REPORT

OF THE

FIRST GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

OF THE

NATIONAL EDUCATION LEAGUE,

HELD AT BIRMINGHAM,

ON

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY, OCT. 12 & 13, 1869.

PRICE, TO NON-MEMBERS, ONE SHILLING.

BIRMINGHAM:
"THE JOURNAL" PRINTING OFFICES, NEW STREET.

1869.

NATIONAL EDUCATION LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 47, ANN STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

GEORGE DIXON, Esq., M.P., *Chairman*, Birmingham.

J. CHAMBERLAIN, Esq., *Vice-Chairman*.

JOHN JAFFRAY, Esq., *Treasurer*.

COUNCILLOR JESSE COLLINGS, *Hon. Sec.*

FRANCIS ADAMS, *Secretary*.

HOLLAND HENRY, *Mayor* of Birmingham.
BAKER, GEORGE, *Councillor*, Tennant Street, Birmingham.
BEALE, W. J., Westbourne Road, Edgbaston.
BUNCE, J. THACKRAY, F.S.S., Wordsworth Place, Small Heath, Birm.
CHAMBERLAIN, J. H., Christ Church Buildings, New Street, Birmingham.
CHANCE, R. L., Chad Hill House, Harborne Road. Edgbaston.
CLARKE, REV. C., F.L.S., Edgbaston.
CROSSKEY, REV. HENRY W., F.G.S., George Street, Edgbaston.
DAWSON, GEORGE, M.A., Hawksley, West Heath, Worcestershire.
FIELD, A., Parade, Birmingham.
HARRIS, W., *Councillor*, Stratford Road, Camp Hill, Birmingham.
HAWKES, H., *Alderman*, Grampian House, Bristol Road, Edgbaston.
HESLOP, T. P., M.D., Temple Row West, Birmingham.
HOLLIDAY, W., J.P., Chad Valley, Edgbaston.
JOHNSON, G. J., Waterloo Street, Birmingham.
KENRICK, TIMOTHY, J.P., Maple Bank, Edgbaston.
KENRICK, JOHN ARTHUR, J.P., Fallowfield, Edgbaston.
KENRICK, WM., Mountlands, Edgbaston.
LLOYD, G. B., Wellington Road, Edgbaston.
MATHEWS, C. E., Augustus Road, Edgbaston.
MIDDLEMORE, WM., J.P., Elvetham Road, Edgbaston.
OSBORNE, E. C., *Alderman*, Carpenter Road, Edgbaston.
OSLER, FOLLETT, F.R.S., South Bank, Edgbaston.
RYLAND, ARTHUR, *Alderman*, Cannon Street, Birmingham.
RYLAND, WM., Noel Road, Edgbaston.
TIMMINS, SAMUEL, F.R.S.L., Elvetham Lodge, Edgbaston.
VINCE, REV. C., Hockley Hill, Birmingham.
WIGGIN, H., J.P., *Alderman*, Metchley Grange, Harborne.
WRIGHT, J. S., Church Hill, Handsworth.

The following is a copy of the first circular which was issued by the Provisional Committee.

NATIONAL EDUCATION LEAGUE.

Birmingham, February, 1869.

Sir,

I am requested by the Provisional Committee, formed for the promotion of a National Education League, to forward to you the annexed draft of a scheme which they have drawn up for the furtherance of a system of education which shall reach all those children who are now growing up in a degree of ignorance injurious alike to their own interests and to that of the community at large.

The Provisional Committee are of opinion, that in those parts of the country where a sufficient school organization does not exist, the deficiency can be speedily and adequately supplied only by the combined action of the central and local authorities. The new machinery to be provided by this joint action need not injuriously interfere with those existing schools which are satisfactorily educating the people; but the Provisional Committee are of opinion that it is all-important that no time should be lost in bringing a good education within the reach of even the poorest and the most neglected children in the country; and they are also of opinion, that when the means of education shall everywhere exist, the poverty or apathy of parents ought not to be allowed to prevent those means being availed of by their children.

If you are willing to assist in carrying out the objects of the proposed League, I shall feel obliged by you signing and returning to me the enclosed form.

I am

Your obedient servant,

GEORGE DIXON.

NATIONAL EDUCATION LEAGUE.

OBJECT.

The establishment of a system which shall secure the education of every child in England and Wales.

MEANS.

1. Local Authorities shall be compelled by law to see that sufficient school accommodation is provided for every child in their district.
2. The cost of founding and maintaining such schools as may be required shall be provided out of the Local Rates, supplemented by Government Grants.
3. All Schools aided by Local Rates shall be under the management of Local Authorities and subject to Government Inspection.
4. All Schools aided by Local Rates shall be Unsectarian.
5. To all Schools aided by Local Rates admission shall be free.
6. School Accommodation being provided, the State or the Local Authorities shall have power to compel the attendance of children of suitable age not otherwise receiving education.

The payment of an annual subscription shall constitute membership.

The Executive Body shall be a Council elected at a general meeting of the members, convened for that purpose.

The Council shall appoint a Chairman, an Honorary Secretary, a Treasurer, and such paid officers as may be required.

The general business of the League shall be conducted by the Council, and they shall make all arrangements for the formation of branch societies, collect and disseminate information, and prepare the way for such legislation as will carry out the objects of the League.

The following is a copy of the invitation to the General Meeting.

NATIONAL EDUCATION LEAGUE.

OFFICES—47, ANN STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

September 16th, 1869.

Sir,

We beg to inform you that a GENERAL MEETING of the Members of the NATIONAL EDUCATION LEAGUE will be held at the EXCHANGE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, Birmingham, on TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY, the 12th and 13th of October, and to hand you a Programme of the proceedings.

The Provisional Committee desire to express their earnest hope that you will be able to attend during the whole, or at least a part of this very important Meeting, at which a large number of the leading Members of the League are expected to be present.

It will much facilitate the completion of the arrangements for the Meeting if you will inform us at your earliest convenience whether you will be able to attend.

We are, Sir,

Yours respectfully,

GEORGE DIXON, CHAIRMAN.

JESSE COLLINGS, HON. SEC.

FRANCIS ADAMS, SECRETARY.

PROGRAMME

FOR THE FIRST

GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD AT BIRMINGHAM,

On Tuesday and Wednesday, October 12th and 13th, 1869.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12th.

MORNING SITTING, FROM TEN O'CLOCK A.M. TILL ONE P.M.

Election of Chairman.

The Report of the Provisional Committee to be read.

Election of the Council, Chairman, Treasurer, and Executive Committee.

The following Resolution will be submitted to the Meeting:—

"Resolved, that a Bill, embodying the principles of the League, be prepared for introduction into Parliament early next Session."

AFTERNOON SITTING, THREE P.M. TO FIVE P.M.

Papers and Discussion on the best system for National Schools, based upon Local Rates and Government Grants.

EVENING, EIGHT P.M.

Soirée at the Town Hall, given by the Mayor of Birmingham.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13th.

MORNING SITTING, TEN A.M. TO ONE P.M.

Papers and Discussion on Compulsory Attendance, and on the best means of enforcing it.

AFTERNOON SITTING, THREE P.M. TO FIVE P.M.

Papers and Discussion on Unsectarian and Free Schools.

EVENING, HALF-PAST SEVEN P.M.

Public Meeting in the Town Hall; the Mayor in the Chair.

Members wishing to contribute Papers are requested to communicat with the Secretary.

NATIONAL EDUCATION LEAGUE.

FIRST MEETING OF MEMBERS.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN.

HENRY HOLLAND, Esq., Mayor of Birmingham, moved that Mr. George Dixon, M.P., be elected Chairman. He said that Mr. Dixon, as the originator of the League, and by the zeal, ability, and devotion which he had shown, not only of late but in past years, in the cause of education, was deserving of the position which it was proposed that he should occupy. The appointment of Mr. Dixon would give satisfaction, not only to the ladies and gentlemen present, but to those friends of education throughout the kingdom who were with the League in spirit, though there were many of them who could not attend the meeting.

Mr. EDMUND POTTER, M.P., delegate from Carlisle, seconded the motion, which was carried.

THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

THE CHAIRMAN said: The movement which we have met to inaugurate to-day is one of momentous national importance, involving in its issues not merely the future material prosperity of the nation, but its intellectual moral, and I will venture to add, its religious progress. The originators of this movement have met with a response far exceeding their expectations. On their behalf, I very heartily welcome here the many eminent men who have come from various parts of the country to assist in the deliberations of the League, to return to their homes, I trust, with a deepened sense of the importance of the scheme, and with a stronger

determination to exercise all their influence in its favour. We have as yet made no appeal for subscriptions; but our expenses have been heavy, and will rapidly increase as the area of our operations widens. To collect information upon all the various branches of the great subject we have taken up, to put this information into a popular form, and to circulate it everywhere, especially among the working classes, will require very large funds indeed. But, in addition, we desire to send able lecturers all through the country, who shall explain our views, and excite discussion upon them everywhere. To create an irresistible public opinion is a work of the greatest magnitude, and one which will task our powers to the utmost. Our success will largely depend upon the means placed at our disposal. You will see, by the paper which has been placed in your hands, that a few friends have commenced a subscription list, upon a scale which, if imitated in other parts of the country, will give us all we want; and I invite you to fill up the forms with as large amounts as you are able. And to stimulate you further in this good work, I will read you a few letters which have been received by me. The first is from the Secretary to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce in London, Mr. P. Le Neve Foster. He says:—

"The Council of this Society have much pleasure in sending (enclosed) a cheque for twenty guineas as a donation to the funds of the National Education League, and have directed me to attend with a deputation, and represent the Society at the meetings of the League at Birmingham next week. The Rev. Wm. Rogers, and Messrs. E. Chadwick, C.B., and E. Carleton Tufnell, have been requested to form the deputation. The Council think it right to say that they cordially concur in the programme of the League in so far as its object is to ensure the groundwork of instruction to all the children of the United Kingdom, and that they shall not be less well educated than children in Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, and Norway; but as a question of general policy, and as representing many different opinions among the numerous members of the Society, they hesitate at the present time to pledge the Society to all the details of the League programme. The Council think it desirable that all the various modes of ensuring universal instruction to the children of the United Kingdom should be amply discussed from many points of view, and they intend to invite members of the Society and others to a discussion of them after the meetings

have been held in Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle, &c. For the consideration of the Birmingham meeting the Council transmit a paper, which has been prepared by some members of the Council, and which appears to be worthy of serious attention."

On the paper you have in your hand you will find some subscriptions of unusually large amount for Birmingham; but I will venture to say that no subscription has given greater encouragement to the Provisional Committee than that from a working man, whose letter I am now going to read:

"Dear Sir,—Would you kindly forward me a prospectus or programme of the National Education League, of which I am informed you are president, and say if it is open to mechanics to become members, as I understand from the report of your Sheffield address. I am myself an engineer, and am at times utterly astonished at the fearful amount of ignorance among my fellow workmen. In the works in which I am foreman, out of 200 hands not 20 either read the daily papers or care for the welfare of their fellows. Sir, I assure you this is a deplorable fact, and if it was not for our glorious Free Library it would be much worse. If I can do anything towards improving this state of things I will willingly subscribe 7s. 6d. (a day's wages) every month. I know the want of education, as I could not write until I was fifteen. If you could send me a few papers, so that I could interest my fellow-workmen in this good work, I should be pleased."

Now, the programme of the meeting, which you have all read, tells you exactly what the course of business is to be. The arrangements are not, in some respects, so perfect as we could have wished, but they are the result of full and anxious consideration; and I hope, therefore, that if anyone should find that they are not quite what he thinks best, he will accept them as a whole, and try to be satisfied with them. One of the greatest difficulties which we have to encounter is that the time at our disposal is extremely short. We dare not ask our friends at a distance to come here for more than two days; but we have a great deal more work to do in those two days than we shall be able to get through to our satisfaction. We have had more papers sent to us than there will be time to read; and after the papers are read there will be, I am sorry to say, but very little time left for discussion. I have, therefore, to beg not only that papers may be read as quickly as possible, but that the speeches afterwards be as short and contain as much as possible. Next year, when we again have a

general meeting of members, we shall be better acquainted with each other, we shall know who are really the leading spirits in this movement throughout the country; and then our arrangements will no doubt be more perfect. There is one thing to which I wish most particularly to call your attention. It is that we are not met here for the purpose of discussing our principles. Our platform is already laid. We have accepted the bases of our constitution, and we must not stray from them. But we have met to discuss the best manner in which we can carry out our principles. Upon that part of the question we may differ, and we want all the light thrown upon it that it is possible for us to get. This meeting has been called, by mistake, a conference. It is not a conference. It is a meeting of the members of the League and their friends, pledged to a certain course of action. We are not answerable, as a League, for the individual opinions that will be expressed in the papers and in the discussions. We are only answerable for that programme, for that scheme, which has been circulated throughout the country; but it is right that I should explain one word in that scheme. We have had a great number of letters upon the subject, and I believe that there are differences of opinion upon it. There are some who do not understand what is meant when we say that "all schools aided by local rates" are to be "unsectarian." Now, what we mean by this word "unsectarian" is that in all national rate-schools it shall be prohibited to teach catechisms, creeds, or theological tenets peculiar to particular sects. These are not to be taught during school hours. But beyond this prohibition we are not going; we leave everything else to be decided by the school managers, who as the representatives of the ratepayers will follow the best guides in these matters, viz., the wishes of the inhabitants of their districts. School managers, for instance, will have power to permit or prohibit the use of the Bible; but if sanctioned it must be read without note or comment. Then they will also have power to grant or to refuse the use of class-rooms, out of school hours, for the purpose of religious instruction; but of course an unjust preference must not be given to particular sects. I trust we are all agreed that the best way of dealing with what is called the religious difficulty is to put it on one side. Having

decided to adopt the principle of excluding from the curriculum of our primary schools all those religious subjects about which there are differences of opinion, let us leave the carrying out of that principle to the school authorities in a spirit of generous confidence. A self-governing people ought to have faith in the discretion of representatives whom it chooses and can remove. I will now call upon the Secretary, Mr. Adams, to read letters from gentlemen who are unable to attend here to-day.

LETTERS.

Mr. FRANCIS ADAMS (Secretary) then read the following letters:—

From Edward Miall, Esq., M.P.

Welland House, Forest Hill, S.E., October 9th, 1869.

Dear Mr. Dixon,

I find it quite impracticable so to arrange my engagements as to leave me at liberty to be present at the Education Conference, on Tuesday and Wednesday next. I much regret this, because I had hoped to derive from the papers to be read, and the discussions which may be had upon them, clearer views of one or two of the principles of the League than I can pretend to hold at present. I trust, however, that due care will be taken to give publicity to the proceedings, and that I and others who happen to be precluded from availing ourselves of your courteous invitation, will have an opportunity of making ourselves fully acquainted with what has been said and done at the Conference.

As I have already made you aware, I heartily concur in the "object" which the Conference has been assembled to promote, and generally in the "means" to be adopted with a view to it. I am anxious, however, to reserve my freedom of action, as well as of speech, to the extent which I will, with your leave, endeavour to describe.

With regard to the 6th article in the programme, that "the State or the local authorities shall have power to compel the attendance of children of suitable age, not otherwise receiving education," I give in my adhesion to the principle involved. I confess I have tried hard to escape the necessity of acceding to a resort to compulsion in furtherance of the end we have in view, and have been driven only by the force of facts to surrender my objections to it. Consequently, I am a little more sensitive on this point than on others, and I can easily imagine *modes* of compulsion resorted to which I could not bring my mind to approve. I wish, therefore, while agreeing to the principle, to refrain from committing myself beforehand to any particular scheme for carrying it into effect.

As to *free* admission to all schools aided by local rates, I suggest that the provision should be coupled with this condition : That in every case in which a school is rate-supported, it should be by a *separate* rate, to be called a "SCHOOL RATE." In order to prevent that non-appreciation of education which would inevitably come of the idea that it can be got for nothing, every ratepayer should be made to understand distinctly that, in availing himself of a free school for his children, he is but receiving back in value that which in proportion to his means he has paid for. He will readily understand and feel this, if he is periodically called upon to pay a specific rate for the purpose, and I think he will be the less disposed to trifle with the right he has thus acquired.

My chief anxiety, however, is to guard myself from being committed, under the fourth article of the programme, to conclusions which in my honest judgment I reject. In that article, as now worded, I thoroughly concur. It is of the utmost importance that schools aided by local rates shall be unsectarian. Denominational education I take to be the greatest obstacle to National education. It causes an enormous waste of teaching power. It misleads a large proportion of the public as to the true end of public schools, and it serves to stereotype instead of softening down religious distinctions. I do not believe it to be in any sense necessary. The public, generally, do not care to perpetuate it. The demand for it is almost exclusively a clerical demand, and I think the time is come for attempting to get rid of it—cautiously and gradually, of course, but, in due time, effectually. But whilst I attach high importance to unsectarian education, I am bound to say that I do not feel obliged to exclude the religious element from rate-supported schools. I would not insist upon it as a condition of receiving public aid, but neither would I insist upon its being eliminated from primary education. Thus much, I think, might be safely left to the decision of the local authorities—to be authorised to open and close their schools, if they please, with some catholic form of devotion, and to adopt the Bible as one of the books to be read; of course, protecting every parent from being compelled to subject his children to either. My reason is this : I feel convinced that if by "unsectarian" schools, the interpretation is to be the rigid exclusion of all religion from the schools, the nation will lose the very best teachers, for, *cæteris paribus*, they are the best teachers who bring a religious spirit and motive to their work. I am sure the working classes, as a body, would not care to shut out Christianity altogether from the schools to which they send their children. I think it would be a mistake so tightly to tie up the hands of teachers as to make all reference to the great facts and precepts of Christianity a forbidden thing to them. At any rate, it might well be left to the local authorities to exercise their free choice in the matter. Such being my opinion, I beg to hold myself uncommitted to the article in question, if by the epithet "unsectarian" be meant "necessarily and exclusively secular."

I have no objection to give public aid to schools confined to secular education; but I do not think it would be wise to impose upon local authorities the obligation to shut out the religious element to this extent.

Pardon the liberty I have taken, and believe me to be,

Dear Mr. Dixon,

Yours, very faithfully,

EDWARD MIALL.

GEORGE DIXON, Esq., M.P.

From J. C. Buckmaster, Esq.

St. John's Hill, Wandsworth, S.W., October 11th, 1869.

Dear Sir,

I regret very much that I am quite unable to accept your invitation for the 13th. I cheerfully give my adhesion to the general principles of the Education League, because I believe it offers the only equitable solution of the educational difficulty. I wish the working classes (who are mostly interested in this matter) would give some expression of opinion on the subject, so as to help you and others in Parliament to obtain a national system of education. Hitherto all our arrangements for the education of the children of the working classes have been settled by the political influence of religious parties, and, to avoid as much as possible all difficulty, every denomination has been tempted to receive State assistance. The result is a great waste of educational effort. I frequently find two and three schools in places with a population scarcely sufficient to maintain one with efficiency. We have the same number of inspectors without any concert with each other, going every year to the same place to do precisely the same work. Ever since the Committee of Council came into existence I have been in various ways connected with the present system, and I believe it was the only scheme at that time capable of meeting the enormous difficulties and resistance of religious bodies. This opposition, controlled, as it appeared to me, by no reason, was a great national calamity, and a source of much sorrow. I have carefully watched and taken part in the working of the present system, and I am reluctantly compelled to admit that the denominational system fails to accomplish its object. I have been for several years Churchwarden of the parish in which I reside. I have taught in elementary schools aided by the State, and Sunday schools, and when at home I go regularly to church on Sunday, and at the corner of almost every street I see a number of men with short pipes and unlaced boots, whose faces twenty years ago were familiar to me as pupils in the parish school and Sunday school. Why don't they go to some place of religious worship? When at the parish school they heard prayers and scripture lessons every morning from students in the Training College—twice or three times a week lessons in the Catechism and Liturgy from the curate or vicar—twice on Sunday religious instruction in the Sunday school and two sermons; and where is the result of

all this in the after life and character of the pupils? If a purely secular system had been inaugurated by the minutes of 1846 and 1847 this indifference to religious worship and conduct would have been charged on that system. Some time ago I made enquiries, as far as I was able, as to the practical result of the religious instruction given in our parish schools. 120 pupils were grown up and still living in the parish; some of them married, with children passing through the same course of religious instruction. Only nine were in the habit of attending any place of worship regularly, and two of these were paid singers. Ninety, so far as I could learn, had never been either to church or chapel since they earned their own living, except to a wedding or a baptism. The complaint that the working classes as a rule never go to any place of worship is, I fear, a sad reality; but where is the result of all our denominational teaching and religious instruction? Theology and Scripture proofs of various doctrines are no doubt taught in most of our schools, but religion is not taught, and cannot be taught. The one is a science, the other a sentiment; and we have been mistaking the one for the other. You must not infer from this that I am insensible to the great blessings of a religious life; but the teaching of dogmatic theology never secures it. The tone and atmosphere of a school-room should stand in contrast with the wretched dirty homes from which many of the children come. They should be surrounded, as far as possible, with everything which tends to soften and refine their hearts and feelings; for it is through the senses that the better impulses of our nature are called into activity and life. We want clean and cheerful school-rooms, with good pictures on the walls, and specimens of good art, and these may now be obtained at a small cost. The obstacle in the way of progress is the ever active spirit which seeks to obtain supporters to particular views and disciples for particular sects. The love of power unconsciously takes the semblance of religious anxiety, and every man acts as if he alone had the true faith which ought to be taught to the young. The only practical way is for the State to restrict itself to teaching those truths upon which we all agree. All knowledge which is cognisable by our senses may be safely taught at the public expense. It is only when we leave the things of this world, and enter upon the consideration of those of the next, that we lose the means of deciding who is right and who is wrong. But I think we must all agree that the more perfectly men are educated in a knowledge of undisputed truths the better they will be prepared for the study of Divine truth. This is most assuredly the basis upon which we ought to start. Society and human nature must be taken as it is, and not as some think it should be. For these and other reasons I shall have much pleasure in rendering what assistance I can in promoting the objects you have in view.

Yours truly,

J. C. BUCKMASTER.

GEORGE DIXON, Esq., M.P.

From the Marquis of Lorne, M.P. for Argyleshire.

The Queen's Hotel, Glasgow, Sept. 17th, 1869.

Dear Mr. Dixon,

Your very kind letter has only just reached me, and I therefore hope you will excuse my apparent neglect in not having answered before this.

I shall not be able, I am very sorry to say, to attend the meeting, as I mean to spend the time between this and November in Ireland.

With many thanks,

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

LORNE.

To GEORGE DIXON, Esq., M.P.

From the Rev. Charles Kingsley.

Eversley Rectory, Winchfield, Sep. 17th, 1869.

My dear Sir,

I am still more sorry that I cannot attend your meeting on reading through your Education Society's Report. It seems to me a convincing proof that the voluntary denominational system is in great towns a failure, and unless you forbid me, I shall use its statistics to that effect at Bristol. That it is a failure in country parishes I know from 27 years' experience as a parson.

I remain,

Your much obliged,

C. KINGSLEY.

I am much gratified by finding in your second Education League list so many names personally dear to me, and so many of my own cloth.

From Sir Henry A. Hoare, M.P. for Chelsea.

Stourhead, Bath, 17th Sep. 1869.

Dear Mr. Dixon,

I received yours of the 15th this morning. I cannot, as I told you in town, undertake to be present in Birmingham on the 12th and following day, but I shall be truly glad to hear that the General Meeting has done something.

I do hope that with respect to the principle of compulsion there will be no faint-heartedness, and no dilution whatsoever of the power to enforce attendance.

I remain,

Yours very truly,

HENRY A. HOARE.

From Professor Huxley.

Swanage, Dorset, September 21, 1869.

My dear Sir,

I received your letter of the 17th yesterday, after I had written a reply to that of earlier date.

I wish again to say how very sorry I am I cannot do what you and the Committee desire of me; but not being a bird, as Mr. Boyle Roach said, I cannot be in two places at once, and I am bound to be lecturing in London on both the twelfth and the thirteenth of October.

I am, very faithfully, yours,

T. W. HUXLEY.

To GEORGE DIXON, Esq., M.P.

From Dr. Schmitz.

The London International College,
Spring Grove, Middlesex, W., Sep. 16th, 1869.

Dear Sir,

It would give me the greatest pleasure at the approaching Meeting of the National Education League, at Birmingham, to read a paper on the great necessity there is in this country for compulsory education, a subject upon which I feel very strongly, but unfortunately the time of the meeting coincides with the reassembling of our College, so that it is even more than doubtful whether I shall be able to attend the meeting.

I am extremely sorry, therefore, that I am unable to have the honour which your Committee has assigned to me, by inviting me to prepare a paper for the occasion.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

L. SCHMITZ.

From E. H. Brodie, Esq., Inspector of Schools.

Education Department, Council Office, Downing Street, London,
September 29th, 1869.

Dear Sir,

It is with the greatest regret that I write to say that I am unable to attend the meeting of the National Education League, at Birmingham.

My official engagements for October are heavy and numerous, and I cannot spare even half-a-day.

I shall read the newspaper accounts of the meeting with the deepest interest.

After 10½ years' experience of the present system of education, I have quite come to the conclusion that the poor both are not and never will be reached by it, except very partially, especially in our large towns, so fruitful of the criminal class. Assuring you of my sincerest sympathy for the cause, and regretting my unavoidable absence,

I remain, dear Sir,

Faithful yours,

E. H. BRODIE.

To JESSE COLLINGS, Esq.

From P. A. Taylor, Esq., M.P. for Leicester.

Aubrey House, Notting Hill, W., October 9th, 1869.

My dear Mr. Dixon,

I am sorry that it will not be in my power to attend the Conference next week.

Do not attribute my absence to any lukewarmness in the cause.

Of all the great reforms we have before us, this is perhaps the greatest.

I am entirely at one with your programme.

You may rely on my humble support on all occasions.

Yours truly,

P. A. TAYLOR.

GEORGE DIXON, Esq., M.P.

From an oversight the following important letter was not read at the meeting.

From the Rev. J. J. Brown.

Birmingham, 8th Oct., 1869.

My dear Sir,

I beg to inform you that at the Autumnal Session of the Baptist Union, held at Leicester on the 7th Oct. instant, the following Resolution was adopted:

"That this Union, without pledging itself to the support of the programme of the National Education League, hereby requests the Chairman (Dr. Brock) and Secretary (Rev. J. H. Millard, B.A., Huntingdon), with the Revs. Drs. Underwood and Haycroft, J. Bigwood, and J. J. Brown, to act as its representatives at the General Meeting to be held under the auspices of the League next week at Birmingham."

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

J. J. BROWN.

To FRANCIS ADAMS, Esq.

From Blanchard Jerrold, Esq.

SCHOOLS OF SKILL.

Reform Club, S.W., Oct. 13, 1869.

Sir,

Being unavoidably detained away from the meetings of the League by professional duties, the Executive will, I trust, permit me to state in a letter the heads of the subject I was anxious to submit *viva voce* to the friends of popular education who are at this moment assembled at Birmingham.

It seems to be pretty generally agreed that the distress under which so many thousands of our fellow countrymen are suffering is caused, not by over-population, but by a superabundance of that labour which the continual extension of machinery has depreciated. The demand for unskilled labour is ever on the decline—a fact on which we should have every reason to congratulate ourselves if the instruction of labour were keeping pace with the spread of machinery. But, unfortunately, while the inventive genius of our race and the energy of our capitalists have given no truce to time, the friends of popular education have been squabbling all the while because they go different ways on Sundays—unmindful of Farquhar's warning. Hence the growth of blind Labour in the face of the Machine, its mighty and unconquerable rival; and hence the increase of pauperism, and of that saddest condition of life—work without hope, which "draws nectar in a sieve."

The point on which I am anxious to insist, and which will, I am sure, find a wide acceptance in the Midlands, is this. The superabundance of blind labour being the cause of the wide-spread distress and heavy poor rates that afflict and fetter us, our first care must be to teach skill. It is because skill and taste are wide-spread among the working population of France that our neighbours have not the parallel of those townships of even misery which are black spots upon the map of every considerable city in this kingdom. In the front of the education movement Trade Schools must be placed. The State is bound to see that every child is duly provided for the battle of life with those doughty weapons, the three R's. Granted. But surely the first duty society owes to the child is to fortify it so as to assure it, at maturity, the self-dependent strength of perfect citizenship. The children of the poor should first be taught some form of skill by the exercise of which they may raise themselves out of the slough of poverty to which the untutored labour of their parents has sunk them.

Had the Ragged Schools been sound trade schools, less given to the Old Hundredth and more to the profitable methods of bread-earning, they would have effected more good in city lanes and alleys than they can fairly claim to have done with the teaching of the three R's.

If the schoolmaster of the poor were himself re-educated, and taught to implant in his pale scholars the art of living by work—if the primary school

were a school of skill, as well as one of catechism—the daily practice of industry with intelligence would strengthen the heart while it informed the hand, and we should be attending prosperously to

"The kindred points of Heaven and Home."

I have honour to remain, Sir,
Your faithful servant,
BLANCHARD JERROLD.

To FRANCIS ADAMS, Esq.,
Secretary of the National Education League.

Letters expressing regret at not being able to attend were also received from the following members of the League :—

JACOB BRIGHT, M.P.
COLONEL SYKES, M.P.
JOSH. GRIEVE, M.P.
GEORGE MELLY, M.P.
PETER RYLANDS, M.P.
JAMES HOWARD, M.P.
THOMAS HUGHES, M.P.
P. H. MUNTZ, M.P.
SIR SYDNEY WATERLOW, M.P.
CAPTAIN SHERARD OSBORNE.
SIR JOHN LUBBOCK.
DR. MICHAEL FOSTER.
RUSSELL MARTINEAU.
REV. GEORGE STYLE.
PROFESSOR ROSCOE.
PROFESSOR JEVONS.
JOHN E. GRAY.
DR. SCHMITZ.
PROFESSOR LEONE LEVI.
MR. EDWIN A. ABBOTT.
SIR JOHN BOWRING.
MR. SAMUEL SMILES.
REV. CHARLES VOYSEY.
HON. GEORGE HOWARD.
DR. JOHN SHORTT.
MR. M. D. CONWAY.
DR. GOTCH.

REPORT OF THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Honorary Secretary) read the following Report of the Provisional Committee :—

The Provisional Committee think it desirable to lay before the first meeting of members a brief statement of the reasons which led to the formation of the National Education League, the object of the Association, and the steps which have been taken towards its organization.

On all hands it has long since been admitted that the present system of education fails to meet the requirements of the country, that voluntary efforts reach only the richer districts, and these imperfectly, and that the poorer districts are left practically uncared for, Government aid being wholly dependent upon previous local expenditure.

Recent enquiries prove that even in districts best provided with educational means, the real value of these means is greatly below what is was supposed to be. The reports of the Manchester Education Aid Society, and of the Birmingham Education Society, for instance, reveal a state of things calculated to arrest attention and excite alarm.

An enquiry instituted by the Manchester Society showed that in Manchester and Salford the number of children of all classes, between three years and twelve years, was 100,000. Of these only 55,000 were on the books of public elementary schools, and of this latter number the average attendance was but 38,000.

In Birmingham, out of 35,018 children between the ages of three and twelve visited by the agents of the Education Society, only 15,490 were at school. Of 45,056 children between three and fifteen years, 17,023 were at school, 6,337 at work, and 21,696 were neither at school nor at work. Of the 17,023 who were at school, 10,890 were under nine years of age.

The results of such education as had been given were shown to be equally unsatisfactory.

In Manchester, in 1,916 families visited, there were, 1,660 persons between the ages of twelve and twenty. Of these, 759 were unable to read. Out of 1,672 fathers, 465 could not

read, and out of 1,857 mothers the number unable to read was 815.

In Birmingham, Mr. Long, one of the masters of the Worcester, Lichfield, and Hereford Diocesan Training College, visited a number of the manufactories (fairly chosen to represent the whole), and examined 988 young persons between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one. His report was that, "in reading and writing nearly one-half of the whole number examined do nothing, or next to nothing, and only one-third do at all well. In arithmetic and general knowledge more than three-fourths fail, or nearly so; and only one in twenty shows anything like a satisfactory degree of attainment."

The facts thus ascertained are corroborated by the statements of the Right Hon. H. A. Bruce, in a recent address, in which, quoting from a report of the London Diocesan Board of Education, he said there were in London from 150 thousand to 200 thousand children without the means of education, and that during the preceding five or six years all that had been done served only to prevent retrogression.

The report of the Committee of Council (1867-8, p. xxiii.) demonstrates the inefficiency of instruction even in the best primary schools—those under Government inspection. Of the children attending a large proportion are declared to be unfit for examination; and of those examined above ten years of age, "only 3.13 per cent. passed in the three higher standards without failure": these standards being of an extremely elementary character.

These and other facts exhibiting the want of educational means and the defective quality of instruction actually given, naturally attracted special attention at the moment when, by an extension of the franchise, a great change had been made in the distribution of political power. Persons who took an interest in education were led to the enquiry whether the present voluntary system, based upon denominational effort, could by any possibility cover in the future, with increasing population and more urgent demands, the ground which it had failed to cover in the past. Conceding to the voluntary principle the utmost conceivable measure of success, the

advocates of education were further driven to enquire whether, considering the new conditions of political arrangements, and the rate at which education has hitherto progressed, it would be prudent to wait until the present system has received a longer trial. Educational reformers felt themselves compelled to ask yet another question, whether, considering the right of every child to education, it would be just to persevere in a system which, however benevolent its motive and however strenuous its exertions, experience has proved to reach only part of the children having the right to instruction, and to deal imperfectly with those whom it succeeded in reaching.

To all these questions only negative replies could be given. The advocates of extended education found themselves obliged to conclude that the voluntary system had failed to meet the wants of the country, that considering the new political conditions resulting from an extended franchise, it would be imprudent to persevere with a system admitted to be inadequate, and that considering the right of all children to instruction, a national system was demanded not less by justice than by expediency.

The result of these convictions was the introduction of a bill, promoted by an influential Committee emanating from the Manchester Education Aid Society, permitting the imposition of local rates for the maintenance of schools. A permissive measure being, however, felt to be inadequate, a subsequent bill was introduced, allowing Government to compel the imposition of local educational rates where these might be found necessary. These bills were introduced by Mr. Bruce and Mr. Forster, and at the same time it was intended that Mr. (now Sir Thomas) Bazley should move clauses enforcing attendance at school.

The measures above mentioned mark the advance of public opinion. The formation of the National Education League indicates a still greater and more important progress. It was felt by several gentlemen in Birmingham that the time had come for the establishment of an organisation uniting all those, throughout the country, who desired to promote a really national system of education, reaching all places unprovided for, based as to means upon local taxation supplemented by imperial grants, becoming,

therefore, unsectarian and free, and having the power to compel attendance as the only way of overcoming parental neglect.

Accordingly, at the beginning of this year, the National Education League was formed upon the following basis, and upon this basis only, which the founders regard as fundamental, were educational reformers throughout the country invited to join the League.

OBJECT :

*The establishment of a system which shall secure the Education of every Child in England and Wales.**

MEANS :

1.—Local Authorities shall be compelled by law to see that sufficient School Accommodation is provided for every Child in their district.

2.—The cost of founding and maintaining such Schools as may be required shall be provided out of Local Rates, supplemented by Government Grants.

3.—All Schools aided by Local Rates shall be under the management of Local Authorities and subject to Government Inspection.

4.—All Schools aided by Local Rates shall be Unsectarian.

5.—To all Schools aided by Local Rates admission shall be free.

6.—School Accommodation being provided, the State or the Local Authorities shall have power to compel the attendance of children of suitable age not otherwise receiving education.

That this movement was happily timed, at the moment when opinion was ripe for it, is proved by the fact that although no public meeting has been held by the League, no means adopted but the circulation of the scheme recorded above, near two thousand five hundred persons of influence, including forty members of the

* A slight verbal alteration was agreed to at a meeting of the Provisional Committee, held 22nd Sept., viz., that in all future circulars, addresses, &c., the words "*in the country*" should be substituted for the words "*in England and Wales.*"

House of Commons, and between three and four hundred ministers of religion, have already joined the League, by formally assenting to its principles; and this number is daily increasing.

It is now proposed to complete the working organisation of the League by electing a Council and an Executive Committee, charged with the transaction of general business, the appointment of officers, and the formation of branch committees. The last-mentioned work has already been commenced. It was intended that it should have been deferred until after this meeting; but the response to the invitation of the Provisional Committee was so great that it was found necessary to form branch committees without delay, and branches have accordingly been constituted in London, Manchester, Bradford, Bristol, Leicester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Leeds, Huddersfield, Exeter, Bath, Warrington, Devonport, Carlisle, Merthyr Tydvil, Wednesbury, South Hants, and the Isle of Wight.

With reference to the funds necessary for carrying on the operations of the League, it was thought desirable to abstain from issuing an appeal until after the general meeting of members; but a number of gentlemen, having the work strongly at heart, have offered the sums undermentioned, payable by annual instalments extending over ten years:—

Mr. G. Dixon, M.P., Birmingham	£1,000
Mr. A. Brogden, M.P., Ulverstone	1,000
Mr. R. L. Chance, Birmingham	1,000
Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham	1,000
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Birmingham	1,000
Mr. G. B. Lloyd, Birmingham	1,000
Mr. A. Field, Birmingham	1,000
Mr. Follett Osler, F.R.S., Birmingham	1,000
Mr. W. Middlemore, Birmingham	1,000
Mr. Archibald Kenrick, Birmingham	1,000
Mr. F. S. Bolton, Birmingham	1,000
Mr. Edmund Potter, M.P., Carlisle	500
Mr. T. Kenrick, Birmingham	500
Mr. William Kenrick, Birmingham	500
Mr. J. Arthur Kenrick, Birmingham	500

Mr. John Jaffray, Birmingham	500
Mr. Harold Lees, Manchester.....	400
Mr. William Dudley, Birmingham	200
Mr. John Webster, Birmingham	200
Mr. H. Swinglehurst, Milnthorpe	110

As regards the general meeting of members, it is thought desirable that it shall be held annually in different parts of the kingdom. It is proposed that the Council, to be chosen at each annual meeting, shall be a consultative body, assembling at such intervals and in such places as may be required, and shall include all Members of Parliament who may join the League, large donors to the funds of the association, and at least one representative of each branch committee. A body so numerous, and consisting of persons so widely scattered, being obviously too large for the transaction of current business, it is proposed to appoint an Executive Committee, to whom, subject to resolutions of the annual meeting, and the general revision of the Council, shall be entrusted the conduct of the business of the League. This Committee will meet at the central offices of the League in Birmingham.

The work of the League will be to collect and disseminate through its various branches, by means of meetings, publications, lectures, and otherwise, all available information on the subject of education; to stimulate discussion upon educational reforms; to create and guide public opinion; to influence Members of Parliament through their constituents; to hasten and strengthen the action of Government; and to promote the adoption by the Legislature of measures which shall ensure the education of every child in the country, and which shall provide instruction so accessible and so graduated that the child of the poorest artisan shall have it within his power to fit himself for any position capable of being attained by a citizen of the United Kingdom. To this work the members of the League have set themselves with a serious conviction of its vital importance, and under a sense of personal responsibility and public duty; and to this work they intend to remain constant until it is accomplished, and the reproach and curse of ignorance is wiped away from the land.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

BIRMINGHAM, *October 8th, 1869.*

I have to report that the donations and subscriptions already received amount to £1,212 10s. 6d. The orders made upon me for payments are £418 19s., leaving a balance in hand of £793 11s. 6d. There are liabilities incurred amounting to nearly £600, including the expenses incidental to the general meeting, and the publication of the report of its proceedings.

JOHN JAFFRAY, TREASURER.

The Venerable Archdeacon SANDFORD said: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—I have been requested to move the adoption of the concise and lucid and complete report which has just been read to you; and when I tell you that I am labouring under a serious attack of indisposition, I am sure you will feel that my presence on this platform to-day is a proof of my deep and continued interest in the all-important question which we are met to discuss. I deeply feel the honour which on this occasion is conferred on me, and the responsibility which I incur in coming forward to move the adoption of the report, and I wish to keep distinctly before my own mind and before yours the object proposed by this Education League, which justifies, I believe, the course that you and I are about to adopt. It is to provide the means of education for every child in England and Wales—that is, to supply education, the best gift that can be bestowed on any human being, to the multitudes of the children of our native land who are at this moment ignorant of those essential truths which are to qualify them for the duties of this life and for the hopes of a better. I remember hearing it observed by the late Lord Brougham, some years ago, in the House of Lords, that he had never met a Frenchman of any condition or occupation whatever, who did not consider that, after the Emperor, he was himself the fittest and the sole man to solve the constitutional difficulties, and to work out the political destiny of his country. Now, I am not so aspiring or so self-reliant, but you can understand that no man can have been connected as a pastor of the people, as I have been, for more than thirty years, with the education of the

children of the poor, without having my own views upon this all-momentous subject, and even believing that I could suggest to you a scheme preferable to that which has been elaborated by my friend Mr. Dixon and his provisional committee. But in our excellent chairman we have a commander-in-chief who is not only sagacious and vigilant, but whom I have found to be inexorable, and whatever discussions have taken place in the Council, he will allow no divergence of opinion whatever on the eve of battle and in the face of the foe. To this very judicious decision I most meekly submit. My consolation is the belief that in the discussions which will ensue there will be found gentlemen less compliant, who will be sure to bring forward and to press those very objections and those very preferences which have occurred to myself. Gentlemen, we stand in the presence of an overwhelming necessity, and of a great national danger, and that necessity and that danger are involved in the fact, as you have heard in this luminous report, that there are thousands and tens of thousands of the children of our people, for whom we are responsible in the sight of God and man, who are the outcasts, the pariahs of society, who are growing up without any moral influences whatever being brought to bear on them, and who in the course of a few years must constitute a very large and important portion of the community, invested with legal rights, which they may use for the injury of themselves and the destruction of society. Now, that is my reason for keeping back any preferences and objects of my own, and coming forward, as I believe I ought to do on this occasion, to endorse the report which has been read to you. What we want to do is to give the means of education to all those wretched children; and it is quite clear from what has been uttered here, and what has appeared in many and voluminous publications, that the voluntary system, however admirable it may be, has utterly failed in providing what is required; yes, and the character of the education imparted is very deficient indeed. Well, now, to secure universal education for our people, I have long believed that we must have compulsory education. And this is no new light that has broken upon me since this Education League was proposed, because I advocated compulsory education months ago, at Man-

chester. Well, then, to have compulsory education you must have a rate, and to have a rate you must have—I will not call it secular education, for I abhor the term, and I do not like the phrase adopted in this report, "unsectarian education;" I very much prefer the term "undenominational education." It is quite clear that in a country like ours, with our various denominational churches, and with our many differences in point of religion, it will be quite impossible to have an education supported by rate unless you have the teaching undenominational. Now, with regard to the rate itself, I believe—and I know that it is the conviction of many of the inspectors of schools in the country—that it is required to compel employers, and to compel parents who do not discharge their duties in this respect, to bear their portion of the burden. I am quite satisfied that very many severe things will be said of your platform. We shall be told, no doubt, that it is a godless scheme; that it is a revolutionary scheme; that it is a scheme utterly unsuited to the taste and the feeling of the British people; that it cannot succeed, that if it is carried out it will flood the land with a number of atheists and infidels, who will be the curse of society; that we are departing from the course of duty; yes, and that we deserve very severe vituperation ourselves because we have the effrontery to propose this scheme to the public. All I can say is this, that after a man at my time of life has been pronounced sacrilegious and an atheist because he has presumed to utter an opinion not upon a religious but upon a political question, he becomes rather callous, and is prepared to do his duty, and, if needs must be, to stand alone, whatever may be said of him by ignorant and interested parties. I am now about to allude, not to what is propounded in this place, and of which for the first time I received a statement to-day, but to another scheme, which was brought forward a little time ago with a great flourish of trumpets; and that is, that all religious sections of the kingdom should be paid to bring up the children of their denominations in the strictest tenets of their own faith. Now I confess that I utterly object to that proposition. I have a very great and affectionate respect for my friend Mr. Vince; I have an equally great and affectionate respect for my friend Mr. George Dawson; but I am not prepared to endorse their

theological opinions or to pay for them, for my theological platform is different from theirs. This scheme, as it appears to me, proposes that the children of Mr. Vince's denomination should be taught, and that the State should provide the means—I suppose by rate—for their being taught, that Christian baptism is a delusion; and that the children of the school of Mr. Dawson should be taught that the Christian priesthood is a sham; yes, and that the children in Jewish schools should be taught, at the expense of the State, that the author of Christianity himself is an impostor. I believe that the proposal of the League, which, at whatever risk, I am prepared to endorse, shows me to be a much more sound and conscientious Churchman than he is who professes the other scheme, which, in my belief, could only tend to perpetuate and to intensify those divisions among Christians which are, and which have been so long, the bane and the scandal of Christendom. There are other speakers of far more note and of far more weight than myself who are to address this meeting, and therefore I will not trouble you with any further observations of my own. I am to be followed by one that cometh out of Samaria, which has supplied redoubtable champions in former times; and I am proud and happy to be associated with Mr. Dawson in this work of education. It is, of course, a most unnatural and a most monstrous conjunction, and one which twenty years ago, perhaps ten years ago, would have been quite impossible; when I, perhaps, considered Mr. Dawson somewhat of a firebrand, and he used to remark on me as an ornamental, but not very useful, appendage to the Church. Ah! but, God be praised! things move rapidly in the present day: to that consummation which as citizens and as Christians we all ought to desire, when good men of all parties and of all religious creeds can unite together in the cause of a common country and a common humanity. I have had brought strongly before me the teachings and example of one who, though himself born and bred a Jew, though he maintained that salvation was of the Jews, though he protested against every conceivable form of error, and at last died a martyr to the truth, yet was on friendly terms with Samaritans, and has set forth in the Book of Books a Samaritan as the grand type of practical benevolence for the imita-

tion and admiration of the Church and the world throughout all time. Before that sublime and magnificent example I bow in loving adoration. I wish to be imbued with that spirit. I wish to tread in those footprints, and therefore I rejoice to-day to come forward to co-operate with my Nonconformist brethren in an endeavour to redeem and to raise the outcasts of society who are left at this moment lying in wretchedness and in the dark, and who, but for this intervention, I believe in God, would be left to perish without instruction, without moral instincts, without any moral or religious knowledge at all.

Mr. George Dawson: It is not for me to enter into the reasons why I have been asked to second this resolution, though I guess it is because on this question there is no man that holds more extreme views than I do. It is certain that if I state my views, I shall state all yours, and, with regard to many of you, a great deal more besides. Courtesy demands that I should reciprocate the kindness of the Archdeacon. He has told you he has ceased to regard me as a firebrand. Well, I have long since ceased to regard him as a fogey. We have made mutual concessions; and it gives me, as I am sure it gives you, pleasure to see a man so eminent in the Church discharge the duty of a true leader of the people, opening his eyes widely and clearly to know the signs of the times; for his Master and mine pronounced a severe condemnation upon those leaders of the people who are unable to know the signs of the times. One word of congratulation, and that is that we have advanced. We have not to argue that the poor have a right to be educated, or ought to be educated. That is gone by. So far, we have got through the meeting without any gentleman telling us the difference between instruction and education. That used to be a stumbling block. We have got to this proposition—that every child in this nation ought to be taught. We hold the doctrine of the family life of the nation. I believe the majority of you do feel as I do, that every ragged, filthy, untaught, cursing, blaspheming child should be looked upon as a child of our household, and should bring shame and disgrace upon us. I would that at heart you and I could say with him of old, "Mine eyes run down with tears for the iniquities of my people." But at all events we have come to see

that there is no human remedy but education, and that education is always good, be it little or much. We dismiss Mr. Alexander Pope's couplet about drinking deep or not touching at all as a piece of antiquated nonsense. We bow, with great respect, those clergy out of our road, represented by one in this town, who once said that unless he could have religious education he would shut up the schoolhouse, put the key in his pocket, and walk away. We have most of us got rid of that foolish distinction between sacred and secular. We believe all knowledge to be of God, and therefore towards good. I believe that he who teaches two letters of the alphabet to a child who yesterday knew but one, has furthered that child's chances of future instruction, and of all well-being. These things we have not to discuss. A word of warning: I shall go further than you will follow; but, in a discussion like this, ill-temper would be out of place, and large allowance for individualism is what we require. We all mean the same thing, only we travel different paces. We all wish to lay the foundation of a national educational system. It must be laid with lucid simplicity and with great breadth, to bear the strain of the future. We are not here to patch existing systems—to patch the garment of semi-charity and semi-ecclesiasticism, which forms a large part of the present education, but to lay a broad system, by declaring at once that the world—by which I mean all people that do not call themselves the Church—has its rights, and that the world is not to be governed by the good people in anything which belongs entirely to the world. All men whose opinion is of value have come to know that what for present purposes we call secular education is an affair of the world—an affair of the nation—acting through its Government. We have got rid of some bugbears—we are no longer afraid of the Government. This used to be, perhaps, a necessity; but it is a disgrace if it remains so now. What is the Government of this country? It is the nation itself. There is no antagonism between the people and the Government now. We are not here to bury the voluntary principle—its great supporters buried it long ago. We have lived to hear the recantations of a Miall and a Baines—to hear them declare that their mistakes about voluntaryism were what we all knew them to be—well

intentioned; and that voluntaryism is quite an inadequate basis for a national system. A national system must be laid in simplicity, and it must be paid for by rates. I am a lover of rates myself. I was never guilty of that "ignorant impatience" of taxation which a great statesman once spoke of. I like to see the tax-gatherer come, provided the ends to which the taxes are devoted are holy and noble, and it will be one of the pleasantest sights when the tax-gatherer comes to lay upon me the noble hand of national compulsion, to pay a rate in order that every child in the nation shall be educated. But, remember, rates mean compulsion. I hope most of you have done with compulsion as a bugbear. All life is compulsion. Society is based upon compulsion. What is government but law made compulsory? Happy the man who by-and-by shall escape from the necessities of compulsion, and do that from the law of liberty which at first he must be made to do with reluctance. I like rates because they touch everybody, because I get hold of the fat and selfish manufacturer and touch him up, because I lay hold of the man that visits no church and visits no chapel, and make him pay; and I advocate not only local rates but national taxation for educational purposes. It is time that a good deal of work that the religious bodies have burdened themselves with should be given over to the world. Let society do its own business. What is going on just now is an operation like what goes on when sheep get mixed. There is a meeting of shepherds to look over the flocks, and each selects his own sheep. We have just restored to the Church a sheep that had got into the State fold. We have handed to the voluntary principle—to the good people—the Irish Church. Marked with the sign of the cross, that sheep belonged to the Church, and it has been restored. Now our turn comes—I mean the world; for I never profess anything more than that. Looking over the Church flock we find a sheep there that belongs to us, and that is education—theprimary education of the nation. It does not belong to the Church in any sense—it belongs to the whole nation. It belongs to the Government, and ought to be done by the Government. I have no more notion of sectarian education, or denominational education, in the sense of mere

primary instruction, than I have of a denominational wate rcart or a sectarian vaccinator. What has our history been for years but the putting of sheep into the right fold? I am old enough to remember when nobody could be married except they went to Church. I sat once at supper with a High Churchman who asked me whether I was married or not? I said I was. "Who married you?" I named the person. "A priest in the true succession?" "Oh dear, no." Said he, "You are not married at all." I said, "What am I?" "You are only joined together." "Well," I said, "as a practical man, for me that will do." By degrees society found out that marriage did not belong to priests, and we established civil marriage. For those who wish to be married in Church, liberty; for those who do not, liberty also. Why must a man be married in the name of a God he does not believe in? Why should a Jew be compelled to invoke a Trinity he despises and abhors? As to compulsory matters, there is the vaccination question. Is education, in the sense in which we use the word—the education about which we are all agreed, the education that relates to this life—is that a matter that the State should now kindly take out of the Church's hand, and do for itself? I say it is. And with that education the clergy have no more to do as a matter of right than the parish doctor or the parish lawyer. I for one am profoundly thankful to clergy of all sorts for what they have done. If the squirearchy and the nobility and gentry of England had done their duty half as well as the clergy, old England would be further advanced than to be only now laying the foundation stone of a national system of education. The poor Dissenting minister has done his duty. He has not had the chances of the Church, but it was often the poor Nonconformist man who held up the flag of true liberty, and maintained the fundamental principle of all just politics—"Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." Now, however, it is time that the matter should be taken out of the hands of clergy and ministers. Why should the Church educate the world in matters about which the world is entirely capable of looking after itself? Religious people have quite enough to do without this. What an advantage it will be to you Churchmen, if we take all this business, and leave your purse and

your time free! And, instead of our system being contrary to the interests of religion, it is the best system for forwarding it. I have been connected with Sunday schools all my life. We get a child for an hour and a half every Sunday morning professedly to teach it religion. The child does not know the alphabet. The hour and half is spent in the painful attempt to teach it what the world ought to have done. What an opportunity for those of you who set store by these things, to pour in the precious dogmas of your theology into minds which we have made open and receptive! I have heard that when the Pope washes the feet of beggars somebody first takes off the worst of the dirt. We will take these dirty, ignorant children and take the worst of the dirt off before we hand them over to you to touch them up with the diaper! To argue that between knowledge of any kind and true religion there can be any real hostility, would be to assume that we are speaking to fossils, and not to men who discern the signs of the times. We want compulsion; we want rates. If we have rates, we must have free schools; and if this system be once adopted, the existing system must go, by a slow, sure, and I hope, painless form of extinction; and who will regret it if a wiser thing be put in its place? For I trust none of you are idolators, worshippers of mere means. I should be sorry to think that the interests of your little denominational school weighed more with you than the interests of the nation. Our people are ill-taught. Our children die at a rate which is shameful and disgraceful. Our people live in filth and disease. Large parts of our great cities are a shame and disgrace, and the odours of corporeal nastiness interfere even with the propagation of the Gospel. We believe we have a remedy for all this; and, being an extreme man, I prophesy that, in the end—and that end not distant—our schools will be supported by rates; and that means compulsion, and it means that the schools must be purely secular. Disguise it as you may, to that complexion you must come at last. If we attempt to make school rates to support denominational schools, we shall have, in fact, our old friend the church-rates back again, and some John Giles, of Bungay, will go to prison rather than pay and members of the Society of Friends will allow their umbrellas to be seized. It is not pleasant to hear how quietly and coolly

the religious world assumes that it has a right to have its dogmas and doctrines taught. I and many others begin to doubt whether we ought to pay for your doctrines. I am a Latitudinarian avowedly. Why should I pay to have done on the week days what I spend all my Sundays endeavouring to undo? Is it not time that the little children should not be plagued with the reverse of what the scholarship of England and the right learning of the Church have shown to be the only things that a scholar can hold? If gentlemen present can show you that Moses did not write the whole of the Pentateuch, am I to be compelled to pay for telling children that he did? Is it not time that children should not build up what it will be their first duty when they are older to pull down? Have not some of us gone through that bitter and painful process of taking our fathers' creed slowly down? And do we not know what it costs? Is it pleasant for a man to have to forsake the creed of his youth? Is the process so agreeable that it is right to subject the children of this country to it? Why am I to pay for teaching a child—as it is stated in a catechism which I shall not name—that for His good pleasure and greater glory, God elected certain people to reprobation? I am willing to pay for teaching the things about which we are agreed. When they go out of school you shepherds can catch them, and take them to the fold. Teach them what you think proper, but do not ask me to pay for that part. Short of what I have stated I shall not be satisfied, but I shall travel with you on the same road as far as you will go with me; and I hope you will make allowance for me if I go farther than you do. Compulsory, national, secular education—that is my faith.

The resolution adopting the report was then put and carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS, COUNCIL, AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Mr. Edmund Potter, M.P., rose to move the appointment of the officers, Council, and Executive Committee. He said: I must at once frankly admit that though I have joined the League, I do not, like some of our friends who have spoken before me, agree with every

proposition that it has laid down. Yet, as I say, I have joined the League, and having joined it faithfully and loyally, I mean to do what I can to assist it upon its broad and general principles, but still holding myself free to go even farther than the League itself. I, like my friend Mr. Dawson, am an extreme man; but perhaps I view the question from a different point from that of any other speaker. I am bound to view it more as a representative of the people than as a philanthropist, and I look upon the question as one of great political and social moment. It is a political question of great urgency and great danger; and my feeling in joining the League was that by meetings and conferences like the present public opinion may be fully and clearly expressed, and that by it we may be able to force the Government to give a sound and comprehensive measure of education. And I say frankly, that to my mind no measure would be sound or comprehensive or satisfactory which did not at least go as far as the principles of your League. Upon the political point of the question, let me say that I look upon the present state of the country with very great dread. I am not going to trouble you with statistics, but just to say this: that it is well known—and it is admitted by men competent to form an accurate opinion—that of the twenty millions of population in England and Wales no less than four millions are in a state of crime, ignorance, misery, vice, and pauperism. Now, what is the cause of this? In my opinion it is simply this—that hitherto education has never touched, or has scarcely touched, the classes comprised in those four millions. True, there are some few charitable institutions which have gone below a certain line; but still there is a hard and fast line below which denominationalism has never gone—cannot go. And for what reason? Simply because it is denominational. Denominational institutions are all supported by the subscriptions of the different sects and by Government grants, but below that dark black line to which I have referred there are no subscriptions at all. Denominationalism cannot permeate to that depth where there is scarcely any religion, if any at all. Yet I won't say that there is no religion at all; for I am convinced that every man has a religion of some sort, if

it is only a strong faith in another world where, perhaps, there might be a better chance for him, and where he might change places with us who are better off. Now, in regard to the line below which denominationalism does not go, let me say that religious bodies have never, or at least in very few instances, been able to get deeper than that line. In Bethnal Green, where there is a population of 180,000 people, there are only 2,000 people who are known ever to go to a place of worship. That 2,000 is just the class which denominationalism can touch, and it can touch no more. What is the remedy for this? I believe it is a purely secular system of education. With a secular system you may, I believe, carry out education amongst the classes below the line, and having educated these three or four millions, surely religious teachers might easily follow. Indeed, there would be opened up to them an opportunity which they never had before. But we must have a wide-spread education amongst these classes to which I refer. Is it not remarkable as a social question, that in a commercial community like this, with perfect free trade, strong competition, and the greater part of our wealth springing from trade—that in such a community four millions of people should have been so long allowed to remain in a state of ignorance? All the results of our labour in that respect have been lost—completely lost! Now, how can we cure this evil? You can only cure it by education. The greater part of the vice and misery amongst the lower classes arises simply from ignorance; and it is only by teaching those classes to help themselves that you will get a cure for the evil. Now, I am perfectly well aware that a Bill will be brought into the House of Commons next session, but I am afraid that that Bill—judging by those who are to frame it—will fall very far short of our expectations. I hope, therefore, that those Members of Parliament who have joined this League will be prepared—for this is not a party question, and ought not to be made one—to bring in a Bill of their own, and to force the question to the greatest possible extent. If we do not accomplish the whole of our object, which is to obtain a complete system of compulsory, secular, and free education, we shall at least have made a step towards its attainment.

Concede compulsion, and a free and secular education must inevitably follow. We have seen how little progress has been made up till now. In point of fact, as I said before, the present system has stopped at a certain line. Its results have increased only five per cent. during the last five years. Looking to the increase in population and wealth during that period, it is a really astounding result. And I am perfectly satisfied that there the results of the system must rest. When the different points of the question of compulsory secular education come to be discussed, I shall be glad to offer opinions; but I may just say that I myself have worked under compulsion for the last thirty or forty years. The working of the Factory Acts in some respects has been very good, but in the matter of education they have failed most lamentably. And why is that? Because we have no free schools to which to send our children. It is a perfect farce to say to parents "Educate your children," when the only possible way of getting education is by a charge of 2d. per week upon them. The Factory Acts have completely failed in sending large numbers of children to school, except in those cases in which masters have taken a Christian interest in their workpeople and have provided education for the children. I am perfectly satisfied that if we determine to bring in a Bill we shall not find the plan of organization or the settlement of the details to be at all difficult. To my mind, this question comes only second in importance to the Irish question; and it behoves us therefore to set earnestly and at once to work. I don't myself see why we should wait a single session for the Bill; and if members of Parliament will only work for it as hard and as zealously as they did over the Bankruptcy Bill and one or two other measures of last session, the whole thing may be carried next session. I now beg to move the following formal resolution:

That the following gentlemen be the officers of the League for the ensuing year:—

George Dixon, Esq., M.P., *Chairman.*

Jesse Collings, Esq, *Hon. Secretary.*

John Jaffray, Esq., *Treasurer.*

That the Council of the League consist of—

(1)—All Members of the League who are Members of Parliament, comprising at present:—

The Right Hon. the Earl of Portsmouth
Anstruther, Sir Robert, Bart., M.P. for Fifeshire
Armitstead, G., M.P. for Dundee
Bass, M. Arthur, M.P. for Stafford
Beaumont, Somerset, M.P. for Wakefield
Bright, Jacob, M.P. for Manchester
Brocklehurst, W. C., M.P. for Macclesfield
Brogden, Alexander, M.P. for Wednesbury
Campbell, H., M.P. for Stirling
Carter, R. M., M.P. for Leeds
Clement, W. J., M.P. for Shrewsbury
Dalrymple. Donald, M.P. for Bath
Dilke, Sir Charles Wentworth, Bart., M.P. for Chelsea
Dixon, George, M.P. for Birmingham
Fawcett, H., M.P. for Brighton
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmund, M.P. for Calne
Gower, Lord Rowland Leveson, M.P. for Sutherland
Grieve, J. O., M.P. for Greenock
Grosvenor, Captain The Hon. R. W., M.P. for Westminster
Hoare, Sir Henry A., Bart., M.P. for Chelsea
Howard, James, M.P. for Bedford
Hughes, T., M.P. for Frome
Lorne, The Marquis of, M.P. for Argyleshire
Melly, G., M.P. for Stoke-on-Trent
Miall, Edward, M.P. for Bradford
Mitchell, S. A., M.P. for Bridport
Morgan, George Osborn, Q.C., M.P. for Denbeighshire
Morrison, W., M.P. for Plymouth
Mundella, A. J., M.P. for Sheffield
Muntz, P. H., M.P. for Birmingham
Parry, T. L. D. J., M.P. for Carnarvonshire
Platt, J., M.P. for Oldham
Playfair, Dr. Lyon, C. B., M.P. for Edinburgh, &c. Universities.
Potter, Edmund, F.R.S., M.P. for Carlisle.
Price, W. E., M.P. for Tewkesbury.
Price, W. P., M.P. for Gloucester.
Rylands, Peter, M.P. for Warrington.
Samuelson, Bernhard, M.P. for Banbury.
Seely, Charles, M.P. for Nottingham.
Simon, John, Serjeant-at-Law, M.P. for Dewsbury.

Sykes, Col. W. H., F.R.S., F.G.S., F.R.G.S., M.P. for Aberdeen.
Taylor, P.A., M.P. for Leicester.
Wedderburn, Sir David, Bart., M.P. for South Ayrshire.
Williams, Watkin, M.P. for Denbigh.
Winterbotham, H. S. P., M.P. for Stroud.

(2)—All Donors to the funds of the League of £500. and upwards, comprising at present:—

Bolton, F. S., Birmingham.
Brogden, A., M.P., Ulverstone.
Chamberlain, J., Moor Green Hall.
Chamberlain, Jos., Birmingham.
Chance, R. L., Birmingham.
Dixon, Geo., M.P., Birmingham.
Field, A., Birmingham.
Jaffray, John, J.P., Birmingham.
Kenrick, A., Birmingham.
Kenrick, J. A., J.P., Birmingham.
Kenrick, T., Birmingham.
Kenrick, Wm., Birmingham.
Lloyd, G. B., Birmingham.
Middlemore, W., Birmingham.
Osler, Clarkson, Birmingham.
Osler, Follett, F.R.S., Birmingham.
Phillips, Alderman, Birmingham.
Potter, Edmund, M.P., Carlisle.

(3)—One Representative from each Branch of the League;

And the following ladies and gentlemen, namely:—

Abbott, E. A., M.A., St. John's Wood, London.
Ackworth, Rev. James, L.L.D., Scarborough.
Albright, Arthur, Edgbaston.
Allman, Professor George J., F.R.S., University of Edinburgh.
Ambler, Councillor John, Walmer Villas, Bradford.
Angus, Rev. Joseph, D.D., Regent's Park College, London.
Anstey, T. Chisholm, Temple, London.
Applegarth, Robert, Stamford Street, London.
Aveling, Thomas, Mayor of Rochester.
Baines, John, Mayor of Leicester.
Bain, Alexander, Professor of Logic, University of Aberdeen.
Barlow, James Mayor of Bolton.
Barmby, Rev. Goodwyn, Wakefield.
Bazley, Charles H., J.P., Manchester.

Beal, Councillor Michael, Sheffield.
Beales, Edmond, M.A., Lincoln's Inn, London.
Beard, Rev. Charles, B.A., Liverpool.
Becker, Miss Lydia E., Manchester.
Belsey, F. H., Rochester.
Bennett, J. N., Plymouth.
Bessemer, Henry, Denmark Hill, London.
Best, Hon. and Rev. Samuel, M.A., Andover, Hampshire.
Binns, Rev. William, Devonport.
Birks, Rev. John, Kingswood Parsonage, near Alvechurch.
Bond, Francis T., M.D., Southampton.
Booth, Charles, Liverpool.
Bowring, Sir John, LL.D., Exeter.
Brodie, Dr., Edinburgh.
Brown, John, J.P., Merionethshire.
Brodie, E. H., Inspector of Schools, London.
Brodie, Rev. P. B., Rowington, near Warwick.
Brodrick, the Hon. George, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford.
Brock, G. B., J.P., Swansea.
Brown, Alderman E. R., Plymouth.
Brown, Potto, Houghton.
Bunce, J. Thackray, F.S.S., Birmingham.
Burch, A. E., J.P., Bedford.
Butcher, William, Bristol.
Butler, Mrs., Liverpool.
Caldicott, Rev. J. W., M.A., Grammar School, Bristol.
Campbell, Rev. Dr., Bradford.
Carpenter, Rev. J. Estlin, M.A., Leeds.
Carson, W. H., Warminster.
Chadwick, Edwin, C.B., Mortlake, Surrey.
Chamberlain, J. H., F.R.I.B.A., Birmingham.
Churchill, Lord A. S., 16, Rutland Gate, London.
Clark, John F., Tarland, Aberdeenshire.
Clarke, Rev. Charles, F.L.S., Birmingham.
Clarke, E. G., Bristol.
Clarke, Joseph, J.P., Southampton.
Collier, W. F., Plymouth.
Cockburn, Mr. Councillor John T., Carlisle.
Cowen, Councillor Joseph, jun., Newcastle-on-Tyne.
Collins, Councillor Henry, M.D., Wolverhampton.
Conway, M. D., Notting Hill Square, London.
Courtauld, Samuel, Essex.
Courtauld, George, near Halstead, Essex.

Coxe, Sir James, M.D., F.R.S., Murrayfield, Edinburgh.
Cremer, W. R., George Street, Euston Road.
Creighton, Mandell, Fellow and Tutor of Merton College, Oxford.
Crosskey, Rev. H. W., F.G.S., Birmingham.
Darnton, Rev. P. W., B.A., Newport, Monmouthshire.
Darwin, C. E., Southampton.
Davies, Jesse Conway, M.D., F.A.S., Holywell, Flintshire.
Davis, Rev. John, Tonmawr, Neath, Glamorganshire.
Dawson, G., M.A., F.G.S., Birmingham.
Deykin, W. H., Edgbaston.
Dick, A. H., M.A., L.L.B., Normal College, Glasgow.
Dixon, Joshua, Winslade, Exeter.
Dowson, Rev. H. E., B.A., Gee Cross, Manchester.
Drake, W., M.A., Hon. Canon of Worcester.
Dyster, Frederic D., M.D., F.L.S., J.P., Tenby.
Eadie, Robert, C.E., LL.D., F.R.G.S., London.
Emanuel, Rev. G. J., B.A., Edgbaston.
Emerson, George R., Editor of *Weekly Dispatch*.
Esson, Wm., F.R.S., Fellow and Tutor of Merton College, Oxford.
Evans, William H., M.A., J.P., Forde Abbey, Dorsetshire.
Everett, J. D., M.A., D.C.L., Queen's College, Belfast.
Falconer, Thomas, F.G.S., County Court Judge, Usk.
Fallows, W., J.P., Middlesbro'.
Faunthorpe, J. P., M.A., St. John's College, Battersea.
Fawcett, Mrs., The Close, Salisbury.
Ferguson, Robert M., Carlisle.
Fleming, A., M.D., Birmingham.
Foster, Michael, F.R.C.S., Huntingdon.
Foster, Dr. Michael, London University.
Foster, G. C., B.A., F.R.S., University College.
Fowle, Rev. T. W., M.A., Cambridge Place, London.
Fry, Herbert, Editor of "Our Schools," &c., London.
Fuller, W. M., Wolverhampton.
Fuller, Rev. A. G., Wolverhampton.
Gairdner, W. S., M.D., Glasgow.
George, Rev. H. B., Fellow of New College, Oxford.
Goodeve, H. H., M.D., Bristol.
Gotch, F. W., L.L.D., Baptist College, Bristol.
Grant, David, Ecclesall College, Sheffield.
Grayson, Charles, Liverpool.
Greenbank, Professor, L.L.D., Manchester.
Grenfell, J. G., B.A., Birmingham.
Grinrod, R. B., M.D., L.L.D., Malvern.

Groome, William, B.A., F.G.S., Bedford.
Guise, Sir William Vernon, Bart., F.G.S., F.L.S., Gloucester.
Hall, Rev. Edward, M.A., Eton College.
Hammond, James L., M.A., Fellow of Trinity College, Camb.
Hanham, Captain, J., R.N., near Blandford, Dorsetshire.
Hankin, C. W., M.A., Grammar School, Southampton.
Hansard, Rev. S., M.A., Bethnal Green, London.
Harris, William, Birmingham.
Hatton, Thomas S., Wednesbury.
Haycroft, Rev. Nathaniel, M.A., D.D., Leicester.
Heathcote, Rev. H. J., Erdington.
Herbert, the Hon. A., London.
Hicks, Wm., Salisbury.
Hildick, John, Mayor of Walsall.
Hill, Rev. Micaiah, Braithwaite Road, Edgbaston.
Hill, Sir Rowland, London.
Hinks, John, Edgbaston.
Hodges, J. T., M.D., F.C.S., Queen's College, Belfast.
Hodgson, W. B., L.L.D., Grove End Road, London.
Holden, Angus, Bradford.
Holland, Henry, Mayor of Birmingham.
Holland, Samuel, J.P., Glanwilliam, Tan-y-Bwlch.
Holyoake, G. J., Waterloo Chambers, London.
Hoppus, Rev. John, L.L.D., F.R.S., Camden Street, London.
Horton, Rev. H. H., M.A., Gerrard Street, Birmingham.
Howard, Hon. George, Haworth Castle, Brampton, Cumberland.
Howard, Rev. W. W., H.M. Inspector of Schools, Exeter.
Huth, Edward, Huddersfield.
Hutton, Charles W. C., ex-Sheriff of London.
Howell, George, Buckingham Street, Strand, London.
Huxley, Professor, St. John's Wood, London.
Jackson, Rev. Edward, M.A., St. James's, Leeds.
James, Rev. A., Bewdley.
James, Rev. William, Clifton.
Jeaffreson, C. H., Giggleswick Grammar School.
Jevons, Professor W. S., Withington, Manchester.
Jones, Rev. Griffith, Bridgend, Glamorganshire.
Jones, Rev. Hugh, Llangollen.
Jones, Rev. James, Barmouth.
Jones, Rev. T. S., Trewen, Cardiganshire.
Jackson, T. W., Fellow Worcester College, Oxford.
Kane, Sir Robert, L.L.D., F.R.S., Queen's College, Cork.
Kedwards, Rev. J., Lye Waste, Cradley.

King, William, Queen's College, Galway.
Kingsley, Rev. Canon, M.A., F.L.S., F.G.S., Eversley Rectory, Winchfield.
Kirk, John S., Ph. D., M.A., Carnarvon.
Lambert, Rev. Brooke, Whitechapel.
Lampard, Joseph, St. Mark Street, Birmingham.
Langley, J. B., M.R.C.S., F.L.S., Lincoln's Inn Fields.
Larkin, Rev. E. R., M.A., Burton, near Lincoln.
Leckenby, John, J.P., F.G.S., Scarborough.
Lee, Rev. F. F., D.D., Lancaster.
Lees, Harold, Woodheys, Sale, Manchester.
Leppoc, H. J., Manchester.
Lestrange, Thomas, Belfast.
Levi, Professor Leone, F.S.A., F.S.S., King's College, London.
Liveing, G. D., M.A., St. John's College, Cambridge.
Lloyd, Sampson, Wednesbury.
Lloyd, Thomas, J.P., Priory, Warwick.
Locket, Joseph, J.P., Dunoon, Argyleshire.
Lowe, T. C., B.A., Handsworth.
Lubbock, Sir John, Bart., London.
Lupton, Darnton, J.P., Leeds.
Lushington, G. Westminster.
Lushington, Vernon, Q.C., Temple.
Lyell, Sir Charles, Bart., L.L.D., D.C.L., F.R.S., London.
M'Cance, Finlay, J.P., Suffolk, Antrim, Ireland.
MacCarthy, Rev. F. E. M., M.A., Second Master of King Edward's School, Birmingham.
Mander, C. B., J.P., Wolverhampton.
Martineau, Robert, J.P., Edgbaston.
Martineau, Russell, M.A., British Museum, London.
Maginnis, Rev. D., Stourbridge.
Manton, Alderman, Birmingham.
Mason, Hugh, Ashton-under-Lyne
Mason, Josiah, Birmingham.
Maxfield, M., Leicester.
Maxse, Captain R.N., Southampton.
McLaren, Rev. Alexander, Manchester.
McMichael, Rev. N., D.D., Edinburgh.
Miles, Rev. C. P., M.A., F.L.S., Monkwearmouth, Durham.
Millard, J. H., B.A., Huntingdon.
Mills, John, Manchester.
Milner, Edward, Warrington.
Molyneux, William, F.G.S., Burton-on-Trent.

Mottram, Rev. W., Warminster.
Moses, Rev. R. G., B.A., Falmouth.
Müller, Professor Max, University, Oxford.
Murch, C. J., Recorder of Barnstaple and Bideford.
Murch, Jerom, Bath.
New, Herbert, Evesham.
Nicholls, John, Mayor of Launceston, Cornwall.
Norrington, Councillor Henry, Exeter.
Odger, George, Bloomsbury, London.
Oram, Richard, Stonehouse, Devonshire.
Osborne, Alderman E. C., Birmingham.
Osborne, Captain Sherard, Hyde Park.
Page, David, L.L.D., F.R.S.E., 38, Gilmore Place, Edinburgh.
Paget, Charles, J.P., Nottingham.
Parker, Rev. J. W., Banbury.
Paul, Rev. C. Kegan, Sturminster Marshall, Dorsetshire.
Pease, Thomas, F.G.S., Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol.
Prange, F. G., Liverpool.
Pemberton, Oliver, Birmingham.
Pentecost, J., Stourbridge.
Pinnock, Henry, Newport, Isle of Wight.
Pulsford, Rev. William, D.D., Glasgow.
Purdy, Frederick, F.S.S., Poor Law Board, London.
Prichard, Thomas, M.D., Abington Abbey, Northamptonshire.
Quain, Dr. Richard, F.R.S., University College, London.
Radford, Wm., Birmingham.
Raffles, J., Birmingham.
Ransome, Robert C., Ipswich.
Rathbone, P. H., Liverpool.
Rawlinson, Robert, C.B., West Brompton.
Rawlinson, Sir Christopher, C.B., Upton-on-Severn.
Reed, E. J., Chief Constructor of the Navy, Whitehall.
Richards, R. C., J.P., Clifton Lodge, near Preston.
Rigby, Samuel, J.P., Warrington.
Ritchie, Rev. W., Liskeard, Cornwall.
Roberts, Rev. J. B., Alnwick, Northumberland.
Rothera, G. B., Nottingham.
Rogers, Professor J. E. Thorold, Oxford.
Roper, Richard, F.G.S., F.C.S., Cwmbraen, near Newport, Mon.
Roscoe, Professor, Owen's College, Manchester.
Rowlands, Rev. David, B.A., Welchpool.
Ryland, Alderman Arthur, Birmingham.
Rumney, Alderman, Manchester.

Sales, Henry H., Leeds.
Salt, Councillor Titus, jun., Bradford.
Sandford, Archdeacon, Alvechurch.
Sandwith, Humphrey, C.B., Denbigh.
Schmitz, L., L.L.D., Ph. D., International College, London.
Scott, Thomas, Ramsgate.
Seeley, Harry G., F.G.S., St. John's College, Cambridge.
Shaen, W., M.A., Bedford Row, London.
Short, Rev. J. L., Kenwood Road, Sheffield.
Sieveking, Edward H., M.D., Manchester Square, London.
Simons, W., Merthyr Tydvil.
Smith, Joseph, M.D., J.P., Warrington.
Stansfeld, James, Halifax.
Stanley, the Hon. E. L., Aderley Park, Congleton.
Steinthal, Rev. S. A., Manchester.
Stock, Rev. John, LL.D., Devonport.
Strut, Rev. J. C., Newcastle-on-Tyne.
Style, Rev. George, Giggleswick Grammar School.
Sully, G. B., Mayor of Bridgwater.
Symonds, Rev. W. S., Tewkesbury.
Symonds, Dr., Clifton, Bristol.
Tait, Lawson, F.R.C.S., Wakefield.
Teschemaker, Major T. R., Sydenham, Kent.
Thomas, Rev. John, B.A., Huddersfield.
Thomas, Christopher J., J.P., Bristol.
Thomas, Rev. U. R., Bristol.
Thomas, Rev. W., Llandyssul, Cardiganshire.
Thursfield, James R., Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford.
Tichbourne, C. R. C., F.C.S., Dublin.
Tonks, Edmund, B.C.L., Knowle.
Trevelyan, Arthur, J.P., Teynholm, East Lothian.
Trimble, Robert, Liverpool.
Turner, J. P., Handsworth.
Vince, Rev. Charles, Birmingham.
Voysey, Rev. Charles, B.A., Healaugh Vicarage.
Webb, C. Locock, Lincoln's Inn.
Wilson, Rev. H. B., St. Neots.
Williams, Rev. Rowland, LL.D., Broadchalke Vicarage.
Williams, Evan, M.A., Merthyr Tydvil.
Wolstenholme, Miss E. C., Moody Hall, Congleton.
Wright, J. S., Birmingham.
Zincke, Rev. F. Barham, M.A., Ipswich.

And that the Executive Committee consist of the Officers and forty members of the League, namely, the following thirty gentlemen, and ten others to be chosen by them and the officers :—

Booth, Charles, Liverpool.
Bunce, J. Thackray, F.S.S., Birmingham.
Caldicott, Rev. J. W., M.A., Bristol.
Chamberlain, J. H., F.R.I.B.A., Birmingham.
Chamberlain, Joseph, Birmingham.
Clarke, Rev. Charles, F.L.S., Birmingham.
Crosskey, Rev. H. W., F.G.S., Birmingham.
Dawson, George, M.A., F.G.S., Birmingham.
Ferguson, Major, Carlisle.
Field, Alfred, Birmingham.
Fry, Herbert, London.
Harris, William, Birmingham.
Herbert, the Hon. Auberon, London.
Hodgson, W.B., LL.D., London.
Holden, Angus, Bradford.
Holland, Henry, Mayor of Birmingham.
Howell, George, London.
Huth, Edward, Huddersfield.
Kenrick, William, Birmingham.
Kingsley, Rev. Canon, Eversley.
Maxfield, M., Leicester.
Maxse, Captain, R.N., Southampton.
Middlemore, William, Birmingham.
Osborne, E. C., Birmingham.
Osler, Follett, F.R.S., Birmingham.
Ryland, Arthur, Birmingham.
Simons, William, Merthyr Tydvil.
Steinthal, Rev. S. A., Manchester.
Vince, Rev. Charles, Birmingham.
Wright, J. S., Birmingham.
Zincke, Rev. F. B., M.A., Ipswich.

The CHAIRMAN : Dr. Hodgson, of London—one of the five or six gentlemen who started the Manchester National Association for Secular Rate-paid Education in 1847—will second the resolution.

Dr. HODGSON : My friend Mr. Potter, who preceded me, has described the motion as one of form ; but still I am sure that it will be received with that feeling of interest and enthusiasm which it properly deserves, both on account of the character of the persons

to be appointed and the greatness of the object which they will have in hand to promote. The list of the Executive Committee contains a large number of members of Parliament who have distinguished themselves in various ways; but this may be said of the body collectively, that it is composed almost wholly of gentlemen who have brought this union to its present position, and what they have already done is a guarantee of what they may be expected to do. The best way to prove our gratitude to them for services already rendered is to call upon them to continue those services, and to come before us next year with a large account of work done. The President's reference to the Manchester Association leads me to say that although death has thinned the ranks of those who composed that association for obtaining secular rate-paid education, there still remains a large number who, instead of looking upon the labours of this League with jealousy, will hail its co-operation with the greatest earnestness and enthusiasm, not even desiring to meet it in friendly rivalry. I beg to second the resolution.

In reply to a gentleman who spoke from the body of the hall,

The PRESIDENT said: In the selection of the names mentioned in the resolution, the principle of having all parts of the country represented has been carried out.

Mr. ALBRIGHT: I should like to know if the name of Mr. G. B. Lloyd is on the Council.

The PRESIDENT: His name is on it.

Dr. BLIGH: The suggestion I would make is that in the place of the words "ten gentlemen," &c., the words "with power to add to their number" should be inserted. And I do so for this reason, that whilst I do not in any way doubt the discretion of the Executive in nominating these gentlemen to the Council, I consider that as the movement extends all over the country there is room for the taking in of a large number of representative men not now on the Council. I beg to move that suggestion.

The PRESIDENT: The objection to that suggestion is that the executive body ought to be small. It might under your suggestion become unwieldy; but still if it is the wish of the meeting that the alteration should be made, the Committee, of course, will be very glad to adopt it.

A GENTLEMAN: Perhaps the matter might be got over by making vice-presidents.

The PRESIDENT: We have no vice-presidents. Vice-presidents are only ornamental people, and we require no ornamental people here.

The Rev. H. SOLLY, of London: I do not see the name of any Congregational minister on the list. I do not belong to that body myself; but I know that they are very zealous in the cause of education, and I think it is only fair that they should be represented.

The PRESIDENT: When we have some Congregational minister willing to join and work upon the Executive Committee, we shall be very willing to receive his name and to appoint him. We were very willing to appoint the Rev. R. W. Dale; but some scruple upon a minor point has prevented him from joining hitherto. If Mr. Solly will undertake the duty of inducing that gentleman to join we shall be very glad. These minor points will soon settle themselves.

The resolution, as altered in accordance with the suggestion of Dr. Bligh, was put to the meeting and agreed to.

NATIONAL EDUCATION BILL.

Professor FAWCETT, M.P. for Brighton, rose to move that a Bill embodying the principles of the League be introduced into Parliament. He said: The resolution I have the honour and pleasure to move will give a pledge to the whole nation that this League, representing a great and an increasing force of public opinion, is resolved to adopt practical and decisive action. The subject of national education has now happily advanced a stage beyond that of doubt and inquiry; it has reached the stage when it is ripe for action. The reproach is too often with truth made against Leagues and Congresses that they begin with talk, they go on with talk, they end in talk, and that is their only result. But if from this meeting a Bill shall emanate, the whole country will then see placed in a practical form, in a definite shape—so definite that they will be able to express their opinions upon it—what are the views we hold upon this great question, and how we think

these views may be practically carried out. It may be said, of course, that Government intends to introduce an Education Bill next session, and that we who repose confidence in the Government should wait until we see what its measure is. In reply to that possible objection to this resolution, it is only necessary to remark that if the Government measure—I am afraid it is too bright an anticipation—comes up to what we require, if it embodies the principles of this League, then all that we shall have to do will be at once to withdraw the Bill which we introduce into Parliament, and use the whole strength of this organisation in support of the Government and its measure. But if, on the other hand, the Government measure should have in it any shortcomings which we conceive are antagonistic to the great principles of this League—we cannot, of course, expect that any measure will meet our programme in all its detail—but if, for instance, the Government measure should infringe any of our great fundamental principles—if it should be too denominational in its character—if it should commit what, to my mind, is the fatal mistake of having compulsory rating without compulsory attendance—then our bill will be before the country, and the nation will be able to decide—and I think I can anticipate their decision with confidence—to which measure they will give their support. Now, it would be idle to deny that it is impossible for the great body of men who compose this League to be entirely agreed upon details; but so long as we can get our great aim and ends secured, we should, I venture to say, sacrifice our individual preferences upon minor points; and I for one am prepared on all questions of detail to give up my own opinions and bow cheerfully to the sentiments of the majority. Thus I may have my own opinions as to which would be the best title to adopt—undenominational, secular, or unsectarian; but I am perfectly prepared to accept any one of these three words which the majority of the League think should be the word in our programme. Then again, I have a preference for parents paying for the education of their children, instead of sending them to free schools; but here again I am perfectly willing to give up my own individual opinions, and if the majority of the Conference is in favour of free schools, I,

for one, will not shrink for a moment. What I conceive to be the fundamental principle of this organisation, what I look upon as the essential point upon which every one of us must be agreed, which is the bond of our union, the basis of our existence, is this: that we are absolutely determined that elementary education shall be guaranteed to every boy and girl in this country, and that if there is a deficiency of educational appliances, then schools shall be built and maintained out of the rates. Upon this fundamental principle I conceive that there can be no difference whatever amongst us. Now comes the question, if we are to have a Bill, what are to be the main principles of this Bill, in order to carry out compulsory attendance and compulsory rating? As far as I understand the programme of the League, they contemplate that the schools—at any rate, in the first instance, the rate-supported schools—shall be unsectarian, and not secular. For a long time, I must confess, I found it somewhat difficult to discover the difference between these phrases. I think the best explanation that can be given of the difference is this: that in the rate-supported schools no catechism shall be used, no dogmas of religion shall be taught, but it shall be perfectly optional with the managers of a school whether, in that school, the Bible shall be read, without any such comment as persons would object to from sectarian feeling. Therefore, if we adopt this plan of having unsectarian schools, I think we at once meet the argument of those who say that the education we propose will be irreligious. No one, I think, can pretend to say that the British and Foreign schools in this country are irreligious schools; and, to put our meaning about unsectarian schools in a definite and intelligible form, it seems to me that what we contemplate is this: there will be nothing whatever in our programme to prevent the managers of rate-supported schools from making their schools exactly analogous in their religious character to the schools which at present belong to the British and Foreign School organisation. These schools are not irreligious; they are supported by Nonconformists, who have shown the greatest enthusiasm for religion. The second point is this: Do we propose to deal with existing schools? We contemplate, I conceive, leaving existing schools untouched. If

a district or a locality prefer voluntaryism to compulsion—if they choose by their own efforts to provide themselves with schools according to the present system, they should have the power to do so. We only contemplate that the educational rate should be imposed in those districts in which the Government inspector reports that the educational appliances are not adequate for the education of all the children in the locality. Now, the next point is this: is it better that these schools should be supported by rates, or from the national exchequer? I believe some gentlemen who are entirely in favour of the great principle of compulsory education have not joined our League because they think that schools should be supported from the Consolidated Fund, and not from the rates. In reply to these gentlemen I would only say thus much—that I believe that if you take money from the Consolidated Fund there is a chance of its being extravagantly administered, and that if we made a proposal to take it from the Consolidated Fund we should at once declare open war against existing schools, for it would be idle to pretend that any existing schools could continue if the public could draw for the support of schools from the Consolidated Fund. In reply to those gentlemen who are in favour of existing schools, and wish to see them maintained, we can truly say that there is nothing whatever in our programme that is in the least degree antagonistic to those schools. If events should show that rate-supported schools are better, then of course the existing schools would gradually cease. But it is quite possible to conceive that the power to levy an educational rate may give a great stimulus to the existing schools, for it is quite possible that many clergymen and ministers of religion, who now find it difficult or almost impossible to support their schools, in consequence of the shabbiness and stinginess of the landed proprietors, may be able to induce them to come forward if they can use this practical argument, that, unless they subscribe, rates will be levied upon them and their tenants. Therefore it is quite possible in some cases that compulsory rating, instead of touching the present system, may give it a greater stimulus and render it far more efficient. The last point, upon which I should like to say a few words—and I speak upon it chiefly

to show you that I am anxious, as far as possible, to be conciliatory —is upon the question of free schools. I know there is a very strong feeling in this League in favour of making education free, but what I object to in this may be briefly stated in one sentence: I fear the principle of free education may weaken that sentiment of responsibility which parents should feel towards their children. I think we should lay down the doctrine that it is as much the duty of the parent to provide his child with education as it is to provide him with food and clothing. I know it may be said, in reply to my objections, that in certain extreme cases you support the child upon the rates—that you will not let children starve, but as a last resource you maintain them upon the rates. Yes; but if the parent refuses to support his child when he has the means to do so, you say that he shall be punished—he commits a criminal act. Similarly I should hold that rather than let a child's mind be starved, as a last resource he should be provided with a free education; but I should like to see the principle never sacrificed, that if a parent who has the means to give his child education refuses to do so, he too should be regarded as being guilty of a criminal act. I know it may be said every parent will contribute indirectly through the rates. There is no doubt some force in that argument; but it would be equally just to say it was the duty of the State to feed and clothe children, and not the duty of parents, because the money devoted to the purpose would be taken from the taxes, and therefore parents would in the aggregate contribute. But this after all is only a detail of the great measure we have in view; and I am perfectly willing to sacrifice my own individual views. If we introduce a Bill next session, let me give you one word of advice—let it be introduced almost the very first day of the session. Anyone who knows the House of Commons will know the importance of that. And let it be forced on through all its stages. My short experience in the House of Commons has taught me that persistence is a most valuable quality. When we have prepared this Bill, let us never abandon it until the Government is prepared to carry a measure similar to it, or until that day will arrive—and I believe it will never arrive—when the nation shall unmistakeably express its desire that the great problem of national education should be settled

upon principles different from those which form the basis of our organization. I beg to move, "That the Executive Council be instructed to prepare a Bill embodying the principles of this League, and that that Bill be introduced in the early part of next session."

Professor THOROLD ROGERS, seconded the resolution, He said: When I entered again into your town of Birmingham, the first little phenomenon that came before my attention was the conclusion of an article in a local paper, that article being, I make no doubt, exceedingly intelligent and instructive. It was to the effect that, if we who compose together the body of this Education League should succeed in proving our point, should show that we had not hitherto been the decided enemies of education, but that we intend—I am only paraphrasing the language of the article—a vast public good, then the editor of this paper, and I suppose those who read it, will quite abandon for ever the opposition which they feel towards us, and come over to our side. Now, I am not in a position to determine the exact numerical value of this possible conversion. I dare say it will be very considerable. But even if it be small, ladies and gentlemen, I think we may have reason to congratulate ourselves; because our main object—or at least, one of our main objects—is the reformation of the dangerous classes. Now, gentlemen, the central point of our Bill, of the movement which we propose, is the object with which the whole statement of the purposes of this National League commences: the establishment of a system which shall secure the education of every child in the country. That, I repeat, is the central point, the great object, the true meaning that we have in all that we say and undertake. For my part, I think that if we can only achieve the general acceptance of this principle, all the other points—points of detail—which have been adverted to in the report read just now, and which may hereafter come up for consideration, will follow as a matter of logical necessity. I entirely agree with my friend Mr. Potter, and the previous speaker, that if we establish a compulsory system of education, it is a matter of necessity that that compulsory education should be supplied, in some form or other, from public funds. I also agree entirely with Mr. Potter, that if you do establish a system of compulsory education, the machinery of which

is supplied from the public funds, it must inevitably be what people call secular, unsectarian, undenominational. I feel, ladies and gentlemen, that to dispute or doubt about the position laid down by those gentlemen, is to be ignorant of the facts of the society in which we live; and that whether we like it or not, for the very well-defined reasons glanced at, I was glad to see, by Mr. Dawson, we must thoroughly accept their necessary and proper conclusion. I shall not indeed, for I think it is out of question now, enter into the reasons why I hold these views, differing as I do upon theological topics at least—as I understand—from Mr. Dawson. Well, that is the only allusion I shall make to the subject. But anything like a Permissive Bill would be wholly and hopelessly out of place. I will here allude to a distinguished individual in the Church to which I belong—Archdeacon Denison; with whom, by the way, I do not agree in almost any point whatever. He avowed one of the finest sentiments I ever heard in my life the other day, to the effect that all permissive legislation was a hoax, a sham, and a delusion. All education, I think, must be universal and compulsory; and it must, I also think, be supplied from some public fund. What that fund shall be I do not intend to discuss now, because I have prepared a paper to read on that subject this afternoon. Now then, having cleared the way in this fashion, let us, endeavouring to reply to the objections urged against us, say why we should carry out the platform which is before us to-day. I was at some trouble to investigate, with Dr. Farr, of the Registrar General's office, what might be the number of children in this country above five and under thirteen years of age—a period of life during which, I imagine, this education would be generally bestowed—and we concluded that there were very nearly four millions and a half of such children in England and Wales. Now, we know from the little book published annually by the Board of Trade that the number of children educated in schools under inspection is about twelve hundred thousand. I confess that I think it will be a very liberal estimate to say that a million and a half more are being educated by their parents, in schools that will not accept Government grants, and by those various other methods of voluntary teaching which, to

a large degree, supplement public education in this country. Thus I am left with the horrid conclusion that nearly two millions of children between the ages of five and thirteen are not getting any education at all! I sincerely agree with my friend Archdeacon Sandford, in confessing that I think that that Christianity is a very queer sort of fabric that will suffer men to be willing that something like two millions of children should grow up in ignorance and sin—a scandal to the whole civilised world—because they cannot make up their minds whether or not these children should be taught something which is no necessary part of school education at all. I should like the gentleman who edits that local newspaper to ask himself the question—if he is content, under existing circumstances, to grapple with the problem, and supposing he will not accept general and compulsory education—how he proposes to provide against the growing and terrible fact that you have so many thousands and tens of thousands of children in this country who are getting no proper education and culture at all. It is all very well to talk about our institutions, and to laud the state of things that exists, but underneath what we see there is a great deal that is not seen, or that, being seen, is not seen with sufficiently careful and scrutinising eyes; and amongst those facts nothing is to me more terrible than that whole hosts of children should be living and growing up without the smallest prospect of having their minds or morals trained—and I quite believe that no man can have his mind trained without his morals being trained likewise, and that the training of the mind should be antecedent to the training of the morals. I confess that the difficulty raised by Professor Fawcett appears to me to be superfluous, and I will tell you why. If I argue on abstract grounds, he may object to my commenting on what he said, and may say he has a right to his belief. But my proofs are derived from existing facts. What is the country, among the people of our own race, where there is the most education given by the Government? It is the United States. I will not say that there they have compulsory education, but they have so extended a system that compulsion is not needed. The education is provided by the State; but does anyone tell us that American fathers and mothers do not care for it?

There are no people under the canopy of heaven who are more willing to make sacrifices, and none amongst whom the results of education are more satisfactory. We are told—and it is true, at any rate, of the Northern States—that there is hardly a child to be found, born of American parents, who does not derive benefits from the law of education. What reason is there to suppose that if we get a system like it—or, considering the ignorance of our people, a more stringent system—our people will not also be desirous of giving the benefits of education to their children? I should like to put this before the editor of your local paper. He says there does not seem to be any profound anxiety for the progress we intend. I can only say that I made many speeches about the country to working men last year, and I constantly alluded to the absolute necessity of having this system of compulsory education, and I have no hesitation in saying that whenever I mentioned it there was, without any exception, a unanimous shout of applause. They always tell you in their conversation that, surrounded as they are by people who will not educate their children, and on account of the freedom they have necessarily to give their children, and of the circumstances under which they have to be so much away from them, they are driven to demand that there should be that compulsion put on the whole mass of their numbers which may or may not be necessary for the education of those who are in a better condition of life—to whom the advantages of a good education are not more obvious, but to whom the machinery of a good education is at present more accessible. Now we shall be told, I dare say, that we are a number of unimportant persons; we shall be informed by some of the organs of the gentlemanly press that very few members of Parliament were present, that the parties collected together were local obscurities, and that the movement, as it has been started, is one which any respectable people may very well pooh-pooh. I should like to ask those who are familiar with political agitation whether it was ever begun by influential persons? You may depend on it that if you wait for a national education till you get, I will not say the whole Liberal party in the House of Commons, but the influential people in this country, to support it, you will wait till Doomsday before you get it. I challenge denial

of the fact that almost all social, political, and economical reforms have commenced with the labours of persons whom the gentlemanly press calls obscurities. Professor Fawcett, as a member of Parliament, gives you advice. Let me, as sincerely wishing the success of this movement, give you this advice: Be content with nothing but your Bill. You lay down a principle which is theoretically unassailable, and that principle involves means logically necessary; let no attempt divert you from these ends. If your principle is admitted, if the Bill introduced by Government during the next session involves your principle, you may safely leave the details to be worked out afterwards; but if the principle is not taken up you had better go without the Bill than have your principle broken up. Gentlemen here can remember the progress of the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws, which I need not say was one of the greatest triumphs the country ever achieved. That was almost wrecked at the commencement by the proposal for an 8s. duty. The advocates of the Anti Corn Law League—a League greater in its historic importance, but not greater in its object than our own—resolved that no such compromise should be accepted, and held to the doctrine of total and unconditional repeal. And so I venture to say it will be your wisdom, and I am certain it will be your success, if you hold to the total and unconditional concession of the principle which stands at the head of these statements that are made in italics. Stick to that, and you will win; abandon it for anything that falls short of it, and you are pretty certain to lose. The enemies of national education, and they are many, count on disunion in your ranks, or timidity on the part of some who support you. They expect you will put up with something less than you demand, and they know that if you do, you will not get what you ought to have. I second the resolution.

Mr. Lloyd Jones, in the absence of Mr. George Odger, supported the resolution: He came to the meeting, he said, certainly of his own desire, but also as the representative of a body of men sitting in London, composed for the most part of secretaries of the largest trades' unions in the kingdom. Those men had organized themselves for the purpose of securing, if possible, the return of working men to the British House of Parliament. That was their special

object; but when they heard that the League had been organized, that its agitation was about to commence, they at once took up the question as one the most deeply interesting that could be brought before them, affecting as it did the particular business of their lives. There was a large number of members present at the meeting which was called to consider the matter, and not one word of objection was uttered to the platform of the League. On the contrary, they passed a resolution declaring that the principles of the League were worthy of hearty support, and promising to assist the object in view by every means in their power. That resolution was signed by a large number of secretaries, one of whom represented between 30,000 and 40,000 engineers. Now, in entering that resolution, he could not pledge himself that the League would have the moral and practical support of the men of all trades in London; but he thought he might pledge himself that it would at least have the support of all those men represented in the names subscribed to the resolution, and in saying that he really gave in the adhesion of the working classes of the country. He was an old working man himself, and his sympathies, therefore, were with the working men. Whenever he could labour with them for the furtherance of any great object, he invariably did so. His own professional pursuits now compelled him to go through a deal of reading which was by no means so dry as many people were disposed to think: he referred to the blue books issued by the Government. Now, if they referred to the reports of those gentlemen who were sent by Government to report upon the products of industry in the various countries of the world, they would find that whilst they in England were disputing and debating about creeds and differences in theology—subjects, no doubt, very interesting and important in their way—other nations were giving a practical education to their people, who were rising up, not to discuss and fight about theology, but to carry off the industry of this country in cotton and wool and iron. If they did not give to the artizans of this country the same educational advantages as those enjoyed by the artizans of other nations, they shut them out from competition; for the markets were open to foreigners as well as to Englishmen. Why, then, permit other countries to beat their own in

the educational and technical stimulus required for the perfection of industry? They might depend upon it, that if this question of education was not speedily and satisfactorily settled, England would go back as a nation, not theologically, but in the skill and power of her industry—she would lose her manufacturing supremacy, and when she had lost that he was afraid their theological disputes would be of very little use or interest. Mr. Murray, one of the Commissioners who reported upon the cotton fabrics at the Exposition at Paris in 1867, describing the Swiss goods, said that if in all countries there existed such a good system of education as in Switzerland, the commercial position of England would be menaced in various ways. Again, Mr. Massey, who reported upon the woollen goods, said that there was no doubt the French were greatly indebted for their progress in manufactures to the very superior technical education which was obtained by the artizans through schools instituted for special instruction. Mr. Massey argued that if in England they wanted to have skilled working men, special regard must be given to general education. Now, they stood there to-day in the presence of as great an educational failure as had ever taken place on the face of the earth. The denominational system had promised to do everything, yet they were told from the platform that day, that there were above two million children in the country receiving no education at all! That was a state of things utterly discreditable to them as a nation, and did they not adjust their differences and throw overboard their prejudices, England would sink as a nation in position and influence, theology not being able to save them from the fall.

The Rev. H. E. Dowson, addressing the Chairman, said: I understood that we came here to support secular education, but I find that we are now asked to support the British School system, and against that I utterly protest. I say it is a compromise, and every compromise deserves to fail.

The Chairman: Mr. Dowson has entirely misunderstood what has taken place. We do not use the word "secular"; but we exclude all theological parts of religion, and I am sure that what is left is what even Mr. Dowson himself would call "secular." But at any rate, however that may be, Mr. Dowson must remember

that we have placed, or we wish to place, the decision of the question in the hands of the people themselves in each district, in the hands of the fathers of children who are to be educated, or, what is the same thing, their representatives on the school committees. Before I put the resolution, I wish to make one remark in reference to an observation which fell from Professor Rogers. He said that, in the estimation of some people, some members of the League were "obscurities." Now, I do not wish to point to the gentlemen who have addressed you to-day from this platform, nor to the 40 members of Parliament heading our list, nor yet to the 300 or 400 ministers of all denominations who have joined, nor to the most eminent men of science whose names appear upon the list; but I would just say that we have been told upon the highest authority that we have upon our list of members certain persons of very great influence—indeed, of much greater weight and influence than we in Birmingham are at all conscious of. Therefore, although Professor Rogers is perfectly right in saying that we depend mainly upon the righteousness and goodness of our cause; that we intend to go not to celebrities, not to leaders, but to the people themselves (to whom we look for that strength and for that power which will ultimately most certainly carry the measure); yet still it will be seen that we are not altogether "political obscurities."

The resolution was then put and carried, and the meeting adjourned.

THE CHAIRMAN'S PAPER ON NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

On the reassembling of the meeting in the afternoon, the CHAIRMAN read the following paper:—

The paper I am about to read on "The Best System for National Schools, based upon Local Rates and Government Grants," must not be supposed to emanate from the Provisional Committee, nor to have any more authority as an exposition of the views of the National Education League than a paper by any other member present would have. The central idea in the scheme of the National

Education League is that the education of the people should no longer continue to be based exclusively upon the isolated, and often fitful, efforts of individuals, however noble and valuable those efforts might be; but that the State should become responsible for the education of the whole of its children. This responsibility need not involve taking immediate charge of all existing schools. Where education is being satisfactorily carried on there, it may be that no further action by the State will be required. It will suffice if provision be made for the transfer to the School Boards of those schools whose managers may desire it. It appears to me that no measure for a national system would be complete unless it contained the following enactments:—The entire cost of erecting or maintaining national-rate schools, to be defrayed out of the rates and taxes of the country, in the proportion of one-third from the former and two-thirds from the latter. The principle of payment on results to be continued. Power to be given for the compulsory purchase of school sites. In every county and in every large municipality a School Board to be elected of the ratepayers or their representatives. These Boards shall ascertain where schools are wanted, and see that they are provided; shall negociate the transfer of existing schools to the local authorities, whenever such transfer is desired by the managers, and will be advantageous to the district; shall appoint committees to manage schools or groups of schools; shall levy the necessary rates, claim the Government grants, and pay all the expenses of the schools; shall keep registers of all the children of school age within their districts, placing opposite to each child's name that of the school which may be fixed upon by the parents, guardians, or school officers, and shall send a list of the names and addresses of the children assigned to each school to the respective school committees; shall appoint school officers to make out and periodically revise the above registers, and undertake the duty of enforcing attendance, under the direction of the school committees. (The duties of these school officers might be performed by the schoolmaster in thinly-populated districts, and where the schools are small.) Shall fix the number of, and the period for, the attendances to be required of children in the course of the year, within the limits prescribed by the Committee of Privy Council on Education;

and shall take care that all other provisions of the Act of Parliament under which they are appointed be carried out. The School Committees shall appoint the masters and mistresses, subject to the approval of the School Boards; shall see that the school buildings are kept in repair, and supervise and sanction the expenditure of the school; shall report to the School Boards all irregularities and infractions of rules; shall cause registers to be kept of the attendances of all the children belonging to their schools, see that the school officers call on the parents or guardians of those children who attend irregularly, or do not attend at all, and acquaint them with their duties, with the meaning and object of the school laws, and the penalties following a disregard of them, and shall summon before them absentee children, or their parents or guardians, and admonish them; and in the event of their injunctions being disobeyed, shall cause them to be summoned before a magistrate, with whom shall rest the infliction of a fine. All national-rate schools shall be free, and no catechisms, creeds, or tenets peculiar to any particular sect shall be taught in them during the recognised school hours. But the school committee shall have power to permit the use of the Bible without note or comment, and to grant the use of the class rooms for religious instruction out of school hours, on condition that one sect is not favoured more than another. Whenever a parent or guardian can substantiate a plea of poverty as a reason for not sending a child to school, and there is no free school within reach, the committee shall have power to pay the school fees of such child; and it shall be obligatory on the managers of the school selected by the parent, if such school be receiving Government aid, to admit the child, and to refrain from teaching it any catechism, creed, or tenet peculiar to any particular sect. The managers of any non-national rate school may negotiate with the School Board for its transfer to the local authorities, and the Board shall, if the transfer be otherwise desirable, and the managers wish it, agree to appoint the said managers to be the School Committee, until their resignation or death, on the condition that all the provisions of the School Act are observed by them. Her Majesty's Inspectors shall cease to examine on religious subjects, and in each district there shall

consequently be only one inspector. The number of inspectors shall be augmented, and the following additional duties shall be imposed upon them :—They shall report to the Committee of Privy Council on Education, and to the School Boards—whether, in their opinion, a sufficient number of efficient schools exists for the wants of the district; in what schools the education is defective, and the manner in which the defects can best be remedied; whether the attendance of the children has been satisfactory, and if not, whether the proper steps have been taken to enforce it. In the event of the School Boards failing to obtain such results as may be deemed satisfactory by the Committee of Privy Council on Education, it shall be the duty of the Committee of Privy Council to direct what additional measures are to be taken, and Her Majesty's Inspectors shall see that those measures are adopted. If the scheme above described were carried out, I am of opinion that we should achieve the following results. We should avoid the evils of centralisation on the one hand, and of local inefficiency on the other. Whilst retaining all the advantages of local self-government, and of the immediate and direct action of public opinion based on local knowledge, we should be guarded by an enlightened inspection and strong Government control against the danger of our standard of efficiency being lowered in some districts by the ignorance and niggardliness of the ratepayers. The new schools provided by the local authorities would be of a class equal, if not superior, to the best denominational schools. The heavy responsibilities and large expenditure involved would prevent the ratepayers from providing more schools than were absolutely necessary. The new schools would be mainly, if not entirely, erected in those districts which are now destitute of them—that is, in those districts where, by reason of the poverty of the inhabitants, free schools are most needed. Existing well-managed schools would be able to maintain their ground, if it be true, as is alleged, that the religious teaching given in them is valued by the subscribers and by the parents of the pupils. I would recommend that the Government grants to all existing denominational schools which accept a conscience clause should be the same as those to the

national-rate schools—that is, that they should be increased from the present amount of one-third of the total cost to two-thirds, thus relieving the managers of one-half of their present responsibilities. The remaining half would not be too much to pay for the assured advantages of religious instruction and the supposed superiority of voluntary management. It is also probable that some of these denominational schools would be preferred by parents as being more select; and as this would in part be owing to the fees required, those fees would on that account be more willingly paid. The result of the rivalry that would take place between the denominational and the national-rate schools might be that the upper portion of the working classes would prefer the former for the reasons mentioned above; but, in my opinion, the instruction given in the national-rate schools would be found to be generally so superior as to cause them, in the course of time, to supersede the others. But the process would be gradual, and no inconvenience would be felt by the transfer of schools that would be continually taking place. Should my anticipations be realised, I am further of opinion that the knowledge and influence of religion would become far more widely spread than is now the case; because the groundwork for it would be universally laid, and the clergy would be able to devote themselves more exclusively to the giving of religious instruction. I do not believe that the spirit of voluntaryism would languish under the new system. Those persons who now take an interest in primary schools would be placed on the school committees, and as there would be more schools, their services would be in greater request. The necessity for voluntary contributions of money would also be quite as paramount as ever; but instead of these contributions being devoted to the building and maintenance of schools for the higher classes of working men, some, if not all, of whom are well able to pay the entire cost of the education of their children, they would be devoted to the providing of clothing and perhaps even of food, for those destitute children who are now unable to attend schools of any sort, because they are starving and in rags. The greatest difficulty in the way of compulsory school attendance is the sacrifice of the child's earnings; but this difficulty may be

considered to have been already grappled with by the Factory Acts, the extension of which to all parts of the country is called for by public opinion. In some cases, however, a modification of the half-time system will be necessary, especially in the agricultural districts, where a cessation of school attendance might be advantageously allowed during the period of harvest. As some time will elapse before compulsory attendance powers will be granted to the local authorities, and as they will even then be inoperative until sufficient schools have been provided, the public mind will have become prepared for the law before its operation commences. And inasmuch as its enforcement will be in the hands of local committees—that is, of gentlemen well known and esteemed in their respective districts, whose sympathies with the poor have been already called into active exercise—it is not likely that the law will be harshly enforced. For a long time the operations of the committee will be necessarily restricted to the instruction of the parents in their duties to the children, and it is probable that one or two cases only of refractory parents being summoned before a magistrate will suffice to bring into school nine-tenths of those children who are now idling about the streets. One important result of the adoption of this system of national education would be that parents would feel an interest in the schools unknown, and indeed impossible, before. Hitherto they have had no voice whatever in the management of that which was of more importance to them than anything else in the State, and it is not surprising that the apathy has followed which usually results from absence of responsibility. It is a common remark of earnest clergymen that when they are labouring to induce the attendance of children at school, the attitude of parents is that of persons who think they are asked to confer a favour, and who believe that the managers of a school, like the owners of a shop, have some personal end to serve. But when these parents find that the schools belong to themselves, that they are paid for and managed by the people, and that they would save nothing, but lose much, by not using them, then their attitude towards them will be entirely changed, and one great obstacle to school attendance will be removed. Some may shrink from the cost of

so complete a system, but this is one of those cases where a well-regulated expenditure is economy, where the niggardliness of inefficiency is extravagance. If every child in the United Kingdom were brought into school the total increased charge upon the taxpayers of the country would probably not reach one-third of the money expended upon our paupers and our criminals. The cost per scholar would not be greater if the charge of educating the people were thrown upon the State. The total amount spent upon education would be augmented only in proportion to the increase of scholars. The choice before us is expenditure on education, or expenditure on paupers and criminals.

PROFESSOR THOROLD ROGERS ON SECULAR EDUCATION.

The Rev. J. E. Thorold Rogers read the following paper :— I assume that this Congress accepts the position that primary education should be universal, should be compulsory, should be as a necessary consequence gratuitous, and that, since the State does not enforce or constrain any particular form of religious belief, should be secular. In order to obviate any unfriendly interpretation of this word, I may state that I do not use it in any sense which implies resistance to religion, indifference to religion, or substitution for religion. I take for granted that the functions of a religious teacher and a schoolmaster in purely intellectual culture can be separated, and that the State is bound to find the latter, but that it cannot and ought not to provide the former, still less to import such an element into a compulsory system. The question as to the source from which the funds necessary to provide for the machinery of secular learning should come ought to be settled, and can be settled, on purely economical considerations. Should the class immediately benefited by a system of primary education contribute the requisite funds? Is society at large so considerably benefited by the change which the Congress seeks to effect that the necessary charge should be raised from the general resources of society? Is it in accordance with the principles of political justice, as now interpreted, that the fund supplied for the purpose should be levied by the whole community on the

resources of a part of the community? If it be determined that it should be levied on the whole community, what is the most equitable way in which the fund should be raised, and what is the way in which it should be distributed so as to secure that maximum of efficiency which is supposed to be obtained by the instituted supervision of those who are intrusted with its management? I will attempt as simply as possible to answer these questions. No one, I imagine, will contest the position that the immediate benefit of a system of primary education falls to the labourer. Every one agrees that such an education renders his work more intelligible, and therefore easier. If, therefore, an educated body of labourers do not derive an increased rate of remuneration from the education which they obtain, they earn the rate which they do get on lighter terms and with less toil. Besides, the effect of education in sharpening the intelligence of the labourer is or may be extended to supplying him with the knowledge of the best market for his labour. If he becomes handy because he is intelligent, the same mental power will direct him to the best means for bettering his condition, and so afford him a positive as well as a relative increase in his resources. Nor must it be forgotten that the remuneration of labour is, on the whole, determined by the cost of supplying it, and that if the age at which productive labour is employed is delayed or postponed, the wages earned are, *cæteris paribus*, invariably higher. This rule might be illustrated abundantly from every-day experience, and holds good even if the labourer does not contribute a single penny towards the cost of his own education. He must be kept while he learns, and this charge will produce the effect referred to. If it could be shown, then, that all the benefits of a system of primary education accrue to the material advantage of the class for which we seek to provide such an education, and produce no effect, near or remote, on the general well-being of society, the cost of supplying this education ought to be entirely defrayed by the parties who desire the benefit, in just the same way as the outlay on a field, or the stocking of a shop, should be supplied at the charges of the persons who gain a profit on either. Nor would it be impossible to obtain such funds from the direct contribution of

the class for whose purposes such a tax would be expended. The State might levy a poll or income tax on all parties who might need this instruction, rateably to the claims which they make on the machinery. Such a poll tax is levied in many of the states composing the American Union. If a half-time system were adopted, the requisite quota might be even collected from the child's earnings, and a very small sum per week would be sufficient to meet the cost of supplying this necessary of life in the case of children too young to work at all. Ill paid as the agricultural labourer is, he is seldom so straitened as to be incapable of finding a few pence per week for the cost of instructing his children, just as he is generally able to find much more for their clothing. It is said that the Wesleyans are able to maintain their organization by a penny a week from each member of their body. Everybody knows, too, that the voluntary expenditure of the poor on taxable commodities is enormously in excess of any possible amount which might be demanded for public education. In the case, of course, of those who are utterly destitute, a machinery like that of the Poor Law would supply instruction, as it now does, with food, clothing, and lodging. My hearers are aware, that with many persons the contribution of children's pence is, apart from its amount, conceived to be necessary as an acknowledgment of the benefit which education is, and of the moral obligation which rests on parents to supply that which is only immediately less important than what are called the necessaries of life. But the fact is, the benefit of education to the mass of labourers is only more obvious than the benefit of the process to society at large. The employer of labour gets his advantage from education. Many of us know the fact, for instance, that an educated recruit learns his drill in half the time, and at less than half the expense, incurred in training another who is wholly unlettered. Over and over again employers find that labour may be more highly paid, and be cheaper after all, because more effective. And here I may observe, that the faults of a low system of education are not to be charged on education itself. One of the worst kinds of education which is given in England—and it is very costly into the bargain—is, as I know from my experience as a Poor Law Guardian, that which is given

in industrial schools for pauper children. But I must not enter on this topic. I only refer to it in order to obviate an objection. But if a sound system of education is of advantage to the person who receives it, and also to the person who hires the services of those who have enjoyed it, it is of no less advantage to the public at large. A good education is the best preventive of crime. Men are quite as much degraded by ignorance as by vice. Narrow men's faculties, and you strengthen the temptation to the grosser forms of indulgence. Enlarge them wisely, give men an insight into the moral and material interests—never really separable—of the society in which they live, and which claims their allegiance, because it bestows on them the highest services, and gives them the fairest field for their labour, and you will ultimately need no police except for those who are utterly and hopelessly depraved. It is, I am persuaded, possible to cultivate a public opinion which shall do more to correct vicious tendencies than all the repressive forces of the most rigorous police. And what is a sound public opinion but the outcome of public education? But if the advantages of a really national education, the course and details of which are wisely determined, are so generally diffused over society, it is the duty of society at large to bear the charge of this, which is, after all, the cheapest as well as the most effective police. I have tried to answer two of the questions which I put at the outset of this paper. But supposing the tax is to be levied, not on one class but on all, how should the rate be laid? We have got in this country a rough-and-ready way of levying taxes for local purposes, by putting a rate on the occupier of property. Such a form of taxation is very often grossly unfair. For example, a poor rate is practically an indirect means of paying wages, or at least of supplying the means by which certain liabilities affecting the condition of the labourer are met from other than his own resources. Now, if the occupier who does not employ labour with a view to profit, is called upon to contribute to the fund by which the man who does employ labour with a view to profit, ekes out wages, I see that the former is wronged. I might, if time permitted, illustrate my position by a variety of examples, indicating the incidence of local taxation, and confirming my statement that the present process

of assessment is radically unequal. But a wrong which I protest against I should strive not to commit; and hence, assuming that the benefits of a national education are national, I think it would be a crying injustice to provide the funds by taxing the occupiers of one kind of property only, and a still greater injustice if the tax were levied directly on the owners of real estate; though perhaps I need hardly say, that the theory which assumes that the landowner pays the tenant's rates in a diminished rent, is sheer pedantry, which everybody's experience refutes. If you could get a just income-tax—and as yet I see no prospect of so desirable a consummation, though it is perfectly easy to show the basis of a just income-tax—such a tax would be theoretically the fund from which an education rate should be levied. I am of opinion that it is wise policy to appropriate not only the proceeds of taxation strictly, which no one disputes, but to import into a system of finance a rule that special taxes should have special objects; and I am sure that economies of taxation could be far more easily achieved if people understood the object to which an impost was directed. Not a little of the extravagance of administration arises from the practice (originally adopted by desperate financiers) of consolidating taxes into a fund, and then charging all kinds of expenditure on that common fund. If I were in the position of a financial reformer, the first basis of my reform would be, special taxes to special objects. As it is, I am driven to recommend that the tax for education should be derived from that financial abomination, the Consolidated Fund. I know that there is a strong indifference to economy in dealing with funds granted from the State; and my hearers, if they agree with me in my dislike of taxation being agglomerated into one or a few units, will see why people are ready to play fast and loose with great quantities, the vastness of which renders them unintelligible. There is a famous question on record, answered, I believe, very facetiously in this town: What is a pound? In the administration of public funds, and in due economy in their administration, the question "What is a million pounds?" is, I fancy, a matter which tasks the understanding more stringently. I have alluded to my experience as a Poor Law guardian. I have constantly found that while my colleagues will waste a whole afternoon in debating

whether they should spend £5, they look with a sort of puzzled curiosity, as though they do not know whether I am a fool or an astute impostor with ulterior views, when I have pointed out that such and such a change in their arrangements will save the Government £500. If, then, we get the necessary funds from Government, and appropriate them, under the equitable administration of a Minister of Education, by local boards—an argument on the constitution of which does not fall within the scope of this paper—we shall perhaps be able to do the best that can be done during the interval between our use of the existing financial system and its probable improvement in the future. I may perhaps be personally excused for referring, in conclusion, to the incidental topic with which I commenced. Objections are raised against our purpose in this agitation, on the ground that we are unfriendly to religion, by which I hope is meant Christianity. No sensible man, I presume, would condescend to answer the calumnies of polemical or political partisans. But how strong would Christianity be if it repudiated its professional advocates, and trusted for its victories to those who believe and live for the patient practice which it invariably enjoins!

REV. A. STEINTHAL ON LOCAL EDUCATIONAL RATING.

The Rev. S. A. Steinthal, of Manchester, read the following paper:—In the few remarks which I propose to address to the Congress, I shall take for granted, that we are all of us agreed upon the importance of the leading features of the scheme, put forward by the National Education League, and have no doubt as to the need which exists of largely extending the means of giving education to the people. I shall not stay to discuss whether there is any serious error in the statistics published by the Manchester and Birmingham Education Aid Societies. Even if the numbers with which they have appalled the country should, on further examination, be shown to have overdrawn the sad picture of the condition of the towns in which their useful labours have been exerted, there is so undeniable an amount of unreached ignorance around us, that it would be sinful to waste time in discussing the accuracy or in-

accuracy of mere figures while human souls are perishing for lack of knowledge. I shall not enter upon the topic reserved for other papers as to the undenominational character which all schools supported by public money ought in justice to bear; or try to prove—what I believe would not be difficult to prove—that it is wiser, under all circumstances, to confine the ordinary instruction of the day-school to so-called secular subjects, instead of pretending to introduce theological matters, to which justice cannot be done in common schools, while teaching the elements of ordinary knowledge. It is not my intention to discuss the important subject, of whether attendance at school is to be made compulsory, or the production of satisfactory evidence of education being received elsewhere, insisted upon. I would simply state in passing, that unless school attendance, or its equivalent, is made compulsory, I should not advocate, as I intend doing in this paper, the need of levying a local rate to be applied, in addition to the Government grant for school purposes. It is the fact that the common weal demands the universal education of all citizens, which justifies the community in insisting upon the attendance of all children at school; and it is the right of every individual member of the community to find the means within his reach of fully developing not only his physical, but mental and moral capacities. The community has the right to insist upon every child being educated, and the child has the right to demand that school accommodation and proper means of teaching should be provided for it. It seems to me that what is thus needful for all, and for all alike, should not be left to the unreliable and spasmodic exertions of voluntary benevolence. Experience has proved to us that voluntary benevolence will not effect the object required. It is useless to go over the old, well-trodden ground to show how, in the first place, parents have neglected their duties, how Christian charity has been unable to supply the void of parental negligence, or how even State aid to voluntaryism has failed to overcome the amount of ignorance we have permitted to exist among us. There are many districts in which there are no persons sufficiently interested in promoting education, to devote any portion of their means to the establishment and maintenance of schools; and, under our present system, to those places no share of Government aid is allowed

to go; and while the children in such localities are left either in entire ignorance, or are exposed to the inefficient training of the dame school, there are other places where benevolence, stimulated by sectarian zeal, multiplies unnecessary accommodation, and wastes large sums in erecting buildings and in supporting a staff of teachers far in excess of the real wants of the neighbourhood. This is no new complaint, but it is not less true now because it is old. More than eighteen years ago Dr. Hodgson gave a typical illustration of the wasteful character of leaving the support of schools to voluntary effort. "At New Mills, near Manchester, an active clergyman of the Church of England came into competition with the Wesleyan school, but did not succeed till he established a day school. The Wesleyan school was capable of accommodating 450 scholars, but the clergyman succeeded so well that only 17 scholars were left in it. The Wesleyans determined not to be annihilated. They got up a day school, and obtained a teacher whom nothing could dishearten. The result, according to the Methodist minister, had not been well for both schools. He expressed his sorrow that they had nearly put an extinguisher upon the Church schools: two pews could contain all its scholars, while their Sunday schools numbered from 5 to 600 scholars." Is it not sad that while the evil waste of such rivalry was recognised twenty years ago, we should be suffering under similar evils this day, and still obliged to discuss the need of obviating such sectarian jealousies? Nor does it seem to me to be just to throw the burden of education upon voluntary givers, even were it prudent to do so. Are not all of us who are in any way connected with the multiform methods of charitable exertion well aware how small is the number of those who are the supporters of all benevolent efforts? The same names, not always the wealthiest in a district, are time after time compelled to contribute, and though the most generous givers are generally the last to complain of having to do so much, are they not prevented from devoting their means to objects in which they take special interest, because they cannot conscientiously allow the absolutely essential work of education to be left undone, on account of the niggardliness of those who will not give until forced by law? But even the benevolent cannot ensure their children being alike generous with themselves, nor has any

district the certainty of the wealthy remaining amongst them. A manufacturing town is not always the most agreeable residence, and many who have made their money in overcrowded places, retire to enjoy their well-earned prosperity far from the scene of their earlier life; and new claims prevent their still contributing to schools, which languish in consequence. Every now and then, it is true, the sad neglect of the education of the poor strikes the attention of some philanthropist like the late Mr. Edward Brotherton, of Manchester, and a new attempt is made to stimulate the activity of benevolence —only to prove, as experience had done before, and is doing again, how vain it is to rely upon benevolent voluntary effort alone. This unreliability and spasmodic character, is all the more fatal to educational progress, as the conditions under which Government aid is granted claim a certain amount from local effort or endowment before any money can be given under the Minutes of Council. So important a matter as the education of the people can no longer be left to efforts nearly twenty years ago justly characterised as "impulsive, irregular, uncertain, unequal, and capricious in their operation." (*West. Rev.*, July, 1851.) Our choice, then, in seeking for the means of establishing and supporting schools must lie between grants from the central government, local rating, or a combination of these two methods. The advocates of a school system supported altogether from funds derived from the national government, have no weak argument in their behalf when they point out, how very heavy the burden of local taxation is at present, and how limited the area is upon which rates are levied: how the wealthy fundholder will escape almost untaxed for schools under a rating system, while the burden would be less felt by the poor and struggling if the cost of education be defrayed from national taxation. The income from which national taxation is paid is estimated at least at £500,000,000, while the assessment of the whole country is only £150,000,000. Twopence in the pound on the former sum would raise more than the £4,000,000 which it is estimated would suffice to provide primary education for all our children, while a rate of nearly sevenpence in the pound would be required for the same purpose. It is further true that under any rating scheme some part of the population would escape from payment, even as in the case of our present

rates, under which we know that the most destitute classes are uniformly excused from paying the rate imposed; while everyone does contribute something to the general taxation, and will do so as long as tea and coffee and sugar, to say nothing of intoxicating drinks and tobacco, are made to add so much to the national revenue. But, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that, if the whole amount of the educational expenses of the country is paid from national funds, its expenditure must be entirely entrusted to the central authority; and I am quite prepared to declare my own strong objection to giving more influence to the Government than I am obliged to do, even though I do not altogether hold the opinion that, nothing beyond securing life and property should fall within the purview of the State. I believe that local management is absolutely necessary for the efficient management of the schools, and therefore I believe that the greater portion of the funds should be raised as well as expended in the localities to be themselves benefited. It is very customary at the present day to sneer at everything connected with local self-government. No joke is more readily welcomed than one pointed at the narrowness and stupidity of a Board of Guardians, or a Town Council. But does not this arise from the fact that the objects which such boards have before them are often regarded as too low to claim the attention of educated men? When a Board of Guardians undertakes to make its hospital a model hospital, and its treatment of pauperism, a means of lessening the evils of pauperism, do we not find educated men devoting themselves assiduously, as I have known them do in Chorlton, Manchester, and Liverpool, and as no doubt they frequently do elsewhere? Do we not see in corporations where there are free libraries, that men are willing to enter the Council that they may sit upon the Library Committee? I have even lately had proof that the Public-house Closing Act, which enables Town Councils to close those prolific sources of misery, immorality, and crime for a few hours, has induced men to enter them, that they might support such measures of improving the social condition of the people. May we not, therefore, anticipate that if a municipal Board of Education be constituted the best men amongst us would be

willing to serve upon it? And as it is proposed that all rate-supported schools should be free, the increased burden imposed by the rate would be lightened, on the other hand, by the exemption of all who desired it from the payment of school-pence, and voluntary subscriptions towards the maintenance of schools. The fact that a special educational rate was levied would tend to interest every ratepayer in the school. He would be anxious to see it prosper, would take a pride in its efficiency. That this is no theoretical advantage is seen by the experience of our Australian colonies, where each district strives to rival its neighbours in the excellence of its educational institutions. If, as I trust, there should be a system adopted whereby the best children in the schools could obtain scholarships to enable them to pursue their studies in higher schools; and to assist them, if need be, to the highest scholarships; this healthful emulation would be increased still more, as a successful student would throw back some reflected fame upon his school, and upon the district which had enabled him to attain success. I am well aware that ratepaying is not the most pleasing of duties; but as soon as men perceived, as they soon would do, that an educational rate would lessen the poor rate, the police rate, the expenses of the criminal courts, and the like, the economy of giving a good education would be recognised, and the payments would be made cheerfully and without complaint. It should, however, be always insisted upon, in my opinion, that the school rate should be kept separate from all other rates, and should not be merged with that long list which is attached to the present poor-rate paper. I urge this, as I wish that every parent should be distinctly impressed with the fact that he does not receive an altogether gratuitous education for his children. I am not afraid that the children attending a free school would feel themselves pauperised, for education always raises the nobler feelings of the taught, and never degrades them. Nor am I anxious lest parents should feel themselves robbed of their independence by their children being able to attend school without payment of the weekly pence. They would know that they are paying their quota, and as has often been said, we none of us feel ourselves degraded by the fact that our streets are lighted by gas, that our

security is preserved by policemen, and that the many comforts we enjoy owing to municipal government are not paid for directly, but are supported by rates to which we all contribute according to our means. There are very few, comparatively speaking, in this country who do pay directly the cost of their children's education. The working classes make use of schools sustained by voluntary subscriptions, endowments, and Government grants. The middle and higher classes find in grammar schools and colleges that their ancestors' benevolence has freed them from this burden. We none of us are pauperised under these influences. Why the change from school pence and voluntary subscriptions should suddenly make such a change I cannot understand. Schools under such a system would indeed be even less charity schools than they are now. I have, however, not proposed in the above argument to pay the whole expenses of the school from local sources; nor do I intend to do so. The cost of a child's training in a school is, I believe, estimated in the Revised Code at 30s. a year, of which sum I think the Committee of Council generally pay about a third. I would not alter this, but would simply raise the sum needed to make up the total by rates instead of by the present means. I am quite ready to acknowledge that local authorities are not unfrequently actuated by an economical spirit which approaches to niggardliness; and as a corrective to this tendency being applied to schools, I would insist upon Government inspectors visiting the school, upon whose favourable report alone should any Government help be given. It does not fall within the scope of my paper to discuss the nature of the examination which should be insisted upon; but I would incidentally remark that I hope the meagre standard of the Revised Code will not be long maintained. Nor have I to consider the character of the authority which should appoint the inspectors, although I hope a responsible Minister of Education may soon take the place of the Committee of Council, in whose constitution I have very little confidence. But I believe that by no means can the wants of the community be better met than by such a method as I have sketched. I hardly know whether I am expected while speaking of rate-supported schools which offer free instruction to all comers, to speak of the conditions under which existing schools

should be admitted to the benefits such a plan offers. I should avoid as much as possible building new school buildings; but I would do so by freely offering to all existing schools the privilege of becoming rate-supported schools on complying with the two requirements, that the education given in them should be unsectarian, and should be free. Unsectarian, because to allow denominational schools to be aided by the rate would be to revive with increased difficulty the old Church-rate contest; free, because, supported by public money, the public should justly be entitled to receive the benefits they offered. A truly national system could thus be established with no infringement of any existing rights, with a perfect preservation of local self-government, and yet, through the system of Government inspection, always maintaining a high standard of efficient training for all who are to be the future citizens of our native land.

MR. PENTECOST ON COMPULSION.

Mr. PENTECOST, of Stourbridge, read the following paper on Compulsory Attendance. He said: If any one part of the scheme of national education is of greater importance than another, it is, I think, that relating to "compulsory attendance." Education may be free and schools may be multiplied, but without compulsory attendance there would be still a large proportion of children preferring the street to the school. The work would be only partially done, since the very class it is most desirable to reach would be left untouched. The opponents of a compulsory measure perceive that it involves the establishment of free non-sectarian schools; hence their opposition. The public is assured by them that the English nation, especially the working classes, will not submit to compulsion. The working classes are farther advanced upon this question than seems to be supposed. Moral, social, and political progress will not be rejected for mere sentiment. Moreover, the working and other classes *do* submit to compulsion, for we have it in our sanitary laws, and Workshops Acts; only here it is restricted in its operation to the industrious portion of the community, and only indolence is allowed the privilege of free ignorance. But compulsory attendance would necessitate

the establishment of free non-sectarian schools, at least in large towns, and ultimately, perhaps, throughout the kingdom; and the cry is raised that an education in such schools would be a "godless education." A knowledge of the constitution of the human body, to elucidate the laws of health, especially with reference to cleanliness, ventilation, recreation, and diet, is godless—the ordinary subjects of primary education are godless—unless issued from the mint bearing the imprint of some denomination or sect. With the bane the antidote should be supplied. An elementary knowledge of natural history or physical science, should carry its corrective in a catechism, and a knowledge of Scripture names and dates should serve as a counterpoise to the dangers attendant on reading, writing, and arithmetic. In a leading article on the debate on education in the House of Commons last March, the *Times* took much trouble to enforce the statement, that the good expected from any new system of education would be nullified by the dangerous lessons of home example, and that parents must be educated. That is what the advocates of a new national system desire—they wish to educate the parents of future generations. Then again, it has been said that the League proposes to educate children out of their religion. The advocates of a free non-sectarian education are not actuated by hostility to religion, but by hostility to ignorance and its results. Religious instruction can still be given—no one can hinder it; but as there appears no prospect of an agreement as to what should be considered religious teaching, the advocates of a new free system of education wish to enable children to become acquainted with the laws of God, regulating the material world, and thus be guided to live in temperance, soberness, and chastity; to learn and labour truly to get their own living in any state of life to which they may be called. Deficient, however, as the present voluntary system is acknowledged to be, even by its own advocates, we would gladly admit that the clergy and ministers of various denominations have performed a great work in building up and supporting the present system of education. That it is now inefficient is to be ascribed not to any neglect or shortcoming on their part, but to the inevitable

march of events. Recognising the value of the present system, the question arises : is there any possibility of co-operation? Is it not possible to combine a new national free and non-sectarian system with the existing denominational voluntary system, and thus preserve the present system, or at least a large part of it? The new system would then gradually win its way in public favour. With a desire to preserve the present system, I jotted down the following rough notes, which I will submit to your consideration :—1. That parents or guardians of children, of a certain specified age, shall be required to send them to school regularly and constantly, for a certain number of weeks in each year —Sunday-school attendance not to be counted; and those who neglect the performance of this duty, shall be liable to a recurring penalty, to be recovered by the inspector or sub-inspector of schools for the district. The production of a school certificate of attendance to be the only complete answer to the charge; the exemptions from this rule of attendance being those children, who are mentally or corporeally incapacitated from attendance, or from receiving instruction, and also children who are receiving instruction at home or elsewhere, from tutors, governesses, or parents. Proper evidence of such instruction to be rendered to the inspector of schools for the district, whenever required by him. 2. That parents or guardians, who are unable to pay the ordinary school fees shall be furnished with a pass, entitling their children to free admission to any assisted, inspected school in the parish or district in which they reside, and to assistance in procuring books, &c. When there is room for choice, the parents to be allowed to select a school. The fees for such pupils (by whatever name they may be known, or by whatever means they may be raised) to be paid to the schools according to a certain fixed scale. That public and private schools, and grammar schools, shall be registered upon payment of a small registration fee, and shall then be allowed to grant certificates of attendance; due provision, of course, being made for preventing any kind of traffic in certificates, and allowing the Government Department superintending education the power of refusing to register notoriously inefficient schools. 3. That all national schools, British schools, and denominational schools, shall

be entitled to be registered, and to receive free scholars, to be paid for by rates or Government grants; provided the managers of such schools submit to Government inspection, and accept a conscience clause, specifying that they shall not allow religious instruction of any kind to interfere with the ordinary secular instruction, but that it shall be imparted at such times and in such a manner as not to break or interrupt the routine of secular studies. 4. In parishes or districts where there is no school accommodation of this kind, for the reception of non-sectarian free scholars, or where there is only insufficient accommodation of the kind, the Government Department superintending education shall, upon satisfactory representations of such deficiency, cause notice to be given to the guardians of the poor, or other authorities, that school buildings and teachers must be provided by the parish or district, the cost to be defrayed by a rate levied on the district; and where the proper authorities neglect to provide the necessary school accommodation, then the Government shall intervene, and provide a school or schools, educational appliances, and teachers, and recover from the district the amount expended. Existing schools, the managers of which refuse to adopt the conscience clause, shall not be registered; and a district containing such schools only, shall be considered as destitute of educational facilities, and shall be required to provide free non-sectarian schools, under local management and Government inspection.

RESOLUTION OF LONDON TRADES' COUNCIL.

The PRESIDENT announced that Mr. George Odger was unable to speak, as he had promised to do; but that he had sent the following resolution of the London Trades' Council:—"This Council is of opinion that the National Education League, whose object is the education of the people, upon national and unsectarian principles, is in every sense worthy of our support; therefore we appoint our secretary, Mr. George Odger, to attend the congress to be held in Birmingham; and we pledge ourselves to use our best endeavours in aid of so laudable a movement."

DISCUSSION.

Mr. SIMONS, of Merthyr Tydvil, opened the discussion by reading the prospectus of an education society with which he was connected in his own town; and he then said: Although an ardent supporter of the League, I venture to say that the march onward will never cease, until every one of the principles of that programme is adopted. I am willing to go with the League as far as we agree, and whilst we are together I should like to endeavour to induce you to march on with me, to the beacon which this programme offers to you. Now, I want to make one observation upon what I call a delusion and a snare—the conscience clause. Test the conscience clause by this: is there any ardent thorough Protestant in this room who, if he lived in the centre of a Roman Catholic community, with the means of education entirely in the hands of the Roman Catholic priest, would send his child to school there, with the protection only of the conscience clause? I have asked the question often before, and have never had an answer in the affirmative. The conscience clause, I repeat, is a delusion and a snare. It affords no protection whatever, and it makes more necessary for the youth of the country the prayer—"Lead us not into temptation." I ask you all to consider the question of the conscience clause. The grant of State aid to Roman Catholic schools, would virtually be a grant for the purpose of teaching the Roman Catholic religion. Believe me that I do not intend, that one word which escapes my lips shall give pain; for the day has passed, happily, when differences of opinion lead to hostility, or discord among fellow Christians. My references to Catholics are made entirely upon principle; I have no objection to them as a body. Well, we know that if a grant were given them for school purposes, it would substantially be a grant for teaching the Roman Catholic religion in this country. Bear in mind that they are about a quarter of the entire population, and if four millions were given in grants they would be entitled to one-fourth—one million given for teaching the Roman Catholic religion. The logic of Roman Catholics is irresistible, that so long as you maintain sectarian

schools in this country, so long will they be entitled to teach in them their religion, and to receive their proportion of Government aid. That is a question which I have not heard put on any platform except when I have given utterance to it. Next, I would ask how long in this country are the middle classes going to contribute towards schools for the working classes? I am here as a middle-class man, to say that no system of education will satisfy me, unless the two classes are put upon exactly the same footing. We speak of compulsion as a thing applicable only to one order of the people. I am an advocate for the application of compulsion to every class. I don't know why the middle-class man should have the opportunity of bringing up his child in ignorance, any more than the working-class man. I am also an advocate for the institution of imperial universities, and for this reason: after we get compulsory education, how long will it be before the people ask for a further opportunity of advancing and brightening the intellects of their children, and of fitting them to occupy any position in the world, even up to that of the Lord Chancellor?

Mr. APPLEGARTH, secretary to the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, followed: So much has been said in the name of working men, that it is almost presumption on the part of a working man to speak for his class; but as I conceive that much has been said in their name, which is not exactly true, perhaps it will not be out of place for me to say a few words. My claim to speak is simply that I have lived and associated with working men all the days of my life; and I am here, as the delegate of one of the largest trade societies in the kingdom, to demand that education shall be placed within the reach of every child, however poor, however degraded. The first meeting of my fellow working men that I addressed was about twelve years ago, the last one last night. On every occasion I have tested the men in regard to education, and I never yet found an exception to my own opinion—that what we want is a national compulsory, unsectarian system. Now, I have a little score to settle both with Mr. Edmund Potter, M.P., and with the Archbishop of York, and I give notice that I shall hit them very hard. The other day, the Archbishop of York ventured to say that, if an attempt were made to introduce

a compulsory system of education, such a system would meet with a hard reception from a large proportion of the working classes. Well, then, Mr. Potter, in his place in the House of Commons, said, too, that the working classes were opposed to compulsion in connection with education.

Mr. POTTER: No, no.

Mr. APPLEGARTH: The *Times* is responsible for my statement; and I am glad to hear Mr. Potter say "No, no." It is not the first mistake the *Times* has made. To go back, then, to the Archbishop of York. Wherever he gets his information from I can't tell. For a number of years I worked in different parts of the country, and in every place I tested the working man upon this question of education. For instance, at one meeting, at which Mr. Geo. Dawson was in the chair, he distinctly asked, "Do you agree with me that we want a national compulsory, unsectarian system of education?" and not a dissenting voice did I hear. The working classes would never feel compulsion, and they would be only too glad of the opportunity to send their children to schools, where they would get a good education. But no one knows better than the men themselves, that there are amongst the working people two classes. There is the sot, the careless and indifferent man, who has been so long neglected, and degraded that he does not understand the value of education; and him the other class, the better class of working men, have to carry upon their backs. But those men who do not understand the value of education, must be made to understand it. The Archbishop of York said the voluntary system had done a noble work, and that it was competent to meet all the requirements of the future. I am not one to disparage the efforts of the clergy in the voluntary system; but I will say this—that that portion of the clergy which has done the real work in the education of the people consists of underpaid curates, who would only be too glad to get rid of this extra work, and get a little extra pay for the religious services which they have to conduct. What has voluntaryism done? Why, it has provided school accommodation for two million children; but for the want of that great principle, compulsion, there are 700,000 vacant seats. We are told that this voluntary system has provided 16,000 schools; but so unequally are they distributed

that in the diocese of Norfolk there are 120 parishes without one day school. From the report of the Select Committee issued in 1866 we find that out of 14,895 parishes, there are 11,000 of them, embracing a population of over six millions, that receive no direct assistance from the State; out of 755,000 children of the working classes, from 10 to 12 years of age, only 250,000 are at school. Again I ask what has the voluntary system done? According to 18th and 19th Victoria, chap. 34, the guardians of the poor have the power to educate out-door pauper children from 4 to 16 years of age. Now, we find that in nine counties of England, where there were no less than 38,451 of these out-door pauper children, the guardians educated the enormous number of 11, at an annual cost of £2. 4s. 8d. That is what we have done under the voluntary system. Now, next, if we have a compulsory system we must have, too, a free system. The object of the League, I take it, is to work in contra-distinction to the present system, which helps those who are best able to help themselves, leaving to starve and rot in ignorance those who have not the power to help themselves, even if they had the disposition. The object of the League is to help those who are least able to help themselves. Some people have said that they fear that if we have a free system of education the working classes would not know how to appreciate it. Well, if they do not know how to appreciate it we must make them know. I have seen the school systems both of America and Switzerland, and I never came across a man in either of those countries, who felt that he was not doing his duty because he allowed his children to go to a free school. And what can be said of the people of America, and Switzerland, would no doubt be said of the people of England, if our educational system were made compulsory. It is no use trying to mix up a national education with any portion of religion, however small the dose. We are not prepared to have gospel and geography mixed together. The working classes want education. They know that the classes above them have been tinkering with this question, whilst vice and misery and prostitution, have piled up a colossal mountain of iniquity. If the League knows its duty, it will go in for a compulsory, unsectarian, and free system—for a measure which will put high and low upon the same level in an educational sense. And now, sir, I

am here to give my adhesion to the National Education League, not that I think that its principles reach exactly and altogether the wants of the working classes, but because it goes a step in the right direction; and I shall be only too glad if the Legislature see their course to a thoroughly radical measure.

Mr. EDMUND POTTER, M.P., speaking in explanation, said: I am sorry Mr. Applegarth has not watched my course more closely, because I believe that if one Member of Parliament more than another has expressed himself definitely, forcibly, and frequently upon this subject, it is myself. Speaking in the House, in reply to Mr. Forster on the question of Trades' Unions, I said that no Bill would be of any use unless it was accompanied by compulsory education. Before then, I spoke upon the educational question itself, and no such opinion ever escaped my lips as that which is attributed to me. I should not, too, have been charged with opposition to compulsion, for I was one of the strongest advocates of the Factory Acts, the great benefit of which was, as I said in the House, that they gave compulsory, unsectarian education.

Mr. APPLEGARTH: I am delighted to hear from Mr. Potter that he did not say that which he was reported in the *Times* to have said. I have placed the report in his hands.

Mr. GREEN, Chairman of the Birmingham Trades' Council, continued the discussion. He said: I take it that what the League especially wants to know from me, is whether the working men of this town are in favour of its scheme, and whether they think that the system of education to be adopted should be compulsory, unsectarian, and free. Now, Mr. Applegarth, speaking for the working men he represents, said they were; and I, too, have to report that in this locality, as throughout the length and breadth of the land, a very large section of the working men are in favour of the scheme. The society which sends me here is composed of men of all politics, and of all religions—from the Red Republican to the milk-and-water Liberal-Conservative, from the Roman Catholic to the latest discovered sect, the Hallelujah Band; yet when we discussed this question of to-day, and of sending a delegate here, there was not a dissentient voice. A few weeks ago a paper upon the subject of compulsory and unsectarian education was read by Mr.

Hibbs, a working man, before a national conference of Trades' Unions in this town. Everyone voted for the principle, and one of the strongest supporters was Mr. Wood, of Manchester, a strong Tory. This matter, therefore, cannot be considered, and ought not to be considered, a party question; but it seems to me that clergymen seem determined to go against the working man on this, as on some past occasions. A little while ago we heard the question, why does not the working man go to Church? I don't know whether the interrogators drew a list of reasons; but if they did, and they have not inserted this, they may add, opposition to the scheme of unsectarian education as one of them. A local paper says that we wish to eliminate religious teaching from education. Well, if that religious teaching is founded upon dogmas or creeds, we do wish to do so. To teach a child truth is to teach it religion, and by teaching it that, you advance it in the path in which you wish it to tread. The clergy object to this system of the League because under it they will not teach their creed; but I can tell them this—that if they want to get the good-will of the people, if they want to diminish pauperism and crime, and to raise the people to an appreciation of what is noble and good, they should support, not oppose, the scheme. Under it I believe the nation would progress in all that is good, and those who now ask the question, why do not working men attend a place of worship? would then have to set about building more places of worship for them to attend. It is the duty of everyone who wishes to see the children of the country grow up, in the way they should go, and kept out of vice and poverty, to support this scheme of the League. The working men do not make a great deal of noise about it, but I can assure you that they feel upon the subject very acutely indeed; for they do not like to see the class immediately above them taking advantage of all the endowed educational means of the country, whilst they are left without anything at all. They desire a better state of things. There is no need of discussion as to compulsion—that is settled; and the working men of Birmingham, I am authorised to say, will do all they can to help on a system of national compulsory, unsectarian education, although they would prefer that that education should be secular.

Sir C. RAWLINSON gave his support to the programme of the League. He conceived that the new educational system must be supported by local rates, supplemented by Government aid. He held that opinion upon two clear grounds. He protested against the education of the country being handed over entirely to Government, because in the first place the administration would in that case turn to rank jobbery and gross expenditure; and, secondly, he did not want to see education conducted without reference to the principle of local self-government, the vigour and success of which was the best guarantee for the liberties of England. It was all very well to laugh at corporations, but they had been the safeguards of liberty. In how many evil days had the Corporation of the City of London stood forth in defence of the people? For these reasons he was extremely sorry to hear anybody say that the education grant ought to come exclusively from Government. On the other hand, he objected to the schools being supported wholly from local rates, because, for a variety of reasons, it was desirable and even necessary to have Government inspection. He need not pursue this matter. It was obvious that for the sake of some degree of uniformity, and for the purpose of ensuring efficiency in places where the local authorities might possibly not be disposed to do their duty, and for other reasons, it was desirable that the whole system should be under the control of a central power. Then with regard to the religious difficulty, surely the country had had sufficient experience to have found out by this time that it was impossible to base education upon religion. He appealed to the whole people, then, to aid the active spirits of the League to base religion upon education. That was the natural course. It was a misconception, which in practice led to disastrous failure, to suppose that religion could be made the basis of education. Religion was the flower of life, and no greater fallacy had ever beguiled the people of this or any other country than to suppose that it was possible to begin with religion. How could it ever have entered anybody's mind, that a child of seven or eight years of age was made better, or was benefited in any conceivable way, by repeating unchangeably the words of a catechism which it did not understand? He saw, the other day, a child who had returned

from a high-class school with a prize for divinity. How did he win it? "I went," he said, "through the whole of the kings of Israel, and I said two Psalms by heart." It was a farce. He would not have joined the League if he supposed that the education it proposed was to be godless. If he were in power, he would propose that the American Common Schools should be the foundation of our schools. The instructions given to the teachers and others connected with those schools, as to the manner in which they were to endeavour to discharge their functions, were well worth considering. They were read in Birmingham a short time ago by Lord Lyttelton, but, unfortunately, very little attention was paid to them. The directions were:—"All instructors of youth are to exert their best endeavours to impress upon the minds of the children and youth committed to their care, principles of piety and justice, a strict regard to truth, love of their country, humanity, and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry, and frugality, chastity, and moderation, and those other virtues which are the ornaments of human society." That was the foundation of the Common School in America. It was unsectarian; and in an excellent pamphlet, which everybody ought to read, in reply to those who said this was a godless education (how anybody could, after full consideration, say so was inconceivable), Mr. Frazer answered: "If the cultivation of some of the choicest intellectual gifts bestowed by God—the perception, memory, taste, judgment, and reason; if the creation of habits of punctuality, attention, and industry, the reading of a daily portion of God's Word, and the daily saying of Christ's universal prayer—if all this is said to be the cultivation of clever devils, it would be vain, I think, to argue with such prejudice." He believed that the cultivation of any one of God's good gifts, or the attempt to develop any one right principle or worthy habit, so far as they went, were steps, not only in the direction of morality, but of piety and real religion. Was it possible that a clergyman would rather have in his Sunday school, or in his church, to hear the truths of religion, or the dogmas of theology, a number of densely ignorant children or other persons, than a corresponding number of bright, intelligent, well-taught persons, such as the

national schools would produce? Which could be most rapidly and thoroughly influenced by the teaching of the Sunday school or the pulpit? He was sorry to hear that in Birmingham a party was got up, to oppose and denounce those who felt themselves bound, by the necessities of the case, to endeavour to educate the masses of the nation. He did not believe that if any of those men could get into their minds the real state of things—if they would endeavour to form a conception of the appalling magnitude of the facts—they would take the course they seemed determined upon; but he trusted that the League would disseminate facts upon facts, as to the number of utterly destitute children in this country, in order to rouse the attention of persons who at present seemed to be satisfied to sit with folded hands, doing nothing to avert the evil which, it was scarcely any exaggeration to say, threatened to overwhelm the country. What with ignorance, poverty, and crime, in which so large a portion of the population was steeped, it was impossible to look to the future without gloomy apprehensions. If England was to maintain her present position among the nations —if she was to maintain her high character for order and civilization—if she was to maintain her pre-eminence for commerce, it would not be owing to her army, and certainly not to her poor-houses or her gaols, but to her having a great, intelligent, and well-educated labouring class—that class upon whose intelligence, honesty, and sobriety the whole strength and existence of the kingdom depended.

Sir W. Guise: After those who have gone before me, I feel that my position is doubtful, for I have no pretensions to represent anybody but myself. We have been favoured of late with long reports of Social Science meetings, Church Congresses, Episcopal Conferences, and so on, and at all of them the question of education has been a prominent item of discussion; but after reading these reports with considerable care I have come to the conclusion that there was no result arrived at whatever. The fact is that in those assemblies the matter is taken up in so perfunctory a manner that it is not likely that anything of value could come of it. Everything charitable, kind, and good is talked of but nothing of the smallest value in a practical fashion is the result. I come

now among practical men, and I embrace most heartily and enthusiastically the programme of this platform—compulsory, unsectarian, national education. The denominational system has been tried and it has failed. It has failed to reach a very large, a very important, and, I may add, a growing and a dangerous class of the community; and it is evident that that class never will be reached by the means provided by the denominational system, the fact being that the teachers under that system cannot shake themselves free from creeds and catechisms; and I have long felt myself that these creeds and catechisms, as taught by different sects, are becoming more and more an impediment to free Christian intercourse amongst us. I am afraid we shall never get rid of them—certainly not without a national unsectarian system of education. I quite agree with the gentleman who has gone before me, that you cannot have religion until you have education. Nobody who has ever been engaged in education can help feeling that in teaching great moral truths—our duty to God and man—we are teaching religion. Education, as has just been shown, must precede religion. Catechisms are utterly unintelligible to children in general, and even to a great many grown-up people. With regard to making money grants to denominational schools, it should be remembered that if you make grants to such schools in this country, you cannot refuse them to the Catholics in Ireland. We have seen their object. The hierarchy in that country have put forward a programme, desiring to grasp the whole of the education of the youth of that country. It is perfectly natural. Every faith that has faith in itself proselytises, but England and Scotland will not consent to hand over Ireland to the exclusive control of the priesthood. But you cannot consistently insist upon that for yourselves, which you are not prepared to concede to others. I used the same argument the other day to our bishop, when I declined to attend an episcopal conference on the subject. I feel that the system of denominational education, subsidised by the State, has failed and must be given up. We have then in front of us this fact—that education has become an absolute necessity, not merely because of the danger of having an uneducated class amongst us, but because it is impossible to

look abroad upon this dark mass of uneducated humanity without feeling that they were made for better things—that their powers were given them for other purposes, than to allow them to waste in ignorance, vice, and crime ; and it is our business, as a brotherhood, to stretch out our hands to those who cannot help themselves, and help them to raise themselves in the scale of humanity. I am not one for pulling down those who are above, to the level of those who are below. I appreciate far too highly the value of intellect, civilization, and refinement, to wish to see any portion taken away ; but I wish to see the day come when those who are below me may be be able to partake of some of the benefits of the civilization which I enjoy. For these reasons, I have very great pleasure in joining the association with all my heart.

The Hon. AUBERON HERBERT said it was clear that the voluntary system could not cover the whole work. The word itself, without any other facts, showed that. In a district which wished to do its duty, and with parents who would send their children to school, the voluntary system was all that was necessary ; but what was to be done in a district which had no wish to do its duty and where parents would not send their children to school ? Therefore it was quite clear that by the side of the voluntary system another must be placed. They were also, he thought, agreed that the system they were going to introduce must be complete in itself. To use Mr. Dawson's excellent words, it must be a system of "lucid simplicity," and therefore he ventured to hope that before the Congress broke up they would define the word "unsectarian" somewhat more precisely than had yet been done. He took that opportunity of expressing his entire subordination to those with whom he was acting, in the same manner as Mr. Fawcett had done ; but it would save them much difficulty hereafter if they construed that word "unsectarian" severely and precisely. He believed that if there was religious teaching at all in the schools, it would be a constant difficulty, for this reason—that if it was real in its nature, there would be constant intrigue as to the appointment of a teacher ; and other difficulties of the same nature would arise. If, on the contrary, the religious teaching was not to be real—if they were using a word in order to satisfy a few persons—it was unworthy of them

to put out a sham. It would be to the advantage of all of them that the State should be manly enough to take upon itself openly its own duty, leaving the Church to take upon itself its duties. He scarcely need add a word as to the fact that unsectarian or secular education was not godless education. The feeling of the meeting had been expressed very strongly in favour of the old truth, that the gates of heaven were upon earth, and that to make good citizens for the heavenly kingdom, good citizens must be made for the earthly kingdom. What had to be done was to see how the two systems —the new and the old—could be interwoven. That which they had to ask seemed to him to be this: to be allowed to introduce their unsectarian system in two instances. One should be where the district failed in its duty and did not provide sufficient school accommodation. In that case the Government or the District Board should have power to say to the district: You must provide schools, you must rate yourselves for them, and they must be unsectarian. The second case in which there should be power to introduce the unsectarian system should be where the district itself desired it. They had all realized that where there was a rate there must be an unsectarian system, and where there was an unsectarian system there must be a rate. As regards the old schools, he did not see why they should not for a long time maintain their place by the side of the new system, if only (and this was absolutely necessary) they made certain concessions. A system of compulsion could not be carried out unless the schools accepted a thoroughly satisfactory conscience clause, unless they put themselves under Government inspection, and unless they kept a register of attendance. The present system need not be deranged further than by the acceptance of these three things. They had heard and would hear a great many appeals against the proposed system, in the name of religion. He would warn those who made such appeals that it was very possible, if this controversy lasted a very long time—should the overwhelming necessity for the education of two millions of children be not speedily satisfied (he did not state the numbers on his own authority, but took them as they had been given)—should those two millions of children be left to perish in ignorance, whilst the "religious difficulty" was debated, it was very possible that the

words "religion" and "irreligion" might change places, and it would be thought that there could be no act more irreligious than that of those, who would be responsible for the delay. When he saw a large part of the working classes, as a pledge of their earnestness, willing to submit themselves to a law of compulsion, not for their advantage, but for that of their children, he felt that that act on their part, was far more religious than the words of the Archbishop of York, when he appealed to the working men, to allow their selfish fears and jealousies, to stand between them and this act of self-sacrifice.

The meeting then adjourned.

SOIREE IN THE TOWN HALL.

The members of the League were entertained by the Mayor in the Town Hall, in the evening, at a Soirée. There were upwards of 800 ladies and gentlemen present.

SECOND DAY.

On the reassembling of the meeting on Wednesday morning, the CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dixon, M.P.), announced that Alderman Thomas Phillips had given £1,000 to the funds of the League.

COMPULSION.

The Rev. Dr. ROWLAND WILLIAMS, Vicar of Broadchalke, Wilts, read a paper on "The Legislative Enforcement of Attendance, particularly in Rural Districts." He said :—I find myself in this paper arguing some things which do not, it seems, need arguing in Birmingham at all, and therefore I shall not read all that I have written. For instance, I find myself saying a good word for the Conscience Clause, which a gentleman from Merthyr Tydvil yesterday said was a delusion and a snare. That arises from the fact that in Wiltshire, in a meeting of the clergy, I have been the only clergyman in the room who did not sign a petition against the Conscience Clause, as being too liberal and sacrificing too much. And just before I left South Wales to go into Wiltshire, the same thing happened. There, also, I was the only one who would not sign a petition against the Conscience Clause, because it gave up too much of the rights of the Church. Hence you see how it arises that a person of average sanity otherwise, comes here to say a good word for that, which you once offered, but will not offer again. I shall pass over some matters in my paper which are of an antediluvian character, and touch on some others lightly which are subjects for reasonable argument. I shall leave out some remarks on the agricultural labourer, intended to show that he is not so ignorant as is sometimes said, and that he is not tyrannised over by the farmers. Then I go on as follows :—The range of human thought is so complex and diversified by ramifica-

tions, that hardly any question is so simple (*e. g.* the idiom of a particle) as not to entail upon persons treating it, the risk of being occasionally pushed forward into the discussion of difficult problems. A similar remark would hold good almost equally, of the field of human action. Only, as the mass of mankind are compelled to act in some way, common sense has taught them the necessity of habitually setting aside, with a view to joint action, questions however important, not relevant to the matter in hand. The most ardent politicians on different sides, are not necessarily prevented from transacting commercial business together. Institutions, such as hospitals or asylums, in which human suffering appeals to benevolence, present a still more obvious field in which the propriety of setting aside the jealousies incidental to divided opinion meets with general acknowledgment. It may be true, that the strongest moral inducements to the benevolent action in which men agree, are derived from the religious sentiment in which they differ. But such a circumstance is not found fatal to co-operation ; nor would it, I apprehend, be a just conclusion, that joint action for a definite purpose implies an absence of proper zeal in respect of other duties or aspirations, upon which unanimity has not yet been attained. On this principle, although my personal feeling, no less than any clerical prepossession, might induce me to prefer the lively presence of the religious element in any system of teaching ; yet, if either the intellectual differences which we have been taught to associate with the religious sentiment, or the social organisations which have arisen as their embodiments, impede the introduction into our schools of theological standards, I still desire the school to be preserved, and those objects of school teaching on which we can agree promoted, even at the price of setting aside whatever becomes an entanglement. I refrain from pursuing this topic, because in those districts with which I am best acquainted, the conscience clause, when enforced as a reality, sufficiently meets the difficulty, and the treatment of the more complex cases of large towns will fall into abler hands. Turning to the special subject of this paper, the desirableness of enforcing attendance in schools, especially in rural districts, I find myself still met by that complexity of considerations which belongs to action of a public kind. It would be

foolish to recommend a legislative policy on this subject, without considering the objections to such a policy which arise from the social circumstances of the country. Hence I must ask so much of your attention, as may show that this aspect of things has not been forgotten, to the condition of the labourer in the south-west of England. We do not, in Wiltshire, admit the accuracy of the highly-coloured pictures, which benevolent writers have sometimes drawn of a dead level of ignorance among our labourers. We find many varieties in the race; some very good, and, in proportion to their rank in life, intelligent; others of various degrees of badness. We see no great wit in classing together men so unlike each other, under the generic name *Hodge*, anymore than in classifying literary artists as *Dodge*. Again, we do not admit that farmers are, as a general rule, tyrannical, or forgetful of the claim of the labouring class to humane consideration. The price of labour is what it will fetch; and farmers can, as little as any other class in the community, permit themselves to be dragged down into pauperism, by undertaking payments on a large scale, beyond the value of that which they receive. One of the primary requisites for their business, amidst the vicissitudes of the seasons and the growing magnitude of their transactions, is *nerve*; and one object upon which *nerve* has to employ itself is the maintenance of discipline. Even on the strong supposition, that the maintenance of a due supply of labourers in adequate comfort should be naturally regarded as a preliminary charge on the land, the class upon which the benevolent portion of such a requirement would justly fall, are not the immediate employers, whose rents have been fixed according to the common rules of demand and supply. Again, observing, how much is deducted by unfavourable weather, and by short days, from the value of the services of labourers (about three-fourths of whom the farmer maintains through the year), I must demur to the criticisms often lavished upon the heads of agricultural employers, as part of the wrong habitually done to silent men. But after all qualifications, the life of our rural labourer is hard. Supposing his weekly nine shillings, virtually stretched by piece-work, harvest-time, and allowances, to thirteen (which is an extremely, favourable estimate), it barely covers the first necessaries of

life; and, if the family are numerous, hardly gives them bread. Fire, clothing, rent, the distant approach to luxury involved in tea, sugar, bacon, are still to be met. When one first observes these people one exclaims, "How do they ever live?" We gradually discover that they live in part, by the aid of their children's labour. From six or seven years old to sixteen or seventeen, the young rustic goes through a rising scale of crow-scaring, and horse-keeping, for which he receives wages rising from eighteen-pence, to six or seven shillings. Hence the boys in a family are a treasure. The girls are, in our account, not so useful. Now the question to which I must ask the attention of the members of our League, and for the sake of which these details have been introduced, is this:—Are we justified in asking the Legislature to interpose, not only between parent and child, but between the children and their bread; or in desiring to remove, in our scholastic zeal, into a sphere of book-work, these poor children of the poor, who are at present more usefully employed? Would there not be some cruelty in such removal? Nay, even some danger of so narrowing the possibilities of subsistence, as to bring the parental and self-preserving instincts into collision? Again, this question comes clogged with an allegation. It is alleged, that unless children go young into the fields they will not be worth their salt; that they are not improved by schooling in books, for the work which will be the business of their life. Hence we are invited to let well alone, or to fall back upon the voluntary system, which suits the genius of Englishmen, and has made them what they are; and if there be any point at which the influence of agricultural employers is injuriously exercised, it is in the form of pressure, to secure the services of children at an age tender in the judgment of the parents, who profit by it; more so, in that of physiological observers. Agriculture is not the only employment on which discussions of this kind have been known. Our answer to the question raised will be found most easily by a reference to the existence of the Factory Acts, but more convincingly by a consideration of the principle on which these Acts are founded, while it may be fortified by moral reflections. We may ascribe in part to Christianity, in part to the growing

humanity of the age, and, not least, to the democratic element in our constitution, the wide acceptance of this principle—that the human being is not to be altogether sacrificed to mechanical excellence in his particular calling. Man is to be made man before he is labourer or artisan. Suppose we could develope some useful animal instincts more strongly by surrendering what is human, we ought not to do so. Thus, if it were true (which is a large concession for argument's sake) that a little early book-work disinclined men for plodding field-work, we are still bound to awaken in them a nature more than merely animal. Indeed, the possibility of such a collateral issue being raised, tends to throw light on our main question ; for it indicates the existence on the part of the parents, of so low a degree of interest on the subject as may almost be called indifference, and it fastens our attention on the prevalence among employers of views such as our League may fairly counteract. Against the element of passive indifference, and against such a low estimate of education as amounts to discouragement, the Legislature of the country may be called upon to set its higher intelligence in operation. The province of an enlightened Legislature comprehends care for the physical development of the young, and (as I have contended) for the possibilities of their moral or mental training. Say, that in its action towards these ends the Legislature, should indirectly suggest to our peasantry something of that foresight which their social superiors are compelled to exercise in marrying, or something of that effort, on behalf of their children's minds which they acknowledge a duty on behalf of their bodies—and say even that it opens to charitable persons a new object, or fresh direction, for the aid which they often lavish upon the poor—none of these collateral results would be so injurious as to destroy the argument for the enforcement of primary education. My proposal to the League is this : Let the Legislature be asked, in pursuance of its own inquiries, to fix an age (my own tentative suggestion would be *ten*) within which field-labour and stable-labour should be restricted in kind, or forbidden altogether. Let there be a second limit of age (I would tentatively suggest *twelve*), within which employment of boys should only be permitted upon the production of satisfactory proof, that schooling for

three or four years has secured fair results. There would be no difficulty in either creating an officer for each union, hundred, or larger district, or in selecting from our overseers, surveyors, inspectors, tax-gatherers, some one who should be charged with the duty of verifying a certificate from the Government Inspector of Schools. Only I would deprecate the selection for this purpose of the clergyman, whose province, lying properly in persuasion, ought not to be encumbered with compulsory requirements. Suppose such a system were enforced, it would reach in the first place all the outlying squatters on the borders of parochial civilisation, whose children are too often a reproach to us. Secondly, it would stimulate opinion among the average peasantry; and, thirdly, it would throw the shield of its powerful protection over the mother, who too often sees her child taken from school sooner than she likes to think of, and sooner than necessity requires. Fourthly, it would enable us to bring to bear upon a riper age those instructive agencies which, in the absence of preliminary training, are almost thrown away. The night-school, of which I speak from experience, cannot possibly be a substitute for a proper amount of early day schooling; as anyone who observes how many of the higher classes, after a day of hard business or hard pleasure, sit down in the evening to the study of a Greek author, will easily conceive. Rain and darkness, with a mile or two to walk, wet clothes and weary eyes, hardly suit the first initiation in the mysteries of book-work. But where the taste for reading, writing, and calculating has been early awakened, the night-school affords a chance of such a recurrence to such things as may be a refreshment. A like remark would hold good of penny readings, lectures, newspapers. (Local journals, with local news, and an element of religious gossip, are welcome; but we are a long way in Wiltshire from the bewildering topics of London journalism). I do not speak without having tried these things. My experience convinces me that all such agencies, and I will venture to add that (supposing the Christianity of England to be something different from that of Abyssinia), the instructions of the pulpit, would have a more wholesome or energetic operation, if preceded in early life by some three years of compulsory education for the labourer's

child. The suggestion which others have made of half-time, or of requiring school attendance for a portion of the day, or of the year, is one which I could only admit as valuable, upon the same condition as the agencies already glanced at—namely, upon the condition that some three years of continuous education had been its preliminary. Nor ought mere infancy to count, if included in these three years? The ultimate result aimed at would be the production of a more intelligent—therefore, we must trust, a happier—order of men, in our rural parishes. The fear that such men would be found less devoted to their work, or less skilful in it, less virtuous, or harder to govern, seems to me the most chimerical fear that ever was entertained. Men are far more easily governed than brutes; only they require to have the fitness of things shown to them. A public school, recruited from our higher classes, is far more amenable to discipline than would be the same number of young rustics, with their alternations of blind credulity and obstinate incredulity, both guided, not by knowledge, but by invincible self-will. Schools do wisely not to pretend to anticipate the experience of life. But intelligence counts for something, even in handling a spade, certainly in managing a steam-engine. That intelligence should apply itself to the improvement of its own condition, does not involve unfaithfulness to the interests of its employer. One of the most direct, and in my judgment one of the happiest, results of education, would be to increase the facilities for comparing the value of labour in different parts of the world. It is not important that our labourers should attend the meetings of the British Association; but it is very desirable that they should be able to inform themselves how to place their condition on a level with their fellows at home or abroad. Nor does it appear to me that there would be any injustice to employers, if such a peaceful and voluntary redistribution of labour as I contemplate, were to leave the natural laws of demand and supply free to operate in the assessment of wages, instead of permitting these to be governed by a calculation (perhaps humane) of the possibilities of subsistence. At present, a certain percentage of the labourers in each parish is unattached, or employed only out of charity during the slack season of the year. If such men tend to

keep down the price of labour, they are also a perpetual threat to the rates. Hence a voluntary sifting of our rural population would be a gain to the remaining peasantry; but also to the ratepayer. Probably, in time, rates might be much diminished, though hardly swept away. Suppose, as another result, that our political economists and our legislators should find themselves called upon to exercise their joint sciences in rendering the condition of the labourer, by means of house and pasture-land, so attractive as to prevent the depopulation of districts already sparsely populated, I should consider the result not unworthy of means so peaceful and so innocent as simple education. It would not grieve me if, by a natural process, meat and milk were earned, and enjoyed more largely as earnings, by the poor and by their children. This plan of enabling our poor to place themselves by intelligence, on a level with their fellows elsewhere, has nothing in common with schemes for the artificial depression of the higher, in order to bring them down to the lower. Again, we should not grudge the labourer whatever acquired habit of intelligent locomotion may be requisite, to prevent a plentiful harvest, which gladdens so many classes in the community, from bringing to him only a lowering of his wages. I am not blaming a process due to natural causes; but I desire the equally natural means of adjustment. Again, if the waste of life in our large towns requires constantly to be repaired by an influx from the rural population, such a process would become more salutary as the raw material was improved. We are apt in rural districts to conceive of society in general, as a Providential scheme, in which protection is the duty of one part, and submission of the other. While I readily acknowledge the just mutual interdependence of all ranks, and no word ever escapes me in my ministrations calculated to set class against class, I see reason sometimes to regret a taint of surviving feudalism, and to dread the spread of ingrained mendicancy. It is not wholesome that any class of men should be unable to help themselves. The truest, the most permanent, of all forms of charity, would be that which should restore this almost forgotten power. Because education is the most effective instrument to that holy end, it deserves

promotion ; and because it cannot be adequately promoted without aid from the strong arm of the law, I applaud this National Education League for inscribing on its banners the unpopular word compulsion. That word ought not in our age to have the same alarming sound, as it had under the dynasty of the Stuarts or the Tudors. For in proportion as our Constitution receives its full popular development, it ought to be discerned that the State is only a name for the People, giving itself on a large scale the benefit of self-conscious organisation. Here the jealousies, too natural in times of repression, with which the smaller social bodies once regarded the central authority, ought to be softened until they ultimately pass away, and the great commonwealth of our country, expressing its mind deliberately in the Senate, should be regarded (in the Apostle's words) as the nurse and mother of us all. If I have not wearied the meeting, I will venture to add a few illustrative remarks on some collateral points. It may be assumed that this League will not have for its object the establishment of new schools, to the detriment of those which exist in satisfactory working order. Again, it is by no means a necessity that the support of a school by rates, or other form of public money, should interfere with the exaction of such payments on the part of the children as may be easily obtained, or of such as may be found useful in giving the education a value in the eyes of the parents. Again, it does not follow, because we deliberately set aside such sectarian forms of religion as include proselytism as an essential element, that we are therefore bound to surrender the contributions to man's intellectual growth which may be derived from literature of a sacred kind. What is called the denominational difficulty, may seem in some cases to be only merging itself in the form of the Scriptural difficulty ; and this may happen the more in cases where religious bodies are not agreed as to the relations of the co-ordinate authority of the Bible, the Church, and the personal Conscience, or Reason. But I am persuaded no such difficulty need be found insuperable in practice. Most religious persons are agreed that, on the ground of reverence, the Bible should not be degraded into a mechanical lesson-book for reading, as a primer or a horn-book. Most men of the world (like Mr. Roebuck, at Salis-

bury) are eager in proclaiming that many useful lessons are to be learnt from modern history and from secular literature. Again, all persons who have accepted frankly the principle of the Conscience Clause (though I fear its operation still needs extension and enforcement) will concede, and even contend, that denominational inferences from Scripture lessons are not to be pressed upon children against the wish of their parents. It is a matter of experience, that very energetic Dissenters will let their children attend the schools of a clergyman, whose doctrines they disapprove, provided they are sure of his good faith in the matter of abstinence from proselytism. So when once it is understood that in schools supported by public money, rates or taxes, the Bible is to have but an indirectly religious influence, and is not to be employed for any denominational purpose whatsoever, the difficulty will vanish. There will still remain a treasury of sacred poetry, history, precepts, religious instances and examples, which may subserve the noblest ends of the teacher's office, without prejudice to the conscience of the parent. But if influential persons, or important bodies of men, remain amongst us, who are not contented with such a practical application of the principle of the conscience clause, but contend for the enforcement upon children of points in which large classes of the community are not agreed, the survival of such persons, or bodies, amongst us, is one of the strongest reasons which could be devised for calling into existence this national League for securing the education of every child in England and Wales. Let me end with a story, and a reflection. A man in my parish could not read, and his wife could not read; but they possessed a book —the library of their household. He said, with touching generosity, "Best give *him* (*i.e.*, the book), to some one else; *he* is no use to any of *we*." Now, it is often imagined that such sayings belong to the generation whose childhood was in days long bygone; when "there was not the talk of schools there is now." My own observation convinces me that the tares grow as fast as the wheat grows; that the cultivation of human life is a constant struggle against enemies, whose activity equals, if not exceeds any which is exercised against them. Hence I conclude that we require stronger remedies than anything short of legislative action

can supply. If we continue in our present course, sending infancy to school, childhood into the stable and the field, manhood to the beerhouse, old age to the workhouse, the second generation hence will, in fifty years more, still find men whose library is a solitary book, and who may be ignorant enough, if not generous enough, to exclaim, "Best give *him* to some one else; *he* is no use to any of *we*."

ALDERMAN RUMNEY ON COMPULSION.

Alderman RUMNEY, of Manchester, read a paper on "Compulsory Education." He said:—The present educational system has been in operation a sufficient time to test its value. The controversy with the voluntaries, commencing with the introduction of the Minutes of Council, ceased long ago, and there has been no hindrance to the efficient working of the system. The Government has rather been in advance of the people, in its willingness to contribute funds for educational purposes. The voluntaries, although withdrawing from the controversy, have not withdrawn from their share of their work, and the results are—the educational condition of England at the present moment. What might have been the state of things if the voluntary principle, pure and simple, had been adopted, cannot now be determined. Its advocates may say with some truth, "It has never had a fair trial;" but it is certain that the schools aided by public funds, and the schools supported by voluntary contributions, have not together succeeded in educating more than a small portion of the children of the working classes, and that both in country districts and in populous places there is a mass of ignorance truly appalling. The Duke of Marlborough may express his satisfaction with things as they are, but most men who have given attention to the subject are generally dissatisfied, while scarcely a meeting is held in town or country at which the ignorance of the people is not deplored, and methods of instruction urged upon them. Without troubling the Conference with voluminous statistics, I would only refer to two or three statements as illustrative and typical. In a return called the "Parishes Return," made to the House of Lords, it appears there are 14,877 parishes in England and Wales. Of these only 7,406 are reported

by the Committee of Council as having schools fulfilling the required conditions of approved schools; 2,779 as inspection schools, but not entitled to capitation fees; and 4,692 parishes respecting which there is no evidence of any good schools at all, although of course in many such, doubtless, good schools not inspected may exist. The character of these 7,406 approved schools may be learned from the fact, that of all the children registered in 1868, only 60 per cent. were sufficiently advanced to be presented for examination to Her Majesty's Inspectors; while of these only 67 per cent. passed in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and only a fourth were prepared for an examination in the higher standards. Canon Norris, at one time Inspector of Schools in Staffordshire, wrote thus:—"Considering how many schools are still inefficient, and how in the best schools the majority of the children leave before reaching the first class, I fear I should be rather over than under the mark if I said that one-fifth or one-sixth part of the children of the country are being reached by our improved system of education." Inspector the Rev. W. W. Howard, speaking of his district in Devonshire, says:—"Looking to the small number of schools in the district in which efficient teaching is given, and the small result of such teachings from irregularity of attendance and other causes, I am convinced that some legislative measure is needed, which shall secure better means of education, and shall compel the attendance of children, that they may benefit by the education offered." Of Birmingham, Mr. Jesse Collings says:—"Out of 45,000 children there were 21,696 wandering about the streets, neither at school nor at work; and 26,000 that could neither read nor write." About the same may be said of Manchester—the lowest estimate given of children who ought to be at school and are not, is from 10,000 to 20,000, the highest from 40,000 to 50,000. The Rev. H. W. Bellairs, another inspector, writes thus: "The present condition of education in Great Britain may be thus stated:—one half of the children of the working classes between three and thirteen years of age, are under no scholastic education at all; and of the other half it cannot be truly said that, under our present system, they will ever be half educated." One country place may be taken as illustrating the

educational condition of the agricultural districts; the national schoolmaster of Evesham writes:—"I have been in charge of this school for five years, and from my observation and experience during that time, I am of opinion that there is a deplorable amount of ignorance amongst the children of the labouring class in this neighbourhood; I have become very strongly impressed with the conviction, that our present educational appliances are quite inadequate to cope with the appalling ignorance, and moral destitution so prevalent in this locality." Such, then, is the condition of England after a lengthened trial of the system now in operation. Doubtless there are exceptions. The northern counties are in this respect superior to the southern, while in many towns a larger proportion of children will be found attending school, than in Birmingham and Manchester, but in no place, whether in town or country, is the educational condition of the people satisfactory, nor is there any hope of improvement with the present system. It is not progressive, has no tendency to propagate itself; it helps those who help themselves which is well enough, but the children of those who have neither the means nor the will, it leaves to mental and moral starvation; the rich schools are supplied adundantly, the poor are sent empty away. "To him that hath shall be given; from him that hath not, shall be taken away"—not that which he hath, but that which he might have, if he had only the means wherewith to obtain it. The system has failed in enlisting the support and sympathy of any but those actually interested in its management. In country districts, the clergyman is almost the only person outside the school who takes any interest in the work within; there is no active and equal co-operation. He may ask, and sometimes obtain the help of his neighbours, but they soon leave him to his duties and responsibilities—they say, it is a part of the parson's work, and does not concern them. In towns there are committees and more equality between clergymen and laymen; and there is oversight and vigour for a time, but in the absence of anything stimulating and requiring thought and effort, a committee soon becomes a soulless form, only roused to periodic action for the purpose of securing as much money from the State as possible, at the least cost of time and labour. There is no competition among

schools, nothing to stimulate teachers and managers; and that which ought to interest a whole neighbourhood—the education of the children—fails to secure more sympathy and support, than a few annual subscriptions paid grudgingly towards the school funds. Then, they are avowedly religious schools, established on the assumption that the State is bound to see to the religious instruction of the young; and so all religious creeds and opinions are, by authority of the State, taught in the day schools. Roman Catholic doctrine and history, Protestant doctrine and history, each declaring the other erroneous; Jewish creeds, declaring both wrong; and, if the Mormons are numerous enough to establish schools of their own, (for the Mormon religion is permitted by law), then the State would pay for teaching that the Mormon Bible is the only revealed word, and all else obsolete and erroneous. What is truth? is replied to by "Whatever you please. It is of no consequence; only let something be taught which you call religion, and that will be sufficient." So the Government, while compelling, declines to interfere with the religious teaching; it merely asks whether the managers are satisfied, with the religious condition of the school, and if an affirmative answer be given, the capitation grant is allowed without further question. Thus, under the shelter of a piece of ill-concealed hypocrisy, if the managers of a purely secular school will enforce the reading of a single verse in the Bible daily—no matter what it may be—and declare themselves satisfied, State aid would be afforded; while, if they are honest enough to declare it is not a religious school, and there is no religious teaching, it will be withheld. A singular illustration of this anomaly was recently brought before the President of the Council, in order, if possible, to obtain a remedy. In connection with a large number of Mechanics' Institutions, which are for purely secular teaching, there are day schools as well as night classes taught by certified teachers. These being secular are denied the capitation grant, but if the same evening class pupils taught by the same masters are removed to a building—a National School for instance—where the day school is an inspected religious school, then the night pupils are included in the returns, and the capitation fee is paid for them. The religious influence of another

class of pupils, taught in the same building in the day extending to them as evening pupils, is as curious an illustration of religion by proxy, or imputed righteousness, as will be found in Church or State, in this or any civilized or uncivilized country. Surely it is time these absurdities were committed to the Paradise of Fools, and we adopted a course manly and intelligent in our dealing with this question. We exhort men to cease their religious strife, to live in harmony, to form Christian unions and alliances, and at the same time commence with the propagation of all these differences with the children in the day school—tell *them* on the one hand how very naughty it is for men to differ so much about religion, and on the other that it is necessary all these differences should be perpetuated at the expense of the State, and as a part of their education. The remedy generally proposed for meeting our educational difficulties is an extension of the Factory Half-time Act. This Act provides that no children shall be employed in factories under a certain age, without at the same time attending school a certain number of hours per week. Regarded as a whole, and compared with what it might have accomplished, it has been a conspicuous failure. Doubtless, in cases where the employer takes a personal interest in the education of his workpeople, the Act has worked advantageously; but such cases are the exception, not the rule, and there is not a large town in the Factory districts, where hundreds of young persons who have attended school at half-times may not be found unable to read or write, and in fact almost as ignorant, as if they had never attended school at all. Mr. Redgrave, Inspector of Factories, in his Report just presented, declares that "the present half-time system cannot be allowed to remain as it is. It is a state of things which the Legislature did not intend, and which cannot continue unredressed;" and he then offers some suggestions for its improvement. The provisions of the Factory Act have been extended to other trades and occupations where young children are employed, but there has not been time yet to determine with what results. Mr. Redgrave writes that he has no doubt, "when the Act of 1867 has become more familiar to the manufacturers, we shall find fewer objections to the employment of half-time children. But," he adds, "it is well to

consider what the Act of 1867 has done in this respect, as a guide to us in connection with that great subject which in effect it has left untouched—*the education of the people.*" Charges of indifference have been brought against employers, but the reply is obvious—it is not their business to attend to the education of their workpeople ; if they find them employment it may be required that it shall be in healthy rooms, and employment which shall not in itself be unhealthy, and that they pay them adequate wages : they are responsible for employing children without a certificate and suffer the consequences ; they ought not to be made responsible for determining the value of the certificate presented. The cardinal defect of the Half-time Act is that it assumes the child learns at school, but does not require it to be proved. The certificate is given simply for school attendance, not school attainments ; and so, with indifferent parents and children, and too often not efficient teachers, the children pass out of the period of bondage to that of freedom without reaping the advantages intended by the Act. The mind is set upon the termination of the school period, not on learning ; earning wages is a luxury, attending school a sacrifice. This defect suggests the remedy. If there are nearly one or two millions of children who ought to be at school but are not—if all attempts have failed in converting ignorant parents to the conviction that it is their duty and interest to secure the education of their children, somehow or other, then nothing short of compulsory school attendance, or rather compulsory school attainments, will effect the object; an Act simple in its main features, and modified in its details, as might be found expedient, would be needed. Regarding attendance at school as secondary, it would make it a criminal offence, punishable by fine or imprisonment, for a parent or guardian to allow a child to grow up without instruction ; and a like offence for an employer to engage and pay wages to a child without the production of a certificate of attainments. In this way the strongest possible inducement would be held out both to parent and child—not simply to attend school, but to obtain the instruction by which alone he could earn wages. Self interest would quicken the apathetic ; no knowledge no wages, would soon fill the schools, and a generation would not pass away before the laws of compulsory

school attendance would be unnecessary. There would be no great difficulty in fixing the standard of attainments, or securing a proper examination; these things are done at present by the Oxford and Cambridge Universities, by the Society of Arts, the Government in the Science Class examination, and other bodies. It is assumed the examinations would be confined to what are called secular subjects. A complete education is not contemplated; but rather that elementary training of the faculties of hand, eye, and mind, by which the educational process may be carried forward—the culture and use of the implements rather than the work they are destined to perform. Primarily, reading, writing, and arithmetic—possibly geography, history, grammar, drawing, &c.—would form the subjects upon which examinations would be held, the particular standard being adjusted to meet the requirements of the case, as in the examinations already referred to; it would be determined by competent and independent authority, and modified from time to time as might be found necessary. It is satisfactory on this point to be fortified by the opinion of Mr. Redgrave, Inspector of Factories, already referred to, who recommends, in suggesting improvements in the Factory and Employment of Children Acts, "that no young person under the age of 16 should be employed for full time unless a certificate be produced, given in a prescribed form by a certified schoolmaster, minister, inspector of schools, or justice of the peace, certifying that the young person can read and write well, and work sums in the four first rules of arithmetic." It may be further remarked, that no country has in modern times secured an educated people in the absence of compulsory school attendance. In Prussia, Switzerland, partly in Holland—the best educated European States—school attendance is compulsory. In Canada it is the same, and in the United States it is now, or has been; in some States the law has ceased to be operative, superseded by the stronger law of public opinion; in others, where school attendance is not satisfactory, a renewal of the compulsory law is suggested as the only remedy. The principal objections to compulsory school attendance are that it is *un-English*, an interference with the liberty of the subject, and would not be submitted to by the people. With a large number of people everything new is un-English. "That

which has been shall be" is with them a maxim incapable of refutation ; they look back on the past, not for lessons to guide, but for precedents to follow. Through predilections and prejudices every question is viewed, seldom directly and abstractedly, and hence almost all accepted truths have had to fight their way through contempt, obloquy, misrepresentation, and argument, to victory. There is this encouragement—many things formerly regarded as un-English are now established. All legislation on social questions, Sanitary Acts, Health and Nuisances Removal Acts, are of this description. A man cannot build his house as he pleases, so far has law invaded the domain of social and private life ; and yet the people are not in rebellion—nay, rather, the demand is for more, not less of legislation in this direction. Doubtless, it would be better if people could be induced to do without so much legal enactment. Whatever people can do for themselves they ought to do it better than the State, in its organized capacity, can do it for them ; but, unfortunately, they do not attend to their own well-being, even when the duty is obvious ; and although experience is valuable as a teacher, her school fees are so heavy, that of late years there has grown up a disposition to devolve many duties upon the State, which were formerly regarded as beyond its legitimate province. That compulsory school attendance interferes with the liberty of the parent is unquestionable, but only so far as the parent violates the primitive and inherent rights of the child. The child has the same right to have the mind fed as the body, and if the neglect to afford proper nourishment for the body exposes the parent to punishment, there is no reason why the same or even greater punishment should not be inflicted when he neglects to supply the necessary food required by the mind. In one sense all law interferes with personal liberty, but only when the exercise of liberty interferes with the rights of others. To punish the burglar is to interfere with his liberty to plunder ; to punish the parents for withholding from their children the right to be instructed is to do the same thing. The State takes upon itself the guardianship of the rights of the weak and helpless, as against the strong, but the law in each case is founded upon man's moral nature, is not arbitary, and would be respected. Compulsory school attendance need

not necessarily interfere with the liberty of instruction. The child may be taught at home or at school; the only obligation is that he shall not grow up in ignorance. In bringing children into the world, parents have contracted certain obligations towards them—they are bound to bring them up and fit them for citizenship; but these children are helpless, and unable to secure the fulfilment of the obligation, and hence the State interferes as their guardian, to obtain from the parent, if he is able—and by some other means if he is not—the completion of the contract into which he had entered. That there would be cases of hardship where children are employed and earning wages is likely enough—all social laws press heavily on some—but regard for the child's permanent welfare should over-ride all considerations of temporary advantage to the parent; and surely it is a less evil to restrain a parent from living upon the earnings of a child, than that the child should be deprived of the instruction by which he can earn his own bread in after life, and discharge properly the duties of a citizen. The evil would not be serious—it would be a displacement of labour to some extent. There is a certain quantity of juvenile work to be done in the country, and if children of six to eight years are prevented doing it, older children and more efficient will be employed for the purpose. On this subject Monsieur Cousan says: "A law which compels parents and guardians under penalties to secure the instruction of children, is based on the principle that the degree of education necessary to the knowledge and practice of our duties is of itself the first of all duties; and," he adds, "I do not know a single country where this law is absent, where popular education flourishes." Would a law so inoperative be observed? It is said such an amount of hostility would be created as to render the law inoperative. It may be so, but is it not more likely the influence would be altogether in the other direction? The Act would be the corporate seal of the nation set to the declaration that the children shall be educated; it would have the support of the majority, of all who are really favourable to the nation's advancement. On parents disposed to have their children instructed it would exert no pressure, would not be felt oppressive; they are doing exactly what the Legislature declares they ought to do. On the vicious only

would it press heavily. In the middle class, and a large section of the working men, the feeling in favour of education is strong and general; and this feeling, supported by public law, would create an opinion and influence upon the class below tending to secure respect and observance, and calculated to render criminal proceedings infrequent, and in time unnecessary. Again, it may be questioned whether there is much force in the opinion so frequently urged, that abolishing school fees, and supporting the schools out of the taxation of the country, would tend to lower the value of instruction in the estimation of the people. It can hardly be conceived that parents, having a due regard for the welfare of their children, will neglect to send them to school because they have no occasion to send at the same time 4d. or 6d. per week as payment for the instruction; and it is still less conceivable that those who have no such regard for their offspring will make this an excuse for their negligence, and urge that if the sacrifice involved in the performance of their duty were greater, they would be more disposed to undertake it. Be it as it may, there is the fact that a large number of the children of the working class are without instruction—a sufficient number to suggest the question, "What will they do with us?" if we cannot do something more with them, than has been done. Parents do not send them to school, and will not, and no other remedy is suggested but compulsion. But if compulsion is applied to one it must be to all; the law must be equal in its dealings. Ignorance and criminality, as a matter of fact, are inseparably connected. One of the functions of Government is the repression of crime, and, in the interests of society and the welfare of the helpless child, it surely may interfere to prevent the abuse of parental authority. At present a parent may do whatever he pleases with his child, short of actual bodily cruelty; he may educate it or he may not, and the law does not interfere. Substitute the imperative for the conditional—you *shall* for you *may*—and there will be a prospect that in a few years our educational condition will no longer be a bye-word and reproach to all intelligent foreigners. In carrying out this law of compulsory school attendance, it is clear schools must be provided; it does not necessarily follow they should be free, except to the children of parents who cannot afford to pay. Whether

they should be free to all is fairly open to discussion, but all certified schools, whether without school fees or with them, on the part of those able to pay, should be open without restriction or limitation in so far as they are aided and inspected by public authority. They should neither be denominational nor sectarian schools, nor, in the ordinary sense in which the term is used, should they be religious schools. It is not now regarded as the paramount duty of the State to attend to the religious interests of the people. The world is ultimately ruled by thought, and it cannot be questioned that the thought of England and Europe is strongly in favour of leaving religion to individual conscience, withdrawing it from the sphere of law, and, in spite of popes and prelates, leaving every man to settle for himself what form of religion he shall adopt, and what mode of worship he shall observe. But it does not follow that all existing schools cannot be utilized and used, and only if and when found inadequate need new schools be erected: the simple provision would be that during ordinary school hours the instruction should be confined to the subjects in which examinations are conducted, and dogmatic religious teaching be excluded. Instead of a conscience clause, which is but a clumsy contrivance for protecting the Dissenter from outward violations of conscience, while it exposes the child to social degradation, the religious instruction, as such, should be limited to certain hours, open to all who choose to accept it, but not forced on any. There is one objection to the use of existing schools pointed out by Mathew Arnold. It is this: "That the moment the working class of this country have this question of instruction really brought home to them, their self-respect will make them demand, like the working classes on the Continent, *public* schools, and not schools which the clergyman, or the squire, or the millowner calls 'my school.'" There is another objection still more formidable, viz., that the interest of the nation will never be fully enlisted in the work of popular education so long as instruction is confined to denominational schools. The continuance of these schools is urged solely on religious grounds; they are supposed to secure, by their connection with a place of worship, the religious culture of the children, and this is regarded as all-important. It is singular the unanimity there is among a certain class of speakers

and writers in favour of combining religion with elementary instruction in schools for the poor. They look with horror on what they term the divorce of religion from the learning of the alphabet in the national schools; yet respecting the schools for their own children, the middle and upper class schools, there is no anxiety. The last thing people send their children to be taught in the grammar or private schools is religion, and as a matter of fact it is not taught; and yet when it is proposed to omit this teaching from schools for working men, an outcry is raised, the scheme denounced as godless, and the supporters of it no better than infidels. Lurking under this loose talk is the idea that religion is a good thing for the poor man, and it must be supplied to him whether he likes it or not; but for other people—why, they can please themselves. Ask, however, the working men themselves respecting the education of their own children, and they would pronounce unhesitatingly in favour of non-denominational and secular schools. In this respect also the present system must be regarded as a failure: it is based on the idea of making men Christians that they may be good citizens. If it had succeeded, its continuance might be justified; but has it? Notoriously, a vast majority of the working classes are outside the pale of direct religious influences, and yet these have been trained to a large extent in our existing schools. Not a Congress of Bishops and Clergy can be held—not a Conference of Dissenting ministers of any denomination—where the question respecting the alienation of the working classes from religion is not earnestly discussed, and sundry plans devised for their recovery. The "heathenism of our large towns" is always a favourite subject, and how to adapt church services to suit their tastes, and so bring them into the religious edifices, occupies a conspicuous place in all their deliberations. Let anyone examine the Reports of the Inspectors of the National Schools on Gospel History, or any subject embraced in religious teaching, and, with some exceptions, it is about the saddest exhibition of ignorance to be found in connection with school teaching. Committing to memory religious dogmas they cannot understand, or which, if they do, they find daily the subject of controversy, is not the way to make children religious, or to form the basis of a true Christian character. In fact, religion cannot be taught, it must

grow by all the holy influences with which a child can be surrounded; but these influences may be entirely absent where there is most of professedly religious teaching. Between "teaching religion" and "religious teaching" we have failed to recognize any distinction, and this confounding of two things essentially different is a mistake which pervades our entire system of education. An improved national system must have for its object the making of good citizens. The real learning of a man is of more public importance than any particular religious opinions he may entertain, and we must learn to separate the teaching of religious doctrine from the ordinary instruction of primary schools, before we can expect to train up good citizens or intelligent Christians. It may be admitted that there can be no *complete* education if religion is altogether excluded; but elementary and technical instruction *can* be given alone, and religious instruction may be safely left to private individuals or the public bodies which may choose to undertake it. A worthy prelate at a recent Church Congress again hoisted the American flag, to frighten us from the adoption of this godless scheme of secular education. Whether the distinguished prelate is acquainted with the American system or not does not appear, but the results will challenge comparison with anything he can produce in this country. The system is based upon the idea of citizenship. The teaching of religion is prohibited; religious teaching is not. The Bible is not degraded by being made a school book, and explained by an incompetent teacher; but the school is opened by a portion read without note or comment, the Lord's Prayer is recited or chanted, a hymn or piece of sacred music is sung; and, when conducted by an intelligent and religious teacher, it is difficult to imagine a service more beautiful or impressive than may be witnessed daily at the opening of an American primary school. And what are the results? The American youths are more intelligent than the English. The American people are as loyal to their Government, and, as a whole, as law-abiding as any under the old monarchies of Europe, and, judged by any of the ordinary tests, they are more religious than the people of this country: Sunday is better observed than here, a larger number of people attend church; the religious, educational, and philanthropic institutions supported by

voluntary contributions are equal in extent to those in this country. A religious tone enters into and affects the whole of society, which has no counterpart in this country, while in the more purely American States, where the foreign element has less influence, there is a higher general and religious culture than could be found either in this country or in any of the old countries of Europe. And yet reverend men at Church Congresses talk about this secular education as leading to irreligion and infidelity. The leading features of a measure may be briefly summarised. A Minister of Education, and a Council, and Examining Board would be essential; provision for training and certifying competent teachers; in every district a committee to superintend all school arrangements, and disburse the funds levied for school purposes. The funds should be partly national, partly local—national as contributed by the whole people, and local in order to secure personal local interest, and a provident disbursement. The area of local taxation should be so wide as to avoid severe and unequal pressure, and not so large as to destroy individual supervision. In corporate towns, and towns with Local Boards, these bodies would be intrusted with the work and management; in country districts, the Poor Law Unions would afford the basis of organization. In all cases the duty of superintending school instruction should be regarded as the proper business of the governing body, and not of the clergy. Their work is the religious teaching; but only as citizens have they need to meddle with general instruction. The scramble hitherto to induce children to attend school, that they might be got to church and figure in ecclesiastical statistics, has hindered rather than helped the progress of education. If the responsibility of looking after the instruction of children be taken from the clergy, and placed upon the ratepayers in each locality, self-interest and preservation would act as powerful incentives to vigorous action against a too parsimonious provision. A minimum salary could be fixed where a given number of scholars are taught, so that a school would in no case be starved by an economical committee. Another important feature would be thorough inspection and frequent examinations, and the results of the examinations circulated as soon as possible. At present the reports of the Inspectors are almost useless. They are

sent in by a department of the Government, printed among the blue books, and ready for use if anybody cares to apply for them; but, supposing the reports of a district were printed and circulated quickly, the peculiarities—excellences or deficiencies—of each school pointed out, what an interest would be excited! Committees and managers would read and consider them. Conferences of teachers would be held, they would be discussed, a healthy stimulus would be applied, and then would happen, what it is utterly in vain to expect under the present system: the people, regarding the work as their own, would do it with all the judgment and energy of which they are capable, and which characterises their proceedings in other matters of local and personal interest.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. E. Potter, M.P.: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen—In the first place, let me express my strong feelings of admiration for the address which we have just heard from Mr. Alderman Rumney, than whom no man is more competent to give an opinion on the working of the educational system in the district from which he comes. I heard him a year or two ago, before a Parliamentary committee, say that he considered the factory education little less than a sham. I agree with him, and the causes are, to my mind, very patent. In the first place, the factory system only embraced a single section of the trade of the country. It was forced on the cotton trade, and the country felt that it was unjust to compel one trade only to submit to it. Among millowners there was a strong and a natural feeling, and even the best masters, who had had educational establishments of their own previous to the time, said, "If it comes to a question of force, the people may educate themselves." They would not be forced, as a single class, to do it, and their feeling upon the matter was strong. Now, factory education has been very good under certain circumstances, and bad under other circumstances. Where a master has taken an interest in education, it has been successful, but it has been a very difficult thing to carry out. It is a difficult thing to exercise a moral compulsion. Those of us who are large employers may be able to persuade many, but unfortunately others would take a different course. They would pre-

fer sending their children to where they could work full time. The inefficiency of the factory system is that it does not embrace the whole country. The great benefit of the compulsory principle is that it would reach all classes. Now, it must be carried out mainly by the extension of the factory and half-time system. That is the great object of the bill I advocate. It would compel the education of every child, labouring or not. I see no difficulty in doing this; the organisation would be very easy—no more difficult for a district than it is now for a single factory. There are large factories, employing five or six thousand hands, and I do not see that it would be more difficult to educate the children in a small town, say, of 8,000 inhabitants, than it is to educate the children in a large mill. There is one point I am anxious about in connection with the League, and that is, that this education should be kept perfectly distinct from the present denominational system. If it is given on something like the factory system, I believe it will not interfere with, but tend to support, the present system. I say this advisedly. There is a large class of workmen who, when forced to educate their children, will, as a matter of pride, send them to the denominational rather than to the free schools, and pay for them rather than accept State aid. In a few years it would have that effect. At all events, the two systems must be kept perfectly distinct. There is nothing worse in a denominational school than the education of half-timers. Schoolmasters do not like to have them, because they interfere with the working of the school. I had some knowledge of a school ten years before the Factory Act came into existence. It was pretty successful, and well supported, and the proprietor had some influence over a certain number of hands. I believe it was a higher class school then than it was when transformed into a school of half-time. The master could not give attendance to the half-timers, and the school rather fell off, and the ultimate conclusion of the proprietor was, to make it altogether into a half-time school. The privilege was extended to the master of taking any number of children from the neighbouring district to educate, and of having the fees himself; but he has never succeeded in this respect, and he said to me in conversation, that there was a

feeling among the better class workmen against sending their children into the half-time school. I think that feeling exists, but if the free and compulsory system is worked on the half-time principle only, the Factory Act will be carried out very efficiently. I am an advocate for the half-time system, but it must be kept distinct from the other. We have been working half a century under the Factory Act, and it has been compulsory, as far as it went, and secular. There has been no compulsion to teach religion —the employer not teaching his own creed—or to have the school purely secular. I think many of the best schools have been purely secular. I think, then, that the new schools which will be established, if I may say so, below the line, should be classed as distinct working-class schools entirely. I am very anxious that every encouragement should be given to keeping them separate. I should not like any injury to be inflicted on the higher class denominational schools. My great interest in joining this society is to keep the schools distinct. I think we shall do a fatal damage if we injure the denominational schools at all, because there is "ample room and verge enough" for us below them. I am perfectly satisfied we can supply education in the schools below them to another million children. Why should they not be perfectly distinct? The one class of schools will be compulsory, and that very compulsion should make them free and secular. We might as well meet the thing at once, openly and honestly. In denominational schools you can enforce denominational teaching; but with us, under a compulsory system, it must be secular. I wish the two questions to be worked harmoniously, side by side, but to be separate from each other.

The Rev. C. CLARKE: I am to speak a few words on the subject of compulsion, and on the supposition that in the course of a few years we shall have our bill passed through the Houses of Parliament, and that local authorities will have the power to found and establish free secular schools, is it likely in such case that the poor, the ignorant, the thoughtless, those of our fellow countrymen who are unacquainted with the blessings and advantages of education, will be able to oppose the national will and the intentions of the Legislature by refusing to send their children to school? Are

they likely to succeed in any attempt of that sort? Now, with regard to the schools which we desire to establish, I wish to notice a remark which proceeded yesterday from the lips of Professor Fawcett. I understood him to say—and in fact he is reported this morning in the papers as having said—that it was the intention, or it would be the work, of the League, to establish such schools as the British schools.

Professor FAWCETT: Should I be in order if I rise to explain? There is some misunderstanding. I made the remark in consequence of a letter last week in the *Spectator*, signed "Jesse Collings." I stated distinctly yesterday that it was my duty simply to explain the programme of the League—I did not express my own individual opinion. What Mr. Collings stated, writing in the name of the League, was this: that it was not the intention, or desire, or object of the League that free British schools should be established. What he did state distinctly was this: that it was their intention to give the local managers of these rate-supported schools the authority, if they desired it, to establish schools analogous to the British schools. If he misinterpreted the intentions of the League, it is his fault, and not mine.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: I think this renders a further explanation necessary. It will be seen from my letter to the *Spectator* that it is not the intention of this League to found schools like the British schools. My letter was written in answer to a rather unfair article in the *Spectator*, and to numerous inquiries whether the Bible should be read or not. The answer is: The League has nothing to say about the Bible; the reading of the Bible, like any other book, or any other question affecting the discipline or instruction of the school, will be left in the hands of the local authorities. Therefore in our bill, to be founded on this principle, we shall have nothing at all to say about the Bible. The words about British schools were brought in incidentally, and they were these—"In this respect (in being unsectarian) the League goes no further than the British and Foreign School Society." I was not speaking of the practice of that society; but their theory, which is that there shall be no theological instruction given in the schools. That is what we mean—that there shall be no religious creed or catechism of any kind taught in

the schools we are about to found. If the British and Foreign Society do allow these things to be taught, then I was in error. We do not intend that they shall be taught in our schools.

The Rev. C. CLARKE: Some of us in Birmingham have to do with schools in which daily the Scriptures are read, but in which no express theological or religious instruction of any kind is given. Now, originally, the British schools had this foundation, and no other, but I thought it was notorious that during the last twenty years the authorities of those schools, the head-quarters of which are in the Borough Road, have (in the judgment of many persons) utterly perverted their trust. They have taught a sectarianism, and when called to account, or when an explanation was demanded, they still persisted in doing it; and persons who had for many years supported their institutions on the ground of their supposed unsectarian character, were obliged to leave the British schools altogether. Now I wish to say that some of us, in promoting the objects of the League, wish to take every precaution against an abuse such as that. The Scriptures will not be read, except in such schools as are governed by authorities who desire that they shall be read, and insist on their being read. We would like to see this matter carefully considered. For having to do with schools, knowing how they are conducted, and what goes on in them; and having after long use some reasonable and proper regard for the Scriptures, we are a little dubious, and inclined to hesitate on the question whether a true regard for them can be shown by the unthinking, and unreasonable, and improper use made of them sometimes in schools. But however this may be, it would be improper and unbecoming for us of the League to say that the Bible shall not be used. Let the Bible be used if the authorities in any district insist on its being used, but let us have, at any rate, in our constitution the clearest and most positive statement to the effect that no theological teaching, no note or comment of any sort whatever, shall be allowed in the national schools of our country. Now, on the supposition that the local authorities have the power to establish schools of this kind—secular free schools—ought the people, by reason of their ignorance, and the manner in which hitherto they have been neglected, to

be allowed to oppose their inclinations to the decision of the Legislature and the just wishes of the nation? We know, all of us, that we have to submit to regulations and laws in connection with the maintenance of the poor, the punishment and confinement of criminals, and the public health; and all of us who think at all on the matter know that if the nation chooses to express its will through the public laws in connection with the matter of our sending our children to school, we shall have to submit in that respect as well as in the others. With regard to modes of compulsion, none of us think of compulsion as an end. We are sometimes spoken of as though we were endeavouring to introduce some principle of compulsion as an end. It is not an end—it is a means; and those who observe the laws in this case, who do what they ought to do in connection with their children, will be under no form of compulsion whatever other than their own sense of duty. As to the manner in which the principle of compulsion may be applied, it would, of course, be possible to introduce here in England what I understand to be the law in Prussia, in which there is a complete system of registration, so that the members of every family are registered, and in a sense known; and the children of every family have in a certain manner to be accounted for if not in their places at school. We might have a system of registration of that sort. But without proceeding so far as that, we might have a system by which no children should be employed whatever when they ought to be at school. This would be a kind of compulsion which possibly might be exceedingly offensive. But in addition to having a labour clause utterly excluding children in those years when they ought to be at school from factories and workshops, we might have a vagrant or truant clause similar to that which is enforced in Massachusetts. Mr. Field, who is well acquainted with the American system, and who, in his visits to Massachusetts, has taken pains thoroughly to inform himself, has told me that the people have clauses in operation of this nature. If children, for instance, are seen in the streets of Boston during the school hours, they are at once captured by the officers, inquiries are made of their parents as to why they are in the streets, and not at school, and their parents

are seriously warned and admonished that they will incur penalties if this is continued. Of course, if the children go to school all is well; if they do not go to school, the parents, as sometimes happens, are fined in any sum not exceeding 20 dollars; or the children, if they show themselves to be incorrigible, are taken before a magistrate, and by him committed to a truant institution. These penalties are enforced in Massachusetts, and inflicted from year to year. If we were wise enough to have a clause excluding children from factories and workshops, and another keeping them from the streets, these forms of compulsion might be sufficient; but if they did not prove sufficient, it would be open to the Government to introduce clauses of a more stringent nature. I talk to my friends and acquaintances on the subject, and find a few of them shrinking in regard to compulsion, but I tell them, as I will tell you, that most happily we have now the power by which knots of various intricate kinds and characters may be either untied or cut. We have this in the political power which the people possess, and if only we will take our stand on grounds that are logical and right, and appeal to the country at large, but especially to those artisans who are really intelligent and upright, and anxious for their own welfare and the country's good, we shall get the help whereby these intricate knots, so puzzling and painful to timid and cautious people, may be altogether untied or cut, the difficulties will not trouble or embarrass us at all. Let us, I say, take our stand on grounds that are legitimate and right, and appeal to the common sense and conscience of the nation, and then we shall find we have just the force we need to carry out educational measures, and everything else relating to the well-being, honour, and happiness of our country.

Mr. Mundella, M.P.: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen—After the remarks of the last speaker, and, indeed, of some of the preceding speakers, I think I cannot do better than submit to this audience something of my experience of what compulsory education has done abroad, what is the machinery by which it has effected those results, and the necessity for it at home; and I trust the audience will forgive me for saying that the few remarks I submit to you will not be the remarks of a mere theorist or *doctrinaire*. I am the son of a working man. I left school at nine and a half years

of age, and my first master, to whom I served my apprenticeship, is now in the body of the hall. I have been an employer of 4,000 workpeople, and have been an employer abroad, where compulsory education is carried out. I have addressed large audiences of from 10,000 to 20,000 workpeople at once, in this country, on compulsory education, and I never met with but one response—a hearty assent to it. I just state these facts, not in order to give you anything of my personal affairs, but that my remarks may not be regarded as those of a theorist or *doctrinaire*, who wishes to force his crotchets on the people. My attention was first drawn to the necessity for compulsory education by observing its work abroad. I first saw it in Switzerland, then in Saxony, and then in Prussia. Ten years ago I saw it first in Switzerland, but my visits to Saxony, as an employer of 600 or 700 workmen, have been annual for some years, and the results of education there are so remarkable, so incredible, that I should be afraid to describe them to you. Nobody could realise or believe it. We are not only incomparably inferior in the quantity of our education, but also inferior in the quality; indeed, we are more inferior in the quality than in the quantity. We cannot realise in England what can be attained by children under a compulsory system of primary education. Now, I have visited the schools in Saxony again, and again, and again; and I have seen the children of peasants and of framework-knitters, children of the humblest classes, of spinners, and of weavers, and of ironworkers, at twelve years of age, convert moneys from English into German, from thalers and gröschen into dollars and cents, then into francs and centimes, and transpose them back again into German. I have gone the length and breadth of the land, and have examined children by the wayside, children in factories and cottages, and have never found one at twelve years of age who could not read and write well—not as we understand reading and writing, but such reading and such writing as I or any other in this room have attained. They read and write intelligently. I have tried to find some corner or some spot in Saxony, or the Canton of Zurich, or some Swiss Canton, where there are uneducated children. I have always failed, and school directors have said to me, "It is in vain you search for them; there is no

child in Saxony who cannot read and write." My manager, who has now been nine years in that country, and has had a daily correspondence with numbers of workpeople scattered in the mountains, with handlooms in their own cottages, has never yet found a workman who could not correspond with him perfectly and intelligibly about his own work. You need not wonder that the North German Confederation is making such marvellous progress. Well, I shall next say something of the machinery by which it has been accomplished, because English people have an idea, and interested parties are disseminating that idea, that com pulsion means espionage and the policeman. A greater fiction never entered into the mind of man. There is no espionage, no policeman, in the case. I confess to you I undertook this part of the subject in fear and trembling. After being shown a school of 3,000 boys, fifty in a class—the school, by the way, being the handsomest building in the place—I said to the head director in his counting-house, with his clerks around him, "Now, sir, tell me how often you have to call in the aid of the policeman;" and he stood aghast. "I have been years head director of this school," he said; "I never yet had to call in the policeman." He said, "You do not understand the machinery by which our schools are worked." I have since mastered it; and I tell you I do not believe in any truant law or vagrant law, or Factory Act, or Workshops Act. They are all nonsense, and will not answer the purpose. The machinery is simply this: Every child in every cottage, hamlet, or town in Germany, Prussia, Saxony, Mecklenburg, Wirtemburg, or Switzerland, is registered. You can keep a register of voters for household suffrage; why not keep a register of children? They have a household register, and there are schools everywhere. They are not free schools either; although the population is poor, they pay. The children at six years of age must go to school. There are infant schools, and they may go there before that age; but the compulsion commences at 6 years, and does not end till 14. Well, the names are inscribed in the register, and at the end of the sixth year the parent receives a notice from the local board—the school board. You could have a central board, and your political divisions would

be your school divisions. It is so in Switzerland and in Prussia. The wards of the town have their own local boards, represented at the central board, and the local board would give notice to the parent, "Your child is six years of age, and must now come to school." The child comes to school or he does not; but suppose he does not, there is no magistrate, no policeman, in the case. The criminal law is never called into operation at all; the board has all power, and they send for the parent. The head director said to me, "When it occurs that the parent does not send his children to school, or neglects to send them regularly, after a certain number of omissions I send for him and read the Act to him, or tell him to read it himself, and say to him, 'If you are in duty bound, according to law, to send your child to school, why have you not done so?'" This generally answers the purpose. But suppose the man is contumacious, his case is laid before the school board, and he is fined a franc. That is the first proceeding. Well, the matter rarely, if ever, goes beyond it, for in a district of 50 odd thousand persons, the school director told me he had only 42 cases of contumacy in 8 years; and he is a strict man. But it is said by our opponents, "Oh, compulsion is not necessary there; public opinion does the work, and it will do just as well without compulsion." Now, I have put this question again and again. I am in correspondence with some of the principal school authorities in Saxony, Prussia, and Switzerland, and I have asked them, "Have you any difficulty?" The answer has been, "We had a good deal of difficulty at first, but after the first year or two it was wonderful how smoothly things went." "Then," I said, "dare you now relax the law?" In every instance I have had but one answer, "We dare not relax the law." And the reason is obvious. In all communities there are some persons who shrink into habits of vice and intemperance, and these persons would drag their chileren down with them, and they would increase and multiply the vice and ignorance of the country; but that the law prevents them. And in answer to our opponents, who say that where there is a healthy public opinion there is no need of law, let me make some allusions to America. The Americans have been spoken of very honourably by the last speaker, and I wish to speak of them with great admir-

ation; but there is one defect in the American system, and the Americans are becoming conscious of it. They know they want the compulsory power. The result is that public opinion, which was a power when America was more sparsely populated, is now ceasing to act. America is fast sinking into ignorance; and in order that I may not misrepresent that great country, which has made more munificent provision for education than any other, I will give these facts. The superintendent of the Cincinnati schools states that this is the percentage of daily attendance: In Cincinnati, 70·1; in Chicago, 58·9; in New York, 42·6. Is that the state of things you wish to copy? Listen to what he says about Prussia—"I refer to the Prussian system of education to call attention to that feature of it which makes education compulsory, and I do this because I believe that if we shall ever hope to derive the best possible fruits from our own munificent system of education, this feature must be incorporated into it." This is American opinion. America has recently appointed a Bureau of Education, and that bureau is finding that with all this munificent provision, there are thousands and tens of thousands who are not availing themselves of it, and America is fast waking up to the consciousness—her best men are already aware of it—that they must introduce compulsion if they would wish to succeed. Now, our Workshops and our Factory Acts are failures. Never was anything a more complete failure than the Workshops Act. To neglect a child till he is 8, 9, or 10 years of age, and then, when he first commences to work, to insist on his going to school, is about the most objectionable and unreasonable form of compulsion, I think, that it was possible for the human mind to devise. And, you know, in workshops and factories we have espionage and the policeman, for nothing is done unless either a policeman or a detective officer goes in. The Factory Inspector is not a policeman, it is true, but he summons men before the criminal courts. Surely we can devise some means by which, when children are neither at work nor at school, they shall be got at. Now I will notice the objection, that if we have compulsory education labour will suffer. What a farce it is to say that parents cannot afford to send their children to school because they will sacrifice their children's earnings. Children can begin to learn at a

very early age, and where the education is persistent, as in Saxony, what they learn is something marvellous. Now, I have the new Labour Act of North Germany, which I received yesterday morning. It applies to the whole labouring population of Germany, and it prescribes that no child shall begin to work until the age of 12, and he has been 6 years at school. That is the first clause. Every child from 12 to 14 shall not work more than 6 hours daily, and shall attend school three hours daily. Every child from 14 to 16 shall attend school 6 hours per week. Now mark this—here technical education comes in, scientific instruction, knowledge of languages; and then consider the moral, and not only the moral, but the material prosperity of the country that must follow. I say this: unless we wake up to this question there are other interests at stake than moral interests; there is the interest of the stomachs of the people, their employment, which will suffer as well as their moral necessities. Now, I do hope nobody will believe I advocate this because I desire there should be less religious instruction. What I have had I am most grateful for, and my reason for advocating education is that there may be more. That word "secular" is scandalously abused. All truth is holy. The order, and system, and cleanliness of a school are the most religious influences, I think, that can be brought to bear. Go through the population of Prussia, and never, even in its poorest districts, will you meet with the wretchedness, squalor, and filth that stare us in the face in our large towns, and make us so ashamed and humiliated. Now, following just after the new law of the North German Confederation, I have received the new Austrian school law. Austria has discovered that knowledge is power, and that ignorance is weakness, and that to be weak is to be miserable. What is the result? Baron von Beust, the Minister of Saxony, is now the Minister of Austria, and he has taken the Saxon school system into Austria, and the Austrian school system is now the most liberal in Europe. I ask you, Englishmen and Englishwomen, are Austrian children to be educated before English children? My inquiries abroad have stimulated me to plumb the depth of ignorance at home, and I find it impossible to do it. I have, with the assistance of your

Chairman, and at other times, in different parts of the country, examined more than 12,000 young persons at work, who had nearly all of them been at school; and what a farce our education is! I mean religious education. How many have been at school, and where much religious education is given, and yet some of them do not know even that God is their Creator? It seems incredible, but it is so. When they say a prayer, it is the merest confusion imaginable. Ask them to say the Lord's Prayer to you word for word, and the first sentence is, "Our Father, 'ch art in heaven." Again and again, hundreds of times, I have heard them say it. What is the meaning? They have only a vague idea what is meant. This comes from our system of teaching. I say to our friends here that I am not a convert to the League. I was a convert to national compulsory education for years, when many of my friends thought I was an enthusiast and was going mad. Some of our converts, with all the zeal of neophytes, go further than myself; but I say, with reference to this system, that I believe it can be applied to agricultural as well as to manufacturing districts. There is in this room a friend in the body of the hall who has for twenty years past had his ploughboys in a good state of education; he has done it without any sacrifice, and his people are the best tenantry in England, and his farm is the best cultivated. He has his ploughboys so well educated that a member of Parliament said, on examining one of them, "That fellow a ploughman! he is a gentleman." I thank the meeting very cordially for having heard me patiently, and I would say to those friends who stand aloof from us, "Stand aloof no longer. We have had some difficulty to arrive where we are, but public opinion is growing so fast that the terms we offered yesterday we cannot make to-day, and the terms we would gladly make to-day cannot be offered to-morrow. We wish to deal with you tenderly and gratefully for what you have done in the past; but I would say, the sibyl is at the door with her last offer."

Lord CAMPBELL AND STRATHEDEN said: It seems to me that one of the wants required to be supplied is some argument against the compulsory principle. Such an argument it is utterly beyond my capacity to furnish. Arguments in favour of the principle may rather overstock the market to-day. It would be useless to touch

upon its necessity; for the whole audience seem to be agreed that until the principle is introduced we cannot bring into schools the whole of the masses we mean to have there. It is useless to touch upon its justice, for the whole audience seem to feel that neglected children really have no parents, that they become the wards of the State, thrown upon the fatherhood of the law and the protection of society. It would be superfluous, though easy, to dwell upon the facilities for giving practical effect to this principle. There are only two points that I, therefore, will venture upon, both of which, if I am not deceived, have something practical about them. Of course, on this question, as on many others, there is a great difference of opinion. All are not equally advanced in their conviction as to the necessity of the compulsory principle, and there is some prejudice yet to be encountered. That prejudice, where it exists, bases itself upon the idea that the State, or the central power, ought not to be armed with domiciliary or autocratic functions such as are proposed. I wish, therefore, to suggest to this audience a distinction between a grant of such powers to the State, and the accordance of them to local bodies, such as Town Councils or municipal authorities, which are the immediate emanation of the very individuals to be supervised. Don't let it be imagined that I am hostile to a grant of such powers to the State. All I suggest is, that in conferring such powers upon municipal authorities, you meet and indulge the prejudices of those who would view with jealousy such powers if the central body happened to receive them. The other observation I have to make is this—that it seems to me that the whole question may be brought into a very narrow focus, and reduced to one of downright justice to the taxpayer and ratepayer. It is obvious to all men that to extend popular instruction in any shape or form there must be a new expenditure. That expenditure must come from general taxation imposed by Parliament, or it must come from the local rates agreed to by municipal assemblies. In the one case, the burden would fall upon the taxpayer; in the other, upon the ratepayer. Both taxpayer and ratepayer are entitled to resist the burden you are going to throw upon them, unless those burdens involve some security for the attainment of the object aimed at. The taxpayer might fairly say, "Now you are going to spend, say a

million and a half, derived from general taxation. I will submit to the payment of my share if your system involves some guarantee that the schools shall be filled with children; but I will not submit to the imposition of another 1s. 6d. in the pound when I know that there is a possibility of these schools being empty." Although we know from experience that our schools may be filled without compulsion, yet until the principle is introduced you have no guarantee for the attendance of even one child in all the school accommodation provided. So, too, might the ratepayer declare, "I am willing to submit to 2d., 3d., 4d., or even 1s. in the pound additional rates for a great public object which I am able to appreciate—for the conquest of ignorance, the repression of crime, and the prevention of misery in many shapes; but I will not submit to any further rate for the erection of schools, or the employment of schoolmasters when I have no security that another 100 will come within the reach of these advantages." I do trust that this latter view may sink deeply into the minds of the taxpayer and the ratepayer, without whose concurrence the great objects of your association are impossible of attainment; and that so sinking into their minds, it will create a general and irresistible concurrence of opinion that, however the question of religion may be decided—that whatever form of education is promoted—some powers for ensuring the attendance of children at school shall exist.

Mr. George Howell, of London: I am decidedly in favour of compulsory, free, secular education. This word "secular" appears to me as though it were used to imply teaching the peculiar dogmas of a small party in the country called "secularists." Now, if it were so intended, this would at once be sectarian teaching. We use the word "secular" as simply opposed to ecclesiastical. The office of the clergyman or minister is ecclesiastical, but that of the schoolmaster is secular. By secular, then, we mean that education which teaches those things which fit children for the duties of this life as men and citizens. We want our children educated in the practical knowledge and business of life. Denominational, or religious, teaching must be left to the home, the Sunday school, and the church. If we once admit the teaching of theology into our public schools, where can it end but

in compulsion? Catholics, Protestants, and Secularists will each have their claim. Even the use of the Bible, as a text book in our National Schools, will involve some difficulty, inasmuch as in Ireland, and in all Catholic districts, the Catholics would claim something different from our Protestant Bible. Besides which, I am afraid that it would revive all the religious animosities which we sought to remove by the dis-establishment of the State Church in Ireland. With regard to compulsory education, the very term law involves compulsion. We have compulsory laws to punish crime, let us now try compulsion to prevent it. We demand compulsory education for the benefit of the entire community, just as we demand quarantine for the safety of our ports; and the removal of nuisances for the protection of the health of our cities and towns; nay, even the regulation of our traffic for the convenience of our streets. Ignorance is at once the most noxious of all nuisances, and the most contaminating. It is also enormously expensive. The objections to compulsion do not come from working men, although some well-meaning men speak in their name as though we *did* object. Mr. Walter, M.P., at a recent agricultural meeting at Maidenhead, spoke somewhat against the platform of the League. During the last few weeks I have been in personal communication with several of the reformers of Worcester Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud, and Tewkesbury, and in those towns I found no hesitation whatever in endorsing the principle of compulsory, free, and secular education. And here I may say that I am informed that so near home as the Scilly Islands an almost complete system of compulsory education is in operation. At the last general election I was a candidate for Aylesbury, and one of the most prominent points in my address was this one of national, compulsory, free, and secular education. I visited every hamlet and village in the large borough, and not one voice did I hear raised up against the principle. The only opposition I found came from the clergymen and farmers. The farmers were under the impression that education would unfit men for work in the field; but both manufacturers and artisans know full well that education is an immense benefit to both parties in the daily work of life. In short, the working classes of this country are anxious for, and demand, a complete national system of educa-

tion, which shall reach all classes, and which shall be be compulsory, unsectarian, and free.

Dr. HODGSON said the text of the few remarks he had to make would be drawn from the admirable speech of Mr. Mundella. Mr. Mundella said, most truly, that we were behind other countries, not so much in the quantity as in the quality of our education, and the question of compulsion was very much mixed up with the quality of education we intended to supply. The question they had to discuss was compulsory attendance in schools, not the compulsory provision of schools, for the schools must be provided before they could be attended. He asked why it was that this necessity existed? There were many reasons; but one special reason was the indolence of parents who did not take any interest in the education of their children, and another reason was the indolence of the children themselves. He should regret exceedingly if it were to go abroad as a general impression that the object of the League was to establish a compulsory education which should be simply, or even mainly, for the teaching of reading and writing, with even arithmetic superadded. They were not likely to disagree as to the importance of reading and writing as instruments of education, but one thing was certain—if we did not aim at something a great deal beyond these things, we should neither obtain nor deserve that support which would be requisite to carry the measure through the House of Commons. The staple of our existing schools was reading and writing, and what was the result? Everyone's experience answered this question, but he would mention one or two cases. He had elsewhere published an account of a visit paid to a school in the South of England, where the children read very passably indeed. The passage read was a description of a crab. The district was an inland one, and he asked the children if any of them had ever seen a crab? There was a great sensation, and after a little delay one girl said she had, but it appeared it was not a marine crab, but a crab apple. That was the amount of intelligence that had been developed. That child, and all the others, would have passed muster in reading and writing. Another story was told him by a benevolent lady, residing in the neighbourhood of a country school, who took an opportunity of giving the

children a lesson on their senses. It was a revelation to them that they had senses. The lady asked, "What is the use of your nose?" There was great silence for a time, broken by a boy who said, "To be wiped." Another story was told him by Mr. Leonard Horner, Factory Inspector, and it related to Birmingham. When the present Bishop of Manchester was head master of King Edward's School, Mr. Horner accompanied him on a tour for the purpose of ascertaining the efficiency of instruction in the district, and especially in the matter of religion. In one case the Scripture passage read contained the word "sacrifice," and none of the children could give the slightest explanation of the word except one girl, who had been about four years in the school, and her answer was, "The place where Jesus Christ offered up his son Isaac." Now, this was a state of things that must be put an end to. The instruction must be made of such a nature as to develop the intelligence and to cultivate the understanding. There must be that kind of useful knowledge imparted which would be suited to the comprehension of the youngest child, and which was indispensable to children when they grew up for their guidance in their after lives. He wished to impress upon the audience that compulsion was not tyranny, but the result of a law which we ourselves had imposed for the general good. The way to make compulsion not only tolerable, but successful, was so to dispose people that they should do of their own accord those things which, if they did not do, the law would compel them. In the schools for the poor the time allotted for instruction was lamentably short, and therefore attention must be concentrated upon those things which were most useful, most indispensable, and most capable of application in after life.

Mr. Paget, formerly M.P. for Nottingham: I have now for, I think, sixteen years, as an agricultural employer, insisted that the boys should spend some of their days at school, and some at work. I felt that some such movement as this was evidently in the future, and that it was better to be prepared with a knowledge of facts for a time like this. And within my experience the results have been so uniformly good that I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the practice I have mentioned is a proved success. I have thirty-four children upon the farm, employed on the condition that they

spend the alternate days at school. It has been without any sacrifice on my part. I felt that it must be a business success to justify me in calling on my neighbours to adopt it, and it has been a business success; for not only have I not lost anything, but I am convinced that I have been better served, and my bailiff is of the same opinion. I receive the boys at nine years of age, on condition that they are able to write decently; and I am quite certain that no system of mixed school and labour will succeed, without that preliminary condition. Coming on my farm at that age, and being able to write decently then, they go to school and work on the farm alternate days. I attend at the examinations in school, and I have full proof that my boys fully maintain their ground against those who are, or pretend to be, constantly at school. I have at the age of 13 all the children who choose it, in the village, examined, and to those who can write correctly from dictation, read intelligently, and work the first four rules of arithmetic, simple and compound, I give a prize. There have been only two instances out of 34 in which my boys have not had the prize. A very independent witness—Mr. Sternhold, the Commissioner to examine into the state of the children employed in agriculture—took very great pains in the matter. He wrote to the employers of these children, who are now some of them 25 years of age, and more than that; and he received a uniform reply from the masters that they were satisfied with their servants, and almost every one of the young men wrote him letters, of which he spoke in high terms, and which showed that they had not discontinued their education. This, I conceive, is one of the very great advantages of the system I have adopted; school-work becomes a relaxation and a pleasure instead of being drudgery, because the boy compares his day at school, not with a holiday or a day of bird's nesting, but with a day on the farm. All his associations with books are therefore pleasant, and in every instance I believe my lads continue their education after they leave school. I asked one what he was doing, and he said he was working logarithms; and another is under-secretary to the Reform Club in London. They are qualified for superior situations. There is no difficulty whatever in obtaining situations as farm servants for them after they leave me, because

they are better than the ordinary run of boys. My bailiff says when he was at their age he went to school till he was thirteen, and then he had to go to the farm, and suffered extremely during the first few months, because the labour was new to him. But my boys are never tired; they work one day on the farm, and rest the next at school. They walk straight not slovenly, in the way those do who are tired to death. Their minds and bodies are both improved. The great subject, I fancy, this morning, is how far education should be compulsory. I have always held, and stated it publicly many times, when I had the honour of representing Nottingham, that in my opinion, society, being bound to provide for the poor and criminal, have a right to see that the poor are brought up in such a way that there shall be the least possible probability of their becoming paupers or criminals. Therefore I have never had any hesitation in saying I was in favour of compulsory education, and I fully endorse what has been said by several gentlemen, that it will not be ill received by the labouring classes. The schoolmaster in my village tells me that men who are not educated themselves, and who never cared about education before, send their children to him to fit them to come upon my farm, because they find that is the road to it. With respect to the religious question, I think it will be an advantage to set the Sunday school free for religious teaching. I think religion will not in any way suffer, but will gain greatly by the education of the people being properly attended to.

Professor Fawcett, M.P.: After the general remarks that have been made this morning, and especially after the admirable speech of my friend Mr. Mundella, it would be superfluous for me to say a word in favour of the principle of compulsion. It may, however, be assumed that every one who has joined this League has clearly and distinctly made up his mind to this fact—that no settlement of the educational question ought ever to be listened to, much less carried as a permanent settlement, unless it involve the principle of compelling the attendance of children at the school. I shall endeavour to make the few remarks I have to address to you as practical as possible. Will you, therefore, allow me to point out to you what in my mind is the great danger which threatens the future

of this education question? I fear there is some chance that it may be wrecked in the same way as so many good measures have been wrecked, by accepting a compromise in part. It is all very well for us to make bold speeches and talk outspoken language on platforms like this, but you are little aware of the blandishments which are brought to bear upon Liberal members when their party introduces a bill. You say you think the bill unsatisfactory. You then hear it whispered in your ear—"Not going to support the bill of your party? why, you are faithless to those whom you ought to support!" To show that my suspicions are not altogether ill-founded, let me in one or two sentences describe to you the great peril which the education question only narrowly escaped last session. A National Education Bill for Scotland was introduced into the House of Lords—a strange proceeding, to begin with. The bill—bad when it was sent there—was infinitely worse when it left. When it came down to the House of Commons, seeing that the Scotch members are jealous of the interference of English members, I knew it was no use moving myself. I went to a Scotch member, a friend, and asked him to put down an amendment for the second reading—an amendment similar to that which it is quite possible we may have to move next session—that no measure of national education could be satisfactory if it involved compulsory rating without compulsory attendance. You can have no conception of the pressure which was immediately brought to bear upon that hon. member. He was young, and he did not stand firm; but I trust, at any rate, if next session compulsory rating is introduced without compulsory attendance, one at least of the fifty members of Parliament who have joined this League—Mr. Mundella or Mr. Dixon—will be stern enough to say this is a question on which there can he no compromise. We are willing to wait one year, two years, or three years, but when we have a national education measure passed, it shall be such a measure as shall absolutely, with perfect certainty, guarantee elementary education to every child in this kingdom. What became of the Scotch Education Bill? Liberal members were told they ought to vote for it, and they did. I do not say it to my own credit, but I believe I am almost the only English member who, whenever there was a division on the subject, steadily

walked out of the house. And what were the arguments to make English members vote for it? That bill, it is true, introduced into Scotland what was never introduced into Scotland before—undenominational education; but it was said, this undenominational education was introduced in such a slight, slender, and delicate form, that it ought to be passed with hurry and precipitation, because there would be something worse in the English measure next session. What I want is, that we shall be representing you—the thousands who have joined this League—representing you faithfully and accurately, if we say it is your earnest desire that no measure of national education shall be passed until we have the power to get a compulsory and unsectarian system. I think we ought to have absolute security that no child shall be permitted to work—whether we fix the age of nine, ten, eleven, or, as Mr. Mundella suggested, twelve—no child shall be allowed to work until it can show that it has been to school a certain number of years. With regard to the only remaining branch of the subject on which I shall speak—that is, the question of applying some kind of compulsory education to the agricultural districts—I was rejoiced more than I can describe to hear the remarks of Mr. Paget—to hear from his own lips the admirable success of his movement. He must be regarded as a benefactor—the nation must feel grateful to him for having been a pioneer. When I mention the word agricultural, I am reminded of another danger. Here is a case you must watch carefully. Persons will rise in the House of Commons as they have done already, and they will say it is very well to apply the half-time system or the alternate day system to the industry of such a town as Birmingham, but there is something exceptional about agriculture; we must have a different system there. Are we not expressing your opinions if we say that it is your desire that agriculture should not be thus exceptionally treated? The system that is proposed is that in agriculture a child should not attend school either half time or alternate days. but should attend school so many hours in the year. If this scheme is proposed, we can at once meet it with most valuable experience—that is the scheme that was introduced with regard to the Print Works Act; and I say that experience con-

clusively demonstrates that the scheme of so many school hours' attendance in the year has proved a lamentable and disastrous failure. The great principle, I consider, of the half-time system is this—that if it is properly worked, if there is a good school, judiciously managed, the children learn better after a certain age, and work better, if they attend school so many hours a day and work so many hours a day. This, I believe, is one great principle connected with the half-time system. I must, in conclusion, apologise for having apparently introduced, yesterday, a certain amount of discord into your deliberations. I fear some of my remarks were misunderstood. There are some men who have not joined this League because they differ upon minor points of detail, upon which I also differ; especially, one of the most eminent of your townsmen, the Rev. R. W. Dale,—no good movement in Birmingham ought to be without his name attached to it—has objections which I know are exactly analagous to mine. I thought, therefore, I should state as strongly as I could what were my objections, and that I was perfectly willing to forgive and forget them in order to get a united movement on behalf of the movement in order to get some good men to join this League. I am willing to sacrifice any matter of individual opinion in order to throw my whole heart and strength into the great, the unequalled, object of securing unsectarian, or, if you like it better, secular compulsory education in this country.

Mr. Webster, Q.C.: I should have hesitated to address you on the present occasion, after the most powerful speech you have heard, if I had not the greatest anxiety to contribute, in whatever small measure I can, to the success of this great movement. I am not wholly inexperienced. I have watched for many years, as far as time would permit me, the educational questions which have been brought before the public from time to time, and I have had the satisfaction of establishing a Church of England schoool in spite of the clergyman, in spite of the bishop, in an agricultural district where there was none when I went into it. Nobody knows the difficulty of such a labour who has not gone through it. I rejoice that this League is placed upon a foundation from which it cannot be displaced. I am satisfied, from considerable experience of Con-

gresses, that a more successful meeting of inauguration never took place. I think we have to some extent lost sight, in our discussions, of the great practical fact with which we have to deal. The Archdeacon, says there is an overwhelming necessity for education—that it is a great public danger that there should be two millions of uneducated children, growing up as Arabs in our public streets, who will be the paupers and criminals of the next generation. That is the fact we have to deal with, and when we are told that the denominational or voluntary system has failed—I don't quite like the use of that word, failed—but it has been found incompetent to deal with this great calamity; and therefore I trust this League will be the means of founding a different system, which shall be more calculated to deal with the difficulty. Let us not forget that great fact—that we have two millions of uneducated children growing up amongst us. That fact becomes a civil question as well as a moral question. It is a question of pounds, shillings, and pence, and it is patent that compulsion is the rock upon which our new system must be founded. On this subject I adopt the admirable views of Mr. Mundella; and it is worthy of observation that in dealing with this evil of ignorance we shall, in my opinion, do something to remedy another evil also. By employing female teachers, you will provide employment for women, and it has been proved in America that they are admirable teachers. My own opinion about it is, that it is an exceptional thing to find a woman who is not a good teacher, and it is exceptional to find a man who is not a bad one. I look, therefore, to this movement as contributing to the removal of two great social calamities—the ignorance of the people, and the want of employment for women. I believe we may appeal to our friends on the other side of the Atlantic to show what might be done by the system of Common Schools; and, although it is possible, for the reason stated—the want of compulsory powers—that it may not have had all the success that was hoped for, still we may look to America for an example, which we shall do well to follow. Let me remind you, that with compulsory attendance schools must be free, and founded upon rates—local rates, because you want local management, by men who are acquainted with the wants and requirements of the district; and the schools must be

subsidized by national funds, because you want Government supervision. The first step to be taken is to have a proper register kept of all parents and children. Why should not towns be divided into districts, as in Boston, and other cities of the States? We have an approximation to it with reference to the elective franchise, but we want a more perfect system to carry out that which, as Mr. Mundella pointed out with great force, is done so well in Saxony. These are the practical matters we have to deal with. If we want to get these schools free, I believe means will be found whereby existing schools may be to a certain extent utilized; but whether or not, let us not forget that we have to deal with two millions of children who are growing up to be criminals or paupers, and who will overwhelm us unless we deal with them fearlessly. Let me mention Joseph Lancaster: the motto he inscribed over his own door was—"All that will may send their children and have them educated freely, and those who don't wish education for nothing may pay if they please." He was the pioneer, in Bristol, of what has been called the voluntary system, which has produced great effects, though it is inadequate to deal with the present difficulty. About the religious question: I would be very unwilling, except from the necessity of conceding something in order that we may all go hand in hand—I would be very unwilling that a portion of the Scriptures should not be read day by day. But having expressed that opinion, I would exclude all sectarian and denominational teaching whatever. I would follow the example of our brethren across the Atlantic, and make it a rule that no book teaching the tenets of any particular sect of Christians should be purchased or used, but that they should use a portion of the Bible, in the common English version, daily. But this is a secondary question, and I am delighted to hear Dr. Rowland Williams use the expression "men must be men," because with these children left as they are, they cannot become men—they cannot become citizens; and let us remember people are citizens before they are Christians. Our object is first to make them good citizens, and then bring them under the influence of a proper system of religious teaching—not teaching them religion, for I acknowledge the distinction between religious teaching and teaching religion; but I assume religious

teaching is that everything should be done with a proper regard to those great truths of revelation, in which we all believe and trust. I would not quarrel with the decision if the locality wished any portion of the Scriptures read; but Sunday should be kept for religious purposes, and it should not be distracted by that kind of teaching which is more fitted for the week days.

Dr. J. A. Langford: I am anxious to make two remarks—one upon a point which, I think, has not been alluded to at the Conference before, namely, that we have the highest cause to congratulate ourselves, upon the progress which this question of national secular education has made in this country during the last few years. In the year 1849—only twenty years ago—an attempt was made, in this and other towns, to organise a similar society to this, for a similar object. It almost enterely failed; and here we are to-day holding meetings like this, and listening to papers such as we have heard. We have great cause to congratulate ourselves, and to be hopeful for the future. I wanted to say also, that this League must stick absolutely firm to the four principles which it sets out with: that education should be compulsory, national, secular, free. There may be a temptation to give up one of these points, because there may be fear of a long agitation; but it will be far better for us, far better for the education of this country, and the question will be far more speedily settled finally, if we persist in agitating for this programme, than if we give up any one of the items; for I believe if we give up any one, the whole structure will fall about our ears, and our children will have to do the work over again which we are doing now. I wished to say these two things to the meeting, because I have laboured in this question more than twenty years, of my comparatively short life. Don't let us squabble about the meaning of the words "sacred" and "secular." Shakespeare settled that point 300 years ago, when he said:

> "Ignorance is the curse of God."
>
> "Knowledge, the wing wherewith we fly to Heaven."

All knowledge is divine, and we have only to give children a good secular education, and their children's children will have for themselves a religious education built upon it. Many people who profess to speak for the working classes have said they

were opposed to this compulsory measure. You have heard from Mr. Applegarth, and others who mix with the working classes, that they will not object to it, and I—as the representative of one of the most active educational societies in this town, the Society of Artisans, every member of which is a representative man—can assure you that the working classes will not object to it. Whenever this question has been brought before that society, they have one and all declared, in support of a national system of education, secular, voluntary, free, rate-supported, supplemented by money from the Consolidated Fund. There is no charity in going to a school supported by rates. Look at our free libraries. Every man who uses a book has contributed towards the purchase of it, and it is part of his own property, because it is the property of the town. So it will be with rate-supported schools; there is no charity. They must be secular and free.

FREE SCHOOLS.

The proceedings were resumed at half-past two, when

Mr. Alfred Field read the following paper on "Free Schools:"—England, in the higher education, may not be behind the rest of the world, but in the diffusion of a good general education England is very much behind other countries; certainly much behind Prussia, Northern Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. It is not far from the truth if we say that while in those countries every child receives a good useful education, less than half the children of England carry into life with them an education that is of any use to them. And from this statement let us not conclude that the education, of the masses of this country is half as good as that of the Germans, Swiss, or Americans. Our comparative deficiency is far greater than that; for the education of the children I am obliged to let pass as educated, in order to make up the half of the children of England, is very inferior in value, to the good average education of all the children of those nations. We deal out a meagre pittance to half our children; they give a liberal measure to all. To understand more fully why the difference is so great in the intelligence of the working classes of England, and of

those countries I have referred to, we must remember that school education is only putting tools into the hands of the young for after use in the real education of life; and in those countries the men and women, who in early life have had the doors of their minds unlocked by instruction in excellent schools, meet together in their homes and workshops, in the streets and in public places, and by intelligent, social, and political intercourse, continue, or rather really enter into, their true education. In this country our working people have no such educated families and neighbours to associate with. In America the diffusion of popular knowledge and quick intelligence, down to the very bottom of society is most astonishing to all observant travellers. And the contrast of the slow, benighted minds of our lowest class, should be a warning and strong impulse, in the cause of education, to Englishmen. You cannot discover in the United States any line of separation, or marks of distinction between the working classes and those we should suppose above them. You hear people talking in groups, on the steamboats or in the railroad carriages, with ready language and quick intelligence, with easy manners and natural politeness; and if you could learn, you would find that nearly all had been educated in the public free schools of the country, and that a good proportion of them were working men. It cannot possibly be doubted, that the foundation of this wonderful spread of popular knowledge and universally quickened intellect, is the public free school. The only way in which we can get the mass of the people of England educated, as quickly and efficiently as will meet the awakened demand of the country, is by a complete national system similar in principle to that in America. If we are to make this national system complete and sufficient, I do not think we can dispense with any one of the six points of our League. Our plan is elastic in its power of development. The beginning, of course, would be the establishment everywhere of the sadly-needed efficient primary school. We must start with primary schools. But then let each school district, as fast as it pleases, build on them a system of secondary and high schools. Ultimately, I hope, the new national school system will grow and be a complete and connected system of graded schools—primary, secondary, and high schools—all free. This system might readily be

connected with the large endowed schools of the country, and perhaps, by a system of scholarships, with the Universities. I will ask everyone to compare a complete connected system of this sort with the present schools. The voluntary and denominational system sets up separate, competitive, even hostile schools; and if you were ever to get this system developed enough to make a really good education possible to all, you would have rival schools everywhere —too many in some parts, not enough in others—and each school obliged to go to great expense to have a staff of different teachers, from the infant class, to the really educated boys and girls of 14 to 16 years old. You may have the contemptible pittance now offered to the country continued and extended, but you cannot have the good education demanded by England, out of the isolated denominational system, without enormous expense; and this heavy cost must in some way fall on the resources of the country. I appeal to everyone, acquainted with schools and education, whether, to give a good education to all the children of England, and one higher and more extended to the capable and diligent, it is not necessary that we should have a connected system of graded schools, through which the pupils shall rise by examination. As a matter of money, the difference of cost of good education for England, between one system and the other, is a difference between pounds and shillings. As a practical fact, England *cannot get* good education by the denominational system, and she can easily by a truly national system. The public school system of the United States, is a model for the general education of a people. Such a system as their graded schools—primary, secondary, and high schools—is demanded by economy, and is absolutely necessary to efficient success. And the plan of the League, not copied from them, is in truth the same in principle, but improved, I believe, in details. The Americans are the same people as ourselves, on the western side of the Atlantic instead of the eastern. What they can do we can do. It is a firm and a safe position for our League that we advocate no untried scheme, that we can point to the complete, and grand success of it in America. The public school system of the United States is the foundation of their political edifice, and is the true cause of their extraordinary industrial, and commercial prosperity. The rapid growth of wealth

in the country, the happiness and morality of its people, and the political safety of the nation, depend on the public school system. Now, I have a few words to say on the desirability of having our schools free to the scholars, and paid for out of rates supplemented by Government grants—not by voluntary contributions, and school pence. It is a necessary part of the completeness of the system that the schools should be paid for by rates. If the control of the national schools, of each school district should rest, as we think it should, with the Corporation or other local authorities, who would doubtless appoint a school committee to manage them, then the right of the Corporations to this control, would be derived from their being elected by the ratepayers, who would pay for the schools. I have tried to show that a complete, connected, organized system of graded schools is necessary to efficiency and economy; in fact, that we cannot get a good education for all the people without. It might be possible to have such an organized connected system of national schools in France, without their being under the local authorities: I do not think this is possible in England any more than in America. I think that the position that schools should be paid for by rates, is naturally connected with the other one, that they should be under the control of local authorities; and that they should be free to all, would be made easy by their being paid for by rates and Government grants. I think, first, that they should be free to all children; and, secondly, that all children should be required by law to go to the national schools, or some other school, are two conditions, independent and complementary one of the other. I cannot practically and successfully say to a man, "I will compel you to send your child to school," unless I say at the same time, "Here is a good school without charge, which belongs to you for the use of your children." On the other hand, I cannot justly say to a man, "You must pay your quota to the school-rate," unless I am able, in answer to his enquiry, also to say "that all children will now go to school; the law requires it and gives us power to compel attendance, and we will see the law carried out gently, considerately, with patient persuasion, but ultimately and as a last resourse, by force, if in some few cases it should turn out to be necessary." I can tell this ratepayer that he himself will be benc-

fited by the money he pays, that he never made so good an investment in his life, or one that will bring so good a monetary return. A commercial man myself, with almost as much personal knowledge of America as I have of England, I have often pointed out to my fellow merchants that the United States are now manufacturing and exporting to the English Colonies and the common markets of the world many articles, to a large amount, that formerly were made in this district. In doing this, the American manufacturers work under the enormous weight of nearly double the cost of the iron and steel out of which the articles are made, and nearly double the English rate of wages, to the American workmen that make them; and yet they send these articles to our English Colonies, and thus supersede those that used to be imported from Birmingham. What is the explanation? There is none other than that of the greater intelligence of the American workmen. And the foundation of this high intelligence and ductility of mind is the American public free school. Every £1,000 rightly expended for the education of the future English workmen will produce, in a very few years, a return of £10,000 to the country. Every ratepayer will receive an ample return, at an early day, in the increased material wealth of the country, of which all deserving merchants, manufacturers, tradesmen, and capitalists will get each his own share. England, to maintain her place among the nations, must educate her people. Even as a manufacturing country, to keep her place—or, rather, to check the yearly diminution of her proportion of the supply of the world, with articles above the coarsest product of low labour—England must educate her people. German merchants have been for years, and rapidly too, supplanting English goods the world over, with the products of the educated workmen of Rhenish Prussia, Saxony, and North Germany. The manufactories of the United States, have been for years sending hardware, and other manufactures to all new countries of the world in place of English goods. And whenever they get rid of the burden of an absurd protection system, the American manufacturers are destined to cover the world, with their skilfully made articles, each so intelligently suited to the purpose it is intended for. Without education, England must fall behind other nations; we

have already lost much, and we cannot begin too soon to knock off the shackles of ignorance from our workmen. On the other hand, with education, the sturdy inhabitants of the land, will make Great Britain more and more the wonderful island of the world. In this way, indirect though it may be called, I believe will the chief return come to the ratepayers, for their investment in the new national schools. But look at a more direct saving:—The ratepayers of England and Wales paid last year nearly eleven and a half millions for poor rates; the cost of the police for the year was more than two millions; the cost of the prisons for the year was more than one million;—reformatories I have left out. Put the poor rates, prisons, and police together, and the sum is more than fourteen and a half millions. Educate the people, and does not every one see, that the annual sum he will pay for the school rate will soon reduce a man's expense in poor rates, police and prison expenses? This dreadful sum—fourteen and a half millions—paid for catching and punishing our rogues and maintaining our paupers, is the shame of England. Educate your people, and in a very few years the saving out of this fourteen and a half millions, will more than pay your school rates. One proof that education will diminish crime, and therefore the expense of punishing it, is found in the ignorance of our convicted criminals. The returns of the state of education of the inmates of our gaols, for each of the two last years show, that ninety-six out of every hundred could not read or write, or only so imperfectly as to be of no use to them. In America a native-born mendicant or pauper is very rare indeed. Why is this? Mainly because all have been educated, in the public free schools of the country. Our present voluntary system is unfair: the few contributors to the expenses of the denominational schools, pay for the large number who will not give. The payment by rates will cause every man who pays rates to contribute his proportion: and by so doing he will obtain a just right to use the schools for which he pays his share. Those who are too poor to pay rates, will send their children without pay, but without the degradation of thinking they are paid for by charity. The children of the country will stream into the new national schools—all equal in the right to enter there, none oppressed with the degrading

badge of charity. The very poor, and no others, will send their children without contributing to the cost of the schools. Let me ask many excellent men, who object to our schools being free, whether this would not be a result much the same as they advocate. Every ratepayer will be interested in the schools being well conducted. A real public opinion, exactly to the purpose, will be created, and upon public opinion the character and success of the schools will essentially depend. The ratepayer will justly want to see the schools good enough to receive his own children. This will help the schools to improve; and in school districts, with many primary schools, secondary schools will soon spring up, to be followed later, probably, by a high school, belonging to several districts. Thus, many ratepayers will get their money's worth in such schools as suit their own children. But some gentlemen object, in the outset, to schools being free, saying, "Englishmen are apt to attach little value to what costs them nothing." To this objection I would reply, that at present, under the denominational system, of those who send their children to National or British Schools, none pay, in school pence, more than about one-third the cost of teaching, and the very poor are, from charity, generally paid for by others. In the system of payment by rates, all but the very poor will pay in their rates; and the very poor are now paid for in a way tending more to injure their self-respect, than the way we propose. But is it true that people do not value what they do not pay for? Englishmen value free parks, free common rights, and, what is closer to the present case, free libraries paid for out of rates, and free grammar schools. The truth is, I think, that people value anything that is good, even if they do not pay for it. The people of the United States, who are of the same stock as ourselves, value their free public schools, as their dearest birthright; yes, almost as much as they value the Union itself. I think gentlemen uttering this objection will, on a little thought, give it up. Looking at the call for education, from no higher point of view than the mere economical one, I would say that not the coal of England, not her iron, not the fields of her cultivated farms, can compare in importance even to her material wealth, with the minds of her people. In the brains of the children of this country Englishmen

will find the true mine of wealth to work in. You may work here without fear of exhausting the ore, and the wealth here contained includes all the rest.

UNSECTARIANISM.

The Rev. F. Barham Zincke, Vicar of Wherstead, Suffolk, and Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the Queen, read the following paper:—I have been requested by our Committee to lay before the members of the National Education League, at this our first general meeting, a brief summary of the reasons which have brought us to the conclusion, that the teaching of the schools we wish to see established ought to be unsectarian. By unsectarian, we mean teaching, that omits the inculcation of those particulars of religious instruction which differentiate, the conflicting sections of the religious world in this country. The reasons which have brought us to this conclusion may be readily stated. Of course, we are not satisfied with our existing schools. First, because they fail to reach large classes of our population. In this very town in which we are assembled there is a sufficient number of children of the school age, growing up uneducated, to form the population of no mean city. It is so, more or less, in every city of the kingdom, and with a very large proportion of the rural population. To go into particulars—it is so with the children of our criminal classes; it is so with that class which supplies our 1,000,000 paupers, and that still larger host which is pauperised in spirit, and on the brink of the abyss of pauperism. Take the first 100 agricultural labourers you can collect from the fields, take 100 operatives from the nearest factory, take 150,000 soldiers, or 50,000 sailors, and what, we may ask, will be the proportion, in these different sections of the community, that our present school system has effectually reached? The state of things this reveals we regard as an enormous evil, the continuance of which can be no longer tolerated. Our present denominational, and, as it is called, voluntary system—but it would be nearer the truth to call it eleemosynary,—has, after a long and fair trial, left us in this position. We believe that it has failed because it is denominational and eleemosynary. Such a system does not aim at educating the nation, and could not succeed were it to aim at doing

it. But as it has been tried, and found wanting, and as we are fully persuaded that it can never accomplish what is needed, we are driven to the conclusion that nothing can do the work except a public system; and we hold that nothing else will befit the dignity of a free, and, very properly, a proud people. A public system, of course, can only be supported by public funds, and therefore must be unsectarian; for everyone who contributes either towards the local rates, or the general taxation of the country, will have grounds for insisting, that his contributions shall not be used for the purpose of teaching what he conscientiously objects to. The compromise of our present denominational system, is a demonstration that the great majority of, at all events, the upper and middle classes of the people of this country feel in this way. Another reason for our dissatisfaction with the present system, is the insufficiency of the instruction it gives, to those whom it does, in some sort, reach. Our present theory and practice appear to come to this, that nothing is possible or desirable, for the great bulk of the people—the lower strata of the middle classes, and the working millions (setting the question of religion aside for the moment)—but a smattering of grammar. This is a natural deduction from the idea, that all that is possible or desirable in our highest education —that is, for the education of that part of the people of this country who are giving up nearly a third of their lives to school and college—is, that they should become the subjects, or the victims, of an attempt to make them classical scholars. So that when the work of education has been completed (it is so for all classes among us alike), no one thing has been taught, which has the slightest bearing on the knowledge or the thoughts of the age; which in any way fits us for the life we have to live, and the world we have to live in; or which makes us at all acquainted with the materials we shall have to work with, or which gives us any guidance for the work we shall have to do. Nothing has been taught which does at all contribute, as Bacon puts it, towards the relief of man's estate, or towards making us more manly or more godly. I use this last word, because it calls attention to the accusation, our opponents are so loud in alleging against the scientific training we wish to see imparted in our schools. For our part, we do not believe that the effect of the ac-

quaintance with Latin and Greek, and of the little grammatical instruction that is given in our existing schools, is especially religious. But we are of opinion that science, being only a knowledge of the ideas that were in the intelligence of God, before they were embodied in the objects, the operations, the forces, and the laws of nature, can never take us further from, but must always bring us nearer to, God. In short, our present aims appear to us very much like a pretence to teach something—a something, we believe, which will rarely awaken thought, and will be of inconceivably little use to any of us, just and precisely for the very purpose of hindering the teaching of something else, which would awaken thought, and which would be of very great use. We do not, then, go in for a reform of these ideas and practices, but—I hope I shall not compromise our League by the word—for a revolution. We wish to give every one an opportunity for being taught just what he will want to know. We wish to see our primary schools, teaching the whole population the instrumental parts of education—reading, writing, and ciphering—as well and as universally as these things are taught in Northern Germany, and in the New England States. And we wish to see the schools, coming next above our primary schools, aming chiefly at industrial, technical, and scientific training, and at the correct use of our mother tongue. I need not now say anything about schools of a higher grade. It is possible for us—for it is done elsewhere—to impart even to working men a very serviceable amount of this kind of knowledge, which will not only make them better workmen, and so enable us to maintain our position in the open market of the world, but will also make the recipients of this knowledge themselves, better and wiser men. Our *beau ideal* of a national system of education is, that it should be so organised as to place within the reach of every child in the country, free of all cost, the most complete and thorough training our present knowledge admits of, whatever his employment or profession is to be—whether that of an agricultural labourer, a mechanic, or a miner; whether a physician, a minister of religion, or a literary man;—and that no bounties should be given to, and special preferences shown for, any particular callings or professions, but that the circumstances of

the parents, and the disposition and aptitude of the child, should alone decide in each, case what the calling or profession is to be. The realisation of such an ideal might a few years back, have appeared quite beyond our reach; but it does not appear to be so now, at all events to the members of this League; for we fancy that we are able to catch a glimpse of it; and some approximation to it is the goal of our thoughts and efforts. Now, we see no hope of the general establishment, under the present system, of schools of the kind I have been speaking of. It is inconceivable that they will ever be established by the clergy, or by the ministers of Nonconformist congregations, who are the chief promoters and managers of our present schools. Because, then, we see no shadow of a prospect of these things being taught in our present denominational schools, which have been established for quite a different object, we advocate the establishment of another set of schools without any sectarian objects, which, as they will be partly supported by local funds, will be managed by persons who will be interested in having these things taught. This is the conclusion we come to, when we regard the schools from the point of view that will be taken, by those who will pay for them. We come to the same conclusion, if we look at them from the point of view that will be taken by those who are to use them. They must be equally free to all. No hindrance must be interposed, which would be an obstacle to their being used by any member of the community. Now, the inculcation in the schools, of denominational differences would be a hindrance of this kind. From our wish, therefore, to make the schools equally open to all, we would not have anything taught in them, to which any Christian people do conscientiously object. We are all of opinion that as things now are (we believe that it will not always be so), in some cases some form or degree of compulsion, to secure attendance will be necessary. Things have now come to such a pass, that the security and well-being of society demand this. As we have already noticed, with a yearly aggregate of 125,000 committals, with more than 1,000,000 paupers, and with a still vaster host on the brink of pauperism; and with multitudes among us who do not know the name of the reigning Sovereign, or of the Saviour of the World, and who

derive their only ideas of right and wrong from the policeman; and with our agricultural labourers, in a condition intellectually so degraded, that the most sanguine politicians among us forbear to demand for them the franchise, we think this necessary. But we trust that, like the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act in Ireland, the necessity for compulsion will be temporary. The late extension of the franchise, which places political power largely in the hands of the uneducated, confirms us in our view of this necessity. But, of course, the question of compulsion cannot be for a moment entertained, so long as we have no other than our present denominational schools. We cannot compel the children of Nonconformists to attend the rector's or vicar's school; and the children of Episcopalians anti-prelatical schools. The attempt could not be made. These converging reasons, then, oblige us to advocate unsectarian education in the schools we aim at establishing. But we have not arrived at this conclusion, without having carefully weighed the consequences of what we propose. We have looked into the facts which bear on the consideration of the question, and have estimated the *pros* and *cons* of the arguments that deal with its probabilities; and, having done this, we have found no grounds for apprehension. The great and conspicuous facts contributed by past and contemporary history are easily stated, and will be easily understood. In Italy and Spain—the countries in which, whatever education there may have been, has been most completely of the kind, advocated by the supporters of our denominational system—the result has not been good as regards literature, science, and, above all, as regards religion itself. The example of France, as far as the education of the people of that country has been in the hands of the clergy, points to the same conclusion. There, too, the reaction against religion appears to be in the ratio of the force religion has brought to bear, in the manner we are now speaking of, upon the minds of the young. I should not think it worth while to recall the fact, that the most celebrated pupil of the Jesuits was Voltaire, were it not that the spirit of Voltaire is so common among Frenchmen. Every one will understand that there is no question about bringing up children without religion; the only question is as to the best way of making a

people religious. The lesson we are taught by the experience of Prussia is on the same side. There the Government has made religious instruction, according to a certain formula, a part of the school course. Again we ask what has been the result? Upon this very question, we have lately had a discussion in the columns of the *Times*, which has left pretty distinctly impressed upon us one fact, at all events—that in Prussia the attempt to teach religion in the school, according to a definite formulary has been a signal and complete failure. The reason is not far to seek. It is impossible to teach religion in this way. Neither you, nor I, nor anybody else, would be disposed in favour of doctrines forced upon us in this way. Religion is not the child of drill and compulsion. I pass from Northern Germany to another great country, where, fortunately for the purposes of this inquiry, the two systems are brought into the closest and most distinct contrast. The fruits of the one are seen, side by side with the fruits of the other. In the United States of America a large proportion of the population are German immigrants, who were brought up under the school system just mentioned. Throughout the North and the great West, they are everywhere living intermingled with the native population, who have all been brought up in what we should call unsectarian schools. It thus becomes easy to judge, upon which of these two people religion has the greater hold. In the winter of 1867-68, I travelled through the Union, with the exception of the Pacific States. Among other matters, my attention was naturally very much directed to whatever had any bearings on the religious question. I frequently heard native Americans speaking of the absence, as it appeared to them, of the religious element in the character of their German fellow citizens; while at the same time, I everywhere saw clear evidence of the strong religious feeling of the native population, brought up, almost to a man, as I just noticed, not merely in unsectarian, but in secular schools. Wherever I went I saw and inspected schools of this kind, and no others—on the Prairies of the West, and the Rocky Mountains, as well as in Massachusetts. But the first buildings that met my eyes, almost in every place, were the churches—at Denver, beyond the Prairies and the Plains, and further on, in the little mining towns in the Rocky Mountains, as

much as in Boston itself. And we must remember, that these churches have been built, and that their Ministers are supported by those, who were all the while very busy in clearing away the forest, and reclaiming the wilderness, and raising the first shelter for man. As a general rule in the country I am speaking of, where all the schools are secular, the foundations of the homestead and of the House of God, are laid simultaneously. I believe—though of course no one can be in a position to prove it—that a larger amount of money is raised every year, by voluntary contributions for religious purposes in the United States, than over the whole continent of Europe. Those who question our conclusion will have to convince us that, notwithstanding these facts, the Continental school system is more conducive to the interests of religion than the American. What we want them to do is to disprove, or if they are unable to do this, to bring into harmony with their theory, the assertion, that in those countries in which their plan has been most thoroughly carried out, there exists the greatest amount of hostility to religion; while in that great country in which education is most throughly secular, more so than in any other country in the world, more money is voluntarily given for religious purposes, and the ministers of religion are held in higher estimation, than in any other part of Christendom. But we are not without experience ourselves on this question. Generally speaking, our schools are denominational; and, again speaking generally, the class which in the towns is most largely indebted to them for its education, is that of the artisans. Now, if the theory of our opponents is the true one, we ought to see the good results of it here. But what is the fact? We have been told again and again, that there is no other class in the community which has strayed so largely, and so far from the fold in which they were brought up. Take a large London national school, under the shadow of an imposing London Church. I take it for granted that the greater part of the scholars, are either children of artisans or, if not, still will be brought up to some handicraft. We may ask how many of those, who have been brought up in that school are ever seen in that Church? and what is the expectation in this matter, respecting those who are now in the school? It can, then,

hardly be the results of our present system, which make any of us desirous of maintaining it. We have another domestic instance in the case of the Irish Roman Catholics, who for many generations have maintained their religion, as no other people in Europe have done, in consequence, not of the aid, but of the neglect, and even the hostility of the State. Facts of this kind lead us to the conclusion, that in advocating unsectarian schools, we are most assuredly not acting in hostility to religion. I will only make one more remark. All these schools will be day schools. The children will, therefore, be still living at home. The parents will thus have, in the morning and evening of each day, and during the whole of Saturday and Sunday, as much opportunity as probably they have at present, for bringing up their children religiously. The Sunday school will supply similar opportunities to the clergy, and other religiously-disposed persons. We know that there will always be parents, who will be living immoral and irreligious lives; but in the case of the children even of such parents as these, we do not think that any advantage would result from the teaching of the schools, being of a sectarian character. Of course, no one supposes for a moment that there will be any irreligious, or anti-Christian instruction, given in any school in the kingdom supported by public money, and under the joint supervision of a Government inspector, and of a local board of management. I will sum up in half a dozen words the different arguments I have been laying before you—we cannot get what we want without unsectarian teaching; and we see no reason for supposing that evil consequences of any kind will result from it.

SECULAR EDUCATION.

The Hon. AUBERON HERBERT read the following paper on "Secular Education":—In asking that national education should be unsectarian—that is, unconnected with the teaching of any creed—we shall all recognize the obligation of considering gravely if, under such a system, the moral and spiritual life of the people will suffer injury. With such a feeling in my mind, I shall try to show that it is not merely the readiest way of dealing with our religious difficulties, but that it is to be desired in itself, as the system under

which the office that the State, and the office that ministers of religion hold in trust for the people, will be better understood and better discharged. There still exists amongst us some confusion of thought on this subject. We have formed the habit of looking upon morality as the property, the special province of the clergy. If this were a just view—as morality is of all things the most important—then the present denominational system would be very incomplete, the system of the middle ages, and Dr. Manning's teaching of to-day would be right, and all education ought to be placed in the hands of the Churches. But morality is not to be enclosed within such narrow bounds. Morality is of the home, and the street, and the public building, as much as of the Church and the class-room. Its limits, its tendencies, its developments are not determined by a class amongst us, but by the action of all those mixed intelligences which form society. The professional teachers have always conformed, and must conform, to the climate of opinion that grows round them. Even the seat of infallibility itself cannot rise above this influence, and thanks to "modern Liberalism," which it excommunicates, the syllabus of to-day is milder than the syllabus of earlier ages. If, then, morality is in no fashion a class-property, who are to be responsible for the teaching of it? I answer, the State, for that which concerns the State; our Churches, for that which concerns the Churches. Both have duties of teaching morality, though their appeal lies to different sanctions. The State has simply to deal with the relations of man to man; the minister of religion deals not only with these, but with the relations of man to God. It may, however, be urged that the relations of man to man are too vague, to be a matter of teaching. I reply, that the State has never yet found them too vague to be a matter of punishment; and he who is an awarder of punishment, is bound to know why he punishes, is bound to act on principles which he can clearly explain, and which, when explained, will command the moral consent of those who obey. How shall the State do this? I answer, by giving to every child a clear conception, of the fact of his existence as a member of society, and of the birth with him of obligations which limit his actions towards others; by leading him to understand what law is—to understand the necessity that where men and women

live together they should live under law, and the spirit and intentions of the laws, which a civilized community imposes on itself. It must show him that the happiness of society, its power of progression, its power of enjoying higher pleasures, impose on its members many obligations—obligations of truthful speech, of upright dealing, of respect for feelings as well as rights—obligations which cannot be neglected, without somewhere inflicting injury upon that society which he is learning to place higher than his own individual existence. Under such teachings the social bond will pass from the region of phrases, and become to our children as they grow up a distinct and living reality. The State will no longer be to them a power existing outside of themselves, a machine of resistless force for imposing burdens, and inflicting penalties; but duties owed to the State will be duties owed to themselves, and slowly, after many centuries, but safely in the end, for them if not for us, the neglected facts of a common humanity will emerge out of the differences of class and sect. Such is the office of the State as regards moral teaching, an office which it cannot rightly place out of its own hands. The minister of religion appeals above, and beyond these earthly sanctions. It is his, to lead us to form the largest and noblest conceptions of God, and of God's dealings; to teach us to know the depth of that spiritual nature which is within us, and the never-ceasing consolation we may draw from it. The last minutes of my time, shall be given to consider the influence which an unsectarian system of education, would exert upon the teachings of the churches. These teachings would not be diminished; for those who labour for the spread of any religious belief would be freed from all anxiety and responsibility, as regards the other parts of education, and would be able to devote all their energy to their special work. By the side of the State education there would grow up, as in America, a great religious organization, voluntary in management, voluntary in attendance, and taking great hold of the mind of the people. Still greater would be the influence of the system, upon the spirit of the teaching. As the State assumes an attitude of perfect toleration and impartiality, refusing to disavow the unity of national life, refusing to believe that those things which divide are stronger than those which unite, I cannot doubt

that the religious teachings of this country, will be affected by the example of the State, and gain in breadth and charity. Do not let us hide from ourselves the fact, that the religious teachings of to-day must pass through the fire, and all that is narrow and intolerant—all that is superstitious, all that fears the light, must be burnt from them, if in the future they are to command the strongest minds, and to act with a living force upon the consciences of the people. That this may come to pass, that the spiritual life amongst us may be freer and purer, the State must faithfully discharge its own duties, and leave the churches to discharge theirs. A country whose churches are built upon the belief, (I quote the words) "that every individual must find his separate way to God by the use of his own intellect and conscience," cannot make a State-lesson of the teaching of any church. But one thing it owes to every church, and that is to act in the belief, that great national measures, across the face of which a people's unity, and a people's toleration for every belief and opinion are written in plain characters, are religious lessons, which, however silently, reach all hearts and influence all lives. I ought to add to this paper an explanation of a practical character. I have tried to show that unsectarian education is not irreligious in its influence, I have tried to show that it is the best form of national education; but let it be understood that I do not wish to displace the present system. All that I ask is, that the State should frankly recognize the unsectarian system, allowing it to be introduced, first, where the inhabitants of a district desire the system, and decide to rate themselves; secondly, where a district fails to supply itself with proper school accomodation, and is required to rate itself, by the central office or the district board. Where schools on the new and old system come together in the same district, I confess my belief that the old schools must give up children's pence, as a condition of existence; but if the State grant be raised, as Mr. Dixon proposes, to two-thirds of the total expenses, school managers will have only to raise about the same sum as at present, which is not an unfair tax for continuing the luxury of denominational teaching. If all existing denominational schools, are wise enough to accept a satisfactory conscience clause, Government inspection, and a

registry of school attendance, they have probably a long life before them; as long, indeed, as their own vitality lasts. English-wise, we wish, if it be possible, to work out the new pattern, without destroying the threads of the old warp.

MISCONCEPTIONS AS TO SECULAR INSTRUCTION.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake read a paper entitled "Misconceptions as to Secular Instruction." He said: In public life it sometimes happens that particular persons excite terror and apprehension, yet when the nation comes to know them, they are found to be wise and pacific counsellors. The same thing often occurs with debatable terms. A particular phrase is regarded with hasty distrust, which, should it be looked at dispassionately, would be found to indicate exactly what the nation is in want of. Such a phrase is secular instruction. For all the purposes of national education, it is sufficient to define secular instruction, as that kind of instruction which pertains to the efficiency of the workman and the duties of the citizen; instruction which must be given, and given with very great distinctness, or the working class will be cheated of that knowledge which can alone make them creditable and intelligent members of the State, able to acquit themselves in the international competition, destined to grow fiercer in coming years. Now, the term secular in no way denies or questions that spiritual education which, in proper time and place, can, in the opinion of most persons, inculcate yet higher motives to nobleness, and peradventure conduct to the knowledge of God. That knowledge which is secular is not, as many imagine, necessarily opposed to that which is religious. It is merely distinct from it. It merely ignores that which stands outside its province. Just as mathematics ignores chemistry and does not assail it; just as jurisprudence ignores geology, but does not deny it; so that which is secular, stands apart from theology, but neither denies nor assails it. In this sense, and in this sense alone, I, who have elsewhere given special currency to the term, have always defined and explained it. It is true that some persons, not understanding the integrity of the term, have used it in a confusing way; but I take it, that the educated instinct of gentlemen is to employ a term

in its intrinsic signification, and not to insist upon an interpretation of it, founded upon its obvious abuse. All that the advocates of secular instruction ask is, that the education given at the cost of the State shall relate to the duties exacted by the State; and these duties are, that the workman shall be able to maintain his family, to pay whatever taxes are levied upon him, give no trouble to the police, make no demands upon the parish, and fight generally whomsoever the Government may see fit to involve us in war with. Whatever knowledge is necessary, to enable the future workman to do these things is his right, and should be given him in the speediest manner; and any other inculcation which shall delay this knowledge on its way, or confuse the learner in acquiring it, is a loss to the State and a peril to the child. It is in the interest of public economy, that secular instruction should be given by order, and religious instruction by option. Anyone who has had experience of the working class, knows that what they suffer most from is confusion of mind. They cannot see one thing at a time. They mix up other considerations with the case in hand. They judge the question before them, in the light of something else. This is the source of that weakness and prejudice, which often make them so impracticable. This habit of the untrained mind, instead of being corrected, has been confirmed by that mixed education, that confusion of things sacred and secular, which charity and misconception, have made the rule in this country. In Parliament, that member alone is regarded as competent, and as not wasting the time of the House, who can discern what the point before it is, and who can keep to it when he does. We want this power in the workshop. The national scheme which is not going to impart it, is going to waste the money of the ratepayer. Mixed education makes muddle-minded scholars. To acquire only what you need to know, to think out one thing at a time, to keep separate things distinct in the mind, is economy in learning, and is the shortest path to efficiency. The nation is busy, and the people have no money or time to spare, and the State is bound to adopt the speediest and cheapest transit to public knowledge. No one has a right to stand in the way of this, in the presence of a nation ignorant and struggling; and struggling because

it is ignorant. Many demur to secular knowledge because they do not know why it is wanted, nor perceive what it will do. They forget, that in England every inch of ground has a proprietor. Not a fish in the river, not a bird in the air, hardly a flower on the bank, but has an owner. A mechanic, as a rule, finds that employment comes by chance, and wages by caprice. He must not steal, or conspire, or fight. Secular sense and secular skill, are the only usable weapons which can keep him from the poorhouse. Piety, ever so conspicuous, scarcely fetches any price in the market. The most devout employer, adjusts the wages he gives according to the swiftness and expertness of his workmen. There is no creed, the profession of which will induce the Chancellor of the Exchequer to remit the assessed taxes, or the magistrate to excuse the non-payment of local rates. The State, therefore, is bound to expend the public money in productive knowledge, and the only knowledge which is productive is secular; and this knowledge the State is bound in prudence and justice to give to the people. But this knowledge, which will mercifully aid the children of the workman, will make them clear-minded and grateful; and gratitude and intelligence, are the fairest of all the handmaids of reverence. With secular instruction, religion will acquire freshness and new force. The clergyman and the minister, will exercise a new influence, because their ministrations will have dignity and definiteness. They will no longer delegate things declared by them to be sacred, to be taught second-hand by the harassed, over-worked, and oft reluctant schoolmaster and schoolmistress, who must contradict the gentleness of religion by the peremptoriness of the pedagogue, and efface the precept that "God is love," by an incontinent application of the birch. An enemy of religion would prescribe exactly this course, if he sought to make it distasteful, and terrorful to the child. It is not secular instruction which breeds irreverence, but this ill-timed familiarity with the reputed things of God, which robs divinity of its divineness. There is one advantage of the secular rule of instruction which might commend it to all earnest men. So long as religion is taught apart from school instruction, and with optional attendance, it will matter little whether it is "sectarian" or not. Sectarianism is not a sin, when it ceases to be intolerant. It is then

but that honest form of faith, which best supplies the wants of the soul professing it. To reduce religion to an impossible generalization of the Bible, and the mere belief in God—creating a sort of Parliamentary piety (which is what is meant by "unsectarianism")—is to efface the individuality of devotion, which makes religion picturesque and passionate, and is harder for the earnest believer to accept than secular instruction, which meddles intentionally neither with his faith, nor his conscience. The last misconception relates to the extent of this question. A magnitude is imputed to it which does not exist. We are not dealing with education in its full sense at all. That means the sum of all those influences of home, and church, and society, which form the individual character. The State never proposes to deal with these. The scheme before us does not contemplate it, and would have no power to effect it if it did. All we ask is, that in every district in England, the children of the working class shall surely get as good an intellectual training, as the children of the working class can get in any country in the world. This can be given in a few hours a day—in a few years of every child's life. This is the extent of the scheme proposed by this League. Secular instruction, if adopted, will deal, during that brief term, merely with the mechanical routine of elementary knowledge, and the passionless facts of science; while it leaves in all the other years, and during all other times, the young learner to the teachers of religion, whose province is that side of human nature which comes in contact with the infinite; where emotions arise which colour life for evermore, and passions are stirred which pertain to eternity, by the side of which, most men deem all that pertains to this life minor and transitory. Should we succeed to the utmost of our wishes, the State-student will still be under the far-reaching influences of the nurse, the mother, and the minister; churches and chapels will still exist, and Sunday schools will still remain open, and able to confine themselves to Sunday knowledge, which will have distinctive value then. Household piety will still prevail, with an interest which it now lacks; theologians will still write, and their literature still cover the land; the institutions and character of the country will still be Christian, and in a more self-respecting and genial sense than now. Splendid philanthropy will still illus-

trate the human tenderness of Christ. Nothing will have been changed, except that the nation will have added intelligence to its greatness. The brain of the common people will be cleared and trained, and every working father and mother, will thank with grateful heart that State which has given their children the priceless blessing of self-defensive knowledge.

DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS, Honorary Secretary, read a paper which had been prepared by Mr. H. J. Slack, and in which the "principle" of Denominational Schools was examined. Mr. Slack, in his paper said :—As powerful parties in this country, holding various and opposite opinions upon theological subjects, have pronounced in favour of what is called the "Denominational System of National Education," an accurate investigation of the principles of such a scheme, and of the consequences which flow therefrom, is urgently needed. An objection of some force might be taken, at starting, to the illogical linking together of the two distinct things designated by the words, "Denominational" and "National." In a country in which a multiplicity of denominations flourish, and divide society into numerous parties, that which is *denominational* stands in obvious contrast to that which is *national*. Considered from the point of theological classification, to be *denominational* is to be *sectarian*, and if regarded from a purely social or political point of view, it is to be *sectional*, and though the nation comprehends all its subordinate divisions, it cannot be confounded with them ; and it should be remembered that large masses of people do not range themselves in definite ranks, and that consequently the whole of the denominations is a much smaller quantity than the whole of the people. It is not customary to consider any church as a national church, unless it is the special object of a State patronage not accorded to other churches. If it merely stands as one amongst many religious bodies, all of which receive State aid in proportion to their numbers, it would be regarded as the church of a larger or smaller section of the community, as the case might be, and any such institution having the support of the majority to-day, might, from change of opinion, represent only a minority to-morrow.

In countries where various religious communities receive State pay, the term "concurrent endowment" designates the kind of relation that is thus established. In like manner, an educational system in which various bodies, holding distinctive opinions, all received pecuniary support from the general taxation of the country, would be one of "concurrent endowment;" and if differences of theological creed separated these bodies from each other, the Government which supported, or helped to support all, would act quite as much upon the plan of "concurrent endowment of religions," as if, instead of providing funds towards mingling reading and writing with particular creeds, it gave the same amount of money towards the church services of each sect. The denominational schoolmaster, who is engaged to teach particular theological propositions as well as to conduct the ordinary secular studies of a school, is, if not the priest, at least the minister, of the sect employing him; and as his two functions would be intimately blended, it would be a mere subterfuge to say that State aid was given to him for his arithmetic without his catechism; not for his doctrines of salvation, but his rule-of-three. If the State aid took the form of local rates, levied throughout the country, by order of an Imperial Act of Parliament, and upon general principles of assessment, the Government by which the scheme was carried out, would compel each ratepayer to contribute to the support of other folks' religions, whether he liked them or not. The Evangelical Dissenter would be compelled to contribute towards teaching, in the schools of the Roman Catholics, what he conscientiously believed to be soul-destroying errors; the Trinitarian would give his subscription towards inculcating the doctrines of the Unitarian, and each party, in turn, would find its conscience and its pocket oppressed with the burden of sustaining doctrines it denied and opinions it deemed to be mischievous and absurd. To be consistent in legislation, State aid for teaching various kinds of theology in denominational schools ought to be supplemented by similar aid, if required, to support the same sorts of theology in churches or chapels. When, under the name of "concurrent endowment," it was recently proposed to do this in Ireland, an overwhelming mass of public opinion decided against it, and, indeed,

if the nation had been in favour of the principle it involved, we should not in this country have arrived at the abolition of compulsory church rates; but our Legislature would have arranged that if Dissenters paid for the theology of Churchmen, Churchmen should make all square by paying for dissenting theology a proportionate sum. The reason why compulsory church rates have been abolished, and why the Irish Protestant Church has been disestablished, is that a strong conviction has arisen amongst the majority of thinkers, that it is morally wrong for the State to arrogate to itself the power of choosing a religion for the people, inasmuch as this is a matter in which each man's own conscience and intellect should be his guides. But if religion is so left to the conscience and intellect of individuals, no one can, without violation of the principle of such an arrangement, be compelled to pay in any shape towards the support of a multiplicity of theologies differing from his own. That everybody should be called upon to support everybody else's creed, is not a doctrine of liberty, but a proposal of despotism, and it is none the better because the compulsory aid is to take effect in one building called a school, instead of in another called a church. No one who admits the principle which led to the disestablishment of the Irish Church, can dispute the position taken by the Roman Catholics, that the State ought to do for them, in proportion to their numbers, what it does in the way of benefit for other religious bodies; and if all the theological sects were equally endowed for educational purposes, the State would still have to meet the claims of secularists, and of those who decline to register themselves under any denominational formula. When we consider the fact admitted by all sects, that great masses of the working class, especially in large towns, are in this position, the magnitude of this question becomes apparent; and if we pass from masses of men to distinguished individuals, the names will at once occur to our minds of philosophers standing high in various departments of scientific enquiry, who do not belong to any existing church. Hitherto the denominational system, has not been associated with any direct legislative compulsion to attend the schools; but the country is obviously tending to the belief, that the State must pro-

tect and safeguard the right of the child to education, even when the parent desires to keep it away from instruction. Compulsory education cannot be justly resorted to, unless religious liberty, that is, perfect freedom upon speculative questions—is well protected from aggression. Religious liberty is based upon the right of private judgment, while the denominational teaching of the young is intended to produce a strong bias, in favour of what those who employ it believe to be true. In chemistry or astronomy, a professor does not hesitate to tell his pupils frankly, that upon certain questions the opinions of men of learning differ, nor does he shrink from explaining the grounds upon which diverging or contradictory theories are held; but would any denominational schoolmaster be allowed to show why historical critics, philological scholars, or geologists, doubted or denied the particular propositions he was paid to teach? Those who, upon grounds of critical inquiry, reject the propositions of orthodoxy, ought not to be parties towards compelling the orthodox to support their heresy in the schoolroom; and if Dean Close, for example, cannot be justly deprived of his shillings or pounds for an institute in which Huxley or Tyndall might lecture, ought they or their followers to be mulcted for a kind of education in which their labours are spoken of in the following terms:—"There was no question that there is in the present day an evil spirit of the 'bottomless pit' rising up among us, poisoning God's truth, poisoning the faith of thousands, and turning them away from godliness; and he was bound to say he laid a large portion of it at the door of science. Did not philosophers at the present day, dig out of the bowels of the earth evidences against God? Did they not seek in the heavens, in nations, and in languages, every means to shake our faith in the Bible? How fearful and how humbling a thing it was, that there were those who would venture to overturn the whole Bible narrative of the creation of man, which involved man's salvation by Christ, and would prefer any dream, however foolish or vain, to the faithful testimony of God respecting the origin of our species! He was bold to say that in all the dreams of Hindoos, and all the false religions—corrupted, degraded, and ridiculous—that were ever amusing among the Pagans, there were none so frivolous and childish

as those, unto which the science of the present day had reduced our scientific men." This passage is not quoted for the pleasure of raising a laugh at its absurdity, but because the learned ecclesiastic who uttered it is, to speak in natural history phraseology, a remarkably fine specimen of a species, considerable in numbers and tolerably wide in the area of its distribution. All the members of this religious species would have a right, under the denominational system, to State aid in frightening their pupils with bug-a-boo pictures of the horrors of science, and the wickedness of scientific men. It may be said, that a "conscience clause" would be a sufficient protection against theological aggression, but this is emphatically contradicted by facts. At a recent Conference of the Wesleyans, a body which carefully avoids separating itself from the Established Church, much complaint was made of the persecution to which Wesleyan children were subjected at National Schools, on account of their attending the Sunday schools of the Chapel instead of those of the Church; and where a school was founded upon a theological basis, children who were not subjected to its theological teachings, would occupy a position inferior to those who were. The denominational system directly tends to brand, with the stigma of inferiority children and their parents who do not belong to the most influential sect of the locality. In Ireland the Protestant child would be subjected to this injury in the Romish school, if he attended one, on account of there being no other in the neighbourhood; and in other places the children of Romanists, Jews, and Dissenters in general, would come under the ban. In rural districts of England the social distinction between pupils of the British, and pupils of the National Schools, is painfully apparent. The park of the lord or squire receives the little Nationals at their annual holiday, and "county families" assist at their cricket or kiss-in-the-ring. The small "Britishers" may look through the palings, but as they did not learn the right catechism, they must not enjoy the fun. The Government, as the guardian of political and social interests, is bound, upon the principles of civil and religious liberty, to permit nothing, that can encourage odious distinctions in any school that it supports. So long as education was left to voluntaryism, there was some excuse for aiding sectarian schools; but to have made that

system approximately fair, secular schools should have had equal rights with denominational establishments. Voluntaryism has been found insufficient in supplying school accommodation, and it is generally believed that attendance at some school should be made compulsory; and would it not inflict a great wrong upon the people, if they were obliged to send their children to schools in which, in any shape or way, a theological test was applied to discriminate and separate the beloved sheep of any orthodoxy, from the suspected goats of any heresy? In large towns, schools of all kinds, from Romanist to secular, would be established, and there would be considerable choice; but in smaller places much hardship could not fail to occur. Large-minded reformers, anxious for human brotherhood, and wishing that the progress we are making towards democracy, should be accompanied by circumstances of safety to society, and good-will amongst men, desire that the schoolroom should be free from envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. The honours of that place should go exclusively to merit of conduct, and proficiency of study; no child should be made ashamed or uncomfortable on account of his father's opinions, or lack of opinions, on subjects of theological speculation; no child should imbibe lessons of sectarian hatred, or be encouraged to think himself better than another child, because he had been taught something different about creed or catechism. Let voluntaryism provide all the theological divisions it believes to be useful, and keep them in their right place; let the State deal with a larger question of human culture, adapted to the people as a whole.

FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

Captain Maxse, R.N., read a paper, of which the following is an abstract, on "Free and Compulsory Elementary Education." He commenced by saying that he was the representative of a branch which was in course of formation in South Hants, to co-operate with the League; and he had long been an advocate of compulsory gratuitous elementary education. He proceeded: First, I should like to say a word or two about the term *secular*, as applied to the movement. In its *best* sense, I myself, am prepared to accept this designation of—what I hope, gentle-

men of Birmingham, you will allow me now to call—*our* scheme: in its ignoble sense, as implying irreverence, or gross worldliness, I utterly repudiate it. If by "secular" is meant of *this* world, as in contrast to another one, I reply, that what is of this world is *of* God, and I denounce as mischievous and unwarrantable the arbitrary distinction, that an attempt is made to establish between the spiritual and the earthly. I believe that it is intended, provided we are *worthy* of the intention, that human nature shall be elevated in *this* world; and that it depends entirely upon ourselves whether we, the English, are to assist in this elevation, or are to be pushed aside by a stronger race, better fitted for progress than we, more resolute to fulfil the nobler aspirations of human nature. I wish to see children, taught, first to *live*, as the most religious duty that they can discharge, taught to live in *this* world for the ennobling of themselves and others, taught that the greater portion of human misery is the result of human error, taught that we *can* be better if we try to be better with courage, with faith, and with inflexible honesty. I believe there is little hope for us in life until we place morality upon a solid basis; until we learn that it is best to be good for its own sake; until we learn that evil, as evil, is the cause of misery to ourselves and others, and realize (I fortify myself by a quotation from Locke) that "To love truth for truth's sake is the principal part of human perfection in this world, and the seed-plot of all virtues." The object of this League is simply to teach the "comprehensible" to all neglected children; to save them from despair, degradation, and death, by placing about every child *some* moral influence, giving them the opportunity of distinguishing between right and wrong, and by securing to all persons in the realm the additional means of livelihood which, in a civilized community, is represented by familiarity with letters and numbers. A movement having such an object as this, I can only regard as a profoundly religious one. In the interest of religion, not less than in the interest of the national cause we advocate, there is but one course to adopt, (and this course is a sorrowful course for some, but they must remember we are pressed to it by a still more sorrowful condition;) it is, to stand respectfully aside from Bible reading, not less than from the use of the Catechism. Nevertheless, I desire myself to

see some reverential attitude on the part of State schools, in relation to the Unknown Power, and I believe this might be fulfilled by drawing up a daily prayer, which would satisfy every shade of religious opinion. If, however, this cannot be done, I am ready to acknowledge the necessity of confining ourselves strictly to secular education. And how much this means! It means giving sight to the blind, and limbs to the maimed. I hold, myself, that whoever is permitted to grow up, without having had the opportunity of learning to read and write, has a direct grievance, not only against his parents, but also against the State. "In a civilized community reading and writing may be regarded as supplementary senses. Not a few of us would hesitate, if the alternative were suddenly presented of losing a sense, such as the sense of hearing, or of losing the faculty of reading. Who is there among us, who would assume the responsibility of destroying a sense? Is there much less in neglecting to provide for the liberation of a faculty, manifestly equal to it in value? It should never be forgotten that the higher our civilization, the greater becomes our responsibility towards the poor. Civilization means luxury, comfort, and security for all of us; but, I fear, only rigour for those who have to provide the necessaries of life. The advantage of quitting a natural state is great, for those who are able to command food—hardly so for those who have to obtain it. Therefore, the Government of a civilized State assumes, or *should* assume, a responsibility towards the indigent, in direct proportion to the degree of its civilization. It is for those responsible—for those who, in a free country, frame public opinion—to see that the disadvantage the poor are placed under by civilization, is reduced to a minimum; and the *least* acknowledgment of this duty is to provide for, and secure the liberation of what I have called the supplementary senses. This does not in the least imply that the poor man or labourer is to be given learning, the latter is for himself to achieve; he is to receive only the instrument to it, to be given his hearing, not to be provided with music. I hardly think myself that we have the *right* to protect property, if we do not make known to everyone the reason why property should be sacred, and this can only be done through education. It seems to me that, as we advance in civilization, the one anxious problem we

have to deal with is, how to preserve the food-getting condition of the poor. A speaker at the Social Science Congress, the other day, said that the misery with which we are surrounded is not the result of ignorance, but is the result of poverty. And is not ignorance one of the causes of poverty—one of the *main* causes? It is owing to ignorance that the labour-market is overstocked. The men who are unable to read and write, are prohibited from entering any calling but that of mere manual labour. How often do we hear it said of some good agricultural labourer "The worst of it is, he is no scholar;" the scholarly attainment in request being, perhaps, to decipher an invoice of drain pipes, or sum up the productions of a dairy. I am quite aware of Mr. Herbert Spencer's views on the subject of education, and I have listened respectfully to Mr. Fawcett's objection to free education as relieving the parents of proper responsibility. Nevertheless, I remain an advocate of gratuitous education. I do not believe that the majority of the parents we require to reach are in a position to exercise responsibility. I know that Mr. Fawcett would leave power to school managers to supply education gratis, when the parents are destitute and unable to pay, on much the same principle as food is supplied under the poor-law; but I cannot help thinking that there would be some invidious distinction arising from this system; the establishment of a class that would be termed a pauper class, of which all callous and improvident parents, would avail themselves at the expense of the provident. I have never advocated myself the State's providing, *free*, more than elementary education. I believe that directly parents are in a position to afford the indulgence of feeling responsibility, on the educational head, they will remove their children from the public to the private and higher school. My experience tells me that the responsibility of education is *now* evaded by parents who can afford to educate their children. I constantly find parents availing themselves of "National School" education at the (to them) nominal expense of 1d. or 2d. per week, which school is mainly supported by others, not for them, but for the very poor. I would do nothing to weaken the responsibility that should exist on the part of parents to their children. I recognise the force of the argument, that parents should not summon beings into the

world without being able to provide for them, and I by no means desire to see the individual gradually perish in the State; but we must not demand too much, we must not insist on an ideal conception of parental duty for those who have not the means, or the prospect of the means, of fulfilling it. To do so, would, in my opinion, afford but too ready an excuse for society to return to its fatal slumber. I would add, that the right to be instructed in the language of civilization offers the opportunity, which must be seized, of supplying higher teaching. We can hardly teach how to read and write, without imparting some rudimentary knowledge, without teaching, I am happy to think, some of the facts of the universe, and expounding reverentially some of the miracles of nature that are ever at hand, whether exemplified in the anatomy of a tree leaf, or expressed in the infinite immensity of the heavens. Finally, we have the opportunity of awakening the conscience to a sense of right and wrong. This briefly represents my idea of education for the people. Call the process secular if you like, call it undenominational if you please—call it what you will—it must remain neither more nor less, than noble and exalting. Perhaps you will let me here offer a word or two upon my own experience, of the effect of a compulsory education proposal among working men; it will serve to supplement the larger experience of Mr. Applegarth. I was one of the candidates at the general election for the representation of Southampton, a town, as you are aware, far south. My own pet subject, at every meeting, and upon every possible occasion during a long house-to-house canvass was, not the "glorious principles of our noble constitution," *but* compulsory education. I do not believe the idea had ever been broached before, certainly it had never been prominently broached before. It was not long after I had commenced, that one or two leaders of the party, who were conversant with the working class feeling, were saying to me, "Go on speaking about education, it takes wonderfully; I should stick to that idea;" and so on. I always felt myself, that I struck a truly popular chord; the response upon this subject was more fevent than upon any other. The simple explanation is, that the working classes have common sense, and that we have only to appeal to this on subjects which concern them, to secure ultimately their hearty allegiance.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. Edmond Beales, of London, most heartily congratulated the President and all the Council of the League—if that congratulation was of any value—upon their admirable commencement of the great work which they had set themselves to accomplish. The fundamental principle of the League appeared to be this, that every one of those two millions of children, now without instruction, should be educated, and that the frightful state of things which they now saw, in the punishment of persons for the violation of laws which they had never been taught to know or respect, should cease to exist. The fruitful evils now resulting from the fact of so many children being uneducated, was a shame and a disgrace to any Christian country. The principle of the League was, that their system, supported as it would be, partly by Government grants, and partly by local rates, should be free and wholly unsectarian, as it necessarily must be. He held that Christian morality was the highest of all morality; that no philosophy which ever existed, could find an adequate substitute for it, and that the Gospel of Christ was the best possible means of making a man wise, just, honest, and virtuous. Still, he could never for the life of him understand, how to teach a child to read and write, to calculate, to instruct him in the elements of science, and in all that was necessary for the faithful discharge of his after profession or occupation, could make that child the less a good Christian. He entirely agreed with Mr. Mundella, that all truth was holy; and also with the principles laid down in the paper of the Hon. Auberon Herbert; for whilst he conceived it to be the duty of the State to assist in the education of the country, he also considered it the duty of the State, not to interfere with the consciences or religious principles of the parents. Still, no parent, whether Churchman, Nonconformist, or Roman Catholic, should be allowed to exclude his children from education simply because in unsectarian schools, if they were established, there was not taught the special doctrines of his faith. As he understood it, the League did not intend to exclude the consideration of religion, or of the Bible from the schools, nor to interfere at all with the existing denominational

system; but what it was prepared to enforce at all times, and under all circumstances, was, that the State must do its duty, and not interfere with the freedom of religious conviction; that the parent must do his duty, and not allow religious conviction to interfere with the education which the State declared was necessary, to make his child a good, upright, and honest citizen. Such a system would bring about greater concord, and greater harmony between all classes of society. No longer would there be antagonism and disunion amongst them; there would be one bond of mutual respect, good-will, kindness, and social attachment pervading, interlacing, and knitting together the whole national body, whilst the individual welfare of each part of the body, would be promoted and developed.

The Hon. G. Brodrick: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—In following Mr. Beales, as I have been invited to do, and heartily supporting his views, I do not feel competent to speak from any personal experience of the practical details of school management, but I am desirous to add my testimony to the broad principle of national unsectarian education, inasmuch as there is no one of our principles in which I more cordially concur. This principle, as we have been reminded, gives offence to some. I observed the other day, that Sir Stafford Northcote, who is a good friend to education, said at Exeter that he heartily wished the words "sectarian" and "unsectarian" had never been imported into this subject. I partly agree with him, and yet I differ from him; for he dislikes the word, and I dislike the thing. Now, there is one objection to which reference, I think, has not been made to-day, but which I believe to be very widely prevalent. I mean the objection that some five and twenty years ago a kind of compact, as it has been called, was made between the State and the religious bodies of this country, and that we are, as it were, morally bound to carry out the spirit of that compact. I might, and do, reply, that we are not proposing to disendow denominational education, that we are not proposing to disestablish it, that we are not even proposing to supersede it, but only to supplement it. But I go further, and I must say, I should like to know when the compact was made, by whom it was made, and what were its terms. And even supposing any such

compact to have been made, I want to know who were the parties to it. Were you and I—those of us, at least, who are less than fifty years old, and perhaps at that very time were under education—were you and I parties to it? Were those who are children, who are now growing up in ignorance and vice, to be the inmates of our workhouses and our gaols, were these children, then unborn, parties to the compact? Were the working classes, then excluded from the franchise, but now admitted to it, and who must ultimately guide and govern the policy of the country, were they parties to it? And if not, what force is there in alleging the existence of an imaginary compact, made a generation ago? There is one other objection, to which reference has frequently been made, to unsectarian education, and that is, the religious objection. On that I can only say, I entirely adopt what has fallen from so many speakers. We leave untouched the influence of the church and the chapel, we leave untouched the influence of home, we leave untouched the influence of Sunday schools; we leave it in the discretion of the managers or school committee, as the Chairman has explained, to admit the teaching, the dogmatic teaching, of religion out of school hours, and, if they think proper, to allow the reading of the Scriptures, without note or comment, even during school hours. Then, I ask—and this is the root of the matter—what is the religion which we are said to sacrifice? Not the practical religion of every-day life; not the sublime and simple religion of the Gospel; not the pure and undefiled religion of St. James, who teaches us to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction; not the religion of St. Paul, which embraces all things true and all things pure, and all things lovely and honest and of good report; but the religion of creeds and articles and formularies, the religion of dogmatic theology,—the parent of the persecution which has been the reproach of Christianity; the religion which boasts, not of its power of including, but of its power to exclude; the religion which at this moment contributes to uphold caste and to prevent the growth of national unity in this country, and which is the main obstacle to the moral union of Christendom.

Mr. Follett Osler: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—I feel considerable hesitation, in undertaking to say a few words on

the present occasion, but having been asked to address you, I have jotted down a few remarks which have occurred to me, connected with the recent journey I have made to America. Though I, in common with a large portion of our countrymen, have long felt it most desirable that education should be extended throughout this realm, so as to render it truly national, I never was so strongly impressed with the importance of this, as after a tour I made last autumn in the United States. In taking this journey I had no particular object in view, beyond the desire to see and learn all I could of the country, its people and institutions; to accomplish which, I visited most of the Northern States, from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains. But it is not possible for anyone to travel in that country at all observantly, without being struck by the great intelligence of the mass of the people. Even in the country districts this is as noticeable as in the towns. So striking was this apparently universal education, that I was involuntarily led to inquire into the system, and to visit the schools that produced such good results. Accordingly, I devoted some time to that object, feeling more strongly than I had ever done before, the pressing importance of real national education, and that it was one of the first subjects to which our Legislature should direct their attention. The question that is of most interest and importance to us at the present moment is, whether the main features of the system which has been so successfully carried out in the United States, may not be applicable to this country. Some persons take alarm at the word "America," and seem afraid lest we should denationalize our people; but surely, the adoption of a broad and extended scheme of national education, be it based on the system adopted in the United States, or Prussia, or of any other nation, or on the systems of all combined, does not make us adopt, or desire to adopt, the mode of government or the political institutions of any of those countries; though the recent changes in our political institutions may render national education not only desirable, but absolutely necessary. But, in addition to any political considerations, it is necessary that our artisans should be placed in a position, to enable us to compete with those nations that, I regret to say, have left us far behind with regard to the education of the people. I contend that education, to

be national, that is, universal, must be free. A large portion of the population cannot pay; and if some are to do so, it will be necessary to decide who are not. No arbitrary amount of wages can settle it. A man with one child, and earning 20s. a-week, may be richer than another earning 30s. or 40s. a-week, who has a number of children. Then, as to those who can pay—is the sum to be uniform, or is it to be graduated according to the means of the pupil's parents? The subject becomes more complicated and difficult, the deeper we go into it. Again, if some schools are free, and others demand a fee, a class feeling will be provoked; for among artisans there is an honourable pride, as great as among the wealthier members of the community, and a distinction will cause the schools, where no payment is made, to be regarded as pauper or charity schools. The difficulties attending payment are so great, and the advantages of having education free are so manifest to my mind, that I am surprised there should be any hesitation as to the course this country should adopt. When in Philadelphia, I had some interesting conversation on the subject with Mr. Shippen, the excellent President of the Board of Controllers of the Public Schools of Philadelphia, who strongly advises our schools being altogether free. Mr. Osler here read the following letter from Mr. Shippen :—

"Philadelphia, June 18th, 1869.
"S.E. Cor. 6th and Walnut Streets.

"Mr. Follett Osler,

"Dear Sir,—Your favour of June 5th is received. I am pleased to accede to your wishes, and mail with this, six copies of my address, which please use to your best advantage.

"The experience of all educators and legislators in this country, confirms me in my judgment of the utter uselessness of legislation for classes in the public schools. We built our system upon poor laws—pauper laws. We practically divided our people into *classes*, and just so long as these foundations lasted, was the system a positive failure. This is not only the experience in Pennsylvania, but of every other State which adopted the same discriminating principles. I have studied this subject well, have given it the fifteen years of my official connection with our public schools. I have remarked to Lord Amberley, and other inquiring English gentlemen who have visited our schools, that if England, in establishing her national school system, fell into the grave error into which we fell, the system would in the end be a failure, and the money laid out upon it would be expended with but trifling advantage.

"Establish your schools 'for every child that draws the breath of life within your borders.' The system need not be compulsory, but open. You will be met at the threshold with the objection that the lower class will demoralize the higher; that the morals of the lower class will contaminate the higher. This is a dangerous and most fearful error. My experience does not prove it. If there be any rule on the subject, it is the very reverse. The poor girl or boy is not less virtuous than the rich. The rich have the means to indulge in vice, while the poor have none. I candidly tell you that in placing my children at school, I would infinitely prefer placing them in public schools than private schools, and, in doing so, I would thus consult the better their moral, spiritual, and scholastic welfare. So far as social relations are concerned, I can always regulate this myself. The school association is only an association of school hours. It need not be otherwise. England must come to our open national system sooner or later, and, I trust, will avail itself of our experience at the outset, and not wait to be taught her error. I take a deep interest in the cause everywhere, and shall ever be happy to lend a helping hand.

"Very respectfully yours,

"EDWARD SHIPPEN."

I would only wish further to say, that I think we have been looking too much on the dense dark spots of ignorance, among the poorer children, and have not sufficiently borne in mind that we are now contemplating a great national system of education to embrace all classes. As these dark spots get lighter, we shall see more clearly that there are very dark shades in higher grades, and shall become more sensible that the whole system must be efficiently worked out on one broad plan. I should like it to be possible for a child to enter into the lowest class, and gradually progress to the highest education that can be obtained in this country. I mention this because a desire has been expressed by some persons to have schools for the working classes only, to give them an elementary education, and when they have reached a certain grade say, "You are going to be artisans, what need for anything further?" I think all should be on one system of general education, embracing even the higher departments of knowledge; so that while all go on together, each pupil may be able, as he advances, to study such special subjects as his abilities or the circumstances of his case may render advisable.

A Gentleman here asked that the sense of the meeting might be taken, as to the proposing of a resolution. He said the London

and other branches should be informed,what were the actual intentions of the League, and what was the meaning of "unsectarian."

The CHAIRMAN: We shall, at half-past seven, have a meeting in the Town Hall, and it was intended that we should finish our proceedings to-day. We have only eight minutes left, and the question is, shall we enter into a discussion upon a resolution about which we have heard nothing, or hear the three gentlemen who yet have to speak? But let me tell you what the resolution is. When, yesterday morning, I opened the proceedings of the Conference, I said there had been a difficulty in some people's minds as to the meaning of the word "unsectarian," and I then proceeded to give an explanation or definition of the meaning. Now, it would appear that to some gentlemen's minds that definition was not sufficiently clear. Therefore, what they desire to do is this, to move a resolution, which resolution shall make clear what I failed to make clear yesterday morning. Now, I have to observe that I have had two distinct resolutions on that very same subject, and now another gentleman wishes to draw up a resolution. In my opinion, not one of those resolutions is any more clear than my definition—in fact, not so clear. And further, if those three resolutions are put to the meeting, we have no sort of confidence that there will not be half-a-dozen more; and my opinion is, that of necessity there will be some more, though I do not know how many. What are we to do under these circumstances? The Provisional Committee specially decided that there should be no resolutions whatever taken, and the order of proceeding having been fixed, the question that arises in my mind is, whether, as Chairman, I am to observe the order of proceeding pre-arranged, or whether I am to open up, at the request of one or two gentlemen—whose object is certainly admirable—a discussion, the length of which we really cannot foresee. What I might do is this: I might put it to the meeting whether or not such a discussion should be entered into. But I am inclined to think, on consideration, that the meeting would rather that the Chairman should perform his own duty, and decide the question for them. However, I have been asked this question, which will take only one minute to answer, and probably the answer to this question will meet all that is desired in these resolutions. The Hon. Auberon

Herbert asks me, "What is unsectarian education? Is it education excluding all dogmatic and theological teaching, or creeds, or catechisms?" I feel authorized, on behalf of the Provisional Committee, to say yes. He further asks, "Whether the scheme of the League necessarily excludes from the national rate schools, the Bible, without note or comment?" And I say, what I said yesterday morning, that it does not; that that, is to be left to the decision of the school committee, who will be the representatives of the parents of the children.

The Rev. SEPTIMUS HANSARD: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen,—I have to congratulate you on the perfect unanimity on the general object of this League, which has pervaded these meetings; and it is a matter of considerable congratulation to myself, as a clergyman of the Church of England, to find on this platform, engaged in the same work, clergymen of different denominations, and men who differ from me as widely as my friend Mr. Holyoake does. It is a matter of congratulation to me to find that in the speech which Mr. Holyoake made on this subject, on which we all feel so strongly in common, he spoke in the language of what I may strictly call the deepest piety. I have, as some of you know, been now occupied over twenty years, in labouring among the working populations of London; and I do assure you, that much as is the satisfaction, that all who, like myself, are interested in education, must have in seeing the success of the different educational works around them, nothing is more painful than to see that there is still a residuum of savagery, and brutality among the humbler classes of our neighbours. That is a blot on our common Christianity, and a shame to us all. Let us take it to heart, and see if we cannot combine to remedy it, putting aside the special doctrines which distinguish us one from another, and in a common cause, working for the welfare of those miserable and neglected ones all around us. What a disgrace it is to us, who boast of the Christian civilization of England, who are so proud, and bragging about our Protestant truth, and about the light of the Gospel shining on us, as we hear from every platform and pulpit, to know that in these last few years we have been obliged to invent a new name in the English language—"the *roughs*"—to

express the miserable condition of those who live in the back streets of our large towns. Whenever you use that term, as applied to the inhabitants of our back streets, you are using a term which, however true it may be in its application, should bring home a lesson to you, and a sense of disgrace to us all, that, as Englishmen, such beings should live among us. Therefore, I should like to say a few words to disarm the prejudices of those who, I think, are at one with us, but who as yet hesitate about joining us. It is a matter of regret, to find absent from the list of those who have joined the League, a very large number of laymen, Members of Parliament, and clergymen, who, from their liberal principles, well known and established, might be expected to be with us. I believe they are a little frightened—naturally enough—because our movement is a new one, and because, as you know, there is at the bottom of every Englishman a stratum of Toryism which it takes a good deal to knock out of him; and because I think there has been a great deal of misapprehension about these very untoward expressions, "secular," and "unsectarian." I will not detain you with an exposition of my opinions, but I would say to all those who are able to join the League, "Deal as tenderly as you can with religious people who have an objection to your League; no scruples have more demand on your respect than religious scruples, and I am quite sure the supporters and originators of the League, would not desire to say one word which would express contempt to those who differ from us in religious opinions." But on the other hand, I would call on clergymen of all denominations, to bear in mind that if schools for primary education become an established fact, more religious influence will be thrown into the hands of those, who wish to give religious teaching, than they possess now. I am perfectly convinced that if you have a good school, managed without any special religious teaching whatever, and if, as I presume, you must and ought to allow the clergymen and dissenting minister, at the recorded wish of the parents of the children, at some stated time, to give religious education or instruction to those children, the religious teachers will have infinitely more power, more real vital power, of bringing home to the hearts of the children the words and

example of their master, Christ, than they ever had by the system that now prevails, of deputing to the schoolmaster the perfunctory lesson which we know is given in most of our schools. To give you an instance of what I mean, I know a clergyman of a certain district in London, who collects together at certain times, once a month, for two hours, any children of any school in his large parish, who may choose to come into the church to be educated in the Bible and Catechism; and the church is crowded with volunteer children, who come and sit there with their minds as attentive as grown-up persons, answering the questions that are put, and evidently having those lessons brought home to the practice of their daily life, in such a manner as is not done in schools. A very High Churchman and Ritualist told me that he believed it was the right way of giving education; and I believe instruction must be so given under the system we are advocating. I think the objection that will be made by the religious world against that system, is an unnecessary bugbear, which I hope we shall all do our best, when we talk to religious people, to remove, by showing that we do not in the least wish to do away with religious teaching, but simply to separate from it dogmatic teaching.

The Rev. H. W. Crosskey: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen, I rise for the purpose of mentioning one or two facts which have not been alluded to at this Conference. Although references have been made to Saxony and America, there have been no allusions to the educational system of Scotland, one or two facts connected with which, I think, will interest the Conference as bearing on the practical working of the subject. In the first place, I hold that this so-called religious, or, rather, most irreligious, difficulty is a thing that vanishes before the logic of practical facts. It disappears entirely in the education of our own children. In Scotland, a country that has not a reputation for liberality, out of 12,572 children of Catholic laity, 7,343 have attended for many years without compulsion the Protestant schools, in which freedom of conscience is permitted. The Catholic laity have had no objection to send their children to the schools, but now a cry is being raised against them by the priests, and in both Ireland and Scotland an attempt will be made to secure the denominational system. But

here is the fact, directly and distinctly proving that if the laity are left free to act, if the priest is told that he must not interfere with the liberty of the subject, and the Government is firm, there can be no practical difficulty in the matter. Now for another point, touching the character of the schools. I would strongly protest against the idea of striving to make the schools merely working class schools. There is a free road open in Scotland from the public schools to the Universities. Last year, I saw in the Highlands a gipsy encampment pitched close to the school house, and a gipsy had sent his large family of children to school, with the children of the farmers. Last year, also, a friend, shooting in the Highlands, had for a gillie a youth, who in this way earned the money to pay for his education at the University in the winter. In another case, a shepherd was found reading a Greek author on his sick bed for his amusement. I think it is perfectly possible to have national schools, to which we can send all the children of the community. I am ashamed to visit the school where my own children are, and see that they there can get a knowledge of languages and sciences; and then go to schools in this town, and see, large branches of knowledge being kept back, that the children's minds are limited and confined, that they are taught only rudimentary things, and that there is no chance of their obtaining the liberal culture which we require for our own children. I would express to this meeting a most thorough satisfaction with the explanation made by Mr. Dixon, of the views and intentions of the League. I think it should go forth, that while we do not in any way wish to offend the feelings or injure the interests of the great religious bodies of this country; while we are prepared to give the freest scope to every sect and party to carry out its own ends and aims in charity and peace, we do propose that the instruction of the common school shall be confined to matters of common culture, and that we do this for the sake of religion. We believe that religion is injured by being made a task within the school. We are of opinion that in the quiet atmosphere of home, in the sanctity of those places where children are brought together apart from the noise and tumult of their daily school-life, the great seeds of religion ought to be sown; that religion is not a technical thing, to be

taught by rule, but a loving influence, a power to thrill the spirit within them. The education which we propose to give would be favourable to religion, because if we excite the religious feelings, without culture, we have superstition. Who is there would not rather plead for his Gospel to an educated than to an ignorant man? I will appeal to the clergy of the country whether, if they had intelligent men and women to address, the divineness of the Gospel ought not to be shown in the warmer enthusiasm of its reception? It is a poor and weak timidity that distrusts the power of an educated people. I hail this meeting with satisfaction. Its object is the greatest cause we can engage in, and it has to me the sanctity of an apostolic work. The future of our country depends on it. A large and liberal culture will the better enable a man to perform the humblest tasks of life, while the more cultivated the mind, the larger the knowledge of the constitution and history of the world, the greater will be the progress of morality and religion; and our countrymen, instead of growing up mere devotees of sectarian interests, narrow in mind and distrustful of each other, will become free men in the noblest sense, able to give an intelligent reason for their faith, and to exercise a wide charity to their brethren. The only boundary we can place to this movement, is to furnish every child born within this kingdom with fair opportunities for cultivating all the faculties God has given it.

Rev. Mr. CALDECOTT: Mr. Chairman, ladies. and gentlemen, I will not detain the meeting by offering any arguments on the question of unsectarian education. That some such system is accepted by you I suppose, or else why are we here to-day? And some such system I believe to be in a very fair way to be accepted by the country. What I wish to do is to congratulate the members of this League on the great advance that has been made in public feeling of late as regards this matter. On all hands, whatever language may be held, the principle of a denominational system of education is virtually abandoned. It is true that gentlemen seek to cover their concessions, and to conceal their retreat under a mist of words about compromises and conscience clauses. But, sir, the day for conscience clauses has gone by. It is too late in England, in the year 1869, to attempt, in a system of national education, to

brand with a ticket the children of any creed as inferior to their fellows of another creed. There is at this moment but a shadow of a shade, that separates the adherents of the denominational principle of education from ourselves. They insist upon it that some religious teaching shall be given to all children, provided that the parents of those children do not object to it. We, on the other hand, would be glad that they, or any of them, should teach their system of religion to any child, provided that his parents desire it. At the last Social Science Meeting, in Bristol, this question was very fully discussed; papers were read and speeches were made upon it, and various suggestions were offered both in public and in private. Speaker after speaker insisted upon the necessity of maintaining religious—that is to say, denominational—education; but as not one of those gentlemen condescended to leave his theories behind and to come to the plain practical question, what was the religious teaching that he was prepared to give, the whole fabric of their schemes melted away. There was one gentleman who did maintain that there can be no religion, there can be no morality, there can be no goodness, that is not based on some creed or some catechism; but I heard no one else in the meeting rise to support that view. There was another gentleman who insisted that in all State Schools, all children should be regularly instructed and periodically examined in the main principles of Christianity; but that gentleman did not explain to us what he himself conceived those main principles to be, nor did he give the slightest indication what is to be the authority that is to determine them. With the great mass of practical speakers on this point, both in public and in private, there seemed to be one thing agreed, that they would be perfectly satisfied with the advocacy of the undenominational principle, if you would only allow, during some time, in the day a portion of Scripture to be read to the pupils without interpretation, without question, and without comment of any kind, merely as a recognition of religion. Well, sir, I cannot help thinking it is something like an abuse of words to dignify such a scanty scrap as this, with the name of religious education. Yes, and when the advocates of denominational principle have come to this, we may fairly congratulate ourselves on having found the vanishing point of the

denominational system. The fact is, the time is ripe for the introduction of this League among the friends of denominationalism. I believe there is really but one demand on which they seriously insist; that demand is, that there shall be some recognition in education of some religious principle or other. It is not that these gentlemen love denominationalism for itself—far from it. They fear that if you exclude denominationalism from the schools, you will exclude religion from education. But surely the remarks you have heard from Mr. Hansard, will show you their fears are vain. The fact is, that at the basis of all our systems, the common foundation on which they, every one of them, rest, there are two religious principles upon which we are all agreed, because God has written those principles in the heart of every one of us; they are the principles upon which we recognize God's love to us, and our duty to our fellow men. Those are exactly the two principles about which our neglected childhood knows nothing, and has never even heard. Those are exactly the principles which in the schools to be founded, I hope, under the auspices of this League, every child will be taught, without variance or without distinction. Every child must be taught them, for there can be no teaching given with respect to God's works in God's world, which does not assume and develop them. These principles are the only principles which the State, as a State, can teach in religion, because they are the only principles in religion that all men, whatever may be their creeds, will alike accept. I know it will be said that this is not enough—that something more is required. Something more *is* required, and in God's name let something more be given. But the State cannot give it. There are special voluntary associations whose duty, whose right, whose delight it will be to give to their children this something more; for the question is, not whether denominational schools shall cease to exist; the question is, upon what material shall those denominational schools work? Shall they work upon young savages, or shall they work upon children who have already been taught to know something of civilization and the truth? Denominational schools can never cease to exist; they will be everywhere, where men are to be found who are fired with zeal for God's service, and are inspired with belief in God's word.

Surely it is the interest of every one of us, that the managers of these schools should receive their pupils from the hands of the State, already prepared for their instruction—decent, so to speak, and clothed, and in their right minds; and should not have to hunt them out, for themselves, through all the moral caverns, and the moral tombs of our great cities, where at this moment they are hiding in thousands, unclean and unclothed, and possessed by the legions of evil spirits of wickedness and of crime.

On the motion of Professor ROGERS, a vote of thanks was passed to the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN, after acknowledging the vote said: I have had another question put to me—"If the school committee should decide that the Bible is to be read, must it be read without note or comment?" My answer is, yes. Now, I wish to mention that a gentlemen of the name of ———, from London, writes and says he is obliged to leave the meeting early, and he concludes by giving fifty guineas to the funds of the League, and saying he has no doubt whatever we shall have great support in London. And I am also happy to say that we have an announcement of a donation of £50 from one, who calls himself a convert to our views by what he has heard to-day. Now, in concluding our two days' meeting, let me say, on behalf of the Provisional Committee, that we have to give our warmest thanks to those gentlemen, who have come from a distance to read papers, and to make those valuable speeches upon this subject, which we have so much at heart. But let me repeat what I said at first, that the League, as a League, is not responsible for what has been said; each individual writer and speaker is alone responsible, for the individual opinions that have been uttered. I also thank, on behalf of the Committee, all those who have attended at these meetings to support us; and I fervently hope that the day is not far distant when they will look back with honest pride upon this meeting; and congratulate themselves that they took their part in the inauguration of one of the most beneficial measures of this century.

The meeting then terminated.

PUBLIC MEETING IN THE TOWN HALL.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 13TH, 1869.

A public meeting, convened by the Executive Committee of the League, was held in the Town Hall on Wednesday evening. The MAYOR (Mr. Henry Holland) presided. The orchestra was filled chiefly by gentlemen, who had been present at the meetings in the Assembly Room. The side galleries were given up to members of the League and to ladies, and the floor and great gallery were occupied principally by working men.

The MAYOR, in opening the proceedings, said the League was founded for the purpose of obtaining the establishment of a national system of education, which would ensure elementary instruction to every child in the kingdom; and he trusted that it would not dissolve, until it should have accomplished its object, whatever difficulties might have to be encountered.

Mr. DIXON, M.P. (Chairman of the League) was received with cheers. He said: Mr. Mayor, ladies, and gentlemen—The resolution which I have the honour to move is, "That, in the opinion of this meeting, the scheme of the National Education League is the one best adapted, to secure the education of every child in the country." The Manchester Education Aid Society, after a most minute investigation, came to the conclusion that one half the children of the working classes of that great town were uneducated, and that the remaining half were educated very imperfectly. The Birmingham Education Society, after equally, if not more, minute investiga-

tions, came to precisely the same conclusion with regard to the children in this town; and the London Diocesan Board of Education reported that from 150,000 to 200,000 children, in one portion only of the Metropolis, were without means of education. There is reason to believe that the number of children educated in large towns has not, during the last ten or twenty years, increased much, if any, more than in proportion to the increase of the population. Such is the state of things in our large towns. How is it in the agricultural districts? Canon Kingsley has written to us, saying that he has read the report of the Birmingham Education Aid Society with great interest; he did not know how badly educated we were, but he did know from twenty-seven years' experience as a parson, that the voluntary denominational system was a failure in the agricultural districts. Mr. Villiers, who was called by Sir John Pakington one of our most able school inspectors, corroborates the statement by saying that half the children of the working classes in the rural districts, between the age of ten and thirteen, receive no scholastic education at all, and the other half, so long as the present system remains, will never be more than half educated. Other school inspectors, and not only school inspectors, but also a Cabinet Minister, a member of the late administration, believe and endorse these statements. These are the circumstances under which the National Education League has sprung into existence, and my only surprise is that it was not formed long ago. We begin by putting our hands upon what we conceive to be the cause of all this ignorance. We think that it cannot be expected to be otherwise, when we remember, that the whole educational system of this country is based, upon the benevolent activities of so small a number of men. The basis of our system is too narrow. In this condition of things what does the State do? Where there happens to be a clergyman who understands his duties; where there happen to be rich manufacturers or benevolent individuals, who undertake to erect and partially maintain schools—where it finds there is some education, defective though it be—there it is ready to help; but in other districts, where benevolent individuals do not exist, and there is no education at all, what does

the State do? Like the priest and the Levite of old, it passes by on the other side. Its assistance is given where assistance is least needed. Where the wealthy are doing something it heaps its riches. The practice of the State with regard to education reminds us of what the poet says of sleep:—

> "He, like the world, his ready visit pays
> Where fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes;
> Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
> And lights on lids unsullied with a tear."

What the League professes is this: not to interfere with the existing system where it is effective. We don't wish to revolutionise the present schools, we don't wish to sweep them away. What we do wish is this: that where voluntaryism and denominationalism have failed, the State should step in; and that, the State should be called upon to recognize the highest of all its duties, the duty of saying, that every citizen shall be brought up to be able to understand the laws he is bound to obey, and to understand what are the duties of a citizen. Now, we propose that this should be effected in the following manner:—That in every large town, and in every county, school boards should be elected by the ratepayers or their representatives; that these school boards should ascertain where there is a deficiency of education, and, wherever they are wanted, erect and maintain free and unsectarian schools. Having done that, they should appoint committees to manage those schools. The State inspectors should have power to see that the various localities perform, and perform efficiently, the duties imposed upon them. If the school boards fail to perform these duties, the State inspectors should then step in, and see that they are performed. We propose—or rather I propose, for I am speaking now as much in my own name as in that of the League—I propose that the schools should be maintained not only by the State, but by the local rates, in the proportion of two-thirds from the central government, and one-third from the local authorities. Now, the objection to this system, in the first instance is, according to our opponents, that it will kill voluntaryism. To that I reply, it need do no such thing. We shall leave voluntaryism alone. Nay, we shall do more—we shall create half as many more schools as are now in ex-

istence, and we shall require for these schools an army of volunteers. Every member of our school boards, every member of our school committees, will be as much a voluntaryist as any school manager under the existing system, and he will be a better, a more efficient, voluntaryist; for he will have to do with an organised system, and he will not only have the promptings of his own benevolence to lead him to his duty, but he will have the experience and the authority of the State system to guide him. Besides, there is another most important thing to be remembered: what is it that keeps enormous numbers of our children now out of school, but poverty; poverty to that degree that they cannot appear in our streets, because they are too ragged, and have not food to maintain themselves. These children never appear in our schools. If there be any excess of volunteers wanting employment in this country, let it seek out these children, and feed and clothe them, so that when they do appear in our schools they may appear in that condition which will enable them to take advantage of the teaching they are to receive. Let me illustrate this. Time was, when in this town the rich people were called upon to contribute from their own libraries, to the lending libraries attached to our Church institutions; that was voluntaryism. There was much of that voluntary effort. But the State stepped in and provided for the people those magnificent free libraries which are now our boast. Voluntaryism may be said to have been killed there, but it only made place for something infinitely superior; and the spirit of voluntaryism still lives, and has a better and a wider field of action. Depend upon it, that so far from voluntaryism being killed by the institution of State schools, it will be utilized, it will be organized and developed. Another objection is, that the education given in these schools will be a godless education. But we have heard during the last few days that in many of our schools—I will not say in most of them—the education which is there given, and is called religious education, has but a very small tincture of real religion in it; and we have been told by the most eminent men, who understand what they are talking about, that in the new schools—schools where there will be no sectarian theology taught—there may be, and we

believe there will be, as much religion as in nine-tenths of the schools that exist now. And even supposing that there were no theology; supposing the children left those schools without any knowledge of the difference between one sect and another, and did not know what you meant when you asked what sect they belonged to—what then? The foundation would have been laid upon which any or all of the sects could operate to advantage, and, no doubt, upon the foundation thus laid, a superstructure of religion could be raised that would be worth having. Having supplied these schools—schools based upon the taxation of the country, and managed by the representatives of the ratepayers, and belonging to the people absolutely, because they would have paid for them, as much as if they had taken the money out of their own pockets, in the shape of subscriptions—three things would of necessity follow. We say that most schools must of necessity be schools, where there shall be no theological teaching of any sort whatever. We say that we have no choice in the matter, if schools are to be national schools they must be unsectarian. We say besides that, having provided these schools, it would be not merely illogical, but it would be a most unjust thing, if we allowed the children still to run idle about the streets. Do you think it likely for a moment that a ratepayer would consent to pay an additional rate in order that children might be educated, and yet to see these poor children for whom he paid the rate, neglected by their apathetic parents, and not receiving the benefit which had been provided for them? It would be impossible to collect a school-rate under such circumstances. Some people say that there would be great harshness—that it would be un-English—that the people would resist anything in the shape of compulsion. Now, I will not dwell upon it to-night, because there is one who is going to follow me who is able to do it much better than I can myself; but I will simply say this, that the manner in which this compulsion may be exercised in this country is extremely simple, and, in my opinion, will be completely in harmony with the wishes of the people. It is most easy to obtain a complete registration of all the children in the country; as easy as it is to obtain a registration of voters. When you have obtained this registration, you must put against each child's name

the name of the school that it is intended to go to. Then send to each one of the school committees a list of the children that ought to attend its school, and throw upon the school committee the duty of seeing that these children attend. Give the school committee, officers, whose duty it shall be to go to the houses of all parents whose children are not attending regularly at school. Let these school officers explain to the parents what their duties are, and the penalties that may attach to the non-performance of them. And remember that these schools will be free schools—remember that the Factory Acts will prevent parents from sending their children to work, and then consider what motive can there be in the minds of any parents to prevent their children going to school, when they are entitled to send them, under such circumstances? I will engage to say that, after a year or two of the operation of such a system as that, there will be very few, indeed, who will not regularly and willingly send their children to school. Of these few it may be necessary to make one or two examples. Let them, if they persist in neglect, be summoned before the magistrates; and what will usually result is this—the magistrates will warn, and, on promise of amendment, no other result will follow; but when the parent is brought up a second time, the infliction of a fine will be very well merited, and I am sure will not shock the sense of justice and propriety of the working classes. Now, we say in the third place, that these schools, if attendance be compulsory, must be free. I have received, this morning, a letter from Edward Polson, and he says—"As one of the working classes, I wish to ask you if, in your opinion, it is fair for an honest, hard-working, steady man, to be forced to pay rates for the education of a drunken, lazy man's children? In my opinion, it is not at all a fair thing; but perhaps you can show me that it is fair. For my part, I cannot see it." Now, I am not at all surprised at this state of feeling; but I would reply, that he is already subject to this very injustice, because he is called upon to pay a very much larger sum than he will ever be called upon to pay for an education rate, in order that that drunken and lazy man's child—nay, that man himself—shall be kept in the workhouse, or shall be punished in the gaol. Meeting the writer of this letter upon his own ground, namely, his desire to

save himself from taxation, I say it is for his own interest that he should ask for this education rate. But even supposing that it were not so—supposing that for a few years he should have to pay increased rates—surely there are considerations of a higher nature. Can he—not merely the rich, but the poor man, the working man—can he pass by these poor children in our gutters, these neglected Arabs of the streets—can he pass them by, knowing their miserable state, and their wretched prospects, and steel his heart against their highest interest, having the power to place them in a better position, merely because their unnatural parents—(The close of the sentence was lost in an enthusiastic outburst of cheering, which was prolonged for a considerable time.) When these parents neglect their duty, what the League says is this: that it is the duty of the State to come in and be a parent to these innocent victims. And what we wish to do is, to call upon the Legislature of this country to take upon itself that duty. We don't wish to say anything in disparagement of the services of those men who have hitherto taken charge of the education of the country; but we say that they have proved that they cannot undertake to educate all, and we say that all must be educated, and all shall be educated; and that it is the State alone that has the power to act up to this. The State can do it, and the State will do it. We have now a Minister of Education, in Mr. Forster, who, in my opinion, has the will to do it; but I am not so certain that he has the power. But what we are going to do is this: by means of this League and its branches, we are going to rouse the people—in whom now, happily, is placed political power—in order that we may say to Mr. Forster, "Be our leader, and give us what we want; we'll support you." But if Mr. Forster should hesitate, if he will not transfer the education of this country from the voluntary and denominational basis, upon which it now rests, to the basis of the taxation and self-governing energy of this country, then, much as we respect Mr. Forster, much as we esteem his strength of character, his excellent will and his great skill, it will be our duty to say, even to Mr. Forster, our hitherto leader, that we can follow him no longer. We shall say, "We have taken upon ourselves the performance of a duty than which, none can be higher—the duty of seeing to the education of every child in this country;

and that duty we shall perform—with you as our leader, if you will, but if not, in spite of you.

The MAYOR then called upon Professor Fawcett.

Professor FAWCETT was received with cheers. He said, Mr. Mayor, ladies, and gentlemen,—It is my privilege to speak to you this evening on the greatest and most important of all social and political questions. During the last two days the National Education League has been inaugurated under the happiest auspices, and the people of this town may indeed be congratulated, that the name of Birmingham is destined to be associated with an organization which will prove as fruitful in its blessings, as were the labours of the Anti-Corn Law League. This organization has been inaugurated under happy auspices. A great body of gentlemen, living different lives, looking upon questions from different points of view, have come together with one common object. They have resolved to sacrifice all minor differences of opinion upon points of detail, because they are determined that they will be a united body in the effort they intend to make, an effort which they promise you shall never cease, until elementary education has been guaranteed to every boy and girl in this country. Perhaps the greatest danger that threatens this movement is, the possibility that some of us may be tempted to accept a compromise. This is the rock which has imperilled so many great movements. Free trade was endangered by the offer of an 8*s.* fixed duty. Household suffrage was imperilled by the offer of a £6 rating and a £7 rental franchise; the future of national education in Scotland ran a narrow risk of being wrecked last session, by as bad a bill as was ever spoiled by the House of Lords. But will you authorize us to say in the House of Commons, in your name—you, representing a great body of the industrious classes of this country—that you agree with us, that nothing will, nothing ought to satisfy you, short of a measure which will impose rates where educational appliances are insufficient, and which will compel the attendance of those children at school, upon whom, by their parents, the irreparable wrong is being inflicted of allowing them to grow up in a state of ignorance? This, no doubt, is a great movement, and it will require hard labour to bring it to a successful issue. It is a

great movement indeed, because what is our end, and what is our aim? To raise millions of our fellow-countrymen who are sunk deep in the depths of ignorance. This is a movement which will require all the popular support which such vast audiences as this can render it. No one can tell the effect which may be produced upon the minds of our statesmen and our rulers by such meetings as this. It is our privilege at the present time to be governed by a Prime Minister who is ever ready to be instructed by the intelligently expressed public opinion of this country, and if Mr Gladstone has not made up his mind on the educational question yet, nothing is so likely to give clearness and distinctiveness of view and firmness of resolution, as the expression of opinion of such an audience as this, in favour of unsectarian, compulsory national education. It is sometimes said that our proposals are revolutionary. We cheerfully accept the title. We intend to effect a great revolution, because we intend, if possible, to root out ignorance, with its attendant misery and vice, and substitute in their place all the self-dependence, all the material welfare, which result from intellectual culture. If the revolution should be successful, the displacement of the worst tyrant that ever afflicted a country will not confer greater blessings, than will our efforts upon this country. It is almost unnecessary for me to speak to you of the usual aspect of this question. It is almost a truism to say that no social reform, no scheme of philanthropy, can produce any permanent effect, unless it makes the labourer self-dependent. If a child is permitted to grow up to manhood in ignorance, he has to pass through life, as it were, crippled and maimed, deprived of half the power with which he has been endowed by nature to secure his own mental and material advancement. Sometimes it is said that these proposals of ours are anti-English. There is something which is not only anti-English, but which is anti-human, and that is the spectacle of millions sunk in such ignorance as if they were living in a heathen land. Anti-English! will the Conservatives venture to raise the cry? They have not passed many legislative measures during the last thirty years. But what is the measure from which they take some credit? Why, they are never tired of talking about the honour which is due

to their party by the passing of the Factory Acts. What is one of the most valuable provisions in the Factory Acts? The compulsory educational provision, which declares that it shall be illegal to employ any child unless he attends school so many hours a week. By recent legislation the compulsory educational provisions of the Factory Acts have been extended—not in a good form, indeed, but still the principle has been extended to every branch of industry in England, except agriculture; and we shall not be generous, we shall not be fair, to the class of labourers who most require State intervention, if we much longer permit agriculture to be thus excepted. Assuming, then, as we may, that the principle of the Factory Acts has now been approved of by all political parties, it is indisputable that the principle of compulsory education has been accepted. How, then, can the monstrous anomaly be permitted to intervene, that we should say, as we are saying at the present moment, that if a parent sends his child to work, education shall be enforced upon that child, but that no similar compulsion shall be used against the parent who is so base, so degraded, that he will neither send his child to school nor to work? Many of you, most of you, whom I am addressing, are engaged, either as employers or employed, in the industry of this town. You know that facts, painful facts, are every day brought under your notice which show, that unless we have national education, it will be absolutely impossible for England to maintain her commercial position. In various trades we have each year to carry on a keener and more closely-contested competition with foreign countries. Industry requires, now, the use of delicate machinery; it requires the skilful application of that machinery; it requires those moral qualities which make the labourer most valuable, and which enable him to understand the true principles of trade. Bearing this in mind, it is as impossible to expect that an uneducated country will be able successfully to compete against an educated country, as it would be to suppose that a hand-loom weaver, could profitably struggle against the appliances of modern mechanical invention. We are too much prone to deceive ourselves by the signs of material wealth. We are accustomed to sing pœans of exultation over increasing exports and imports, but behind all this glitter and show,

behind all this evidence of material wealth, there are the ugly, there are the portentous facts, that one out of twenty of our population is a pauper, and there are countless thousands who are in such a state of misery that they are verging upon pauperism. For twenty years, various material appliances have been brought into operation, all of which have tended to stimulate the production of wealth. We have had free trade, we have had mechanical inventions, we have had the extension of the railway system. When these facts are borne in mind, does it not convince us of this great truth—a truth which should never be lost sight of—that there is something more required to make a nation great, and happy, and prosperous, than mere material agencies. You must act upon the mind, and, in that way, upon the morality and social character of the people. The Education League has, to my mind most wisely, in the first instance, confined itself to elementary education. Of course, this is the first, this is the essential thing to be done. But this ought to be regarded as only a part of our work. The opinion I am about to express is, I know not whether it will be thought extreme, or Quixotic, but I have long entertained the *idea*, and I do not mean to relinquish it, that we never ought to be satisfied until the poorest child in this country, if he has the requisite ability, should have an opportunity of enjoying the very best education the nation can afford. You ask me, perhaps, how is this end to be attained? I believe it can be attained by a just, by a wise administration of our vast educational endowments. Those educational endowments ought, to my mind, to be devoted to reward the meritorious, to whatever class and whatever religion they belong. I would not give, as a matter of right, a free education, but no child should suffer from want of education in consequence of the poverty of its parents. But I hold that the greatest of all human responsibilities is incurred by bringing a human being into the world, and I think every parent should feel, that it is as much his duty to give his children education as it is to provide them with food and clothing. Now, with regard to the administration of the educational resources of the country, much has already been done by the Endowed Schools Bill, which was passed last session; for the main principle of the Bill was this—that those endowments should be devoted to reward

meritorious students. Therefore, when we have these elementary schools which Mr. Dixon, who represents the League, proposes should be established, we may look forward to see poor boys advanced from the elementary schools to the first grade school, and to the second grade school, and thence to the University. When they get there, I can only say that we shall cordially welcome them; for it is the great glory of those Universities, that they welcome mental cultivation and intellectual power, from whatever class they are drawn. As a Cambridge man—and I know I am expressing the opinion of many Oxford friends also—I can say that we should rejoice to see in Oxford or Cambridge two or three hundred students, sons alike of the poorest men and the wealthiest merchants of this town, all being brought under the influence of the education which we can give them. There, we know no social favouritism, we never ask who a man's father is, we have no governing families. What a happy thing it would be if the same remark could be made with regard to English politics. But you may perhaps say that something will require to be done, before the Universities can do what you wish them to do. You know that there are still there religious liabilities, and religious tests; but I venture to think that the overwhelming majority of the country has already declared that those disabilities and those tests shall be completely swept away. A University Tests Bill—I say *a* University Tests Bill, for it was only a half measure—passed the House of Commons last session. Here again is an illustration of the danger of great questions being wrecked upon the rocks of compromise. That bill would have only done its work after a long course of years. It would not have swept away those tests and disabilities, it would only have given the colleges the power to sweep them away if they liked, and the bill might possibly for years to come have produced very little effect whatever. The bill passed the House of Commons; but sometimes we derive signal advantage from the unreasoning resistance of the House of Lords, and I feel more profoundly grateful to them than I can describe. It seems to me that the one useful function which they perform, is to reject a bill when it is a compromise, and thus give the House of Commons an opportunity of waking up to its senses, and seeing its true position.

Political predictions are dangerous, but I venture to predict that the House of Lords will never see that bill again. The next session they will have to express their opinion upon a very different measure. They will have to say "aye" or "no" to a proposal which will abolish, at once and for ever, every remaining vestige of religious test and disability, and thus make the Universities truly national institutions. It is for such audiences as this to say that this is your will, and that nothing short of it will satisfy your just demands. But great as is the vista which is opened by the education question in all its aspects in England, we may, perhaps, not improbably have to render as great service to the sister country as we have rendered to her by the disestablishment of the Church, and as we shall render to her by passing a land bill. Undenominational education is a great principle in England. But it is a principle still more dearly, still more carefully to be cherished in Ireland. There is danger that the national school system of that country, which is undenominational, may be imperilled. There is danger that the University question in that country may be settled on a denominational basis. I believe that if we permit this to be done, we shall do more harm to Ireland by permitting the ascendancy of an ultramontane hierarchy, than we have done good by the destruction of the ascendancy of the State Church. In conclusion, if I have not already detained you too long, perhaps you will permit me to say that the science which it is my privilege to teach, instructs us in the lesson, that nothing more tends to promote efficiency and industry than division of labour. With division of labour, each individual can devote himself to the particular process for which he has the greatest capacity, and without it we should find skilled mechanicians doing what might be equally well done by unskilled labourers. Unrestricted commerce, again, enables the capital and labour of each country, to be applied to those branches of industry for which it has the greatest natural advantages. This is the secret of free trade. Similarly, we believe that a complete system of national education would enable the individual capacity of each person to be utilized in the best possible way for the benefit of his country. Many a person there may be, now toiling monotonously in the fields, labouring in some deep-sunk mine, or carrying out, year after

year, some work of mere routine, who, if his abilities had been properly developed, might have executed some work of art, invented some new machine, organized some political or social movement, or produced some literary work which might have permanently enriched and benefited mankind. There is in life no more melancholy spectacle, than that generation after generation should pass away, without sufficient knowledge to understand the beauties and wonders with which Nature has surrounded them. Can it be right, can it be just, that Nature, which has been so bountiful, should not be appreciated as she might be? And is it not strangely sad, that some people who seem to arrogate to themselves the title of religious, seem to care more about the paltry triumph of a creed, than they do about education, which would elevate the people from the ignorance which is alike degrading to human nature, and antagonistic to moral and material advancement? Some of those who are willing that the education question should stand still whilst they wrangle about bringing children under the influence of some barren formality, such as Apostolic succession, should remember the significant words of the Prophet when he said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

The MAYOR then called upon Mr. Mundella, member for Sheffield.

Mr. MUNDELLA, M.P.: Mr. Mayor, ladies, and gentlemen,—The few words that I shall say to you shall be in support of the resolution which has been so ably and exhaustively moved and seconded by my two honourable friends who preceded me. I shall address myself mainly to the working men, by the request of my friend your worthy member; and as it is the first time I have had the honour of addressing an audience of working men in Birmingham, I confess that I feel proud of the opportunity of doing so, because you are represented in the House of Commons by one of the noblest men and most honest politicians of any age or country. The considerations which I venture to submit to you shall be of a purely practical character. First, I ask, what are the objects of the association? The establishment of a system which shall secure the education of every child in England and Wales.

How do we propose to effect it? School accommodation being provided, the State or the local authorities shall have the power to compel the attendance of children of suitable age, not otherwise receiving education. The means therefore are, first, by making provision, and then compelling attendance. Now, I desire to point out to you what has already been effected elsewhere, by compulsory education, because although this is a new doctrine in England, it has been in operation thirty years in Switzerland, forty years in Saxony, and thirty-five years in Prussia, and on the first of January next it will come into operation in Austria. Eighty millions of the people of Europe will, on the first of January next, be subject to the operation of this law. What has been its effect in the free republic of Switzerland? They are the most intelligent and best educated people in the world. You may go from canton to canton, you may go from one end of the country to the other, and you cannot find a child of twelve years of age that will not read and write *well*, that does not know something, intelligently too, of the history of its country, and has not also a knowledge of other useful acquirements. It has been my fortune for some years past to have an opportunity, of studying the effect of compulsory education on the Continent, and I wish you, working men of Birmingham, to comprehend what the effect of the system is. I am an employer in the little kingdom of Saxony, now part of the North German Confederation. I have a manager there who has been fixed there for nine years. I have gone there year after year, and have remained there a month at a time, and I have visited its schools, which are marvels of arrangement and pedagogic science (for these are the words with them), and I have never yet found, nor has the manager yet found, a man in the country who could not correspond intelligently with his employer, nor a child of ten or twelve years of age who could not read and write as well as myself; and although that country, and Prussia, and Switzerland have many disadvantages, as compared with ourselves, although their commercial position is infinitely inferior to ours, although there is a lack of capital, and geographically they are much worse in their position than Great Britain, yet I am ashamed to say that I have never met there with

that squalor, that brutal ignorance, that terrible destitution, which I meet in my own country. Now, what is the state of things as we see it in England? You working men, you know well what it is. What has been the effect of the present system? It has reversed the teaching of Scripture—it has filled the rich with good things, and the poor it has sent empty away. It has bettered those who can and ought to help themselves, but those who can do nothing for themselves it has utterly neglected. Look at our ragged schools; they have had no assistance from the State, and look at the thousands of poor children who cannot obtain admission even into the ragged schools. You know—no men know so well as the working classes—what is the educational condition of the poor that surround you in the streets, and lanes, and alleys of our large towns. By the assistance of your worthy member, an education society was formed in this town, and 1,000 children in employment were tested. I have had an opportunity of testing thousands of children, in this and other towns, children, the great majority of whom have passed through our schools; and what is the result of our education? What with irregular attendance, few attendances, and attendances for a short time only, when the child grows up to fourteen or fifteen years of age, it has almost forgotten anything it ever learned at school, and the very little it retains is utterly useless for any practical purpose. And what is it that we propose to accomplish? We propose that the child shall commence at a certain age and attend, for a certain number of years consecutively, regularly at school; that when the child enters upon its labours, it shall have the benefit of the half-time system for some years longer; and that the poor man's child shall, as the hon. member for Brighton has said, have the same opportunities which the rich man's child has, to develop those faculties with which it has been endowed. One thing you may be well assured of, the rich man in the middle classes will take care that his children are educated, because he knows that without education their career in the world is utterly ruined and destroyed. Why shouldn't the poor man's children be educated, then, in the same manner? Why should they not have open to them the same career and the same advantages? It simply depends upon audiences like this to demand it. Now

I want to point out to you the machinery by which this is to be accomplished; because many objections are raised to it, and you are cautioned, above all things, that your liberties are about to be destroyed, and your parental rights taken away. You are told that, if you submit to the system of compulsory education, the policeman will drag you before the magistrates, and you will be shut up in prison, because your children may not be in attendance at school. I wish to show exactly how this is done elsewhere, for the 80,000,000 of people I have before referred to. Every child in the North German Confederation, and in Switzerland is registered, and next year every child in Austria will be registered, on a system precisely the same as that of the political register in England. The school boundaries are conterminous with the political boundaries; they are divided in Switzerland into cantons, districts, towns; in Prussia, into towns, counties, divisions of towns; and in Birmingham there would be the central district, and the wards. They are managed by local bodies. These local bodies have the power to demand that the children be sent to school, and it is their duty to see that they are sent. If the parent neglects to send his child to school, what is the result? Is a policeman sent to him with a summons in his pocket? No. There are persons called school messengers. These school messengers are generally pupil teachers, or have just finished their education in the school. They go to the house and inquire why the child is not at school. If, as in nine cases out of ten, or, I might say, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the child's absence can be accounted for, it is perfectly satisfactory. But if it is through neglect, and continued neglect, the parent is brought before the school committee, and the law is pointed out to him, and he is told that it will be enforced against him if he rebels. If he continues contumacious, he is fined. I have known it 6d., 10d., and up to 2s. 6d. for a second or third time. But I tell you what has been the result of the compulsory system: there is the same wholesome state of public opinion with respect to the father who starves the intellect of his child, as there is with you when a father starves his child by denying it bread. It is a constant thing with me, whenever I have an opportunity—it has become almost a

habit with me—to seize upon poor children wherever I find them, whether in the factory, the workshop, or the street, and ascertain exactly what our glorious system of education has done for them. A fortnight ago I found on the step of my counting-house door a number of lads, and I coaxed them up-stairs into my counting-house. There were nine of them, and some were very ragged specimens indeed. They thought I had some sinister motive, and it was with some difficulty I induced them to go with me. I examined them separately on their educational acquirements. Not one of those poor boys could read the simplest word. I had the *Times* newspaper before me. Two of them could manage the *The*, but not one of them could spell *Times*. Not one of them had the slightest idea of the existence of God, except to use his name in blaspheming. Yes, but some of them said, they had once been at school, at five or six years of age, and they had been since, some at the brickyard, some at one employment, some at another. Their ages ranged from eleven to sixteen. There was only one of those children, for whom there was any reasonable excuse why he had not been regularly at school. The absence of the others was mainly owing to drunkenness on the part of the parents. Now I ask you, is this to be continued any longer? Are these children to be thrown as paupers or criminals upon society, and that in the name of the most sacred rights—British freedom, parental authority, and so on—to breed up a race of criminals, paupers, and wretches to prey upon society? We are told that the working classes cannot afford to lose the earnings of their children. It is this I wish to meet, and I think I can do so, because it is really the gravest argument that can be brought to bear upon the whole question. Now, I find in the countries I have referred to—in North Germany particularly—a new Labour Act comes into operation next year, and this new Act runs thus:—No child shall be employed in any regular employment, except domestic employment, by the parent after school hours, until it is twelve years of age. It has been repeatedly said to me that the English workman cannot do without his child's earnings until the child is twelve years of age. "What is to become of a man with six or eight children?" they say, "You are depriving him of the

earnings of his children." But those who make this objection take children as if they were like rabbits—all of an age. They forget that if a man has six children, the chances are that they run something like 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12; that he has not to struggle to keep them all at school at once, and that in a year or two, when the eldest gets employment, it earns a great deal more money if it has been educated. Nay, and what is more—and this is a question I wonder that trades unionists have not seen, and I don't care how soon they do—if there were not so many children employed who ought not to be employed, many parents would be better paid than they are. Now, assuredly what can be done by 80,000,000 of people in other parts of Europe can be done by Englishmen, must be done by them, if they are to keep their place as a nation. Are we content to be the last in the race—we, who have been supposed to be in the van of civilization and humanity? Well, there is another consideration, and that is the religious difficulty. Now, I never find that this religious difficulty exists with the working classes; it exists with those generally who make the objection, on behalf, they say, of the working classes. I should be exceedingly grieved —I should be more than grieved—if anything we did tended to make working men irreligious or irreverent; but I know it is impossible to effect anything of the kind by the means we propose. I know that the more knowledge we give, even that secular knowledge which is so much despised, the better they will be prepared for the reception of religious truth. What is the drudgery of our Sunday school teachers, what is the drudgery of our ministers, dealing with unintelligent children and unintelligent congregations? Why, I believe we should raise our people entirely, from that brutal ignorance, and that state of besotted intemperance, that pauperism and that misery which characterise the lower three or four millions of the people of England, if we were to give them a good education. I regret to hear that some association has been formed in this town, with a view of opposing this benevolent movement. But I would venture to remind those who engage in that opposition of some remarkable lines that were written by Charles Dickens, describing the constant contests between the sects, and this great

religious difficulty which we now stand in the face of. He said,—

"So have I seen a country on the earth,
Where darkness sat upon the living waters,
And brutal ignorance, and toil, and dearth,
Were the hard portion of its sons and daughters;
And yet where those who should have ope'd the door
Of truth and charity to all men's finding,
Squabbled for words upon the altar floor,
And rent the book in struggles for the binding."

The MAYOR rose to put the resolution.

Mr. J. RUTHERFORD interposed, asking permission to move an amendment.

The MAYOR said that that was a meeting of the members of the National Education League, for the transaction of certain business, and he could not receive any proposition that had not been allowed, and accepted by the general committee.

The resolution was then carried, Mr. Rutherford and another being the only persons who voted against it.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I have been asked to move the following resolution:—"That the Executive Committee of the National Education League be requested to prepare a bill, based upon the principles of the League, for introduction into the House of Commons during the next session of Parliament." Inasmuch as this resolution is in fact a formal one, and follows almost necessarily from that which has just been, all but unanimously adopted, it is not necessary for me to say much in its favour. It is clearly desirable, that our views should be presented as early as possible to the Legislature in a practical shape; and inasmuch as we believe that we now have a Government, who are determined faithfully to carry out the wishes of the people, it will be an assistance, and not a hindrance, to them that our views should be presented in a proper form. But I have been requested, as an officer of the local committee, to say a few words in support of the objects and principles of the League; and, in the first place, I think I may congratulate this meeting, and all the friends of education, upon the enormous advance, to which this meeting testifies, on the great question of education. I see in this advance the result

and the justification of the great political reform, which has made those most interested in education, the depositories of a great share of political power. There can be no doubt that the present officers and members of the League have not, and cannot have, any personal or selfish motive in the agitation of this question. One common motive we have, and that is the love of our common country, which induces us to seek its prosperity and progress, and which, in the present case, incites us to obtain that prosperity by cultivating the intelligence, and securing the enlightenment of the people. But you have a much nearer and more personal interest in this matter. For it is not merely a question whether this country shall continue to maintain its position among the nations, or whether it shall lag behind in civilization, and leave the victory in industrial and intellectual progress to other nations; but for you, it is also a question of the future of your own class, and perhaps of your families; and you have to say whether they shall enjoy the advantages which education confers, or whether they shall remain in the position to which ignorance will condemn them, even if they do not enter into the ranks of pauperism and crime. As one guide to your decision upon this question, I ask you to consider the character, both of the support and of the opposition which our proposition excites. As to the friends of this movement, I will only refer to the adhesions we have received, during the present Congress from the delegates and representatives of the great Trades' Councils throughout the kingdom; so that, I believe we may say that directly or indirectly, from 800,000 to 1,000,000 working men have, at these meetings in Birmingham, given their support to the platform of the League. But it is chiefly from the opposition which our propositions excite, that I anticipate a favourable result—not that the opposition is not formidable, both in extent and in numbers; but when I see, taking sides against us upon this question, the selfish hosts whom we have seen ranged against us, again and again, upon previous questions, and whom we have again and again defeated, I see an augury of a good result. I have read that Napoleon I., on the morning of one of his great battles, told his soldiers that they saw before them those self-same Prussians whom they had beaten at Jena, whom they routed at

Leipsic, and whom they would crush that day; and when I see taking sides against us now, a great portion of the Conservative landowners, and a certain section of the clergy, I think of the Corn Laws, of Reform, and of the Irish Church. But the signs of our success are even more apparent in the trepidation and doubt which are beginning to operate in the opposite camp. President Lincoln had a homely proverb, that it was "bad to swop horses when crossing a stream;" but we see our opponents, in the middle of this discussion, abandon their old hobbies, in the hope that they may yet save something out of the wreck of the system which is fast passing away. Only a few years ago, at a meeting which was held in this town, to consider the state of its education, the local clergy who were present voted, to a man, against compulsory education, and most of them were opposed to local rating; but now you find, in the programme of the society which has been started within the last few months, in opposition to our League, these two points made the principal points of their platform. But we, in the meantime, have advanced a little further, and so these gentlemen are, as usual, left behind. So it will always be, until they learn to give up their prejudices a little more graciously, and a little more quickly. Until they do that, they will never overtake the full confidence of the people whom they profess to wish to serve. The present issue between us is simply this: we say that the old system, which has failed, after a trial of twenty years, should at least be supplemented by something new; but they say, No, let us extend and continue the old. We say that the nation has been growing fast, and has outgrown its old clothes, and that it ought to have a new suit; but they want to let out a tuck here, and put in a patch there, to make the old rags last a little longer. Underlying all this resistance, is the fear that, if we do have a new outfit, we may refuse to employ those who made such a miserable misfit of the last. His Grace the Archbishop of York, at a meeting which was held in Liverpool the other day, and which was called a working man's meeting, because a large portion of the room was filled by the clergy, at that meeting his Grace told his audience that three-fourths of the education of the country was owing to the clergy, and that the men and the system that had done such

great things ought not to be superseded. I should be the last to deny or depreciate the enormous sacrifices which have been made by many of the clergy to establish and maintain schools; but I say that, on their own confession, their motive has been, not the education of the people as a thing which is good in itself, but the maintenance of the doctrines of the Church of England; and the consequence has been, that secular education has been subordinate to this object, and we remain at this time one of the worst educated nations in Europe. I say that, even if they had been a great deal more successful than they really have been, it is the worst kind of Conservatism to say that, because a thing is good of its kind, it shall not be supplanted by something which is better and more complete. I cannot understand the propriety of keeping a grown-up man in swaddling clothes, because he looked very well in them when he was a baby. To plead for the retention of the denominational system, under which more than half the children of this country are growing up without any education worthy the name, because three-fourths of the remainder are brought up in the Church of England schools, is as ridiculous as for an old Protectionist to have pleaded for the Corn Laws, at a time when thousands were perishing for want of food, because three-fourths of the rest, drew their daily supplies from the granaries of the farmers. But the real reason why our opponents support the denominational system is, not because they believe it to be the best means of securing the education of the people, but because they believe it to be the only means by which they can maintain a monopoly of instruction. Our choice is between the education of the people, and the interests of the Church. Education, to be national, must be unsectarian; and I cannot suppose that there will be a moment's hesitation as to the choice which the majority of the nation would make, if it were not that theological professors, who ought to recognize in education the best foundation upon which religion can rear her temple, have perverted the meaning of religion until, indirectly, it has become a hindrance and a stumbling-block. The day is not far distant when all will look back with wonder at this time, and be astonished that intelligent, earnest, and conscientious men could have thought a profession of faith in any creed, worth anything as long as it was unintelligent, and

could have been blind to the fact, that the best handmaid which any truth can have is a mind trained for its apprehension. It is a curious and instructive fact, that while almost all other sects are welcoming the prospect of increased education, as the best preparation for their own religious work, there are two which strain every nerve to preserve and extend the present system, in spite of its clear deficiencies. These two parties are the Roman Catholic Church, and the Evangelical section of the Church of England. I think the latter should have some doubt about the propriety of the course they are taking, when they see into what company it has brought them. You know what the pious organ of the party, the *Record*, said, when it discovered that Mr. Gladstone had an acquaintance with Archbishop Manning; you know that all the resources of Biblical bad language were exhausted, and men searched the Scriptures diligently to find parallels for the supposed baseness of the great Statesman. Now the same gentlemen who shuddered at the iniquity of conversing with a Roman Catholic prelate, are actually rowing in the same boat with the ecclesiastics of Rome. The interest of the Roman Catholics in this matter is very clear. If denominational education is to be extended in England, how can you in justice refuse denominational education in Ireland? And then you will have this glorious anomaly in our splendid constitutional system: you will have the State spending money on mutually destructive objects, and the patient people will be called upon in one breath, to swallow the poison and the antidote, and to pay the bill for both. The only way by which this baneful, dangerous, and senseless application of the public money can be avoided, is to insist firmly upon the principle that the secular education of the people should be the province of the Government, apart from all theological instruction, which should be left to the respective ministers. This, at all events, is what the League sets before you. I read, the other day, that Lord Sandon, in a speech which he made in the House, said that, speaking from an intimate acquaintance with the working classes, he was confident that they would never accept any education which had not impressed upon it a religious character. If his lordship's acquaintance with the

working class be correct, our work will be vain; but I prefer to believe, with John Stuart Mill, that the time is shortly coming when the working class will no longer be content to accept a religion of other people's prescribing. And if this matter of education is taken up by the working class, as we hope and believe it will be, and if it is made part of their political programme, then our success is certain, and we may yet live to see the glorious time when, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth and best production, this imperial realm, while she exacts allegiance, will admit the obligation, on her part, to teach those who are born to serve her; and thus only shall we maintain our position as a great nation, and guard and protect the highest interests of every class of the community.

Mr. CREMER: I apprehend that the reasons which induced the committee to ask me to second this resolution were, because I am known to entertain strong convictions in reference to the question of national, secular, and compulsory education; and, secondly, because, being a working man, I may fairly claim to speak of the wants and wishes of the working class. Those of us who, year after year, contended for the extension of the suffrage to the working class, asserted that one of the first objects which the working men, when they obtained the suffrage, would seek to realize, would be a system of secular and compulsory education. That prophesy has received a partial fulfilment in the establishment of the National Education League, in the successful meetings it has held during the last two days, and the enthusiastic manner in which you have endorsed the platform of the League at this meeting; and I am sure that when the matter is fairly before the country, our prophecies will have a complete triumph. Some three years ago, the working men in the borough in which I reside in London, formed a political association, and one of the planks in their platform—three years ago, remember—was national, secular, and compulsory education, and they declared that any man who came to them in the future to ask for their suffrages, must be distinctly in favour of secular and compulsory education. The result was, that at the last general election nearly 6,000 workmen recorded their suffrages for the man who made that the most prominent feature of his political programme. The tendency of modern legislation was, I think, rightly

described by Sir Stafford Northcote at the Social Science Congress, when he said it was in the direction of more and stronger government. The old do-nothing policy has passed away for ever, and has been succeeded by an earnest determination on the part of the people to do something useful, and to do it well. I fear Mr. Forster is likely to bring in next session a Bill based upon the denominational system. I hope, therefore, that the Executive Committee will as speedily as possible frame a bill embodying the principles of the League, and get some staunch friend of education, such as Professor Fawcett, Mr. Mundella, or Mr. Dixon, to introduce it into the House of Commons; because its being in their hands will be the best guarantee that there will be no unholy compromise upon this question. Professor Fawcett's conduct last session proves that there is no greater enemy of compromise than he. I wish we had a House composed of such men. With regard to education, I know there are a great many who are exceedingly timid at the mention of compulsion. They are quite willing to provide schools, but the idea of forcing children to attend is repugnant to them. But the right of the State to compel, where the well-being of society is concerned, was acknowledged long ago. In fact, this principle is at the root of all government. To come to what has been done within our own day: was not the right of the State to use compulsion acknowledged when the Factory Acts were passed? when the Bleaching and Dyeing Act was passed? when the Inspection of Coal Mines Act was passed? when the Health of Towns Act was passed? when the Vaccination Act was passed? When we talk of freedom, we mean freedom to do what is right; when we say we don't want Government to interfere, we mean that we object to its mischievous interference; but the very purpose of its existence is forgotten unless it interferes beneficently. The only question, then, is whether it is well for us to be educated, and if so, whether we can have the work done more effectually by Government than by any other agency? If so, then the Government must interfere and do it. We provide inspectors to see that people whitewash their houses and drain them, and we punish people who injure society by neglect in these particulars. I have read, within the last three or four weeks, of thirty or forty cases

where, in the Metropolitan Police Courts, heads of families have been fined for not having their children vaccinated. There may be difference of opinion as to whether vaccination is beneficial or not, and those who think it is not beneficial of course object to people being fined for not practising it; but among men who are convinced that vaccination is useful, there is no objection to Government enforcing it; in fact all people who believe it is good, want it enforced for the benefit of society at large. It is only when they become convinced that it is bad that they object to Governmental compulsion. I hold that the case of education is precisely similar. If it is good, let us have it—let compulsion be used if necessary; let it be punished as a crime to starve a child's mind, as we punish it as a crime to starve its body; but if it is bad, or merely indifferent—if it is of little or no consequence whether people are educated or not—let us have no compulsion. But we who hold that it is good, and that it is a remedy against moral pestilence, want the same principle applied to it as to the prevention of contagious diseases. Some people object to the programme of the League, because they say the policeman must be called in to enforce it. Mr. Mundella has just now disposed of that cry; but for my part, even if it were a well-founded objection, I should be very glad to see a policeman drag a child to school, if I thought there was a reasonable prospect that by that means he would be saved the trouble of dragging him to gaol in after years. I would rather employ the police to save our children from the moral snares which beset them, than in preventing the snaring of hares, the beneficent work which our aristocracy have found for a large number of them. As to the state of education in this country compared with some nations abroad, it was my good fortune to visit Switzerland some years ago. I went through the cities, towns, and villages, and into the mountains. I had full opportunities of judging of the education of the people, and I can confirm the statement of Mr. Mundella that there is not a man or woman, or a child of ten or twelve years of age—not one, so far as I could make out—who has not received a thoroughly sound and practical education. They have not the miserable charity schools that we have in this country for the people, but they have magni-

cent colleges, built at the expense of the State, where the children of the shopkeeper, the artisan, and the labourer sit on one common form, and receive a common education; and nothing seemed to me more likely to root out caste, prejudice, and privilege, and to knit all classes together, than this intermixture of the children of all classes in school. When I saw this in Switzerland, I could not help hoping that the time was not far distant when we should see a similar state of things in the United Kingdom. A word to my fellow-workmen: We are apt to lament the gulf which separates class from class, and to bemoan our fate, and regret that there should be such a thing as caste and privilege in society; but you may depend upon it that you will never get rid of these things of which you are the victims, until you place yourself upon an intellectual equality with the other classes of society. That is the necessary condition of all equality. Do what you will, a rude and ignorant class can never be upon an equality with a polished and educated class. What you have to do, therefore, is to educate and polish yourselves; and if you do that, other classes will lose alike the wish, and the power to elbow you aside and treat you with contempt. I insist, therefore, upon education. Take no denial, be turned aside by no pretext, but insist upon that as the one thing needful, without which all the victories you have ever achieved or can achieve, will possess but half their value, and without which, there are many victories which will be impossible. I believe the programme of the League will help to this intellectual equality which we now require, and that is the reason why I give it my cordial support. Let us, as working men, speak out boldly and manfully on this question. It is of vital importance to us. Let there be no temporising or compromising with us. Let us enter into no unholy alliances, but do this thing now with all our might, for there never was a work more worthy of all our energy. I believe we are all ready. Four years ago, when I was in the eastern counties, I found the labourers in the villages, and in the country quite ripe upon this question even then, and my conviction is that we shall find an overwhelming force to help us onward. I hope you will give us all the assistance in your power, and justify the predictions made in your behalf when the franchise was demanded for you.

One of these predictions was, that as soon as you came into possession of political power, you would insist upon the education of every child in the kingdom.

Mr. CARTER, M.P.: I don't intend to inflict a speech upon you at this late hour of the evening; but one or two gentlemen have referred to a speech of the Archbishop of York, and as I know something of the views of the working men of Yorkshire, I rise to assure you that when the Archbishop of York tells the people of Liverpool that the working men of Yorkshire will be opposed to secular and compulsory education, he says what he is not authorized to say, and what he will find himself very much mistaken about, if he will consult the working men of Yorkshire. The gentleman who has preceded me has told you that a candidate who inscribed compulsory and unsectarian education on his banner got 6,000 votes. I did that, and I got 15,000 votes. You remember that the Bishop of Ripon told the House of Lords, during the discussion on the Irish Church Bill, that a great change had come over the working men of Yorkshire, especially in the large towns, where he said, they were going strongly against Mr. Gladstone. Now, Archbishops and Bishops, I think, are not generally the best informed of men on the subject of the feelings of the working classes. At all events, Mr. Baines and I, a few days after that statement was made by the Bishop of Ripon, addressed a meeting of 15,000 working, men in the Leeds Cloth Hall, and we asked them, was the Bishop of Ripon right? And about twenty said he was. Now I take it that the Archbishop of York, knows about as much as the Bishop of Ripon does, of the views of the working men of Yorkshire. I know as much of the working men of North Yorkshire as any man in Yorkshire, and I tell you that they will stand shoulder to shoulder with you in this fight. Mr. Mundella can tell you what they think in South Yorkshire; he himself represents their views. One of the previous speakers has observed that if Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Forster should shrink upon this question, you know how, by your meetings and demonstrations, to give them firmness and courage, and make them go faster; you will find that the men of Yorkshire will assist you.

Mr. LLOYD JONES: It is necessary that we should under-

stand precisely the ground we occupy. We are told that we shall have to meet a very vigorous opposition, and I have not the least doubt of it; but I claim to know something of the working people of this country, and I deny most positively that any part of that opposition will come from them. It is said that they have a very strong dislike to compulsion, but I say that that depends altogether upon what it is, that they are to be compelled to do. People are very ingenious in finding excuses for inactivity, when they dislike doing anything. We know Mr. Disraeli declared that the discontent of Ireland was due to the proximity of the Atlantic Ocean, and that as England could not remove *that*, it was quite useless to attempt to do anything. Now, his party urge as a great obstacle to this movement, that the working classes dislike compulsion, and we know that the party have reason for considering compulsion a most painful thing; for what have we been doing with them within living memory, but compelling them? We have kept them under a continued system of compulsion, and they find it very irksome. We have compelled them to pass from one reform to another, and have compelled them—if not to do—at least to accept, with the best grace they could, the doing of things which every man fifty years ago would have declared to be impossible. Only a few days ago we compelled them to disestablish the Irish Church, and, if necessary, we shall compel them, in a few days or months more, to acquiesce in a system which shall educate the whole of the people of this country. We were told by Mr. Lowe, when the late Reform Bill was before the House of Commons, that the country would have to teach its masters their letters; and that is just what in real earnest we mean now to do. We know he said it in no friendly tone to the working classes, but we mean to do it in a different spirit. The working people are now in possession of political power, and it is necessary to educate them to use it for their own and the country's good. We want them to be educated, not that they may become the master-class—because we believe the mastership of classes in this country has been destroyed for ever—but we wish to educate them in order that they may be able to take their part wisely with their fellow-citizens of other

classes. With regard to compulsory education, it is said that it may do very well for the artisan, but will be impracticable in the agricultural districts, because a family deprived of the labour of its children will not be able to sustain itself. If that is true, the sooner such a state of things is put an end to by some means the better. If the children of the agricultural labourers must either remain in absolute ignorance, or else starve, that is a state of things which every Englishman with a heart in his body, ought at once to set about rectifying, if possible. But is it true? I am sure the working men will not be turned from the path of duty by difficulties, especially by difficulties which are not yet actually in the way, but are only expected ahead, and which may be found to have no existence, or not to be of so formidable a nature as is anticipated. We expect difficulties, but we are determined to conquer difficulties, and do our duty in spite of them; and the performance of every duty in turn, as our hand finds it to do, will strengthen us for the performance of the next. We intend to go on steadily, step by step, vanquishing difficulties as they appear. A very wise man has told us that there is no culminating point in the ascension of nations, that nations have fallen, not because they had gone as high as nations could go, but because they have placed their feet upon a rotten round of the ladder, and it has given way with them. If we go stupidly and blindly into the future, with an uneducated people, depend upon it we shall sooner or later step upon that rotten round of the ladder, and come to grief. With regard to the assertions which are made that the working people are opposed to this movement, let those who say so produce the working people who are opposed to it, let us see them. We can produce tens of thousands of working men in its favour; let them show us those who are against it. I know that the working men of England will go heart and soul with this movement, and I have no doubt whatever that before long we shall see a thorough system of national education, unsectarian, free, and compulsory, established in this country; and when we see that, we shall feel assured of the perpetual growth of the nation.

The resolution was then put, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Jesse Collings (Hon. Sec.): I have great pleasure in proposing, "That the best thanks of the meeting be presented to the Mayor for his conduct in the chair." I have also to announce that "an early member of the League"—I am not permitted to give any name—who has been waiting for his faith to be confirmed by this Conference, will give £200 in yearly instalments. That is the second sum of the kind we have had to-day. There is something very appropriate in having our Mayor in the chair, seeing that before many of us knew anything about this question, and before some of us were born, the principles for which we now contend were matters of settled conviction with him. He is one of those who hailed this movement in Birmingham, with recognition of the greatness that belonged to it. He threw himself heartily into the work of the formation of this League at the beginning, and he has never ceased, up to the present moment, to give it his hearty aid and sympathy. I congratulate the town that it has so appropriate a chairman on this occasion, and I congratulate the Mayor, that it has fallen to his lot, to inaugurate the most important movement of modern times in this country. Our scheme is fairly launched to-night; or rather I should call it yours, for you have received it with a fervour which makes it yours, and which gives us confidence in its success. It is a system that all may understand, whilst as to the scheme or system opposed to it, if it have any principles at all, no two of them fit into each other. We men of business wish to deal as soon as possible with this great question; and remember that if Members of Parliament make the law, the people make the Members of Parliament. You have, therefore, the making of the law in your own hands. Do not accept as a Member of Parliament, any man who will not accept the principles which you desire to see carried out with regard to education. The leaders of our opponents could only tell us the other day, at the Social Science Congress, that the poor must do what Canon Girdlestone described, as shutting their eyes and opening their mouths, and waiting for what Heaven might send them. They have done that long enough; and now we want them to shut their mouths and open their eyes, and see what Heaven *has sent* them. Let them see the rights sent them by Heaven, out of which they

have been unjustly kept. One right—the dearest of all—is to have their children educated as human beings. There has been talk about compromise. We mean no compromise; it is well that that should be understood. The road has been laid down for you to-night; you have only to walk in it. It may be a little difficult, but it goes straight to the point, and if you follow it earnestly and with determination, you will find what you want.

Mr. DIXON, M.P.: I rise with the greatest pleasure to second this resolution. We are extremely fortunate in having such a Mayor to help us as we have this year. I cannot forget that when I introduced, some time ago, into the Town Council a resolution on the subject of education, our present Mayor moved an amendment, because he said my resolution did not go far enough, and he carried his resolution, and the Town Council did that which was an honour to the town, and an example to the country; and we are now doing that which satisfies, I am happy to say, our Mayor. He is satisfied with us, and we are satisfied with him.

The resolution was carried with acclamation.

The MAYOR: Ladies and gentlemen,—When my term of office belongs to the things of the past, there is no event connected with it that will give me so much pleasure, as that the formation of the National Education League, and the great movement which has been inaugurated by it, took place during that term. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.

This terminated the proceedings.

FIRST GENERAL MEETING,

OCTOBER 12th and 13th, 1869.

LIST OF VISITORS.

Adair, Thomas, Derby.
Adams, Francis, Birmingham, *Secretary.*
Aitken, W. C., Birmingham.
Albright, Arthur, Birmingham.
Applebee, Rev. J. Kay, London.
Applegarth, Robert, London.
Ashford, W. W., Edgbaston.
Aveling, Thomas, Mayor of Rochester.

Bacchus, J. O., Birmingham.
Baker, George, Birmingham.
Barber, Stephen, Birmingham.
Barnett, William, Birmingham.
Baron, Joshua, J.P., Over Darwen.
Bartleet, Thomas S., Edgbaston.
Basnett, George, Birmingham.
Basnett, S., Birmingham.
Bastard, Thomas Horlock, Blandford.
Batchelor, John, Cardiff.
Bayly, J., Plymouth.
Beal, Michael, Sheffield.
Beale, W. J., Birmingham.
Beale, J. H., Banbury.
Beales, Edmond, London.
Best, J., Andover.
Bigwood, Rev. John, London.

Binns, Rev. William, Devonport.
Black, Rev. James, M.A., Stockport.
Blackham, G., Selly Oak.
Bourne, Alfred, London.
Bottomley, J. Firth, London.
Bovill, W. J., London.
Bray, Rev. Charles, Coventry.
Bremner, John A., Manchester.
Broadhurst, Samuel, Warrington.
Brock, Rev. Dr.
Brodie, Rev. P. B., Rowington.
Brown, Rev. John Jenkyn, Birmingham.
Brodrick, the Hon. George, London.
Bunce, J. Thackray, F.S.S., Birmingham.
Burman, R. H., Birmingham.
Busk, Wm., M.R.C.P., F.S.A., &c., London.
Butcher, W., Bristol.

Caldicott, Rev. J. W., M.A., Bristol.
Campbell, Lord, London.
Carrington, R. C., Farnham.
Carter, R. M., M.P., Leeds.
Carter, John, Birmingham.
Chamberlain, J. H., Birmingham.
Chamberlain, Joseph, Birmingham, *Chairman of Executive Com.*
Chadwick, Edwin, C. B., London.
Chapman, Samuel, Rochdale.
Charles, David, Aberystwith.
Clarke, Rev. Charles, F.L.S., Edgbaston.
Clarke, Edward G., *Hon. Sec. Bristol Branch*, Bristol.
Clarke, Thomas Chatfield, London.
Clarkson, Rev. W. F., B.A., Lincoln.
Clayden, Rev. P. W., London.
Coe, Rev. Charles C., Leicester.
Colley, William, Leamington.
Collings, Jesse, Birmingham, *Hon. Sec.*
Congreve, Rev. John, Rector of Tooting, Graveney.
Connor, Rev. W. A., B.A., Manchester.

Cole, Alfred A., Walsall.
Cornish, Charles Leslie, Birmingham.
Cox, Robert, Edinburgh.
Cox, J. Charles, Hazlewood, Belper.
Cremer, W. R., London.
Creighton, Mandell, Fellow and Tutor of Merton Col., Oxford.
Crosskey, Rev. H., F.G.S., Birmingham.
Curme, Rev. Thomas, Vicar of Sandford.

Dale, Rev. R. W., M.A,, Birmingham.
Davies, Rev. F., D.D., Haverfordwest.
Dawson, George, M.A., Birmingham.
Dixon, George, M.P., Birmingham, *Chairman of the Council of the League.*
Dowson, Rev. H. E., Hyde.
Draper, E. Herbert, Kenilworth.

Earl, William, Birmingham.
Edwards, Richard Passmore, Bath.
Edwards, Charles H., Birmingham.
Ellenberger, Dr., Worksop.
Ellis, J. H., Leicester.
Emanuel, Rev. G. J., Edgbaston.
Esson, Wm., F.R.S., Fellow and Tutor of Merton Coll., Oxford.
Evans, Rev. C., Birmingham.

Fawcett, Professor.
Fawcett, Mrs.
Felkin, Robert, Wolverhampton.
Field, Alfred, Birmingham.
Fillingham, John Charles, Sanitary Inspector, Sheffield.
Fish, John, J.P., Blackburn.
Fooks, William, L.L.B., London.
Foster, Dr. Balthazer.
Franklin, Geo. B., Birmingham.
Fry, Herbert, *Hon. Sec. of the London Branch*, London.

Galpin, Thomas D., London.
Gasquoine, Rev. T., B.A., Oswestry.
Gaunt, Edwin, Leeds.
Geikie, Rev. J. Cunningham, London.
George, Rev. H. B., Fellow of New College, Oxford.
Gillions, Charles Edward B., Bedford.
Glydon, William, Birmingham.
Gore, George, F.R.S., Edgbaston.
Gosling, Alfred, Birmingham.
Grattan, John James, Sheffield.
Grayson, Charles, Liverpool.
Green, T. H., Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford.
Green, Thomas, Birmingham.
Greg, Louis, Liverpool.
Grenfell, E. F., M.A., Rugby.
Grew, Frederick, Birmingham.
Griffith, Geo., Wolverhampton.
Guedalla, Joseph, London.
Guest, William, F.G.S., Gravesend.
Guile, Daniel, London.
Guise, Sir Wm. Vernon, Bart., F.G.S., F.L.S., Gloucester.
Guttery, Rev. Thomas, Wolverhampton.

Haarbleicher, M. J., Manchester.
Hall, James, Sheffield.
Hammer, Geo. M., London.
Hansard, Rev. Septimus, M.A., Rector of Bethnal Green.
Harris, William, Birmingham.
Harrison, John, Birmingham.
Hatton, Joseph.
Hawkes, Alderman H., Birmingham.
Haycroft, Rev. Dr.
Haye, E., Stoney Stratford.
Heinrick, Hugh, Birmingham.
Heath, Rev. E., Blackburn.
Heathcote, Rev. H. J., Erdington.
Herbert, the Hon. Auberon, London.
Heslop, T. P., M.D., Birmingham.

Hibbs, Charles, Birmingham.
Hill, Alsager Hay, London.
Hills, Harris, Essex.
Hime, Dr., A.B., M.B., Sheffield.
Hinds, Miss, St. Neots, Hunts.
Hodgson, W. B., LL.D., London.
Holland, Henry, Mayor of Birmingham.
Holliday, William, J.P., Birmingham.
Holyoake, George J., London.
Houghton, Rev. C. E., Rugby.
Hosken, R. F., Leamington.
Howell, George, London.
Hudson, J. Davidson, Birmingham.
Hulme, Thomas, Stoke-on-Trent.

Jacob, Alfred, Birmingham.
Jaffray, John, Birmingham, *Treasurer*.
James, William, Edgbaston.
James, E. H., Birmingham.
James, Rev. Wm., Bristol.
Johnson, G. J., Birmingham.
Jones, Lewis, Birmingham.
Jones, Lloyd, London.
Jordan, Henry, Birmingham Exchange.
Jubb, Rev. W. Walker, West Smethwick.
Judge, Thomas, Brackley.

Klein, Dr. Julius, London.
Kempson, W., Leicester.
Kenrick, William, Birmingham.
Kenrick, J. A., J.P., Edgbaston.
Kenrick, T., Edgbaston.

Langford, John Alfred, Birmingham.
Ladd, W., London.
Lake, Rev. J. W., Warwick.
Le Neve Foster, P., London.
Lester, Wm., Wrexham.

Lloyd, G. B., Birmingham.
Long, William, jun., Warrington.
Longmore, J., Worcester.
Luckett, Rev. Henry, West Bromwich.

Maclean, L. M., Worcester.
Macfie, Rev. M., Birmingham.
Mackenzie, Rev. J. R., D.D., Edgbaston.
McRae, Robert, Birmingham.
Mantle, George H., Birmingham.
Manton, Alderman Henry, Birmingham.
Manton, John S., Birmingham.
Martin, Robert, M.D., Warrington.
Martineau, R., Edgbaston.
Martineau, R. F., Edgbaston.
Mason, W., Leeds.
Matthews, Evans, Birmingham.
Mathews, C. E., Birmingham.
Maxse, Capt., R.N., Southampton.
McDougal, Rev. J. M., Darwen.
Miall, Rev. William, Dalston.
Middlemore, William, J.P., Birmingham.
Millard, James H., B.A., Sec. of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland.
Milner, Edward, J.P., Warrington.
Milward, R. H., Birmingham.
Moore, Septimus P., LL.B., F.G.S., London.
Morison, Colonel.
Morgan, William, Birmingham.
Mundella, A. J., M.P., Nottingham.
Murch, Jerom, Bath.
Muspratt, Edmund R., Liverpool

Naden, Joseph, Sheffield.
Nash, Thomas, Manchester.
Noel, Ernest, Godstone, Surrey.

Odger, George, London.
Olding, B.
Olsen, Samuel, Birmingham.
Osborne, Alderman E. C., Birmingham.
Osborne, William, York.
Osler, Follett, F.R.S., Birmingham.
Owen, Edward, Lee Port.

Paget, Charles, Ruddington Grange, Notts.
Palmer, W., M.R.C.P., Warwick.
Park, John, Walsall.
Parkhurst, R. M., L.L.D., Manchester.
Partridge, J. Arthur, Birmingham.
Paton, W., Atherstone.
Payton, Henry, Birmingham.
Pears, Edwin, London.
Pease, Thomas, F.G.S., Bristol.
Peiser, J., Manchester.
Pentecost, John, Stourbridge.
Peyton, H., Birmingham.
Phillips, Thomas, J.P., Birmingham.
Phillpotts, J. S., B.C.L., Rugby.
Pinnock, R., Mayor, Newport, Isle of Wight.
Popplewell, W. J., Manchester.
Postgate, John, Birmingham.
Potter, Edmund, M.P., Carlisle.
Prange, F. G., Liverpool.
Priddy, G. M., M.D., Wolverhampton.
Pryse, Joseph, London.

Quin, F. B. Wyndham, LL.D., F.R.G.S., Market Drayton.

Rabone, John, Birmingham.
Rafferty, Michael, Birmingham.
Ransom, Edwin, Bedford.
Ransome, R. C., Ipswich.
Rawling, S. B., Devonport.
Rawlins, James H., Wrexham.

Rawlinson, Sir Christopher, Upton-on-Severn.
Richards, S. Wall, Birmingham.
Richards, Rev. James, Stourbridge.
Robertson, Dover, Liverpool.
Rogers, W., Edgbaston.
Rogers, Rev. Wm., London.
Rogers, James E. Thorold, Oxford.
Rothera, G. B., Nottingham.
Rumney, Alderman Robert, Manchester.
Rusden, R. W., Manchester.
Ryland, Alderman Arthur, Birmingham.
Ryland, T. H., Birmingham.

Sandford, the Ven. Archdeacon, Redditch.
Sandwith, H., Llandovery.
Salwey, Col. Henry, Runnymede.
Sayle, Philip, Liverpool.
Schnadhorst, Frank, Birmingham.
Sharp, James, Southampton.
Shelley, Rev. Richard, Great Yarmouth.
Simon, Serjeant, M.P.
Simon, Louis, Nottingham.
Simons, W., Merthyr Tydvil.
Smith, Joseph, M.D., Warrington.
Solly, Rev. H., London.
Soul, Joseph, London.
Spark, H. H., Darlington.
Sykes, James Albert, Liverpool.
St. Clair, George, Banbury.
Steinthal, Rev. S. A., Manchester.
Stepney, W. F. Cowell, London.
Stevenson, George, Leicester.
Swinglehurst, Henry, Milnethorpe.

Tait, Lawson, F.R.C.S., Wakefield.
Taylor, J., Sheffield.
Taylor, Rev. Sedley, Cambridge.
Thomas, Joshua, Birmingham.

Thomas, John, South Shields.
Thomas, J. H., Cardiff.
Thompson, H. B. S., Birmingham.
Thompson, James, Leicester.
Tilley, Alfred, Cardiff.
Timmins, Samuel, Birmingham.
Tobley, James S., London.
Tufnell, E., Carlton, London.
Tunstall, E., Smethwick.
Turner, George, Birmingham.

Underwood, Rev. Wm., D.D., Chilwell College, Notts.

Vickers, Wm., J.P., Nottingham.
Vince, Rev. Charles, Birmingham.

Webb, Edward, Worcester.
Webster, John, Birmingham.
Webster, Thomas, Q.C., London.
Wells, James, Northampton.
Williams, H. M., London.
Williams, R., West Bromwich.
Williams, Rev. Rowland, D.D., Broadchalk.
Williamson, W.B., Worcester.
Whitehead, James, Catford Bridge, London.
Wood, William Robert, Brighton.
Woodhill, J. C., Edgbaston.
Wright, J. S., Birmingham.
Wynne, T., Stone.

Yates, Alderman Edwin, Birmingham.

Zincke, Rev. F. B., Ipswich.

With many others, whose names have not been ascertained.

"THE JOURNAL" PRINTING OFFICES, NEW STREET, BIRMINGHAM.