

Highland Messenger

"Life is only to be valued as it is usefully employed."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

Education of All the People.

[From the West. Christian Advocate.]
PRESENT STATE OF EDUCATION.—A brief survey of the present condition of education may be proper before we proceed further on this subject. Our resources of information, however, are very limited, not having within our reach those statistics which would enable us to speak definitely on some points; and indeed, the statistics of education are imperfectly kept, and of course as imperfectly known, and much of what is known we have not. Nevertheless, perhaps our brief discussion will suffer little on this account, because it is imperfect in almost every other respect.

ENGLAND.—Among the strange things in the world is the fact, that England possesses no general system of elementary education. For the education of her clergy and gentry, she has several great public classical schools, and two universities; but she has no national establishment, like that which exists in Prussia and other countries, to meet the convenience of the people at large, so as to enable every man in the kingdom to give his children a knowledge of the common branches of education. Custom has decreed that the land holders in England, instead of paying a comparative trifle to teach the lower orders, should be burdened with the enormous tax of thirty-one and a half millions of dollars annually to support a body of paupers, most of whom have sunk into that condition in consequence of the low morality attendant upon ignorance.

To remedy the want of a national establishment two charitable institutions have been in operation for some years, one of which is chiefly composed of friends of the Church, and the other Dissenters; while the same purpose is aimed to be accomplished by Sunday schools, and infant schools. The boarding schools, so prevalent in England, are accessible only to the middle ranks and the most wealthy, and they chiefly aim at giving a classical education.

In 1818, there were in England 4167 endowed schools, 14,292 unendowed schools, and 5162 Sunday schools. All these together educated, in whole or in part 644,000, or one-sixteenth of the whole population. Of the 11,000 parishes, 3500 were without a school in 1820.

The system adopted by the two great associations just mentioned is the monitorial, modified by the Lancasterian which was introduced by the Quakers. The partisans of the Established Church first despised and then condemned this educational project of a body dissenting from them, and finally were obliged to set up something of the same kind themselves, as the only available means of defending the interests of the Establishment. Two rival associations denominated the British and Foreign School Society, the former composed chiefly of the liberal and dissenting party, and the latter under the crown and Church, now endeavored to anticipate each other in the planting of monitorial schools in every cluster of population throughout England. Nevertheless, a great field of ignorance still remained. In many places, a large proportion of the people knew not the alphabet. London alone contained 150,000 persons, or a tenth part of the whole population, to whom the means of education were not accessible.

The general government, however, has taken up the subject with some small degree of earnestness. In the session of 1833, a grant of £20,000 was voted by parliament, in aid of general education, and this was followed subsequently by another, and a select committee of the House of Commons was charged with an inquiry into the state of education among the poorer class of England and Wales. The object of the grant of 1833 was the erection of school houses.

SCOTLAND.—Previously to the Reformation, Scotland was in much the same condition with regard to education as other Christian countries of Europe, with perhaps some inferiority on account of its remote situation and narrow resources. By an act of the Estates, in 1696, it was provided that there should be a parochial school and school master in every parish of the kingdom, with a fixed salary, not under £5, 11s. 1d., nor over £11, 2s. 2d., payable by the heritors of the parish, in proportion to their property, who should have the power of drawing one-half of their tenants. The duty of locating the school was imposed on the heritors; and the appointment of the teacher and the supervision of the school were instructed to the presbyteries.

In consequence of this endowment, which was never grudged by those from whose pockets it proceeded, every parish in the kingdom, except some of those in the

large towns, was furnished with a school, in which reading, writing and arithmetic, and in some cases, classical literature were to be learned. The fees were generally for English, 1s. 6d., for Arithmetic 2s., for Latin 2s. 6d. per quarter; the poor being admitted at about two-thirds of this rate. The system thus avoided at once the disadvantage of high fees, and that of an indiscriminate gratuitous admission.

One prominent department of education in these schools was religion. The primer was prefixed to and inseparable from the catechism; and the first lessons in reading were from it. The Bible was the other text book of importance; and thus almost the only ideas obtained at school were those of religion. To these causes, so early put in force, the uncommon diffusion of pious feeling of morality, so common in Scotland may be traced.

An idea very generally prevails, that Scotland is remarkably fortunate in respect to education. She may be so in comparison with some other nations; but this is not the case in reality. In 1818 there were 942 parochial schools, attended by 54,161 children; this made only one in every 39 persons.

The state of Scotland as to elementary education in 1834 and 1835 may be thus briefly summed up. There are 1005 parish schools, being a few more than the entire number of parishes. In the Highlands, there are, besides 171 parish schools, 324 supported by the society for promoting Christian knowledge, and other charitable institutions, and 86 planted by the General Assembly. Throughout the whole country, but especially in the more populous parts and in large towns, there is a great number of private schools. In 1818, the number was 2222, instructing 106,627 children, nearly double the number in the parochial schools. It is therefore certain that the parish schools of the Establishment have fallen completely behind the population, and only accomplish in a small degree the purpose for which they were intended.

The efficiency of these means of instruction is various. In the 143 parishes of the Highlands, even after the establishment of 86 charity schools, there are about 83,000 persons who, from local circumstances, have no means of instruction within their reach. In the 132 parishes of Aberdeen, Banff, and Elgin, the average attendance at school is one-eleventh of the whole population. The average in other districts ranges from one-eleventh to one-twentieth. One parish has one-fourth of her population at school; two parishes one-fifth; four parishes one-sixth. In Edinburgh, there are no parish schools; nor till lately were schools of any kind accessible to the poor; hence large numbers of them grew up without education. In Glasgow 20,000 persons are in this condition. In Paisley, though the case was different thirty-five years ago, there are now 3000 families into which education does not enter. The proportion of the population which attends school in Glasgow is one-fourteenth; in Dundee one-fifteenth; Perth under one-fifteenth; and Aberdeen one-twentieth; Paisley Abbey parish one-twentieth.

The amount of learning generally is small. A child learns to read, and no more is often supposed to be necessary. He is hurried off to the factories, with his faculties still in a great measure dormant.

One teacher in general superintends the tuition of a large number of boys, only a few of whom can any time be deriving much benefit from his services. The period of attending is short, and the impression of school learning upon the mind is very slight. The monitorial and intellectual systems have as yet been partially adopted. The private teachers are, in most cases, women, or else men of very humble accomplishments; a result of the very slender emoluments, which range from £4 to £25, the latter sum being very rarely exceeded. The general education of Scotland is far from what it ought to be; though superior to that of England and Ireland, and of most other countries.

IRELAND.—In the dark ages, Ireland remarkable above most other countries for the number and excellence of its schools, which were resorted to by students from various parts of Europe. Under the domination of the English, as well as the peculiar state of things in the island itself, education, as well as most other public affairs was neglected or mismanaged. The Pope made a grant of the "green island," to the British monarch, from which time little prosperity has existed there. An act of Henry VIII indeed imposed on the vicar or rector of every parish the duty and cost of keeping up a parochial school, in order to instruct the natives in the English tongue. This, though confirmed by an act of William III, was never more than a dead letter. The same act forbade Catholics to keep a school under a penalty of twenty pounds and three months imprisonment. This cruel act was subsequently repealed. The people, however, were to educate their children, and maintained a number of those mean establishments called hedge schools, where a slender degree of instruction was conferred on a considerable portion of the community.

During the century between 1731 and 1831 various attempts were made by private associations, generally with the aid of government to educate the people of Ireland. Almost every one of them, however, went to wreck on the unjust principle that the religious instruction should be exclusively Protestant. The celebrated Char-

ter School Society commenced in 1731, has continued till a recent period to pay vast sums in the vain attempt to proselyte by means of education. Besides all the private contributions, the public parliamentary grants amounted to £1,105,860. The incorporated association for discountenancing vice, commenced in 1792, was the second of these societies, and made a great improvement on the first. In their schools, the Protestants learned the Church Catechism; and the Catholics were required only to read the Scriptures. In November, 1810, it numbered 119 schools, attended by 4460 Protestant, and 1369 Catholic children. In 1824, the number was 4578 Protestants, and 4368 Catholics. The London Hibernian Society, established in 1806, was less liberal in its plan, and has not, therefore, done much good among the Catholics. In 1823, it had 653 schools attended by 61,387 scholars. It had also many Sunday schools.

In 1812, the Kildare Place Society was formed under the sanction of a Parliamentary committee for the education of the Irish poor. Its grand principle was to afford education without any interference with the peculiar tenets of any. Its specified objects were to aid in the founding of new schools and the improvement of old ones, provided the principles of the society were adopted; to maintain to model schools for the exhibition of their plan, and the training of teachers and to publish moral, instructive, and entertaining books.

The society began to operate in 1817, and in 1825 had 1490 schools, attended by 132,573 scholars, two-thirds of the schools being in Ulster. The system of instruction was a combination from those of Bell, Lancaster, and Pestalozzi. The total grants from Parliament up to 1834 amounted to £200,508.

During the same recent period, something has been done for the instruction of the poor in Ireland by the Baptist Society, the Irish Society, and the Sunday School Society. The last has been particularly efficient.

From inquiries made in 1829, there were in Ireland 11,923 elementary schools, of which eight parts out of eleven were penny schools, conducted by private enterprise, and altogether unnoticed with either the clergy or charitable societies. The number of scholars in 1824 was 560,549, of whom 77,926 were Protestants, and 307,402 were Catholics; and 394,730 of the whole paid for their education. The number of masters and mistresses in 1829 was 12,520, of whom 3098 were of the established Church, 1058 Presbyterians, and 8300 Catholics. The proportion of school attendants shows better for Ireland than England; a fact attributable to the higher sense of the value of education entertained by the Irish.

Such was the state of education in Ireland, when in 1831, the government resolved to commence a national system, avoiding the real or supposed errors into which others had fallen. They omitted the Bible without notes to conciliate the Catholics. A board of superintendence was appointed by the Lord Lieutenant, consisting of the Protestant and Catholic archbishops of Dublin, a Presbyterian and a few others. As yet the scheme has been tried only as an experiment; though it has met with some success in the face of a vigorous opposition from the High Church party. The schools now in operation afford the benefits of education to about 140,000 children. The members of the board conduct the business in perfect harmony. The religious part of education is kept separate from the literary, and is entirely under the control of the various denominations of clergy. One day of the week, besides Sunday, is set apart for religious instruction, which is conducted by such pastors as are approved of by the parents or guardians of the children.

FRANCE.—Previous to the first revolution there were various kinds of schools in which persons were prepared for the higher seminaries. The Government did nothing for the education of the people at large, and the clergy, though possessing so large a part of the property of France, and having the special instruction of the people under their care, left them in utter ignorance. Some elementary schools were supported here and there, but the instructions were scanty and behind the age. Napoleon established several military schools, and others for instructions in trades and arts, and an imperial university was created to have the supreme direction of instruction in France. But the plan was on a military principle and did not succeed, so far as primary or elementary education was concerned.

Since 1815, public instruction has been a department of state business, being intrusted to a train of officers, the chief of whom, under the title of Minister of Public Instruction, has a seat in the cabinet. Normal schools have been established all over France for the preparation of teachers, according to a regular system.

In 1815, there were 22,348 elementary schools, educating 737,369 pupils. In 1819 the number of pupils was 1,130,000, or one for every twenty-five of the population. In 1828, there were 1,500,000, or one-twentieth of the population. The number of the educated, however, is progressing at a more rapid rate than the population; and the French government is not only making liberal grants for schools, but is about to establish a state system which shall provide for the whole people. It has been calculated that a third part of the population, the population being greater in the south than

in the north, are unable to read or write. **SPAIN.**—There are few establishments in Spain for the diffusion of the first rudiments in knowledge. The lower classes seldom learn to read and write; the higher are seldom instructed in any thing but reading, writing, and arithmetic. Such as are intended for the learned professions attend a Latin school three or four years. Those who go to the University are taught little else than the logic and natural philosophy of Aristotle and the theology of Aquinas. If a Spaniard therefore learn any thing like true knowledge, he must leave his country to acquire it. Portugal is in a similar condition. And the same may be said of South America and Mexico, whose inhabitants carry with them the usages of their Fatherlands with little or no variation. The Spaniards are among the most ignorant and bigoted people of Europe. Several generations must pass away, and numerous and important changes be effected, before we can expect that the great body of the Spaniards and Portuguese, and their colonial descendants in America, can become enlightened and moralized.

DENMARK AND THE NETHERLANDS.—Denmark and Holland strive to keep pace with Germany. In the former country there have been normal schools for the last forty years, and the monitorial system has been introduced and met with surprising success. In Holland one-fifth of the population is stated to be at school, and the elementary seminaries are stated to be under a good organization. In Belgium, education is too much in the hands of the priests to be in a good condition.

SWITZERLAND.—In the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, elementary education is in a flourishing state, the schools have from one-sixth to one-tenth in attendance. In the Catholic cantons, education is not so prosperous, and is chiefly in the hands of the clergy. Education is partly supported and superintended by the various local governments; and in several cantons there are public institutions for the training of teachers.

NORWAY.—In this country there are public schools, of which each parish has one, the teacher being appointed by the bishops of the respective dioceses. Children are compelled by law to attend these schools, in which they are instructed in reading, combined with intellectual exercises, religion, Bible history, singing, arithmetic and writing. The period of attendance is from seven years till the time of confirmation, which generally takes place at about sixteen or seventeen. Parents who withdraw their children before that period are liable to a fine. The teachers are partly supported by a fixed piece of land, and partly by a tax.

SWEDEN.—The schools are much on the same footing as they were in the seventeenth century among the German Protestants. The Protestant clergy in the possession of the Church property of their Catholic predecessors, show little disposition to apply a part of it to the public instruction; and the Government is too poor and too jealous to admit improvements from foreign countries.

POLAND.—This country is ravaged by Russia, and education receives little attention or support.

RUSSIA.—According to the decrees of the Emperor Alexander, schools for the circles, districts, and parishes, were to be instituted throughout the empire. The circle schools exist at present on the pattern of the German gymnasia in most of the capital cities of the government. The district schools are found in some towns of the middling size. The parish schools exist only in a very few villages. The greatest and best part of this plan remains as yet unexecuted. Several ages will be requisite, before the half civilized inhabitants of Russia will be raised from the mental debasement in which they have been so long plunged.

The remainder of the topic will be given next week.

Father O'Flynn and his Congregation.

Father Francis O'Flynn, or, as he was generally called by his parishioners, 'Father Frank,' was the choicest specimen you could desire of a jolly, quiet-going, easy-going, Irish country priest of the old school. His parish lay near a small town in the eastern part of the county Cork, and for forty-five years he lived among his flock, performing all the duties of his office, and taking his dues (when he got them) with never tiring good humor. But age, that spares not priest nor laymen, had stolen upon Father Frank, and he gradually relinquished to his younger curates the task of preaching, till at length his sermons dwindled down to two in the year—one at Christmas, and the other at Easter, at which times his clerical dues were about coming in. In one of these memorable occasions that I first chanced to hear Father Frank address his congregation. I have him now before my mind's eye, as he then appeared; a stout, middle-sized man, with ample shoulders, enveloped in a coat of superfine black, and substantial legs encased in long straight boots, reaching to the knee. His forehead, and the upper part of his head, were bald; but the use of hair powder gave a fine effect to his massive, but good-humored features, that glowed with the rich tint of a hale old age. A bunch of large gold seals, depending from a massive jack-chain of the same metal, oscillated with becoming dignity from the lower verge of his waistcoat, over the goodly promise

of his 'fair round belly.' Glancing his half-closed, but piercing eye, round his auditory, as if calculating the contents of every pocket present, he commenced his address as follows:

"Well, my good people, I suppose ye know that to-morrow will be the pattern of Saint Finian, and no doubt ye'll all be for going to the blessed well to say your *podheerens*; but I'll go bail there's few of you ever heard the reason why the water of that well won't raise a lather, or wash any thing clean, though you were to put all the soap in Cork into it. Well, pay attention, and I'll tell you.—Mrs. Delany, can't you keep your child quiet while I am speaking?"

"It happened a long while ago, that St. Finian, a holy and devout Christian, lived all alone, conveniently to the well; there he was to be found ever and always praying and reading his breviary upon a cowl'd stone that lay beside it. Unluckily enough, there lived also in the neighborhood a *callicien* called Moriceen, and this Moriceen had a fashion of coming down to the well every morning, at sunrise, to wash her legs and feet; and, by all accounts, you couldn't meet a whiter or a shapelier pair from this to Bantry. Saint Finian, however, was so distracted in his heavenly meditations, poor man! that he never once looked at them, but kept his eyes fast on his holy books, while Moriceen was rubbing and leathering away, till the legs used to look like two beautiful pieces of alabaster in the clear water. Matters went on this way some time, Moriceen coming regular to the well, till one fine morning, as she stepped into the water she struck her foot against a stone and cut it.

"Oh! Millia murder! What'll I do?" cried the *callicien*, in the pitifulest voice you ever heard.

"What's the matter?" said Saint Finian.

"I've cut my foot again this misfortunate stone," says she, making answer.

Then Saint Finian lifted up his eyes from his blessed book, and he saw Moriceen's legs and feet.

"Oh! Moriceen?" says he, after looking awhile at them, "what white legs you have got!"

"Have I?" says she, laughing, "and how do you know that?"

"Immediately the Saint remembered himself and being full of remorse and contrition for his fault, he laid his commands upon the well, that its water should never wash any thing white again,—and, as I mentioned before, all the soap in Ireland wouldn't raise a lather on it since. Now that's the true history of Saint Finian's blessed well; and I hope and trust it will be a saysonable and premonitory lesson to all the young men that hears me, not to fall into the vainish sin of admiring the white legs of the girls."

As soon as his reverence paused, a buzz of admiration ran through the chapel, accompanied by that peculiar rabid noise made by the lower class of an Irish Roman Catholic congregation, when their feelings of awe, astonishment, or piety are excited by the preacher.

Father Frank having taken breath, and wiped his forehead, resumed his address.

"I'm going to change my subject now, and I expect attention. Shawn Barry!—Where's Shawn Barry?"

"Here, your Reverence," replied a voice from the depth of the crowd.

"Come up here, Shawn; till I examine you about your Catechism and doctrines."

A rough-headed fellow elbowed his way slowly through the congregation, and moulding his old hat into a thousand grotesque shapes, between his huge palms, presented himself before his pastor, with very much the air of a puzzled philosopher.

"Well, Shawn, my boy, do you know what is the meaning of Faith?"

"Parfely, your Reverence," replied the fellow, with a knowing grin. "Faith means when Paddy Hogan gives me credit for half-a-pint of the best."

"Get out of my sight, you ondacent vagabond; you're a disgrace to my flock.—Here, you Tom McGawley, what's Charity?"

"Being a process-server, your Reverence," replied Tom promptly.

"Oh! blessed saints! how I'm persecuted with ye, root and branch. Jim Houlihan, I'm looking at you, there, behind Peggy Callahan's cloak; come up here, you banging bone siccereen, and tell me what is the Last Day?"

"I didn't come to that yet, sir," replied Jim scratching his head.

"I wouldn't fear you, you Boethoon.—Well, listen, and I'll tell you. It's the day when you'll all have to settle your accounts, and I'm thinking there'll be a heavy score against some of you."

"When that day comes, I'll walk up to Heaven and rap at the bell door. Then St. Father, who will be takin' a nap after dinner in his arm-chair inside, and not liking to be disturbed, will call out mighty surly: 'Who's there?'"

"It's I, my lord, I'll make answer."

"Ay course he'll know my voice, and jumping up like a creaket, he'll open the door as wide as the hinges will let it, and say quite politely—"

"I am proud to see you here, Father Frank. Walk in, if you please."

Upon that, I'll scrape my feet, and walk in, and then St. Father will say again—"

"Well, Father Frank, what have you got to say for yourself? Did you look well after your flock? and mind to have them all christened, and married, and buried, according to the rites of our holy church?"

"Now, good people, I've been forty-five years amongst you, and didn't I christen every mother's soul of you?"

"Congregation.—You did,—you did,—your Reverence."

"Father Frank.—Well, and didn't I bury the most of you, too?"

"Congregation.—You did, your Reverence."

"Father Frank.—And didn't I do my best to get decent matches for all your little girls? And didn't I get good wives for all the well-behaved boys in my parish?—Why don't you speak up, Mick Donovan?"

"Father Frank.—Well, that's settled;—but then St. Father will say—Father Frank, says he, 'you're a proper man; but how did your flock have to you?—did they pay your dues regularly?'"

"Ah! good christians how shall I answer that question?—Put it in my power to say something good

of you; don't be ashamed to come up and pay your priest's dues.—Come, make a lane there, and let ye all come up with contrite hearts and open hands. Tim Delany!—make way for Tim; how much will you give, Tim?"

"Tim.—I'll not be worse than another, your Reverence. I'll give a crown."

"Father Frank.—Thank you, Timothy; the deacent drop is in you. Keep a bare, there!—say of me that I wasn't a crown, or half-a-crown, don't be bashful of coming up with your leg or your testar."

And then Father Frank went on encouraging and wheedling his flock to pay up his dues, until he had gone through his entire congregation, when I left the chapel, highly amused at the characteristic scenes I had witnessed.

The Cardinal, the Minister and the Physician.

FROM THE FRENCH.

Early one delightful morning in April, a young man stopped at the door of a little road-side inn, situated near Paris. In person he was tall and slim, his large black eyes were full of fire, while his countenance was open and agreeable. On his entrance he accosted the landlady with "Give me some breakfast, my fair hostess; I have been walking since day-break, and am very hungry." As he was speaking there came in another traveller, more youthful in appearance than the first. Like him he was on foot, and seemed much fatigued. He was small in stature, with a complexion of red and white; and possessed the voice and hands of a young girl. "Madam," said he, with great timidity, "give me some breakfast, if you please." At these words, the first comer advanced toward him, saying, "Monsieur, let us breakfast together, you are travelling on foot, so am I; you are going to Paris, so am I. Let us sit at the same table, drink to each other's health, then enter Paris together, shake hands and separate; do you agree?" The modest stranger, still with the same tone of voice, replied, "you honor me much, sir, and I consent with great pleasure." The meal was soon ready, and they sat down, their plates and glasses were filled, when a third traveller passed the window, and looked in. "his last was dark and rather stout, his features were grave and composed, his fine forehead was shaded with long waving curls of brown hair. The manner of this comer was very different from the vivacity of the first stranger or the timidity of the second. "Gentlemen," cried he to the others, "will you not wait for a poor fellow like me? but I fancy I am arrived just in time, a little later, and must have contented myself with the fragments of that magnificent smoking *onlette* I see." As he concluded, the first traveller, with his ready *saie*, held out his hand and glass through the window, which the last visitor accepted, and then, entering the inn, placed himself at the end of the table, the bashful youth being in the middle, apparently astonished that so many pleasant acquaintances should be picked up on the road to Paris. Their repast was soon finished, and they pursued their journey. They were all travelling the same road, and they walked together. At last they arrived at the barrier of Paris—they stopped by mutual consent. Till then conversation had been light and cheerful, but they were now grave and pensive—it was once more the first traveller who broke silence.

"My name," said he, "is Portal; I am going to Paris, with the intention of becoming a member of the Academy of Science, and first physician to the King."

"And I," said he of the brown hair, "am going to Paris to become advocate general." They waited for the modest stranger to speak.

"And I," he answered, with his soft voice and air of timidity—"I visit Paris to become a member of the French academy, and cardinal."

"Then," said the others, gravely, "making off their hats, "it is you my lord, who must pass first."

At that moment the clocks of a neighboring church struck, and they entered Paris. Let us follow the fate of those three young men. The last mentioned became the Abbe Maury, an eloquent orator, member of the French Academy, and cardinal. He died honored and esteemed.

The other was Count Treillard, minister of state, and friend of the emperor; he is still living and has not forgotten his first entry into Paris.

The tall vivacious Portal, he became the glory of his profession, member of the Academy, professor,—he was all except physician to the King. Louis XVI perished on the scaffold while Portal was yet a student. The republic had no physician, the emperor had one who was his friend, besides Portal would be attendant on a King, and he was. He became principal physician to Louis XVII. Portal died lately.

At the annual dinner of the Southwest Middlesex Agricultural Association, held on Friday last at the Adam and Eve Inn, Hayes, near Exbridge, Mr. H. Pownall, of Spring Grove House, while eulogizing the farmers of Middlesex, on their high degree of intelligence and practical judgment, produced a head of corn, which he said had been grown in the neighborhood of his residence, and as a proof of their meriting the eulogy he had passed upon them stated that he had that day shown the head of corn to Mr. Sherborn, of Bodfont, who on examining it, immediately said it was Egyptian corn, which Mr. Pownall had grown from grain found within the covering of an Egyptian mummy, within which it had been enclosed for upwards of 2000 years, a statement which produced a great sensation throughout the association.—*London Paper.*