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of hearing and keeping the testimony of the Church at large, in a matter in which the Church has really received a Deposit, we shall be answerable for the consequences to the cause of Truth.

C. H. WALLER, D.D.

ART. III.—THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION QUESTION.

THE withdrawal of the Education Bill, after it had passed its second reading by a majority of 267, has caused a not unnatural feeling of annoyance in the minds of those friends and supporters of Voluntary Schools who approved of the main principles of the Bill, which, so far as it referred to primary education, were three: (a) Decentralization, by the establishment of a county authority to undertake some of the duties at present discharged by the Education Department, and new duties imposed upon them by the Bill; (b) increased financial aid to poor schools, Voluntary and Board; and (c) a security for definite religious teaching in accordance with the expressed wishes of the parents of the children. When the first feeling of irritation has passed away, it will probably be felt that, though the Government has undoubtedly received a severe shaking by the course of events, the cause of education will probably in the long-run gain by the delay. Further discussion of the new principles which the Bill contains will be of great advantage, and will, I feel sure, show how carefully it was thought out, and how valuable are some of those provisions which at first startled many of us by their novelty and unexpectedness; while, on the other hand, some undesirable features of the Bill may be modified or removed with advantage during the breathing-time gained, especially some which seemed to outsiders to show that, after the Bill has been carefully prepared by its authors, not only in the interests of Voluntary Schools especially, but of education generally, influences had been at work and changes made, which once more show the truth of the old adage, "Too many cooks spoil the broth."

It may be hoped also that the delay which will occur will show to some friends of the Bill and of the Government the folly of making unreasonable demands, and remind them also of another truth which the large majority on the second reading helped to put out of sight, "A house divided against a house falleth."

The Government will speedily recover their lost ground if

they carefully think out the whole subject, bring in early next session a well thought out measure, and then firmly stick to its main provisions, and if their supporters loyally accept the situation, and resist the temptation of pressing their own individual hobbies: for if the course pursued by some members of Parliament during the last few weeks is repeated next session, the cause of education—not of religious education, and of Church Schools only, but of improved education on a sound and religious basis—is irretrievably injured for this generation; and perhaps the Government itself may be wrecked, to make way for another which will bring again upon Churchmen all those anxieties, and it may be worse ones, which oppressed them during the days of the last Administration.

To refuse hearty support to the present Government, because they do not do for us all some of us wish and expect, seems to me the most suicidal of policies.

I do not propose in this paper to discuss at length the causes of the failure of the defunct Bill. The opposition was doubtless most virulent as well as determined, but such seems likely to be all opposition nowadays. When a leading paper condescends to call a sadly-needed temporary relief to the *occupiers* of land a *landlords'* relief measure, we must be surprised at nothing.

Any Education Bill, even if sent down by an angel from heaven, was certain to be opposed bitterly by the present Opposition: they worked themselves up to a white heat upon some clauses of the Bill, notably the 27th, without taking the trouble to understand them, and of that clause at any rate, as I hope to show, misrepresented its provisions. But for all this the Government should have been prepared. If they had intended to pass this session so large a measure, Parliament should have been called together earlier, the Bill introduced sooner, and the way not blocked by many minor measures, some, as the result has shown, highly contentious. Above all, the author of the Bill who had it in charge in the House of Commons should have been put into the Cabinet and given a free hand. Desirable as it may be for Parliament to rise about August 15, to say beforehand that it shall then rise is to encourage obstruction—to erect a brick wall to stop the progress of every measure the Opposition desire to destroy. We hope next year the leader of the House will clearly say that while he will make every effort to get business through by the middle of August, the House will sit till the Education Bill is passed: in no other way will a highly contentious Bill ever become an Act of Parliament.

The CHURCHMAN for December of last year contained an article upon "The Education Question," kindly inserted by

the editor, in which I specified ten ways by which, as I thought, aid might be given to country Voluntary Schools; and I stated that I believed that if those ways of assistance were adopted, "the financial difficulties of our country schools would be considerably reduced, if not entirely removed."

Many of those points were satisfactorily dealt with in the Government Bill.

1. Clause 19 (2) repealed the 17s. 6d. limit imposed by the Educational Act of 1876, subsection (1), substituting for it either the grant per head paid to the school for the year ending July 31 of this year; or in the case of an infant school 17s.; in any other case 20s. per scholar—whichever is the greater.

I confess I fail to see the justice or expediency of this new limit. In the case of my own school the grant this year was for each boy 20s. 6d., and for each girl 21s. 6d., and therefore under the Bill we should have been able to retain those high grants, which we won for the first time this year, as long as we maintained our present high standard of efficiency; but had such a Bill been passed in 1895, we should never have been able to take such a grant, and a great incentive to improvement would have been taken away. As a matter of fact, we were unable under the Act of 1876 to take the whole grant we earned, though we hope to do so in future years; and this we felt to be very hard after a long and at last successful effort to raise our school.

2. Clause 20 of the Bill met my second suggestion with reference to the rates, and is generally acceptable.

3. Clause 25 gave increased facilities for borrowing money for improvements in buildings, and so met my third point.

4. Clause 23, by allowing average attendance to be calculated by the Elementary Day-school Code of the current year, and not in accordance with a code stereotyped by the Act of 1891, would have enabled the Department, if they desired to do so, to adopt another suggestion—that with reference to the number of attendances upon which the average for the year is calculated.

5. Clause 21, by substituting after January 1, 1898, *twelve* for *eleven* as the age for compulsory attendance, whatever standard a child may have passed, is in accord with another wish I expressed; and for reasons which I gave in that article would, I believe, not only largely advance the cause of education, but also be a great financial boon to the country schools.

It seems to me a most short-sighted policy for the friends of the agricultural labourer to oppose this clause. No doubt many parents will at first consider it a hardship to have to

keep their boys at school a year longer, but the result must be to raise the class as a class; to improve the intellectual capacities of the labourers, not only enabling them to take a more intelligent view of parochial and public affairs, but also to discharge better their special duties in life, and so probably to aid in solving the problem of agricultural depression. I fear the present generation of agricultural labourers do not really know what is best for their class. Child labour is false economy, and tends also to reduce the standard of wages for the adults.

6. Clause 2, subsection (5), went some way to meeting another wish which I expressed in my December article with reference to Poor Law children. I trust, however, when this clause is reintroduced, the word "shall" will be substituted for "may," and Poor Law children placed under the Education Department instead of the Local Government Board.

7. Most of the other suggestions contained in that article are matters for the annual Code, rather than for legislation, and may be expected to follow as a result of the great educational improvement to be anticipated, when some such Bill as the Educational Bill of 1896 becomes an Act of Parliament.

Already the Vice-President has taken one step to raise the standard of country pupil-teachers by further limiting the number of hours per week during which they may be employed in teaching. Further steps may be expected in this direction when a county educational authority is set up, by which with local knowledge educational classes may be established for the pupil-teachers.

The Bill went farther than many of us dared to hope in offering the 4s. special grant to all Voluntary Schools, and to those School Boards which come under section 97 of the Elementary Education Act, 1890.

Clause 4 would, I think, have been improved if more discretion had been left to the county authority in the distribution of the special aid grant. There are certainly Voluntary Schools where already the staff are well paid, their qualifications satisfactory, the apparatus and educational fittings up to date, and where, therefore, so large an additional income as 4s. a head is hardly needed; there are well-to-do places, where subscriptions come in freely, and where the only result of additional pecuniary aid from the State will be the diminution of subscriptions readily and cheerfully paid. On the other hand, there are many schools which will not be relieved from the intolerable strain by a grant per head of 4s. It seems to me the county authority working, as clause 10 suggests, by delegation, should make grants year by year out of the special

aid money, according to the proved necessities of the schools of the district, and in accordance with rules approved by the Education Department. One advantage of this would be that the objections taken to clause 4 by the admirers of the School Board system, who consider those schools unfairly treated, because, unless they come under section 97 of the Education Act of 1870, they will receive no portion of the grant, would be removed. Federation would to some extent bring about the result I desire; but I fear that so long as voluntary subscriptions are required, federation is a counsel of perfection—the system will not work in country districts. Residents will subscribe for the schools of their parish, but not for the schools of a district which they consider has no special claims on their liberality.

Another point to which I referred in my last article was met by the Education Bill. "A Procrustean Code is surely a great mistake." The Bill wisely allowed the county authority to modify the Code to suit the special requirements of the county, subject of course to the approval of the Education Department.

Another most excellent provision of the Bill is contained in clause 6. There is abundance of evidence that, while from an educational point of view School Boards in towns and large places have been a great success—albeit, at great cost to the ratepayers—in country places they have often been a failure. The right men are not elected on to the Board, either because they do not care to go through the annoyance of a contested election, or from other causes.

The self-opinionated village agitator, who oftentimes cannot himself write a grammatical sentence, but at the same time has a profound admiration for himself, and is an adept at the art of talking over others, and leading them to believe that he knows something, sits on the Board, and even may become its chairman, and then—talk of the tyranny of the parson, this man's little finger is thicker than the parson's loins! If there is a tyrant in the education world, it is the man who has acquired a position for which he is not intellectually fit.

Many a story could be told of the treatment of masters and mistresses by a Board domineered over by an ignorant chairman, who has gained his position by using fine words, the meaning of which neither he nor his hearers understand. Sir John Gorst mentioned one or two in the House of Commons. Then, again, in these small parishes the triennial elections are an unmitigated curse: they stir up ill-feeling, they set church and chapel by the ears, and they cost money which the poor country ratepayers can ill afford, and often, under the cumulative vote, bring out absurd results, by no means desired by the

electors. Then, again, the expenses created by a School Board for clerk, offices, etc., are by no means small. The money so spent had far better be spent directly on education. The plan provided in the Bill, to take effect where School Boards are not desired, seems to me an admirable one, and would have restored harmony and peace to many a country village, would have removed many a conceited, ignorant busybody from a position for which he is not qualified, and generally would have largely advanced the cause of country education.

We earnestly hope that the provisions of the Bill which created a county authority, and assigned to that authority duties such as those to which I have referred, will speedily take effect.

To the parts of the Bill referring to secondary and technical education, which were also to be placed under the county authority, no exception has, I believe, been taken; and I see that even so strong an opponent of the whole Bill as Mr. Bryce considers that that part of the Bill was not contentious, and might speedily have become law, if it had been separated from the part which referred to primary education. I suppose he includes in this non-contentious part the establishment of a county authority for educational purposes.

And now it may well be asked why this Bill, so carefully thought out, so full of excellent provisions in the interests of education, was so bitterly and pertinaciously opposed. No doubt chiefly because of the irritation still felt in the minds of the Radicals, and especially of the Radical Nonconformists, at the result of the last General Election. This Bill, like the Benefices Bill, was supposed to be drawn up in the interests of the Church of England; and to any such Bill, however perfect, or however harmless, the Nonconformist Radicals were determined to offer the most virulent and unscrupulous opposition. But such opposition would not, I think, have been as successful as it was but for at least three causes:

1. The apparent attack upon School Boards, even when well and successfully conducted.
2. The ambiguity, possibly intended, of those parts of the Bill by which *some* of the powers of the Education Department were delegated to the new County Authority; and
3. Clause 27, and the way in which that Clause was either misrepresented or misunderstood.

1. It seems to me it was a mistake to give to these new Educational Authorities any power of interference with the existing School Boards, so long as the Education Department are satisfied with the state of such schools. Clause 26 of the Bill was no doubt one of those clauses which gave the opponents of the Bill a lever by which to work, and caused

them to argue that it was intended ultimately to destroy the School Board system. Unfortunately the utterances of some leading public men had lent colour to this idea. I do not think the 8th and 9th clauses of the Bill which gave power to the Education Authority to take over, under certain carefully defined conditions, existing public elementary schools, and to take the place of defaulting School Boards, can be reasonably objected to, and many small parishes, heartily sick of their School Boards, would warmly welcome the change. If any future Bill is to be drawn up on the lines of least resistance, while clauses 8 and 9 may well be retained, clause 26 had better be omitted.

If these new County Authorities do their work well, no doubt, as time goes on, other duties will be assigned to them, and not improbably that of checking in some way School Board expenditure. The extravagant way in which some Boards go to work, the continual increase of the rate—*e.g.*, the recent increase of the School Board rate for London—point to the conclusion that the day cannot be far distant when Parliament will be forced by the indignant ratepayers to devise some means of controlling the spending power of School Boards throughout the country. But these new Authorities will require time to learn their work, and by their wise action gain the confidence of the public, before too many duties can be safely assigned to them; certainly before they can be expected to undertake so difficult and invidious a task as exercising a control over the School Boards in their districts.

It was, I cannot but think, most unfortunate that, at a time when the Government had already difficulties enough upon their hands in connexion with this thorny subject, the idea of rate aid was again started by some Northern Churchmen. It sharply divided the advocates of the Bill, and gave occasion for witticisms and jeers from its opponents. I do not propose to discuss this knotty point. The Bishop of London's letter in the *Times* seems to me unanswerable. Rate aid must mean ratepayers' control, and though this may not prove so objectionable as some anticipate, to accept it is to give up all we have been contending for for twenty-five years—our Trust Deeds, and the distinctive teaching in accordance with them.

Rate aid may ultimately come, but surely those who desire this cannot do better than expedite the creation of a County Authority, to which, if to any body, it is most likely that the power of rating may eventually be granted by Parliament, subject to the control under carefully guarded conditions of the County Authority, who would appoint at least one of the Managers of each school aided by a share of the rates.

2. With reference to the ambiguity in the Bill as to what

powers—at present exercised by the Education Department—were to be transferred to the County Authority, it is sufficient, as an illustration, to take the question of Inspection. Clearly, under the Bill, that might be delegated, and possibly at one time, before the matter had been well thought out, it was so intended. I cannot but think it most undesirable that any such step should be taken. The opponents of the Bill argued, most unjustly, that the Bill generally was intended to lower the standard of educational efficiency in the country. On the contrary, the whole object of the Bill was to increase that efficiency, especially in the country districts, to level up, and not to level down.

If, however, the duty of inspection is taken from the Central Authority, a difference of standard will undoubtedly be the ultimate result, and probably, in some counties, a lowering of that standard. The reply would probably be, that the Department would prevent this by a system of test inspections; but to this course there is the serious objection that, under that system, a school might be subjected to two inspections under a different standard, to say nothing of the additional expense caused to the country by the maintenance of two sets of inspectors.

I trust, therefore, that in any new Bill, it will be made quite clear that, for the present at least, the Department will retain in its own hands the important duty of Inspection, and so keep up to a high standard the teaching of all schools in the country, whatever differences, as regards subjects taught and methods of teaching, are allowed in different parts of England.

To allow any lowering of the standard of education is, we are sure, the last thing that those at present at the head of the Department are likely to do. Sir John Gorst, who was a member of the Berlin Conference, and has made the condition of education in other countries a special subject of study, must be fully alive to the fact that we are still below the standard of many countries in Europe in this matter, and that if we would successfully compete with other nations, our people must be well educated. Moreover, having given the Parliamentary franchise and the vote both for county and parochial councillors to all householders, it is essential for the well-being of our country that we should take no retrograde step in primary education. An impression, undoubtedly a most mistaken one, that the Bill was a retrograde step, accounted for some of the virulent opposition which it encountered. The excellent provisions for secondary education, acknowledged, as I observed above, by Mr. Bryce, ought to have disabused his mind and that of others. Still, misunderstandings and misrepresentations are hard to kill. It will be well to remove

from the Bill of 1897 every clause which can afford the slightest justification for the charge so persistently made against the Bill of 1896.

3. There remains as a ground for the opposition to the Bill clause 27. Most undoubtedly this clause was introduced in a spirit of all-round fairness and charity. It was designed as an olive-branch or, if the expression is preferred, as a safety valve, and intended to remove equally the grievances of Churchmen and Nonconformists. It has been grossly misrepresented or misunderstood. Nonconformists have argued that under it the "Church parson" might claim access into every Board School to teach what he chose; Churchmen have thought that the dissenting ministers may claim admittance into every National School.

A careful reading of the clause should have prevented these false impressions. In the first place, the initiative, if any action is to be taken under the clause, must come from the parents—then the number who require action must in the judgment of the Education Department be a reasonable number—what they ask must be reasonable, the Department being the sole and final judge; and when the Department issues any order, it is for the managers to make reasonable arrangements—satisfactory, that is, to the Education Department. It does not follow that the managers will be obliged to admit the "parson" or the Nonconformist minister; they may find other ways of meeting the difficulty when it arises—for instance, in a large school it may be arranged that the instruction asked for may be given by one of the staff able and willing to do so, and other ways of arranging matters will doubtless be found.

The whole essence of the clause is reasonableness; and unless on one side or the other there is a determination to stir up strife, I believe the clause would seldom be acted upon where managers are already reasonable. The clergyman open to reason will not, I think, be troubled by his Nonconformist brother; the School Board which has made reasonable arrangements for Scriptural teaching ought not to be worried by an aggressive clergyman, and will not be by a reasonable one. But the clergyman who aggressively announces that the children will be taken on a saint's day morning "to see Low Mass" must not be surprised if parents act upon such a clause; and the School Board which excludes Bible teaching, or allows Unitarianism or Agnosticism to be openly avowed and taught, if such is ever done, must expect action to be taken by the faithful parish priest.

In my own parish, with, I suppose, between a third and a fourth of the children those of Nonconformist parents, I have for about ten years had the children for a short service and

catechizing on a saint's day morning without one word of objection ever reaching my ears.

Clause 27 asserts the sacred right of the parents to control the religious education of their children—alas! the great majority do not trouble themselves about the matter; but when they have, as they always should have, a strong opinion upon the question, that opinion should be respected.

I believe a good sound Scriptural instruction can be given under the present law, and this is all we have any right to expect in our day-schools; teaching which is distinctive of the Church or of a denomination can and should be given in the Sunday-school.

I look upon clause 27 as a safety valve; I should much regret its very extensive operation. However, it has created a most unexpected and violent opposition; and therefore it may be that those who introduced it into the Bill of 1896 may not, in the face of that opposition, think the game worth the candle, and quietly drop it in 1897. If, on the other hand, it is again introduced, it may be well still further to safeguard it against unreasonable partisans; at any rate, the modifications suggested by the Bishop of Hereford and Archdeacon Wilson are worthy of careful consideration. By them the clause would be made inoperative in large towns, where parents have a choice of schools within reasonable distance.

"Sweet reasonableness" seems to me the only way in which the religious difficulty can be met. In the admirable speech, praised equally on both sides of the House, in which the Vice-President introduced his Bill, he said no truer words than that the religious difficulty is far more a platform than a practical question. Tact, and a charitable allowance for the opinions of others, will solve the difficulty better and more quickly than an Act of Parliament.

Finally, all must sympathize with the disappointment felt assuredly by the Vice-President, who had devoted his time ungrudgingly to the preparation of his Bill, and produced what all must admit, whether they agree with its principles or not, was a masterpiece of constructive skill. His many friends and admirers earnestly hope that it may fall to his lot to successfully accomplish in 1897 what, from no fault of his own, he failed to accomplish in 1896; that as a Cabinet Minister he may introduce and carry through a great measure for the advancement and improvement of education generally with which his name will be associated; and that the leader of the House of Commons, whom, notwithstanding some mistakes he has made, all Unionists and most opponents most heartily respect and admire, will avoid in the future such a fatal mistake as accepting, in the absence of the Minister in charge

of the Bill, an amendment, the far-reaching and fatal consequences of which he could not have foreseen.

C. ALFRED JONES.



ART. IV.—BISHOP THOROLD.

“THE Life of Bishop Thorold,” by his friend and chaplain, the Rev. C. H. Simpkinson, deserves a large circle of readers. It is beyond question a most able and valuable biography, and as interesting as it is valuable. Containing no startling incidents, the book yet rivets the attention of the reader from beginning to end. A man of powerful personality and of original genius; a born ruler of men; an impressive and painstaking preacher; a writer of wide influence both here and in America; a prelate of profound sagacity; above all, a man of great personal piety, Bishop Thorold will take his place among the most successful diocesans of the nineteenth century. As Vicar of St. Paul’s, Walworth, and afterwards in the Winchester Diocese as Rector of Farnham and examining chaplain, Mr. Simpkinson was privileged to enjoy the close confidence of Bishop Thorold; and in the volume before us he has given us a vivid picture of “the beloved prelate” (as A. K. H. B. was wont to call him), and of the great work, especially in the diocese of Rochester, which, in spite of ill-health, he was enabled successfully to accomplish.

Of Anthony Thorold’s early years there is little of interest to record. His father was Rector of Hougham, in Lincolnshire, where the Thorolds had been settled since the beginning of the fourteenth century. They came of a very ancient stock—“no better blood in Lincolnshire,” says Kingsley in “*Hereward the Wake*”—tracing back their ancestry to the famous Lady Godiva. Young Anthony comes before us as a shy and delicate boy, with deep religious impressions, and on terms of the closest intimacy with his youngest sister. Unfortunately he never went to a public school; and this, to a great extent, accounted for that self-consciousness and apparent affectation of manner which often aroused criticism in after years. At the age of nineteen he went up to Queen’s College, Oxford, where the social life of the place attracted and delighted him; but he failed to make the most of his University career, obtaining only in the final examination an honorary fourth class in mathematics. After taking his degree he travelled for a time in Egypt and in Palestine, where the sight of the Holy Sepulchre, of Bethlehem and of Nazareth, above all, of Gethsemane, deeply impressed him, and kindled afresh