

has been for the past year, to lay aside a certain proportion of that for distribution in alms during the year ensuing—so much to be subscribed to various good works, so much to be offered in church, so much to be given to mission work at home, so much abroad, so much for spiritual work, so much for the relief of poverty and bodily suffering—make out your list of objects which you consider most suitable and maintain your contributions to these as far as possible year by year. One can't contribute to everything, and it is better to give a few objects material and constant support than to flit about from one to another, or to fitter away what it may be in your power to give by splitting it up into infinitesimal portions. And for special appeals, unforeseen contingencies, you may, of course, leave a little margin for these; but if possible let the margin be on the other side, let your contributions to these extra matters represent some special effort, some additional sacrifice. I do not think it will be a permanent loss, remembering that "he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord," and we have the assurance that that loan will be repaid. But, indeed, I know that rules cannot be laid down in this matter, everyone must judge himself and take account of the talents God has entrusted to him, remembering that one day he will be judged by Another and give account of his stewardship to One who knoweth the heart of man.

W. EGERTON HUBBARD.

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ART. VI.—ASSISTED EDUCATION.

AFTER a prolonged period of expectancy, the proposals of the Government for the compulsory abolition of school-fees in public elementary schools have at length been placed before the House of Commons and the country; and a period of a fortnight is deemed sufficient for the consideration of proposals which wholly reverse the educational policy of the past half-century. It is difficult to understand the reasons for this prolonged silence, or for the precipitate decision by which it is to be followed. From the financial point of view, the limits of the Government proposals have been determined from the first by the proportions of the surplus of the receipts over the expenditure as disclosed by the Budget of the year. That surplus amounted to a sum of £2,000,000. It was obvious, therefore, that if the whole surplus were applied to the purpose of a Government grant in lieu of the existing school-fees, the grant could not exceed an average of 10s. per child in average attendance. There was, therefore, no necessity for any attempt

at secrecy upon that point. Nor, when the provisions of the Bill are disclosed, does there seem to be any necessity for having so long withheld them from the arena of public discussion. What is needed now is a full opportunity of seeing how the circumstances of various schools will be met by the proposals of the Bill, and of appreciating the full extent of the alteration proposed as to the management and the efficiency of existing public elementary schools.

I do not, therefore, propose in this article to discuss the new principle which the Government Bill introduces into our educational policy. That principle can be stated, in broad terms, to be the appropriation by the State of the total responsibility of the education of children. The State claims the right of determining the minimum period of years during which a child shall attend school; of determining the nature and character of the instruction to be given in the school; of certifying to the qualifications of the teacher who may be permitted to teach in the school; and of the proportion of cost which in some few instances a parent may be graciously permitted to pay towards the education of his own children in attendance at a public elementary school. What room there will be in the future, if these principles prevail, for what are known as voluntary subscriptions is not very obvious to the ordinary observer. For a time the force of habit may tend to the continuance of a practice handed down from a time when it was the outcome of a needed educational zeal; but it requires little prescience to perceive that before many years are past voluntary subscriptions, upon the Government principles, must be merged into rates or taxes.

As, however, I do not propose to discuss the preliminary objections to the Government proposals, it does not fall within the limits I have marked out for myself to do more than state, with an appropriate comment, the reasons which are alleged in their support. Sir William Hart-Dyke, the Vice-President of the Council, frankly tells us that he has changed his mind. What is the precise value of that performance as an intellectual feat is at present unknown. It depends upon factors with which we are necessarily unacquainted; but the change is stated to have been brought about by an extraordinary hopefulness of disposition. He hopes that it will be a boon to the parents. He hopes that it will improve the attendance at school. He hopes that it will ease the working of the laws regulating the compulsory attendance of children at school. To realize hopes of this kind has always been the ambition of all interested in the education of children. And such persons have sought guidance in the annual reports of the Education Department upon these points. Hitherto we have been in-

formed with clock-like regularity, year by year, that the partial failure of the laws relating to compulsory attendance is due to the "indifference of magistrates," and to the manner in which in this respect local authorities—that is, School Boards and School Attendance Committees—"fail in performing the duty of securing the early and regular attendance of the children in the districts under their jurisdiction." Upon the assumption that magistrates have been indifferent, and that local authorities have not done their duty, it requires a prodigious amount of hopefulness to believe that a law preventing parents from doing their obvious duty will quicken local authorities and magistrates into performing the duty assigned to them. And as to the "boon" to the parents, the following extract from the Registrar-General's report of the census of 1851 may be commended to the Vice-President's consideration, inasmuch as the Education Department placed such value upon the opinion that so late as their report for 1871-2 they added it as a note to the table relating to school-fees :

"Children of the labouring classes are employed at an early age—some permanently, others temporarily—at a rate of recompence, which, though apparently but trifling, is sufficient for their maintenance, and more than sufficient to induce their parents to remove them from school. It is evident that even the lowest amount of wages which the child of a labouring man will receive (from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per week) must be so great a relief as to render it almost hopeless that they can withstand the inducement, and retain the child at school in the face of such temptation. And this inducement will be almost equally powerful whether or not the school be one where payments from the children are required. It is not for the sake of saving a penny per week that a child is transferred from the school to the factory or the fields, but for the sake of gaining a shilling or eightpence per week, and the mere opportunity of saving the penny by sending the child to a free school would not restrain the parents from making a positive addition to their weekly income, if the absence of the child from school could ensure it."

I am aware that Sir W. Hart-Dyke objects to "mining operations in Hansard." But in the light of the hopefulness with which his present proposals are recommended it is not a little desirable that this nugget of a quotation should be rescued from the dust-heap of modern blue books, and brought again to light. It may be that it possesses an intrinsic value quite apart from its past surroundings which will repay independent thought upon it. And it may suggest that the policy of "boons to parents" is capable of much extension beyond the germ contained in the Government proposals of to-day.

With these observations I pass to the consideration of the details of the Government proposals, as affecting (1) Board and (2) non-Board Schools.

1. The financial result as affecting Board Schools generally, both now and in the future, will differ from that of the non-Board Schools. This difference arises from the fact that the ultimate deficiency of receipts as compared with expenditure is made up in the case of Board Schools from the local rates, and in the case of non-Board Schools from subscriptions. But the actual financial effect of the Government proposals upon the rates of any district will depend upon the amount hitherto received from school fees. Where those fees have been low, the Government grant in lieu of fees of 10s. per child in average attendance will practically be a subvention, in aid of the local School Board rate, to the amount of that difference, subject to two possible qualifications. It is possible that the School Boards may allow children under 5 years of age and also children over 14 years of age to attend school without payment of the school fee. In either, or both of these cases, the children for the purposes of the Government grant in lieu of fees will not be counted in the average attendance. What they have hitherto paid will be lost, and no Government fee grant will be paid in its stead. There are, however, a large number of School Boards, especially in the urban and northern districts, where the average fee exceeds the proposed fee grant.<sup>1</sup> In all such cases the fee grant will not act as a subvention in aid of the local rates. Such a fee may still be charged as, with the proposed fee grant, will make a total average fee equal to that existing prior to the 1st January, 1891, and the local rates will remain as at present. Broadly stated, the immediate financial result of the Government proposals will be to give a subvention to the local rates where school fees have been low, and either to leave the local rates as they are, in cases where the school fees have exceeded an average of about threepence per week, or to increase them by the increase of cost necessitated by the reduction of fee in the case of children below 5 and above 14 years of age.

But the Government proposals do not stop at this point. A new definition is introduced into the regulations relating to the number of school places to be provided which may have far-reaching, and at present, incalculable financial results. Up to the present it has been the duty of School Boards to provide school accommodation where "suitable and efficient accommodation" did not already exist. For the purpose of

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<sup>1</sup> The number of schools in which the receipts from school fees exceed the amount of 10s. per scholar per annum is—Board Schools, 1,202; non-Board Schools, 5,219; total, 6,421.

calculating the existing quantity of school provision every public elementary school has been reckoned as "suitable and efficient." But the Government Bill introduces a new requirement: "Sufficient public school accommodation, without payment of fees," must be provided for "any school district," "and the expression public school accommodation in that Act," viz., the Elementary Education Act, 1870, "shall include public school accommodation without payment of fees."

Now let us realize what this language means by putting a by no means infrequent case. In a School Board district there already exists a non-Board School. The average fee of this school for the last school year prior to the 1st January, 1891, amounted to 12s. per child in average attendance. The Government propose to pay 10s. per child in average attendance between the ages of 5 and 14 years. The remaining 2s. per child may be raised by allowing a fee still to be charged in that school. But that power is subject to two limitations. The first is, that the fee must not exceed 6d. a week for each child; and the second is, that the Education Department "are satisfied that sufficient public school accommodation, without payment of fees, has been provided for" that "school district." In other words, the non-Board School must either lose its income of 2s. per head, or the School Board must first build a new free school in the district before the existing school is permitted to enjoy what it now possesses. And what applies to the non-Board School in this respect applies equally to the case of an existing Board School under the same conditions. And in districts where these conditions obtain, and which have not already a School Board in existence, this legislation means in effect the compulsory establishment of School Boards. This proposal was certainly not expected from a Government who have changed their minds upon the desirability of abolishing school fees in order to strengthen non-Board Schools.

2. These considerations lead at once to a prosecution of the further inquiry as to the extent to which the Government proposals affect the financial condition of non-Board Schools. Every school manager will admit that the cost of school management is a perpetually increasing one. In non-Board Schools, since 1870, it has increased by over 11s. per annum for every child in average attendance. In order to meet this increase of cost the managers of non-Board Schools have hitherto had three sources of income to rely upon—the Government grant upon inspection, the school fees, the receipts from endowments and subscriptions. Over the amount of the first the Government of the day exercises absolute control. The remaining two have hitherto been

under the control of the managers. No part of the increase of cost of 11s. per child has been met by a corresponding increase per child in the amount of the receipts from endowments and subscriptions. Nor can any increase be looked for in the future from this source. The pressure of the School Board rate must continue to exercise an increasingly adverse influence upon this mode of raising a revenue. And managers of schools have realized this. The only source of revenue entirely under their own control has been the amount of school fees. Since 1870 the increase per child in this source of income has been 2s. 6d. per annum. The Government Bill proposes to stereotype the receipts from school fees to the amount received in the last school year prior to the 1st January, 1891. From this time onwards the managers will not be allowed to increase their income according to their needs. The managers of more than 5,200 schools must suffer a loss of income under penalty of further school accommodation "without payment of fees," at the cost of the rates; or if that accommodation exists they must convince the Education Department that a school fee "will be for the educational benefit of the district." At a time when the Education Department are asking the country to spend £2,000,000 and more per annum in perpetuity in the compulsory abolition of school fees on the plea, variously stated, of conferring "an educational benefit" upon the country, it will require a considerable amount of ingenuity for managers of schools to convince the Education Department that the imposition of a school fee is for "the educational benefit" of any particular district. But when the Department have, with an elasticity of conscience of the best india-rubber kind, agreed that a school fee not exceeding 6d. per week is "for the educational benefit" of any district, the managers of schools must not expect that this will result in a proportionate increase of the income of their school. This by no means follows. The Education Department may be convinced of "the educational benefit" accruing from the charge of a school fee, and may approve of one, not exceeding 6d. per week, but they "may give such approval on the express condition that the amount received for any school year from the fees so charged or increased, or a specified portion of that amount, shall be taken in reduction of the fee grant which would otherwise have been payable for that school year, and in that case the fee grant shall be reduced accordingly."

In popular language the Government may go shares with the managers, or they may pocket the whole of the gain. It is the way of the modern lion in the distribution of the spoil.

The further our investigation proceeds in the examination of this Bill, the more fully does it become apparent

that it is also a Bill for the establishment of a complete despotism by the Education Department over the whole area of public elementary education. The present Government may exercise that despotism in a benevolent spirit towards non-Board Schools. But another Government may supplant the present Administration. It may be dominated by those who are anxious to suppress non-Board Schools, and are more particularly anxious to suppress those in connection with the Church of England. This Bill gives the power to do it, not by openly attacking, but by insidiously undermining them. The present Government, which I believe to be honestly desirous of promoting the efficiency of non-Board Schools, in the process of changing its mind is forging an implement which may be used for the complete destruction of that which they are pledged to defend. Everything by this Bill is left to the Education Department. Without departing by one iota from the letter of the law, a hostile President and Vice-President of the Council could so administer the law as to crush in detail every existing efficient non-Board School.

How far, therefore, this policy will confer any "educational benefit" upon any district it will be for impartial observers to decide. But there is one aspect of the Bill which must lead to immediate educational confusion. Take the case of a school to the circumstances of which the 10s. fee grant is applicable. That school may be conducted without the payment of a school fee, or it may charge children under 5 a fee of 2d. per week, children between 5 and 14 will not be permitted to pay anything, and children over 14 may pay 3d. per week. On the assumption upon which the Government are proceeding, viz., that the school fee has a deterrent effect upon the attendance, it is obvious that this provision is to be taken as a discouragement to the attendance of children under 5 and above 14 years of age. I do not propose to examine the question as to whether or not the Government are right in formulating this policy for "the educational benefit" of any district. My present purpose is to indicate the confusion which will ensue. School Boards, relying upon the rates, will largely continue the present plan of attracting children early to school and keeping them there as long as they can. But non-Board Schools, whose managers will have to review their financial prospects, may fall into the Government groove of discouraging early and prolonged attendance at school. At any rate, they will have to face the dilemma of either risking the financial loss resulting from the education of these children, without either payment of school fee or compensation by way of a fee grant, or they will have to face the possibility of the children being attracted at an early age to a neighbouring Board School. Either choice will demand serious consideration.

It is possible that before these pages are published the Government Bill may have been read a second time in the House of Commons. That is a reward which any Government may obtain by changing their minds and carrying into effect an assortment of the principles of their opponents. But it does not attract the confidence of their friends. Nor in the long-run is it politically successful to carry out as much as you can of the policy which you have opposed in order to prevent your opponents from having the opportunity of carrying out their own policy in their own way. When their turn comes, what has been already conceded, not because it was right, but because it was, on a short-sighted purview, deemed to be expedient, will be made the basis for further demands. The policy of expediency is foredoomed to disaster when it is expediency of doing a dubious act, on the plea that its character will be worse if done by someone else.

JOSEPH R. DIGGLE.

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## Notes on Bible Words.

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### NO. X.—“MYSTERY.”

THE “mysteries,” *μυστήρια*, were religious secrets confided only to the initiated. (*μυέω*, to initiate into the mysteries;<sup>1</sup> *μύστης*, the initiated.<sup>2</sup>)

In various places St. Paul found “mysteries” an established institution. The “great mysteries”—the most famous—were at Eleusis, which place he must have passed. (He twice uses the phrase “great mystery.”)

The essential feature of a “mystery” is this; by initiation that becomes light which was absolutely dark.

Bishop Lightfoot, on Coloss. i. 26, writes:

The Christian teacher is thus regarded as a *ιεροφάντης* . . . who initiates his disciples into the rites. [But] the Christian mysteries are freely communicated to all. . . . Thus the idea of *secrecy* or *reserve* disappears when *μυστήριον* is adopted into the Christian vocabulary by St. Paul: and the word signifies simply “a truth which was once hidden, but now is revealed,” “a truth which, without special revelation, would have been unknown.” Of the nature of the truth itself the word says nothing. It may be transcendental, incomprehensible, mystical, mysterious, in the modern sense of the term (1 Cor. xv. 51; Eph. v. 32), but this idea is quite accidental, and must be gathered from the special circumstances of the case.

The word denotes the revelation of what was secret; with this the idea of publication. The whole stress, says Dean Howson, is

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Phil. iv. 12, *μεμύημαι*, I have been initiated; I possess the secret, or, in its derivative sense, “I have been fully instructed.”

<sup>2</sup> Ignat. *Ephes.* 12, *Παύλου συμμύσταί*. (See Bishop Lightfoot, vol. ii., p. 64.) St. Chrys., on John xix. 34, says, “They that are initiated know that they are regenerated by the water, and fed by the blood and flesh.”