

should enforce the principle that 'patronage partakes of the nature of a trust to be exercised for the spiritual benefit of the parishioners,' and should contain clauses (1) for the abolition of the sale of next presentations; (2) for the due regulation and registration of the sale of advowsons; (3) for the conversion of all donatives into presentative benefices; (4) for giving increased powers to the Bishop to refuse institution in certain cases and under express limitations and conditions."

Such, briefly, are the main features of the Church Patronage Bill. By whom is the Bill opposed? By the members of the "Liberation" Society!

STANLEY LEIGHTON.

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## ART. II.—THE CHILDREN'S DAY OF REST.

THE vast importance of Sunday Schools has recently received public endorsement by the erection of a monument to the reputed founder. The statue of Robert Raikes speaks of a great fact, the existence of an institution recognized, honoured, and confided in by Christians of all denominations. Coincident with this general acknowledgment is a belief that by such means the insidious scepticism of the present day—negation of truth—which not a few regard as the beginning of the end, is to be met and combated. So the good seed of the Gospel is sown in prayerful hope that light springing up at the dawn of human life may preclude darkness in adolescence, deadness in manhood, apathy in old age.

Keeping in mind considerations so momentous, it may not be ill-timed to weigh seriously Sunday School work as now in operation, and to ask ourselves the questions whether—

- (1) The existing system is as efficient as practicable?
- (2) Whether modification is desirable?

And, (3) In such case, the form it should take?

The great principle toward which all agencies should coalesce and subserve is sufficiently obvious. It is to sow the good seed wisely as well as lovingly; it is to commend the Gospel of Christ in a form so attractive as to afford promise "of the life that now is and of that which is to come." Those who are experienced in the work realize that this is no easy task. Far otherwise. Something too might be said—indeed is said—by ministers as to the wisdom and un-wisdom of the teacher, his very varied conception of such office, its duties and way of fulfilment. To this bearing of the subject we shall recur.

Truly a child is a complex machine which needs to be studied,

developed, worked as a unit. What mother of ordinary intelligence, however unlettered and unlearned, desires not to realize this truth?—willingly limits the instruction of her offspring in things human, much less things divine, to class teaching? Yet from obstacles sufficiently apparent this individual training (we speak now of the higher aspect) is unattainable, as a rule, in the large mass of the community—the lower ranks. On grounds equally patent, though of a very diverse character as regards causation and accountability, it may be feared that the like untoward consequences are witnessed, now and again, at the opposite pole of society.

What different elements compose an average Sunday School in a city, and, to a less marked degree, in the country! There is the sharp, perhaps precocious, child who anticipates all others of the class in replies, and whose pride in so doing is so manifest as to call for wise restraint at the hands of the teacher. There is the average well-informed and well (or ill) conducted; the idle and inattentive, who regard the occasion as an opportunity for display either of personal possessions or of colloquial powers; and sometimes, unhappily, the radically bad.<sup>1</sup> All these meet together for instruction and on but one day of the week. And as they cannot, except momentarily, be dealt with as units, surely it is of much importance that common ground or grounds of action most conducive to the great end desired, should be educed with all possible wisdom.

First then as to the existing system—its efficiency, sufficiency. As a principle we all acknowledge the beneficial operation in every-day life of established usage. It is a great factor, lever, in social life. Stability and confidence are the proper outcome. But the need of fresh thought and, now and again, fresh consequent action, is taught—sometimes by somewhat stern lessons. Take, for example, the British Army; its organization and adaptability for active service when we entered on the Crimean War, as contrasted with the sad experience gained at its close. Once fixed in a groove, well worn by time, and the Englishman's axiom becomes very generally "let well alone, avoid friction." And somewhat as the army in Wellingtonian times was treated and used as a machine, the soldiers drilled and treated much in the automatic manner of their wooden representatives by little children, so, we venture to think, are Sunday scholars as a body practically dealt with. Drill, albeit kindly enforced, is the consideration; usage, dating from the foundation of the whole system, is stereotyped; and teachers and taught alike swim on in the smooth tranquil current of conventionalism.

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<sup>1</sup> Instances of malignity of disposition (sadly ominous of the future career, and not limited to the very poor) are met with which illustrate, at the age even of boyhood, the force of Jeremiah's words, xvii. 9.

Let us glance at the ordinary routine of a Sabbath as regards children of the humble ranks of society. With occasional and exceptional modifications it will be found as follows:—First, early in the morning, school, and immediately afterwards, the long morning service of the church.<sup>1</sup> The very young are allowed, however, in some instances to return home; in others, to remain for a brief liturgical service.<sup>2</sup> Following but some two hours after morning church comes afternoon Sunday School. In the interim scholars and teachers take their chief daily meal, necessarily much after the manner of our American cousins, and traverse a distance more or less lengthened to the school buildings. The Evening Service terminates this “day of rest.” Sufficiently trying an ordeal were the weather in our climate perfect. In winter time—the physical aspect of Sunday School work is now before us—the procedures of a Sabbath so passed through have attendant ills and risks of one order; in summer, those of another. In the former, lung-affections consequent on hanging about the doors before service and sudden transition from heated, too often vitiated, air, to the raw cold atmosphere without.<sup>3</sup> In the latter, evils, less noticeable but yet more pregnant of mischief in the long run, are recognized by an observant eye. And it is in summer, rather than winter, that the female teachers as well as the taught suffer. In cold weather, by due precautions, adults can guard against mischief. In summer all fare alike. We have, in a former paper in this Magazine, spoken on a fact sufficiently patent—viz., the undue length of morning Church Service. To such young women of a congregation, particularly of the higher grade, who participate further in that labour of love—school work—the tax on constitutional powers is indeed great. The frequency—rather, perhaps it might be said, constancy—of appeals by parochial clergy for more teachers is accounted for. Think of the noise, heat, expenditure through various channels, of nerve-power at a time when the season and system (physique) call for conservation and repose! That Protean class of ailment of the nervous system in which the head becomes chief offender, is but the natural rebellion of

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<sup>1</sup> The writer limits his remarks to the Established Church.

<sup>2</sup> The writer recalls a town in the South of Ireland where, on the termination of the ordinary morning service, Sunday School begins, in the church. The poor children are thus gathered at an hour when they need food for the body (Sabbath ministrations are later than in England), penned together in pews, more like unruly goats for punishment, than little lambs for pleasure.

<sup>3</sup> Clergymen are, as might be expected, fully cognizant of such evils—alive to the requirements of sanitary science. But they are hard put, often, to afford space with ventilation adequate to the number of children in the rooms at their disposal. Sufficient cubic measurement of air is indeed *very rarely* met with.

an over-wrought frame. And so, as regards Christian young ladies, their enjoyment of the Sunday, in its highest, holiest sense, is marred, albeit such self-sacrifice brings to them, as they take retrospect of the day's work, its own reward.

The girl element of Sunday School classes, in proportion as age assimilates to that of the teacher, suffers in like manner.

If these premises be admitted, it may be well to consider (2nd) whether modification of existing procedure might not be productive of higher ends, spiritual, moral, and even physical?

A somewhat startling fact presented both to psychologist and philanthropist is the proportion of crime—not insignificant, and sometimes heinous crime—brought home to men and women who were brought up in Sunday Schools. To the experienced clergyman and Christian layman these untoward incidents weigh not a feather in balance against the scale of Divine Wisdom and Omnipotence. The Word of God, unfolded by the Spirit of Truth and received in the light of faith, the great mirror in which, albeit dimly now, we see reflected His dealings with man, satisfies the believer in that which perplexes unsanctified human intellect. None the less is it granted to all who desire to advance the Father's glory below and, in so doing, the good of others, to perfect as far as may be finite agencies.

There is, we all admit, a certain leaven of zeal in the world which is not in accord with knowledge—knowledge of human nature too. In the matter before us it looks on the juvenile mind, virtually, as an instrument to perform certain functions for a given time, longer or shorter. Surely, if anything can be done to counterpoise this very inherent "mechanical" tendency in those who train the young, it may be legitimately essayed. "Self-help," in its aspect as a moral lever, is much advocated by certain shrewd writers of the day, who take no higher view than that honesty, plus perseverance, is the best policy. May not such chord in loftier tone be touched with profit at Sunday Schools, the child taught on higher vantage-ground, more as a unit, and therefore more intelligently?

We have referred to the varied lines on which teachers work. Some rest satisfied with automatic repetition over and over again, of Collects which embody in language, beautiful indeed, aspirations scarcely to be reached by the very young. Others give a verse detached from some parable or passage which cannot be rightly understood, save as a whole. In another category are instructors (?) who let the hour slip by in efforts—sufficiently fruitless!—to establish perfect order as the one thing necessary. And, happily, there are some—of the other sex chiefly—who with winning wisdom "born indeed," like poets (Christian), put things old in such new light; so arrest wandering minds by "telling" truth in terse words and with clear voice—no factor to be

despised—that each little one carries away “something” rooted in memory, in lieu of “nothing”—literally nothing!<sup>1</sup> Capacity for apt illustration is indeed a high qualification for such work. Even to those of us who are not ascending, but rather descending, the hill of life, how often does new light on old familiar words break in through “fresh” imagery at the hand of a gifted minister. For the Master Himself is Exemplar and Teacher in this potent channel of wisdom, as well as “the one Shepherd to fasten the nails” in a sure place—

Thou must be true thyself, if thou the truth wouldst teach;  
Thy soul must overflow, if thou another's soul would reach;  
It needs the overflow of heart to give the lips full speech.

(3) Granting that it be expedient to open new ground, in what form should the effort be essayed?

In considering the question we must keep well in view the state of the community, in its religious aspect, a hundred years ago, and the conditions which obtain now. On the whole, what change for the better—let us thankfully recognize it—in every respect, religious, moral, social! Now, we take as a rule of Christian obligation words which, in the mouth of Cain, expressed the contrary.<sup>2</sup> A century back, what was the condition of Churchfolk, men and women,—of Protestants of all classes, old and, *ergo*, young? Stagnation, deadness, indifferentism. What now? An opposite extreme, tending to exoticism. A brain forced alike in theology as in science, and an outcome, if timely guidance be not used, in rationalism—abnegation of *all* truth.

As cardinal objects to be borne ever in mind we would, in order of importance, name five.

- A, Fasten the attention.
- B, Fix some *one* definite truth or principle to be carried away.
- C, Aim at “*rest*” in every bearing of the term.
- D, Endeavour to make the Sunday, *positively*, a day of pleasure to children. (Is it so now, if incentive in the shape of reward, direct or indirect, be abstracted?)
- and E, In the use of such agencies keep more in view adolescence—“its rocks ahead”—in the present day.

Profit may rightly be drawn from the basis of an old saw, too little recognized, “the child is father to the man.” Practically we ignore it by narrowing down instruction, religious and otherwise, to boy and girl life, oblivious of coming manhood and womanhood. Vague, undefined, teaching, founded on mere negative, ill prepares lambs to withstand the assaults of wolves of “modern thought;” of science, “falsely so called.”

<sup>1</sup> Need we name one thus pre-eminent, Frances Havergal.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis iv. 9: “Am I my brother's keeper?”

Apart from any other argument for change—the term “relaxation of discipline” were perhaps better—there is one sufficiently weighty to the physician. It is expressed comprehensively in the two words “competitive examination.” They speak volumes. With Board Schools in the present, clerkships—female as well as male, let us remember—in the future, parents in humble life naturally aspire to raise their offspring in the scale of social status. Such bait is kept before the children, and has its due weight with the more intelligent, and, too often, *pari passu*, delicately organized. So during the week faculties are kept at high pressure, and when Sunday comes—what then, rest? No, rather continued work under the semblance of repose. Now this strain cannot be salutary. May it be lessened without disadvantage—more—may such lessening be made subservient to good? Let us weigh the matter over.

First, then, we hold that two school services on Sunday are a “mistake.” Rather let there be one—on the lines “A, B”—in the afternoon during winter; in the early morning during summer. Some modification in rural parishes might be necessary. In these, bearing in mind distance and short days, it would be preferable to have Sunday School always in the morning—say at ten o’ clock—to terminate a few minutes before eleven, so as to afford time to settle down at church; and in the afternoon the “reading,” while the parents are at service then.

What then, it may be asked, of the rest of the day, how obviate the unwholesome influence of questionable homes during time thus void, how keep children from the streets? We reply, supplement this one service by a reading to further objects “C, D,” and as a whole outcome, “E.”

These are the days of good Sunday literature, and it is needless to particularize magazines. Now, there is no more inherent desire in the juvenile mind, whether it be good or bad, than to listen to a story. Why not bring to bear such influence in a more comprehensive and distinct form than heretofore? The seed by which error and falsehood in after-days may be withstood, truth evolved, can be sown less directly, none the less efficiently, by means of a tale well told. Gather then the children together; let them, above all things, consult their own ease and comfort as listeners; do not plant them like sparrows on a spout on rows of unbacked benches. The mischief these abominations cause to delicate children in the form of spinal and other disease is great. No clergyman should tolerate seats without a back rest. If some druggist could be spread temporarily, all the better. It imparts that feeling of cosiness which

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<sup>1</sup> The influence for good on children by closing public-houses on Sundays is a very important bearing in this most desirable legislation.

it is well to foster, and somewhat of the home character—grouping—which pleasantly illustrates the fireside of the better classes. Then, as the story is read to the mass, each little brain takes it in, individually revolves the incident and teaching, builds its own small castle in the air, and happiness now, hereafter fruit in Christian living, by Divine blessing, may be the outcome. If such reading be chosen with a view practically to enforce the Scripture lessons of the day, all the better. In any case this one procedure supplements—links together—the other. A few questions cheerily put fitly follow any religious instruction. Children like to be thus appealed to on any subject, sacred or otherwise. And by anticipation of what follows the interest is the better sustained. Hymns of course are indispensable, albeit we must make allowance for somewhat automatic rendering. Childhood is an age when “melody” operates powerfully—more so indeed than at any period of life—and when words, at the time, are apt to be overlaid by a sweet rhythm, and thus to be “words”—nothing more. But the refrain at least lingers, the verses come up with true import when sickness lays its grasp on the scholars; and not infrequently the child-mind has, at the hour of departure, been permitted to see further within the veil than even grey-haired saints.

A word or two on other subjects at odd times, as, *e.g.*, on social questions when the boy or girl is old enough, are salutary, and give freshness to intercourse. An occasional call at the home furthers this end. Ladies who have time at their disposal can thus maintain influence for good from girl to womanhood. Obstacles lie in the way of men dealing with the boy-clement. This is, however, compensated for in great measure by that admirable appendage of Sunday Schools, “the Young Men’s Christian Institute.” But the far greater influence of the other sex, both over boys and men, is an indisputable fact. In the army, particularly when the soldier is removed from the evil influences of town quarters, much, very much, of the work of conversion is due to ladies. And why? It is explicable on several grounds, among which, certainly, the early associations of Sunday Schools, and gentle kindly influence, there, play their part.

To the teacher a change such as we have ventured to shadow forth, would be appreciable and salutary, in every respect. But one, perhaps two, would be required at a “reading” in addition to the superintendent. A roster might be kept by the clergyman, the duty would fall lightly—perhaps every second month or so—and ample time would be afforded in the interim for selection of suitable matter.

The whole mechanism of Sunday School work we conceive should be in the direction of quietude and repose—mind and

body—rather than of fussy activity; to the reception of and reflection on a little well-chosen truth, rather than of much in misty, diluted outline; and thus, on surer foundation, to erect a superstructure fitted to encounter “storms” incident to this nineteenth century. The key-note throughout should be love—that love portrayed by the master-hand of St. Paul.<sup>1</sup> The intellect is taxed quite enough on week-days; let the heart be taught on Sundays. Not by rote, not by strained mental effort, but by bright illustration of what love has done, is still doing, let the children be taught, and that Christ and happiness are truths inseparably united even here below. For let us remember, on a right use and real enjoyment of the Sabbath by our children now, national issues of paramount importance may depend.

An extract from the writings of that kindly yet keen observer of human nature, the Rev. Dr. Boyd, may fittingly close these remarks:—

The man who is able to *put things* so strikingly, clearly, pithily, forcibly, glaringly, whether these things are religious, social, or political truths, as to get through that crust of insensibility to the *quick* of the mind and heart, must be a great man, an earnest man, an honest man, a good man.<sup>2</sup>

Sunday School teachers may not possess the first of these qualifications. Let us hope and pray that the other requirements are not lacking.

FREDERICK ROBINSON.



### ART. III.—STORIES FROM THE STATE PAPERS.

*Stories from the State Papers.* By ALEX. CHARLES EWALD, F.S.A. (of the Record Office), Author of “The Life and Times of Prince Charles Stuart,” “The Life of Sir Robert Walpole,” &c. Two vols. London: Chatto & Windus, 1882.

UPON the deserted site formerly known as the Rolls Estate, lying between Chancery Lane and Fetter Lane, there has arisen within the last thirty years a magnificent building, the Public Record Repository. Of the numbers who daily walk down Fleet Street, scarcely one man in a thousand knows to what use that vast edifice is put, what priceless treasures it

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> “Recreations of a Country Parson,” concerning the art of “Putting things.”