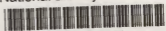


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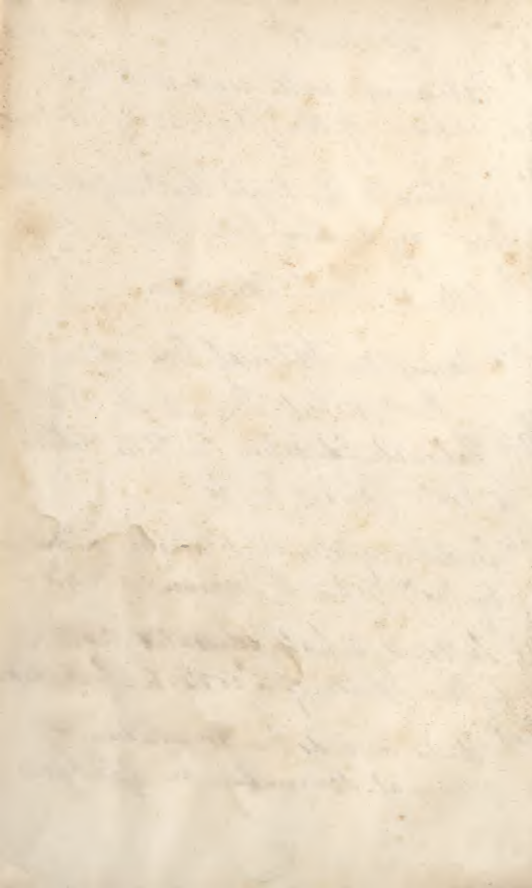


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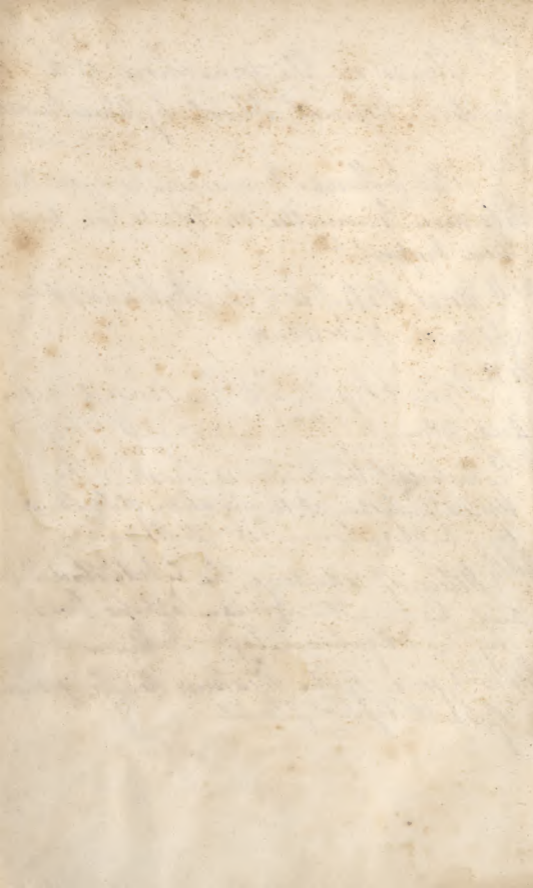
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No 1

A
STATEMENT

OF
THE EXPERIENCE OF SCOTLAND,

WITH REGARD TO

The Education of the People;

WITH

REMARKS

ON THE

INTENDED APPLICATION OF THE SCHOOLMASTERS
TO PARLIAMENT.

DUMFRIES:
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1825.

SCOTLAND

THE UNIVERSITY OF SCOTLAND

The Education of the People



STATEMENT, &c.

“THE arguments (says Mr Malthus, in his work on Population) which have been urged against instructing the people, appear to me to be not only illiberal, but to the last degree feeble; and they ought, on the contrary, to be extremely forcible, and to be supported by the most obvious and striking necessity, to warrant us in withholding the means of raising the condition of the lower classes of the people, when they are in our power. Those who will not listen to any answer to these arguments, drawn from theory, cannot, I think, refuse the testimony of experience.” He, then, appeals to the case of Scotland.

It is to this signal testimony in favour of the advantages of instructing the people, derived from the experience of Scotland, that we are anxious to solicit the public attention.

In stating the fact as to this testimony, it is needless to investigate the effects of education previously to the Revolution in 1688. It may, no doubt, be possible to trace to this source a portion of what, all along, distinguished the Scotch.—But their political situation from the Reformation, and more especially from the Restoration to the Revolution, was so unfortunate as to defeat all that was ameliorating in their condition. Let us take the case of Scotland, then, at the Revolution, when the system, progressively advancing to its completion for the instruction of all classes, received the final sanction of the Legislature, and when a school was established by law in every parish. In justice to this case, it is requisite particularly to attend to the condition of the country when the great experiment of the effects of education upon a whole people was about to be fairly tried.

One might easily guess what must have been the condition of this people at the close of such a piece of misgovernment as that to which they had been for years subjected.—But we are not left to conjecture; we have an account of it from an actual observer in those days. The celebrated discourses of Fletcher of Saltoun, written ten years after the Revolution, afford a melancholy picture of the wretched and disorderly state of Scotland at that period. The following is a well known passage:—“There are at this day in Scotland (besides a great many poor families very meanly provided for by the church boxes, with others, who, living upon bad food, fall into various diseases), two hundred thousand people begging from door to door. These are a grievous burden to so poor a country. And though the number of them be perhaps double to what it was formerly, by reason of this great distress, yet in all times there have been about one hundred thousand of those vagabonds, who have lived without any regard or subjection to the laws of the land, or even those of God and nature. No Magistrate could ever discover, or be informed which way one in a hundred of these wretches died, or that ever they were baptized. Many murders have been discovered among them; and they are not only a most unspeakable oppression to poor tenants, but they rob many poor people who live in houses distant from any neighbourhood. In years of plenty, many thousands of them meet together in the mountains, where they feast and riot for many days; and at country weddings, markets, burials, and other the like public occasions they are to be seen, both men and women, perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together.” Before any one ventures to call this an exaggeration, let him carefully peruse the delineation, by Mr Laing, of the government of Scotland during the two preceding reigns, and let him imagine to himself any thing more fitted to realize the state of crime and disorder here described by Fletcher.

Now, what was there in the circumstances of Scotland, for a long period, fitted to cure those disorders, and to raise the country from so depressed a condition?

On the happy settlement at the Revolution, the Scotch sprung forward with their characteristic ardour, to share in the prosperity which the English and the Dutch derived from their colonies and commerce. With this view, the bold expedition to Darien was pro-

jected, and most extraordinary efforts were made to carry it into execution. Fletcher, in speaking of it remarks:—"The nation has so great a concern in this enterprise, that I may well say, all our hopes of ever being any other than a poor and inconsiderable people, are embarked with them." "And the ruin of it (he adds in another passage) "which God forbid, may draw along with it, that of the whole trade of the kingdom, and a perpetual discouragement from ever attempting any thing considerable hereafter." The ruin of the enterprise, which this patriotic man so warmly deprecates, soon followed, and the blow proved paralyzing in its effects, almost to the full extent of his predictions. The hopes of the nation were attempted to be revived, by the proposal of a legislative union with England, which soon followed; but the Scotch were so long of awakening from the lethargy which succeeded that event, that, till the unhappy period of the Rebellion in 1745, their country as to affairs, literary, foreign, or domestic, is reduced almost to a blank in the history of Europe.

But, during this dark and inauspicious period, there was, happily for Scotland, an engine at work, which in the absence of other means to remedy her disorders, was silently laying the foundation of all the prosperity by which she has been since distinguished. The church of Scotland, for many years after the Revolution, laboured unremittingly, to carry into execution the wise and liberal provisions of the legislature, for securing to all classes of the people the benefits of moral and religious instruction;—and her labours in this respect, as testified by her records, will remain an imperishable memorial to her credit;—and so high appears to have been the opinions entertained in those days of the qualifications which fitted a man for the important task of instruction, that we find the following singular recommendation among the printed acts of the General Assembly in 1706:—"The General Assembly recommends it to such as have power of settling schoolmasters in parishes, to prefer thereto men *who have past their course at Colleges or Universities*, and taken their degrees before others who have not *cæteris paribus*."

Let us trace the effects which manifestly sprung from these attempts to extend the blessings of education to all ranks. In the course of half a century, Scotland, continuing all the while most unfavourably situated in a political point of view, witnessed, what

was no less gratifying than surprising, the whole mass of disorderly people, mentioned by Fletcher, without the ordinary absorbents of commerce or colonization, gradually falling into the ranks of a community, remarkable for the absence of crime, and for their orderly, loyal, and peaceful habits.

Without entering into minute and tedious details on this point, let any one re-consider the sad picture of a lawless condition, drawn by Fletcher; and reflect on the amazing contrast in the situation of Scotland, exhibited by the following fact, from that valuable record of her domestic affairs—the Scots Magazine. The following is a brief but most significant notice in this Record for September, 1757:—“*In our Autumn circuits no one person was found guilty of a capital crime.*”

From this extraordinary fact we may infer, that the education of the people had already had a deep and general moral influence.—But whoever attends to the history of Scotland since that period will find ground for tracing to the same source an astonishingly rapid advancement in all that constitutes the prosperity of a nation. Scotland, it is well known, previously to the Rebellion in 1745, was unfavourably situated for improvement of any kind:—But when the evil effects arising from the Union had ceased—when the advantages of a more intimate connexion and intercourse with England had begun to operate—when a fair opening had been made to the entererpize of Scotland, and real stimulants had been afforded to her manufacturing and agricultural industry—the good effects of an education that extended to all classes were most signally displayed. The Scotch now burst with unrivalled ardour and intelligence into every channel of industry that was laid open to them. Never was there a country that, throughout all the ranks of her population, manifested such a superiority to all prejudice in the way of improvement; and that embraced with such intelligence all the means of advancing the general prosperity;—and the result may always be quoted as without any parallel in the history of the world. The beneficial change which took place in Scotland in the course of thirty or forty years from the commencement of her career of improvement, is such as was never exhibited in the same time in any country on the face of the earth;—and on no principle can it be accounted for except that of the superior intelligence of all classes resulting from the institutions for instruction.

Scotland would have advanced, long before, had the same openings to her enterprise and industry been presented; and had she not been politically placed in a situation by no means favourable to national improvement. All Europe, indeed, advanced during the period in question; and in England, in particular, owing to her favourable political situation, vast progress had been making for centuries. In Scotland, on the other hand, every thing was to begin. Commerce she had none, and her manufactures and agriculture were in the most wretched condition imaginable.*

Now, what proves the change in her condition to have been greatly accelerated by the intelligence of her people is, that it was not in one branch of industry that she began to excel; nor from any peculiar or local advantages; nor through those accidents of enterprising individuals which often hasten the progress of a country in particular branches of industry. On the contrary, it was one general movement over the whole population; it was the spirit of enterprise flowing into every channel that was open; so that you could scarcely fix upon any one great branch of industry which could be said to possess any marked superiority. In manufactures she all at once started into a rivalry with England, where they had been established for years. She not only invented, but, with a Roman policy, made the inventions of others her own, by a wise and skilful adoption of them. In this department of industry, no doubt, the march of improvement is generally more rapid; and the strongholds of those prejudices which form the bars to improvement are more easily assailed. But let us look at her astonishing progress in agriculture. With scarce any example before her, she commenced a career of improvement which was carried on with distinguished intelligence—she broke, at once, through those trammels which so frequently stand in the way of other countries, and which even still retard the agriculture of England, and, in many of her counties, exhibit her as a monument of the effects of ignorance and pre-

* What must have been the low state of agriculture in Scotland when the use of manure for land seems to have been scarcely known.—Sir George Warrender, in the year 1714, granted *leave* to the town council of Edinburgh to deposit the manure collected from the streets of the city, upon those fields in the neighbourhood, now called Warrender's Parks. It would appear from the police reports, that this article now yields a gross revenue of many thousands of pounds Sterling.

judice in the lower classes of the people. Her very ploughmen exhibited the freedom of mind and superiority to prejudice which it is the object of philosophy to teach; and in the course of a few years, Scotland, of late, almost the poorest country in Europe, was held out to the world as an example of farming skill and enterprise. And such, in her instance, were the effects of instruction in stimulating and expanding the human faculties, that after her population had completely occupied every channel of industry at home, the spirit of her enterprise burst, we may say, over the whole known world. The sudden migration of her skill, perseverance, and industry, to the sister kingdom, was long and very naturally the occasion of jealousy; and it is only since the interests of the two have been so completely amalgamated, that this feeling has given way to a cordial and generous rivalry.*—When the effective union with England, which may be dated from the seven years' war, had opened the channels of Colonial enterprise, to what a vast extent were all these occupied by Scotchmen!

Let it not be said, that this was merely a poor and needy population naturally pressing into more beneficial employment;—that it was the “living cloud” of a northern hive floating to a kindlier region. This circumstance operated no doubt, but it will by no means account for the result. Let us find a parallel instance. There are countries as poor and barren, and occupied by a hardy race, but, from what country on earth have we ever witnessed so much industry, skill, and enterprise overflowing her own native channels of occupation? It is not a country like Spain, in former days, whose cupidity had the tempting bait of gold and silver mines—leading off a swarm of the more enterprising of the population, while all remained stagnant and unoccupied in her industry at home. We trace the wonderful result in Scotland, distinctly to intelligence and the expansion of mind which superior light and information necessarily produce. Nor is it only one channel that is occupied, but every channel that is open. The whole was simultaneous in Scotland;—it was a general movement of mind, and of an enterprising spirit, resulting directly and undeniably, from the superior intelli-

* Mr Malthus states in a note that “during the number of years which the late Mr Fielding presided at Bow-street, only six Scotchmen were brought before him.”

gence and information, of which all ranks of the population were allowed to be possessed. This change in the condition of Scotland is so distinctly assignable to one cause, that it affords a delightful proof of the benefits of education, and should for ever silence all who would throw a bar in the way of the intellectual advancement of the people; and should carry to every mind the conviction that the greatest blessing which can be conferred upon a country is to give to all ranks the best education possible, and that no institutions are so deserving of public encouragement as those which serve to promote the moral and intellectual improvement of all classes. Here are the most complete and convincing proofs of the point in question—a whole nation, as if by magic, rising from a most depressed condition to a state of unexampled improvement and prosperity. We find the intelligence of the people bearing directly and powerfully on every single occupation in which they engage. We see one spirit running through every vein, and vitally influencing the whole mass of the population. And while the beneficial effects of general education are so clearly evinced in the case of Scotland, it is impossible to fix on a single evil which it has occasioned.—The people are skilful and industrious, and not mechanically, but as the palpable result of intelligence, and, at the same time, are distinguished for their peaceful and orderly habits.

With the case of Scotland, then, before us as an illustration, we may fairly assert that the scheme of educating the people is not an untried speculation nor a Utopian plan for the melioration of their condition. The plan of general education is thus, at once, rescued from all the objections which are offered against mere theories in civil and political affairs. The theory is completely reduced to practice. The experiment has been fairly tried, and the experience of a hundred years enables us to pronounce a verdict upon, what we may call, the unquestionable and unqualified advantages arising from an education which extends to all classes.

It is, we think, fortunate, in the present day, when we have witnessed a disposition to theorise in human affairs, which has created in the minds of many an aversion to the least change; and has made all wise men wary in their approbation or adoption of any thing that looks like an experiment upon human society;—it is fortunate that we have this example standing out fair and

full to the eye of all Europe, as a demonstration of the blessings of popular education, unembarrassed, too, by a single difficulty which can enable the opponents of education to charge the demonstration with being in the least degree incomplete. When a statesman now proposes to communicate the benefits of education to a people, he is endeavouring to realize no untried theory or speculation; he is proceeding upon the sure ground of an experiment actually made, and eminently successful to all the extent to which it has been carried, and leaving us, in the case of Scotland, nothing to regret, but that the means when most wanted, were not furnished for completing the noblest and the most gratifying experiment to which the attention of mankind was ever directed.

What then precisely is—or rather what was the kind of education, in respect of the great body of the community, which produced such beneficial effects in Scotland? In stating this, it is not necessary to trace the singular feature in the character of this people by which they have been so remarkably distinguished from the earliest times—their ardent desire of knowledge. The following enactment of the Scottish Parliament, so far back as the year 1494, is most creditable to the age, and especially the Legislature, which produced it; and we doubt if any other statute-book in Europe, of the same period, can furnish an enactment that breathes the same wise and liberal spirit:—“It is statute and ordained, throw all the realme, that all Barronnes and Freeholders, that are of substance, put their eldest sonnes, and aires to the schules fra they be sex or nine zeires of age, and till remaine at the Grammar Schules, quhill they be competentlie founded, and have perfite Latine; and thereafter to remaine three zeires at the schules of art and Jure, swa that they have knowlege and understanding of the lawes. Throw the quhilks justice may remaine universally throw all the Realme.”* This statute must have contributed to strengthen and diffuse the spirit in which it had its origin. The effects of this spirit are visible in Scotland, in the accomplishment of the great work of the Reformation, which soon followed. When that great work was completed, the Scotch were, unhappily, not allowed to reap the benefits, which alone should have flowed from it. They received a sad check in their career towards national prosperity; and were all of a sudden, thrown down from

* The 5th Parliament of King James IV.

the distinguished rank for literary attainment which they held among the nations of Europe. This is to be ascribed to a political situation peculiarly disastrous ;—a political situation, fitted to extinguish in their breasts every noble and generous feeling. Yet so unquenchable seems to have been the desire of knowledge among them, that we find it kept alive and ardent under political circumstances, which threatened to reduce the whole country to a state of absolute barbarism : so that, at the Revolution, when schools were finally established by law, the Legislature may be said only to have given effect to what was a strong and universally prevalent wish on the part of the people. In making this representation, we state only what we conceive to be the fact, and, assuredly, have no wish to detract from the great merit of that legislature ; and still less to detract from what is due to that illustrious Prince, King William—a name dear to all enlightened Scotchmen.* By the wisdom and liberality of his administration, worthy of being a model to all future ages, and by a few enactments to which that wisdom and liberality gave birth, he rescued Scotland from the most deplorable political condition in which a nation was ever placed, and conferred upon her institutions which, contrary to the splenetic predictions of the time, have proved, by the experience of more than a hundred years, the sources of her peace and of her prosperity.

One of the institutions which Scotland owes to the government of King William is the complete establishment by law of parish schools ; and we think it right to insert the following portion of the well known act, dated 9th October, 1696 :—“ Our Sovereign Lord, “ considering how prejudicial the want of schools in many places “ have been, and how beneficial the establishing and settling there- “ of in every parish, will be to this Church and Kingdom ;—there-

* Scotland, we are aware, in the cases of Darien and of Glenco, had reason to complain that William departed from his maxims of a just and liberal policy. It is obvious, however, that the shocking affair of Glenco was misrepresented to him, and that in that instance, he trusted those who were unworthy of his confidence :—and in both cases, in the way of extenuation, it should be remembered, that great allowance is due to the man on whose shoulders rested, in those days, the grand system of European policy ;—who had already conferred freedom and tranquillity on Great Britain ;—and who, by the wisdom and energy of his conduct, laid the foundation for rescuing Europe at the time from the fangs of an absorbing despotism.

“fore his Majesty, with advice and consent, &c., ordains, That
 “there be a school established, and a schoolmaster appointed in
 “every parish, with advice of the heritors and minister of the pa-
 “rish.” The maximum salary is fixed at 200 merks (£11, 2s. 2d.),
 and then follow some provisions required to carry the great pur-
 pose of this noble enactment into execution.*

By this enactment, a salary and accommodations were furnished to schoolmasters, which enabled them, at a cheap rate, to dis-
 pense education to all classes. Such an establishment was, of
 itself, a blessing to a people. But it is right to investigate
 those circumstances in the condition of the schools for some
 years after their establishment, and in the then state of Scot-
 land, which gave them so powerful and beneficial an influence.
 When it is merely stated that the Church carried on a system
 of most efficient inspection of schools, and all along took a de-
 cided interest in their success, the whole fact of the case is by
 no means fully brought out. There was a powerful interest
 from another quarter which bore strongly on their welfare.—
 Formerly, and indeed to a late period in the history of Scot-
 land, its proprietors were mostly all resident upon their estates.
 The children of the smaller proprietors received the rudiments of
 their education at the parish schools; and this, of course, was one
 great security for the right conduct of the teachers. The proprietors
 had, along with the clergymen, the appointment of the masters;
 and frequently they were members of the Church Courts, under
 whose inspection the schools were conducted. The interest of all
 classes in a parish thus combined in securing the efficiency of the
 schools.

But in a statement respecting the kind of education which has

* “The General Assembly, (says Sir Henry Moncrieff in his *Life of Dr Erskine*,)
 “had, long before the Restoration, kept steadily in view the education of the people in
 “parochial schools: but till after the Revolution, they had never been able to procure
 “an efficient law on the subject, or to establish any regular system. The regulations
 “laid down in 1645 and 1649, might have had considerable effect, if they had not
 “been rendered abortive by the political convulsions of the times. But it is un-
 “doubtedly to the Revolution, that Scotland is indebted for parish schools; one of the
 “most important advantages she enjoys.” Dr M’Crie (in his *Life of Melville*,) asserts,
 and we suspect with truth, “that the Parliamentary enactments would have remained
 “a dead letter, but for the exertions of the Church Courts.”

proved so beneficial to Scotland, the attention is particularly drawn to the class of men who occupied the station of schoolmasters.— They will be found to have been for many years an order superior in point of character and literary attainment to any men occupying the same stations in other countries.*

The provision made for schoolmasters by the Act of King William, considering the age in which it took place, was most liberal. That act will always remain a distinguished tribute to the wisdom of the Legislature that passed it. Nothing can be a more striking proof of the value which was put upon the education of the people, and of the interest which the higher classes took in schools, than the provisions of this Bill. In the ears of our southern neighbours, and even in our own at the present day, the sum of £11, 2s. 2d. Sterling sounds as a small thing. But whoever attends to the condition of Scotland in that age, will be satisfied that it was, in fact, a large allowance.† But this provision will, by no means, account for the superiority of Scottish schoolmasters during the earlier period of this establishment. The same provision at the time, for example, would not have procured men of equal attainments in England.

Let us account for the fact as we will, a love of knowledge has, for a long period, been characteristic of the Scotch. It has pervaded all classes; and in the humbler ranks, whenever this desire was in some measure gratified, the result was a passion for farther literary attainment, to a degree that would scarcely be credited by any one not intimately acquainted with the character of this people. This drew into the ranks of the schoolmasters men of no ordinary talents. What has unfortunately, of late, appeared a very hum-

* The late Dr Walker, in his account of Collington, states :—" There are but two countries in Europe more remarkable than Scotland for the learning and usefulness of their schoolmasters. These are Switzerland and Sweden. In these countries, there is a regular school in every parish, amply maintained at the public expense; and the masters, who are all remarkably well qualified, held in considerable respect. The great *Genève*, one of the first and most successful restorers of learning, and the celebrated and elegant *Castalis*, besides many other men of note in literature, were schoolmasters in Switzerland."

† Out of numerous facts to shew the difference in the value of money and the state of the country, one is sufficient. According to Mr Cleland's Annals of Glasgow, the highest shop rent in Glasgow in 1712, was L5 Sterling, the average £3. In 1816 some were so high as £150—and are now doubtless far more.

ble station, opened up in those days to many an aspiring mind, the only opportunity of gratifying an ardent desire of knowledge. The fervid piety, too, which sprung from difficult and hazardous times, contributed to the same purpose. The station of a schoolmaster was considered as a preparatory step towards filling what was then, on every principle, an object of the very highest ambition, the situation of a minister of the Gospel; and, indeed, some of the richest contributions to the usefulness of the Church of Scotland have come from this order of men. While, too, the inducements to fill the office of schoolmaster were so strong in the minds of so large a class, there was nothing in the state of the country which had a counteracting tendency. At the original establishment of schools, and particularly for near half a century after the Union, it is difficult now to conceive how few were the objects of ambition in Scotland to an enterprising mind. A people naturally so endowed never stood for such a period in such a condition. Their unquenchable ardour did, indeed, force the channels of enterprize, in various shapes in distant countries; but, at home, scarcely any means existed, by which the most ambitious spirit could push himself out of the rank in which he was born; and we really believe, that to the large mass of the people, no object seemed more tempting than the prospect of being a Schoolmaster; and that it opened up to them a rank, which in no other way could be attained. There were men accordingly, during the period to which we are alluding, filling those stations;—all of whom had received a classical education; many of whom had studied at our universities; and not a few fit to be presented to livings in the Church—while the whole body occupied, confessedly, a prominent and honoured place in society.

One obvious advantage of the rank they held was, that it served to draw a portion of the best and most useful talent in the country, to one of the most important employments to which talent can ever be applied. There was thus secured, not merely a succession of able men to the parochial establishment; but there was secured to the whole business of education, an abundant supply of worth and talent, that will in vain be looked for in any country where the profession of teaching is not counted an honourable station. What must it have been, for a country to have had the formation of the minds of its youth, of almost all ranks, systematically con-

ducted by such men. It is really difficult to estimate the sum of their beneficial influence. They formed one of the most important links in the gradation of ranks; and tended most happily to combine the upper with the lower classes in life. Nor did they merely accomplish the business of elementary education; their labours went hand and hand with those of Clergymen in the work of religious instruction, and through their means, habits of good order were formed, and pious and virtuous dispositions planted in the mind at the age in which they are sure of taking the deepest root. Without such respectable coadjutors, every Church, indeed all the ministers of the gospel, are but ill provided for the great work of religious instruction. It is impossible, in this view, to withhold our tribute of admiration from the efforts of the Scottish Reformers to secure to their country the blessings of education. Their Books of Discipline, which contain the model of their intended policy, furnish a striking testimony to the liberality of the views in which they wished their reformed Church to be established. But these views and wishes were only partially realized. The rapacity which, in the disastrous times succeeding the Reformation, was allowed to seize the means of making the decent provision the Reformers evidently intended for public instruction of all kinds, must be classed among the leading causes of throwing down our country from the distinguished rank she held in the literary republic; and of continuing that deep and settled gloom which so long hung over the Scottish mind;—a gloom so deep and settled, that it is matter of amazement it should have been so soon dispelled; and that the condition of Scotland, in our day, should have at all justified the glowing description from a master-hand—“of her winging her eagle flight, against the blaze of every science, with an eye that never winks, and a wing that never tires, crowned as she is with the spoils of every art, and decked with the wreath of every muse.”

Although the provision for public Education, intended by the Reformers, was completely lost, we have to thank the wisdom and liberality of King William's administration, for the provision, slender as it may now appear, which they made for this important end. The sum was so small, that among the items of expenditure of later times, it would scarcely be noticed in a public account. But we need not hesitate to affirm, that a sum of the same magnitude

never was productive of so much public benefit, in any age or country.

We must now inquire how long the machinery by which so much good was accomplished continued in full efficiency; and how far, at this day, it may stand in need of repair and additional power. The unquestionable benefits which resulted in Scotland from her system of public education, has drawn the attention of all Europe. On every question connected with the advantages of educating the people, her example is uniformly appealed to. We have received so much praise from every quarter on this point, that there is ground to suspect we are tempted to look upon our system as altogether perfect; and that we are not aware of the defects and decay which time and a change of circumstances have carried into its most essential parts. That the plan of parochial education in Scotland continued for many years to be as perfect and efficient as could well have been expected at the time, and under the circumstances in which it took its rise, no one can possibly doubt who attends to the beneficial change upon the condition of the country, which must be ascribed mainly to this institution. Now, while all this national prosperity was progressively and rapidly advancing, and arriving at a height that, in the time, could not possibly have been anticipated, what was the corresponding improvement in the provision for that education which had contributed to produce so well instructed, and orderly, and well-disposed a people as the Scotch?—It must be stated as the fact, that for upwards of a hundred years, during which the country had risen to unexampled prosperity, no change whatever took place in the salaries of Scottish schoolmasters: and that even then the alterations which were made in their condition were, on the whole, rather injurious to them;—so that we may say, the class of men who have laid the foundation of our proudest distinction as a people, continue to this hour to have little or no share in the prosperity to which their order has so eminently contributed.

Now, supposing that the population of Scotland had remained stationary, or that additional masters, but without additional emoluments, had been appointed to meet the demands of an increased population;—are we to believe that the schoolmasters, for example, of 1802, could possess the same moral influence as their predecessors during the earlier period of the establishment? Let any

one, for an instant, reflect upon their very different conditions at the two periods. During the earlier period, we found, that there was not only a very handsome provision, considering the circumstances of the times; but that there were few openings to ambition in Scotland in any other way; and, consequently, that a good portion of the best talent in the country was drawn to this office.—In the latter period, the means of advancement in every department, both at home and abroad, became innumerable, and the Scotch, of all ranks, availed themselves of those means to an almost incredible extent.

Where was, all the while, the inducement to tempt a man of talents, even of the lowest rank, to confine his ambition to the office of a schoolmaster?—Let us take the description of it from the late Professor Christison, in his pamphlet on the subject in 1802;—and who was intimately acquainted with their condition.—“So wretched is the income of parish schoolmasters, that many of them do not earn half so much as a journeyman mason. The unhappy old men who are in the profession, must continue in it, as they are too old to learn any other.” Nothing can account for that decent portion of worth and talent, which still, under such adversity, stuck to the schools, except a remnant of the old veneration for a station once regarded as most honourable in Scotland,—along with the characteristic and unquenchable desire, even in the lowest ranks of the Scotch, for any station that held out, in the humblest form, the prospect of literary leisure.

We suspect too, in many cases, that in the attempt, at the time, on the part of many individuals, to limit their views to such preference there crept in a practice of most pernicious tendency, that of combining with the office of Schoolmaster some other occupation;—such for example (of which we have known instances,) as that of land-surveyor, of auctioneer, or of a country attorney.

But what we regard as still more ruinous to the parochial establishment, there was, at this period, most unaccountably gaining ground a low idea, quite unworthy of the ancient feeling on the point in Scotland, of what qualified a man for instructing the people. Classical attainments were in many parishes altogether out of the question, and in instances we have known a raw boy, fit to teach merely reading, writing, and accounts, was considered quite sufficient.—This last circumstance will go far to account for the facility,

with which persons were found to fill an office, to which so very slender emoluments were attached. But is it possible to believe, that an order of men, in this depressed and less respectable condition, could possess the same moral and beneficial influence with those who formerly occupied so very different a rank in society? In the latter period, you have merely the skeleton of the old establishment, which remained, like the forms of freedom in ancient Rome, after a complete despotism had been established.—The old frame-work established at the Revolution remaining with us, had the effect, it would appear, of deluding Scotchmen with the belief, that their country still possessed the full advantages of education;—and that a population advancing to wealth, and exposed to temptations not dreamt of in the former time, had the old salutary checks in the established schools. Whoever attends minutely to the subject, will find that this expectation was in a great measure ideal.

• Mr Howard found fewer prisoners in Switzerland and Scotland than in other countries, which he attributed to a more regular education among the lower classes of the Swiss, and the Scotch. That in the days of Howard, his inference with respect to Scotland, is perfectly just, is undeniable. But, if a Howard had of late years visited our jails and bridewells, he would have found, we are sorry to say, a more melancholy state of things. It is right, then, distinctly to state the fact on this point, that even the possibility be removed, of drawing a single inference from our national experience, hostile to the interests of education. When Howard first visited Scotland, there was scarcely any complaint, as to the diminished usefulness of our Schoolmasters, from their depressed condition in society. But since that period, the Statistical Account, along with numerous tributes to the worth and talents of Schoolmasters, abounds with the most pitiable complaints of the wretched state of their emoluments. The truth, then, is, that if there had been an increase of crime within the territory actually embraced by the parochial establishment, no inference could justly be drawn from the fact against the cause of education; inasmuch as those entrusted with it, were, for years, reduced to a condition which, confessedly, deprived them of the old beneficial influence. But let us reflect on the vast territory to which this establishment, even with its diminished power, did not

at all extend—and on the altered circumstances of the population within this unreclaimed portion of the field.

Beginning with the country, to which, for long, the parochial schools have been entirely confined, we cannot well suppose that an establishment of teachers sufficient at the Revolution, was really in numerical strength adequate to the wants of the population in 1802. Even here, then, arose a population for whose wants in this most interesting of all points of view, no public provision was made. Let us add to this consideration, that there were gradually removed, as to constant residence, from the country part of Scotland, what may be called most powerful coadjutors, not merely in giving encouragement to the work of education, but in influencing, in various ways, the moral habits of the people—the proprietors.

Next, as to that large portion of Scotland—the Highlands. The defect of the means of instruction there, remains to this hour a subject of lamentable complaint. And let us only think of the temptations to which, in the absence of the restraining power of right instruction, that interesting portion of our population has been exposed for the last thirty or forty years. We are unwilling to say any thing of the effects of the change of system in the management of Highland property. But let us reflect on the demoralizing influence of the practice of smuggling alone, to which our distillery laws gave birth. It is beyond belief to any one not intimately acquainted with the Highlands.—On no soil, with one exception, has this giant (as called of very late) spread his arms with a more baneful influence; and though those arms are now, we trust, under a wiser policy, to be shattered to pieces, they have left behind them, we fear, traces of moral desolation which will require much healing influence to efface.

Let us now pass on to the towns, and see what has remained there destitute of all public means for the education of the people: and let us take Glasgow and Edinburgh as examples. Glasgow, from containing in 1707 about 14,000* inhabitants, has come to possess a population, as now, of upwards of 150,000. An increase not to the same, but to an immense extent, has taken place in Edin-

* Cleland's Annals.

burgh.* But it was not merely a change in the numbers of the population of the towns which took place. During the first half of the last century, the towns in Scotland were not merely small, but were all as orderly and well regulated as the country. The young not only well instructed, but living, as the fashion then was, under the eye of parents or of masters;—apprentices living generally in the house, and forming a part of the family of every shopkeeper, tradesman, and even manufacturer. The whole of this private controul over the town population, has for years, and no doubt very naturally, entirely disappeared. Apprentices have had no connexion with masters, except by their attendance at shop or work-hours.

We are not to forget in this account a trial to which a population thus situated came to be exposed;—though, under universal attention to right tuition, it could not have been a source of alarm. A boldness of speculation in politics and in religion formerly unknown, all at once broke forth. The press, confined previously in a main degree to religious books and a few standard authors, as far as the lower classes were concerned, started into new life and activity, conveying rapidly its tide of novel and most attractive speculation over the whole mass of the community.—The fashionable scepticism of the days of Hume, adapted entirely to the educated classes, came to be presented in later times by Paine and his associates, in a form suited to the coarsest and most ignorant palate.

During this period, too, the manufacturing population especially, was yearly receiving accessions from a country far from being so distinguished for orderly habits as the Scotch;—and at the same time arose a source of neglect of education, which required absolute facilities thrown in the way to counteract it:—Manufactories presented to parents of the lower ranks a bait not easily resisted, of preferring gain to the education of their children—and many of those manufactories exhibited scenes gratifying, indeed, as they added to the resources of the country, but humiliating often as they

* As to the change upon Edinburgh—let any one count the number of its streets at present, and then read the following advertisement in the *Caledonian Mercury*, 8th July, 1723:

“**ROUP OF A HOUSE, &c.**—The conditions of the Roup, &c., to be seen at Mr William Wilson’s, writer to the Signet; his writing chamber, situate on the south side of *the street* of Edinburgh, a little below the cross.”

immured within their walls so many youthful victims to the love of money. But from the dread of being tedious, we are giving a mere sketch of the territory to which the power of education was almost unknown—and over which a demoralizing influence was travelling day after day with increasing force. To those, however, who will reflect patiently on the subject, it will always be matter of wonder, that the increase of crime among us has not been more alarming; and that the Scotch, under such circumstances as have now been referred to, have continued so moral, so orderly, and so loyal a people as they still unquestionably are:—It will ever be a proof how long a beneficial influence, such as a moral and religious education produces, can keep itself alive and spread far and wide, even after it has been mainly deprived of that nutriment by which it was originally fostered.

We are aware that many are unwilling to have their country held out under such points of view as have now been stated. But what is more ruinous than any thing like concealment of the real fact, instead of looking the whole evil of our situation in the face,—more especially when it is in the power of an enlightened Legislature to apply the true remedy. We are satisfied that our imperfect sketch affords a very faint idea indeed of the evils which have sprung in Scotland, from not making the noble establishment of King William's reign keep pace in extent and efficiency with the increasing population of the country.

We must pause, then, with all our national partiality, before we venture to hold out even Scotland as an example of a thoroughly educated people. The fact is, the great experiment of general education has not been fairly tried even here, so as to afford complete evidence of its inestimable benefits to the present day. At the very time in Scotland when the advantages of education were most wanted—when the field for its operation was enlarging on all hands; and when the temptations were multiplying, which were to put its power to the test, the means of carrying it on were fast falling to decay;—when the strain and press were coming upon the machine, that machine was allowed to become weak, and inadequate to its great and noble purpose.

But, without dwelling farther on the obvious result of this impolitic neglect, and before adverting to the propriety of extending

the means of elementary education, may we not be allowed to say, that it is surely high time,* in justice not merely to them, but to every interest in the country which can be named, that the schoolmasters of Scotland should be restored to their ancient rank and efficiency in society; and that they should no longer be pointed out as a depressed class of men. There is one consolation, may we not presume to hope, arising from the delay, that it is likely to prove, at last, beneficial to their order. They are now going before Parliament, backed, we may say, by the unanimous voice and good wishes of all intelligent men, at a period happily of profound peace, and of reviving and most cheering national prosperity; and in that parliament, not a single avowed advocate, we believe, is to be found for what Sir William Davenant calls (and what at a far later day might be called) "the received opinion, "that the people ought to be kept in ignorance—a maxim," (he adds), "sounding like the little subtlety of one that is a statesman "by birth or beard, and merits not his place by much thinking."

The only circumstance that appears to be unfavourable to their claims is,—that, of late years, from the depression of other classes, more especially the agricultural, their fixed salary, though small, seemed to place them in a state of comparative comfort. The overflowing numbers, too, arrested by the peace from other occupations, have driven to their ranks for a time, young men who, a few years ago, never would have limited their ambition to this office. But if the country rises,—as it is rising fast,—to its expected prosperity, such young men will look to other situations; and except the provision now made be really liberal, by the rise of all other classes around them, the Schoolmasters will gradually sink to their old depressed condition. And if any one be in doubt with respect to the evil effects, that in such times as these must inevitably spring from this order of men being reduced to a poor and dependent condition, let him look at what is at this moment realized in the case of Ireland—where a portion of the Teachers of youth have become literally pests of society, instead of promoters of its peace and good order. The

* "If the parochial schools (says Sir H. Moncrieff in his *Life of Dr Erskine*,) are to be supported so as to answer their original design, the Gentlemen and Clergy of Scotland will soon find it necessary to apply for a new act of Parliament to prevent the advances which have added so much to the prosperity, and to the character of their country, from being lost or impaired to their posterity."

author of the "Thoughts and Suggestions on the Education of the Peasantry of Ireland" states, "That a mere knowledge of letters is not rare in that country; it is not what is wanted. In fact, every village has its school: and there are few parishes that have not two or more, either permanent or occasional." But look at his picture of a country Schoolmaster in a state of poverty and dependence.—"He is himself one of the people, imbued with the same prejudices, influenced by the same feelings, subject to the same habits; to his little store of learning, he generally adds some traditional tales of his country, of a character to keep alive discontent. He is the scribe as well as the chronicler and pedagogue of his little circle; he writes their letters, and derives from this no small degree of influence and profit, but he has open to him another source of deeper interest and greater emolument, which he seldom has virtue enough to leave unexplored. He is the centre of the mystery of rustic iniquity, the cheap attorney of the neighbourhood, and furnished with his little book of precedents, the fabricator of false leases, and surreptitious deeds, and conveyances. Possessed of important secrets and of useful acquirements, he is courted and caressed; a cordial reception, and the usual allowance of whisky greets his approach, and he completes his character by adding inebriety to his other acquirements."

Let any one contrast with all this, the invaluable advantages which Scotland has derived from an order of men, that would have amply justified a completely opposite description—and let it be a motive to those who have it in their power, to remove from their condition every real ground of discontent. Let their situation at once be rendered such, as permanently to invite truly educated men to enter their profession; and to secure to every parish, at least one man of such attainments as would fit him to give to all ranks useful instruction, and to the better rank in it, the elements of a liberal education. By such means every seed of genius and talent scattered over the mass of society is fostered "*that nothing*" (to use a sacred expression) "*be lost.*"—And what is most important to the welfare of a country, a right education is thus secured to a middle class in every parish. Without a respectable order of Schoolmasters, such a class can only be partially well educated; and if they could be well educated (which we doubt) independently of a parochial institution, we hold the advantage to a country incal-

calable, in having the poorest boy of a parish entrusted to the charge of the man who is qualified to do ample justice to the children of the wealthier class.—There is thus insensibly created an effectual bond of union among all ranks, which cannot well be attained in any other way. When it became common some years ago, in many instances, to limit the qualifications of schoolmasters in Scotland to a knowledge of mere reading, writing, and accounts, it amounted almost to a decree, that all was gradually to be reduced to the same miserable level—that there was to be no well informed middle rank—no gradation between peasant and lord—no class, in short, who should be the permanent depositories of intelligence, and of independent and virtuous feeling. When events, over which we have no controul, remove from a country its resident proprietors; and when our excellent institutions are allowed to go to such decay as to deprive the remaining rank, to whom any little wealth and independence may belong, of the means of giving their children an education beyond that of the mere working classes, such a people are, of necessity, prepared for degradation and consequent slavery.—No power on earth can now prevent our towns from advancing to very general and high attainments in every branch of knowledge. Without some counterpoising means, such as a superior order of schoolmasters afford, the towns acquire an unnatural superiority, in point of intelligence, over the country portion of the community.—What an illustration have we had of the evil of such disproportion in the case of Paris? At the Revolution all France was as nothing to Paris. There was in the country little beyond an ignorant peasantry. The great landed proprietors resided in the Capital. The inhabitants of the provinces knew them only by contributing to their luxury and their ease. On their own estates, and surrounded by a thriving and intelligent tenantry, those proprietors would have been powerful, and through their counterpoise the liberties of France might have been allowed to advance gradually towards maturity. But when the conflict came, they shrunk into utter insignificance, or swelled the throng of emigrants who abandoned their country in her hour of danger and distress; and the result was, that the whole country was, in the Revolution, literally dragged at the heels of the mob of Paris.

But where is the security of Great Britain against such convulsions of state arising from the madness of the hour, as would sacri-

fice the peace and comfort of a whole generation, and put to hazard all our envied greatness and happiness as a people? No man can reflect much on the means for preventing Revolutions, suggested, as in the case of France, by the fears of the great and the rich, without perceiving that often such means are among the accelerating causes of Revolution. There cannot, we apprehend, be a doubt, that one of the most powerful means of securing us against all those convulsions which the most sanguine of the enlightened advocates of liberty would deprecate, is to be found in giving efficiency to those institutions, which have for their object to elevate the public mind by superior intelligence and virtue. In our day, crowded as it has been with the lessons of whole ages of history, we may have learned, that political constitutions are no better than pieces of parchment, except where they are founded on the opinion, and rooted in the affections of an enlightened public;—and surely the broader the foundation the greater the security. If that enlightened public be confined to towns—where is our security? Situated as our towns are, and neglected as the great mass of their inhabitants have been for years in all virtuous training, there must always be in those towns materials, which in times of public distress, a few demagogues may excite to the wildest schemes of Revolution. In such a country as this, we see no other security than the counterpoising influence of an intelligent provincial population. What is it, as compared with France, which has given such stability to the political Institutions of England—which rendered her Revolution so mild and orderly, and which conferred even upon her civil wars a character of chivalrous generosity? We apprehend she owes it to her middle rank resident in the country; and we very much suspect, that those who have made the narrowest inspection into the interior condition of England, have found reason to deplore, that the events of our times have inflicted a blow upon that noble class, from the effects of which it will require all the attention of a vigilant legislature to recover them. But with the absence of the proprietors, which late years have witnessed—with the severe pressure of agricultural distress on the higher order of tenantry—and with a mean and paltry provision for education,—Scotland had all the appearance of one day seeing a total extinction of this independent and enlightened class. It is vain to deplore the absence of those whom we cannot bring back; but we trust it is not vain, in the present day, to de-

plore the inefficiency of the means of securing the intelligence of the class that still resides.* Let the middle rank of the country portion of England disappear, which we fervently hope will never be the case, and the evil of that deplorable ignorance, in which the mass of her lower ranks have been allowed to remain, would one day appear in a frightful form. It is the existence of such a class, we are satisfied, which has so long kept out of the view of Englishmen, the evil and danger to their country of the notorious ignorance of the peasantry: It has deceived many an Englishman into the belief, that their country population is as orderly and peaceful as that of Scotland with all its boasted education. But let there be in England no connecting link between the great landed proprietors and an ignorant or partially instructed populace, and it would soon be seen with what rapidity the flame of discord and sedition would pass over the land. It would be seen, that in many of the counties of England the most paltry demagogue that ever mounted the hustings would possess more influence than all the landed proprietors put together. Let Englishmen, then, beware of drawing an inference in favour of the old cry for the ignorance of the people, from the peaceful and orderly habits of the least instructed of their population. They are other, and far different causes, which have secured that tranquillity. Fortunately for England, the gradation of her ranks, more insensibly descending to the lowest than in any country on earth, has created a tie that binds the heart of the most ignorant of her peasantry to the institutions of his country. In calamitous times, his underunderstanding may be puzzled by seditious arts, but his affections still lean to his old protectors.

But are there no evils in the condition of England, springing in a main degree from the ignorance of the lower ranks? Is it possible to believe, that if the same care which has conferred such superiority upon her higher ranks, had been taken to secure the blessings of a pious and virtuous education to all classes, that

* Mr Stewart, in his celebrated Dissertation, has the following remark, in a note respecting Scotland:—"Of our smaller country gentlemen, resident on their own estates, (*an order of men, which from various causes has now, alas! totally vanished,*) there was scarcely one who had not enjoyed the benefit of a University education, and very few of those who could afford the expense of foreign travel, who had not visited France and Italy." What must have been the moral influence arising from the residence of such men!

her poor's rates should have become an evil of so enormous and alarming a magnitude? What is it in Scotland, with laws that led almost as directly to the creation of such a system as those of England, which has freed our country from this evil to such a degree, that till of late years such a thing as an assessment for the poor was scarcely known? We shall in vain look for the cause of this in any other source, than in the elevation of mind which our institutions for moral and religious instruction have bestowed on the lowest of our people. We would, at this moment, entreat the attention of the influential classes to this fact: From the inroads which assessments for the poor have been making in some parts of Scotland, the alarm has become general, that the evil is fast travelling to us from our southern neighbours. And no wonder there should be an alarm, with the fatal experience of England before us, to render visible to all eyes the enormity of this evil—not merely from its severe pressure upon the resources of the country, but from the afflicting circumstance, that all this frightful expenditure leads to the degradation of the very class it was intended to relieve.

This alarm in Scotland has given rise to a variety of views upon the subject; and one of them, we presume, has given occasion to a late attempt, by an Act of the Legislature, to erect a barrier which should for ever secure Scotland from the inroads of English poor's rates.* But, with all deference for the intelligence and liberality of the quarter in which this attempt originated, we would ask—what kind of rampart is this, whose main strength is to rest upon an Act of Parliament, and not upon the minds and moral condition of the people for whose defence it is to be erected? Was there ever a case in which the trite but true maxim of the Roman poet was more justly applicable?—*Quid leges sine moribus vanae.*

* Some time ago, it was proposed in questions respecting alms for the poor, to render all appeal from the heritors and kirk-session to the Sheriff, by law incompetent. It is now found by the Court of Session that such appeal is at present incompetent, and that an appeal is admissible only to the Supreme Court. As far as the state of the law on the subject is concerned, we apprehend this right of appeal to be the very hinge, on which turns the probability of poor's rates gaining ground in Scotland. It might perhaps be advisable to cut off the right of appeal entirely to any Court whatever.

Let the landholders of Scotland at this moment resist with all their influence the application of its schoolmasters; let those schoolmasters be forced to retire from Parliament discomfited, and, as must happen, discontented; banish gradually from this office every man with the least pretensions to liberal attainments; let the same gross ignorance pervade our land that belongs to the least instructed portions of England; let the moral influence of a resident proprietary continue to leave us with the same rapidity we have been witnessing for years:—and let the peasantry of Scotland be allowed to descend from that virtuous and independent spirit, which once distinguished, and, fortunately for their country, still distinguishes them.—Let all this unhappily be allowed to take place, and what would be the power of human laws in securing us against the evil of poor's rates? We have not surely, now-a-days, to learn, that there is a point below which if the minds of a people are allowed to descend in moral tone, if you have not poor's rates in name, you have all the evils of poverty and wretchedness in the most afflicting forms in which they can possibly exist. We have Ireland, so fearfully fruitful in political admonition before us, as an illustration.—What a scene did that country exhibit of late, during a visitation of scarcity, which would not almost be felt in other countries! The cry of her starving population passed from her own shores to harrow the feelings of every humane man in Britain. Her own contribution to the wants of her people must be supposed to have been great—from England it was enormous, and from Scotland liberal. It is idle to say, such a country has no poor's rates, when a whole empire is virtually assessed to meet the wants of her people. But if a rampart erected by human hands shall ever secure Scotland against the evil of poor's rates, and against that increase of crime, of late the subject of complaint, it is in the power of the British Legislature this very year to contribute one of the elements which will unquestionably tend to the formation of such a barrier. Let them ordain so liberal a provision as shall have the effect of raising the profession of a Scottish schoolmaster to that honourable and efficient rank by which it was once distinguished. When the application for the schoolmasters comes before them, they will have solicitations from all quarters of our empire to throw the shield of their protection over investments of capital, which seem

destined to give a new impulse to the whole machine of human society. From the mighty river thus pouring into all channels, it is truly a streamlet that requires to be diverted to this institution: But we will venture to say, that, in the opinion of the most reflecting and enlightened among us, all those investments of capital in one portion of the land, and the whole foundations of our prosperity and happiness as a people, have acquired one of the most efficacious of all securities, from the hour in which the British Legislature have decreed, that a liberally endowed and enlightened order of men are to have the charge of the education of the people.*

Upon whom is the sum required for this endowment to be levied? With respect to this we have more hesitation in giving an opinion. Were all the landholders of Scotland of the same mind with some of them, they would say—no hand shall be called to give but ours. But we do humbly think, that it may very fairly become a question, whether the additional provision for an institution of such acknowledged public utility should wholly be assessed on one class of men. One is disposed the more readily to go into such a view of the matter, that grants of public money have been already made for similar purposes, and that still larger grants must in all probability be made to place the means of a right education within the reach of all classes throughout the empire. But whatever be the treasury from which this provision is made, when we look at the account of the ample funds appropriated in the States of New England for the support of their schools, and from which they are largely reaping the benefits;—and consider the truly respectable situation to which some of the Swiss Cantons have raised their schoolmasters—we cannot bring ourselves to believe that a British Legislature, in the present day, will dole out such a pittance as will leave one of the most important orders of men in the community, in a poor and dependent and discontented condition.

There is one point essential to the cause of learning among us, and to the best interests of society, which we trust will be secured in the new bill,—that there shall be one leading schoolmaster in every parish, and that a man of classical attainments be alone eli-

* This was sent to press, when the application to Parliament was expected to be made this Session.

gible to that situation.* Without this, we hold the parochial establishment is not at all restored to its old footing, and in future never can be productive of the same invaluable advantages to the country. The consideration of this point, then, may at once afford an idea of the amount of salary to be awarded. A *minimum* has been proposed of $2\frac{1}{2}$ chalders, half barley, half oatmeal, computed by the average of the last 25 years. Now, when it is agreed on all hands that any increase upon the school wages is, in every view, unadvisable, we do not see how it is possible to expect, that masters of such acquirements as have just been stated, can be permanently obtained for a smaller allowance:—and were this salary for the minimum with an accommodation in garden, and a house suited to the present state of society, secured to the principal master, we would be satisfied if there was even no provision made for other schools beyond a school-house and a very moderate allowance in lieu of a dwelling-house.

Nothing could be more ruinous to this establishment than the effects of a clause introduced into the late Bill, by which the salary was allowed to be parcelled out among two or three Teachers. Rather than adopt the same destructive plan again, we would leave the supply of such schools, in addition to the principal one, as may be required in distant parts of a parish, entirely to the liberality of the proprietors, and to that spirit among the people, which an enlightened order of schoolmasters will unquestionably foster and keep alive. The obvious and beneficial effect arising from the existence of such a well endowed establishment of teachers over Scotland, would be, that a stream of excellent talent would always be in regular progress to occupy stations, which from their respectability, must become objects of ambition to a large portion of the community. The fittest of all probationary offices for the youth who are qualifying themselves for the establishment, would be those second rate schools, which on the supposition made, would seldom fail to be most creditably filled. It is right, on this point, to state what we know in several instances to be the fact:—A young man of talents from the humbler ranks, after completing his education under a classical teacher, goes to occupy one of those subordinate schools. Frequently he is received into the family of one of the rich-

* We would consider it as the perfection of legislation on this point, if one of the provisions of the bill were expressed in the terms of the Act of the General Assembly in 1706, already quoted.

er tenants or small proprietors of the district, as tutor to their children, while he teaches the district school during the day. The whole emoluments of the school are allowed to accumulate for two or three years, to enable this young man to gratify his most ardent wish of being a session or two at one of the Universities, to qualify himself for a higher station. During his absence at College, his place is supplied by another young man equally ambitious to run the same career. We know such schools to be admirably taught by very young men. It is no doubt true, that this takes place under the present system. But it should be kept in mind, that from well known causes, the country of late has commanded a supply of talent to occupy schools of all kinds, that will in vain be looked for in a few years, if the establishment be left upon its present footing.

But what is the practical result in parishes where the salary—slender in whole—is divided among two or three masters? In a district where this plan was adopted, and the teachers on a parity of wretchedness, we found one of the masters, a meritorious man, in the habit, during every school vacation, of hiring himself as a day labourer in a harvest field, to eke out the slender emoluments which kept himself, a wife, and children, in possession of the bare necessaries of life. The education of mere letters, which is effected by the hedge-schools of Ireland, may be secured by such men; but moral influence they can have none; and independently of the complete sacrifice which is thus made of the interests of the middling rank of a parish,* it is obvious that the character of our country, and its peace and good order, can alone preserve such men from realizing the picture already given of some of the Irish schoolmasters.

Let the sum required to place this order of men upon a right footing be stated at the highest; and were even the whole locally assessed, how gladly would English proprietors receive such assessment—all tending to the security and ornament of society—in exchange for that grinding tax, the poors' rates, the pressure of which must be the sorer, from the reflection that it is ruinous and debasing in its influence.

* In 1774, the inhabitants of the parish of Tinwald, greatly to their credit, made an objection to the appointment of a parochial schoolmaster; and stated the objection, by appeal, to the General Assembly, that he was *unacquainted with the Latin or Greek languages*. When this ceases to be a valid objection in all cases, the parochial schools will no longer answer their original design.

With respect to the other provisions of the bill, the spirit of the ancient laws and practice, we humbly apprehend, should, as much as possible, be followed out. The church courts should be left in possession of the power with which they were invested by the enactments of King William's reign, of being the sole judges of the *qualifications* of schoolmasters. If ever there was a power not abused by a public body, it is this, in the case of the Church of Scotland. No man can read her records for many years after the Revolution, without seeing stamped on them a proof of the most honourable anxiety on the part of the church, that there should not remain one uneducated man within the territory entrusted to her care. It is but due to that Church, that she should not be controuled in an office which she has discharged with so sacred a regard to the public interest.

Another point with which the late bill interfered, is the right of appeal on the part of the schoolmasters from the presbytery to the higher church courts. As one great object of the new bill should be to elevate the masters in point of rank, we would be inclined to restore them to their ancient privilege;—but we understand that some are startled by the idea of allowing them to carry their appeal the length of the General Assembly. A middle plan is proposed—to admit of an appeal to the Synod; and we do not see why this should not meet the views of all parties. It is most desirable to free the presbyteries from the responsibility which, at present, belongs to them, of sitting in final judgment on the character and conduct of schoolmasters. Independently of other objections, it must have a tendency to injure that spirit of cordial attachment which must exist between ministers and teachers of youth, before they are able effectually to co-operate in promoting the important object of moral and religious instruction. If the objection to the admission of an appeal, at all, from the presbytery be, that it renders it vexatiously difficult and tedious to remove an improper schoolmaster from his office, an obvious plan, we apprehend, may be adopted to meet this objection. After an appeal has been allowed with regard to the relevancy of any charges against a teacher, and a superior court has found that the charges are such as should go to proof; let the presbytery be the sole judges in all the succeeding steps of the process, till they have pronounced their final judgment; and from that decision of presbytery, let an

appeal be competent to the Synod, as the court of last resort. The delay under such a form of process cannot well be great: The Synods, as is well known, meet every spring and autumn: Supposing a libel to be presented to a presbytery against a schoolmaster in the month of March; and he appeal on the point of relevancy, which we hold to be as indispensable as on that of the final judgment; (as nothing can be more injurious to the usefulness of a teacher of youth, though ultimately acquitted, than having been tried on charges that ought never to have been permitted to go to proof:)—Well, he appeals on the point of relevancy to the synod meeting in April: The synod find the libel relevant; and the process goes on before the presbytery. The presbytery, uncontrouled in their future proceedings by any appeal, may surely be supposed to bring such a trial to a conclusion in the course of the intervening half-year. The master appeals from their judgment to the synod; and he is acquitted or ejected in October following. A more summary mode of proceeding may no doubt be adopted; but in trying it, we should beware of introducing a far greater evil than the one we may wish to remedy:—Let this order of men be now visited by any infliction of the law that shall give them the slightest feeling of degradation, and we should anticipate the worst consequences, and the ejection of a teacher to be a very common event: Whereas, if they be now raised to that rank in point of privilege and emolument to which their learning and usefulness entitle them, we are convinced, that the trial and removal of a schoolmaster would become one of the rarest exercises of authority to which the church courts would ever be called. Independently of deeper considerations, the influence of the opinion of an enlightened public alone, over an order of men elevated to that station in society which brings them fairly under its controul, we should esteem of more force and value a hundred fold, than all the terrors which the legislature can ever contrive to hold over their heads.* We would beg leave, then, to entreat every friend to this admirable institution, to consider well before he opposes the modified plan of an appeal to the synod:—and if this measure were adopted, anxious as we feel for their success, we do think the schoolmasters ought cheer-

* A remark of Mr Burke's deserves attention—That "the degree of estimation in which any profession is held, becomes the standard of the estimation in which the professors hold themselves."

fully to acquiesce in it, as an arrangement on the whole more conducive to the respectability of their order, than any that might open a door to lengthened and harassing litigation.

We have merely to add, that when their claims are presented, we are desirous only that they receive an attention similar in effect to that which was bestowed on those of the schoolmasters of England in the days of Queen Elizabeth ; as set forth in a passage from Strype's Annals, which is subjoined ; * and we will venture to predict the same result, in the increased attachment of the schoolmasters to the best interests of their country.

When the present parochial masters are restored to their proper rank and usefulness, we do most sincerely trust that an enlightened legislature will not stop till the key-stone be placed in the arch, and the benefits of this excellent institution be extended in full efficiency to all our towns. An inquiry, too, into the state of education in the Highlands, is most imperiously required, and a parliamentary inquiry seems alone in such cases to be effectual. The complaints from that quarter are yet distressing—now, the defect of the means of instruction should be precisely ascertained, and surely a remedy may be applied without great difficulty.

Our large towns have been allowed to rise to their present extent, entirely destitute of all public means of general education. The

* "The favour shewn to Schoolmasters in these times was remarkable, (anno 1581), being commonly freed from Taxes and ordinary payments, and had exemption from personal services—commonly charged upon other subjects—which Richard Mulcaster, an eminent Schoolmaster in London, in his *Elementary*, (a Book of his setting forth next year,) called *the Munificence*, and that extraordinary of our Princes and Parliaments towards their whole order (of Schoolmasters) in the country's behalf.—But it seems in a subsidy given about this year or the next, some that were assessors had cessed all Schoolmasters, though it was not done before. But upon this the Schoolmasters made an humble application to Sir Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer (and the Barons of the Exchequer,) beseeching them for the common benefit of a number of poor men to favour them in this matter. Whereupon it pleased them to take the cause to protection, and to construe the statute as the Parliament men did mean it, and as they had still enjoyed it, to the common benefit of their whole company. Upon which Mulcaster concluded 'that this their great goodness to the favour of their order, as it deserved at their hands an honourable remembrance, so it bound them further to the common care for the which they had been favoured.' "

descriptions which Dr Chalmers has repeatedly given of the dark state of a large portion of the population of Glasgow, ought certainly to arouse the public attention;—and we suspect the same would apply in some degree to a portion of the population of other towns. The Christian benevolence of the present day is, no doubt, making wonderful efforts to reclaim those moral wastes. But it is surely desirable to set free the charitable inclination of the public from such a demand upon its resources, and allow the stream to be directed to benevolent objects that can never be supposed to be undertaken by the Government of a country. The great object of securing to all classes the means of elementary education, we hold to belong peculiarly to the legislature; and what the legislature alone can accomplish in the way, and to the extent which is desirable. What is wanted is, an efficient system that shall leave not a single corner of town or country destitute of the means of instruction. Obviously no voluntary efforts, even of active benevolence, are ever likely to be adequate to this;—and if they were adequate, it should never be forgotten, that there is always a fearful risk of degrading that portion of the population which is left for the education of their children to the efforts of charity.*

We should esteem the Scottish statesman fortunate, to whose lot it may fall to procure for his country a system of parochial instruction of universal application,—and in commencing his task, he may reflect with gratitude, that there are not those obstructions in his way, of which other statesmen have had reason to complain. Every English statesman, who has thought of procuring the same blessing to England, has given up the cause in despair.—Even Mr

* Sir John Newport, in moving a Resolution in the House of Commons last year— with a view to the extension of the benefits of education to the whole body of the people of Ireland—by the report of his speech, states—“That there was a great desire in the people of Ireland to obtain instruction for their children, *but a great dislike to obtain it gratuitously.*”—If this remark be applicable to Ireland, we are confident it is still more so to Scotland, and especially the Highlands of Scotland. It may be long before the evil effects appear on the character of a country, of educating any portion of the population from charitable funds. Those evil effects may not appear till the distinction between the different schools be visible to the public eye—and the sound of *the Charity Schools* becomes familiar to the common ear. Those who then send their children to such schools, must, we fear, lose self-estimation as well as rank in society.

Brougham has hitherto failed, who carried to the undertaking a degree of zeal and talent, that is rarely enlisted in any service. Whoever, then, succeeds in completing this good work in Scotland, will have the satisfaction of thinking, that he has not only conferred a mighty boon on his country, but that he has placed distinct facilities in the way of the English statesman, for the accomplishment of the same great and patriotic design. The example of Scotland, which, in this respect, will then be without a blot, cannot fail in having a most beneficial effect. On this mighty subject, it is impossible to confine our wishes to any one quarter of the empire. Every enlightened man in the kingdom must wish to see the means of education possessed universally throughout the realm. The time, we trust, has happily arrived, when Englishmen of all ranks, are convinced that the ignorance of a large portion of their people is the greatest stain on their noble country.* “It is surely (says Mr Malthus) a national disgrace, that the education of the lower classes of people in England, should be left merely to a few Sunday schools, supported by a subscription from individuals.” But let us not view it merely as a disgrace—let us consider it in the present excited period of Society, as full of hazard to the peace as well as the prosperity of our country. In every season of national difficulty or distress (against the recurrence of which there is surely no security,) all the benighted quarters of the empire are exposed to the machinations of intriguing men. Though sanguine above most with regard to the blessings which are to result from the progress of knowledge, we do freely confess, that in beholding a certain part of our towns advancing in intellectual attainments, at a rate of acceleration not dreamt of a few years ago;—almost realizing the

* We are extremely apt to forget, that the desire of knowledge grows very much in proportion to the means of having it gratified. Many are not aware to what an extent this desire was fostered by the parish schools, and what a debt of gratitude Scotland owes to this institution. A Scotch Gentleman, a few years ago, with a view to the examination of some improvements in farming, received a letter of introduction from a great English proprietor to one of his tenants; when the letter was presented to the tenant, renting a farm of about £1000 a year, this honest Englishman confessed that he could not read it. When one thinks of the expenditure of England in the last thirty years, how unseemly that any, the least portion of her Yeomanry, should be left in such a condition!

glowing picture of active speculation which Milton has drawn of London, at the period of the commonwealth ;—and at the same time so vast a portion of the population of the Empire abandoned to a state almost of complete ignorance ;—it is with a sensation akin to that with which one looks on large and dense masses rising in our atmosphere, charged with an element—when equalized not merely harmless, but one of Nature's instruments in accomplishing her great and beneficent purposes ;—but when accumulated in one region, destined in an ominous hour to burst forth in the thunder and the storm, with awful and destructive violence.

Is there a function, then, belonging to a wise Government, more sacred and important than to secure the right distribution of an element in the moral world, of similar power and agency, and pregnant with danger only when very unequally diffused :—Unequally diffused, indeed, it must always be, for the purposes of society.—What is wanted is, to make a distinct *preparation* for its finding, throughout the whole mass, that level, or attaining that accumulation, which those great purposes may require. Surely the liberal eye and the beneficent care of the Legislature may extend over all in such a way as not to leave a single corner in that state of *destitution* which, in seasons of tumult, necessarily lays it open to the visitations of evil design ;—and when they have secured to the utmost extent the means of elementary instruction, and thus laid universally the foundation on which the intelligence of all classes is to be reared, they have discharged one of the most valuable duties they owe their country ; and as far as the education of the great body of the people is concerned, they have gone all the lengths that, by the general consent of reflecting men, they ought to go. An enlightened government, by such noble and impartial efforts, establishing itself afresh in the affections of a people, may then calmly behold the mighty tide of knowledge and of science roll on ;—and dread no more from the result than we do from those waves which break upon our shores—ever bearing to us the products and the riches of every soil the sun visits in his course.

FINIS.



