in part by church funds, the remainder of the cost of their maintenance being made up from state grants or local rates. These are spoken of as public schools, are under the inspection of the school authorities, and are maintained as schools for all denominations. The majority of the schools belong to this class. The English church maintains most of them, receiving for so doing half of all the state aid granted. In the third class are the newly formed board schools, under the direct administration of the district boards, and existing in the poorer districts. These are continually increasing in number. They receive a sum from the state grant which is considerably larger than the amount received by all the denominational schools outside of those directly connected with the church.

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The freshmen at Cambridge university, England, this term, number 938, of whom 197 go to Trinity college. The freshmen at Oxford number 616.