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THE

CHURCHMAN

JUNE, 1884.

ART. I.—CHURCH MIDDLE-CLASS EDUCATION.

THE establishment, in the course of last year, of the Church Schools Company, Limited, constitutes the first attempt which has been made by the present generation of Churchmen collectively, to assert for our Church that place with respect to middle-class education which she already holds in reference both to upper and to elementary education; or rather, to win back for her that vantage-ground which she formerly held in regard to it no less than in regard to the education of the classes above and below. The loss of this vantage-ground has been due to two causes—first, the undenominationalizing and secularizing, under the Endowed Schools Act of 1869, of the grammar and other endowed schools which had previously been almost exclusively in connection with the Church of England; and secondly, the large increase in number of the middle classes, and their concentration in new localities, so that the ancient foundations, even if they had retained a distinctive Church character, would have been insufficient to accommodate their children, and, in many cases, would have been inaccessible to them. Until within the last few months all that had been done on the part of our Church to supply the want which had thus sprung up, was represented by a few isolated enterprises on the part of some energetic and zealous individuals. The subject of elementary education, from its more universal applicability, and from the fact that it forced itself upon our attention and touched our pockets whether we wished it or not, had, in fact, almost exclusively engrossed our attention.

It is remarkable that, in that other era of great religious and intellectual activity with which the present century has sometimes been compared—I mean the period of the Reformation—the exact reverse of this was the case. Elementary educa-

tion was then almost entirely ignored; but it is from the sixteenth century that the majority of the 782 schools, containing an aggregate of 36,874 scholars—of whom 9,279 were boarders, and the rest day pupils—which were dealt with by the Endowed Schools Act, 1869, date their origin. Many of them, as is well known, were founded out of the property of the dissolved monasteries; but many others owe their establishment to private munificence. The number in existence at the accession of Henry VIII. seems to have been fifty-three. During his reign sixty-three were founded, and fifty-one more during the short reign which followed. Nineteen date from the reign of Mary, and 136 from that of Elizabeth. Between her death and the Revolution, 286 more were established. Each of the following five reigns, differing widely as they did in duration, yet witnessed the addition of very nearly the same number, thirty, to the list of our endowed middle-class schools, while exactly the same number more have been established since the reign of George III. It thus appears that the rate at which they were founded has been steadily and rapidly declining during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, notwithstanding the continuous growth of the population whom the foundation of such schools would have benefited. There were, no doubt, two causes which, among others, largely conduced to this decline. The legal restraint which was imposed in 1736 on the gift by will, of land, or of money to be laid out on land, for charitable purposes, put a stop to the practice of providing for the foundation of a grammar school by will, which had previously been resorted to by persons who, though not willing to diminish their property for the purpose during their lifetime, were quite ready to devote a portion of it to the object in question, at the expense of their heirs, after their death. And the enactment which was passed at the beginning of Queen Anne's reign against the alienation of Crown lands, put a stop for the future to Royal foundations, to which many of the previous schools owed their existence. It would be easy to suggest other causes which have contributed to the same result; and at any rate the fact is clear, that while our middle-class population has been growing year by year, there has not been a corresponding augmentation in the number of schools for their children.

Meanwhile, however, the subject of elementary education had been gradually receiving increased attention. Sunday schools had been started towards the close of the last century. The National Society for the Education of the Poor was established in 1811, and the corresponding Nonconformist association, the British and Foreign Schools Society, was founded about the same time. The State first intervened in the matter in 1834,

when a small grant was made by Parliament to aid in building school-houses in connection with the two societies; and from 1839 onwards Parliamentary grants in support of elementary schools have been annually distributed, under the superintendence of a committee of the Privy Council specially appointed to deal with the matter. The working of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, was admirably discussed in THE CHURCHMAN of January last. Further reference to it here would be out of place; but I shall have occasion to allude to it later on, as a warning beacon with regard to middle-class education.

To return now to this, which is the subject immediately before us. In the decade following that in which the impetus was given to the education of the poor by the bestowal upon it of systematic State aid, the education of our middle classes began to occupy the attention, not of the community at large, but of one energetic individual, the Rev. N. Woodard, Canon of Manchester. About the year 1849 he propounded the plan, which has since been gradually developed, of a number of colleges, or societies, which should be legally incorporated, and whose work should be to open and carry on middle-class schools throughout the country, in connection with the Church of England. These schools were to be of three grades; the upper for the sons of gentlemen preparing for the universities, the intermediate grade for the sons of professional men of limited means, farmers and tradesmen, and the lower for the sons of parents of small means, who yet desired to give their children something above a mere elementary education. The first-grade schools were to be remunerative, and the second and third self-supporting; but contributions were sought from the public for providing the buildings, just as in former days the structures of the schools now appropriated to the upper classes had been erected by private munificence. In accordance with this plan the whole of England has been mapped out into five educational districts, with the intention of establishing in each a collegiate body to provide and carry on schools within its area. Each college is to be connected with the other four, and is to consist of a provost and twenty-four seniors, and the same number of junior fellows. Of the senior fellows half are to be resident and engaged in educational work, while the other half are to be non-resident and to consist of influential clergymen and laymen. The junior fellows are to engage directly in teaching, in which they are to be assisted by a body of associates in course of training for ordination and for the profession of schoolmasters. Schools of the three grades are to be provided in each district, either by the establishment of new or the affiliation of existing schools;

and the scheme has been extended to include similar schools for girls. At present the furthest development of these schools has been attained in the diocese of Chichester, in which Canon Woodard made a commencement, more than thirty years ago, by turning his own house at Shoreham into a school. There are now schools of all the three grades in full operation under the collegiate body of SS. Mary and Nicholas, Lancing, of which Canon Woodard is the Provost. At St. Nicholas College, Lancing, some 200 boys are being educated, at an annual cost of eighty guineas. At St. John's College, Hurstpierpoint, there is accommodation for 300 boarders, and the annual charge is thirty-five guineas; while at St. Saviour's, Ardingly, where the charge is fifteen guineas, there are 470 scholars. There is, besides, an associated school for the sons of gentlemen at St. Leonards, and a school for girls at Bognor, at which the annual charge is forty-five guineas. The second of the five colleges has been founded in the diocese of Lichfield, for the Midland district, under the title of the Society of SS. Mary and John, of which Canon Lowe is Provost. The upper-grade school has not yet been founded, but a middle school has been provided at Denstone, with accommodation for 300 boys, and a lower school at Ellesmere, which is designed ultimately to hold 500. For girls there have been started a middle school, and also a lower school, at Abbot's Bromley. Operations have been commenced in the West of England by the purchase of a school at Taunton, offering accommodation to 120 boarders.

It is a melancholy reflection that the usefulness of this scheme of the "Woodard Schools," so grandly conceived, and in course of such successful practical development, should be marred by the taint of Ritualism by which to a great extent it is pervaded. But such is undeniably the case; and, the fact being so, the establishment of these schools, instead of rendering further efforts for the establishment of Church middle-class schools unnecessary, has furnished an additional cogent reason in favour of such efforts on the part of all who would regard it as a calamity that the Church teaching of the young of our middle-class population should, in the future, be exclusively of an extreme High Church type. The necessity of doing something to avert this calamity has not been overlooked; and the foundation of Trent College, and of the South-Eastern College at Ramsgate, has been the result of isolated attempts to establish middle-class schools in which the religious teaching, while strictly that of the Church of England, should be distinctly Protestant in its character. But Evangelical Churchmen have not been prevailed upon, as a body, to come forward and support a general scheme which should be the counterpart of, and an antidote to, the scheme initiated by

Canon Woodard. So far from this, the South-Eastern College itself still urgently requires for its completion the sum of £9,000. This failure on their part has not been from want of solicitation. About fourteen years ago the subject of the Woodard Schools was discussed at a Conference of the Church Association, and a committee was appointed to take it into consideration. This committee recommended that a central fund of £25,000 should be formed, from which grants should be made of £5,000 each to aid the foundation of five large schools in places where local committees could be formed to collect the remaining necessary funds, and to superintend the establishment and carrying on of such schools. Promises for the whole of the central fund were soon obtained, and part of it was actually paid up; but the committee, though they applied to different parts of the country, were unable to find any place willing to form the required local committee, and to contribute the balance of the necessary funds for a school. Nothing, therefore, remained but to abandon the scheme and to return to the donors the contributions which had been actually paid. Two years ago the subject was again taken up, and a drawing-room meeting was held in Queen's Gate, South Kensington, at which a statement was made by the Dean of Canterbury with reference to the educational advantages offered to the middle classes by the Woodard Schools, and the importance of establishing some similar system, based upon the Evangelical principles of the Church of England. This meeting cannot be pronounced to have been a success. The only fresh move in the direction aimed at by its promoters, which has taken place since it was held, has been the establishment of the Dean Close Memorial Fund for the foundation of one or two isolated schools of the desired type.

Meantime, however, a move in a new direction was in contemplation, such as should command the sympathies and enlist the co-operation of Churchmen of all sections alike. The idea of an association formed on a commercial basis, as a company with limited liability, was not altogether new. Besides the precedent of Canon Brereton's County Schools, it had been tried and found successful in the case of the Girls' Public Day Schools Company, founded in 1872; and there were also two other educational companies in the field—the Boys' Public Day School Company, established in the early part of last year, and a company for giving a Church education to girls, founded by Canon Holland. The latter of these, however, was only a small company, its operations being confined to the maintenance of two schools in the West-end of the metropolis, one in Baker Street and the other in Coleshill Street. It was now proposed to form a company which should establish for

boys and girls above the class attending elementary schools, schools of various grades in which a general education should be given in accordance with the principles of the Church of England, at a moderate cost. The idea appears to have been first formally mooted in the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences, in March, 1883, when a resolution was passed that the conferences should be invited to discuss the expediency of taking further steps to extend and promote the establishment and efficiency of Church of England schools for boys and girls of the middle class, including especially within such extension those now comprised in the higher grade of primary schools. A more practical step than merely inviting the different diocesan conferences to discuss the question, was at the same time taken. Arrangements were made for an early meeting of gentlemen interested in the subject, with a view to consider the feasibility of initiating a comprehensive scheme for developing Church middle-class education. The meeting was held, and the outcome of it was the Church Schools Company, Limited, which was formally incorporated on the 12th of July, 1883, with a nominal capital of £100,000 in £5 shares, and with its registered office at 2, Dean's Yard, Westminster, where all information respecting it can be obtained. The object of the Company, as stated in its Memorandum of Association, is "to provide in England and Wales, by the establishment and maintenance of schools, a liberal, practical, and general education upon moderate terms, for boys and girls of all classes above those ordinarily attending public elementary schools, such education to include religious instruction in the doctrine and duties of Christianity, as the same are taught by the Church of England," and "to assist upon such terms as the Council may think fit, and otherwise to promote the establishment and maintenance of schools conducted or to be conducted on the same principles as those on which the schools of the Company are conducted."

The Archbishop of Canterbury entered warmly into the scheme from the first, becoming a shareholder to the amount of £1,000, and on the 20th of July, immediately after the formation of the Company, presided at a meeting in furtherance of it at Willis's Rooms. His Grace, in bringing the subject before the meeting, insisted on the need which existed, and contended that the proposed mode of meeting it was the best which could be adopted. While the upper classes had their magnificent ancient schools, and the poor were amply provided for in the matter of education, partly by voluntary effort, partly out of the rates, and partly out of the Imperial Exchequer, provision for the education of the middle classes was deplorably deficient. In many places farmers and shopkeepers cannot

procure for their children as good an education as their labourers and *employés* obtain. The best plan for supplying the deficiency would be the establishment of Church day-schools—schools in which there should be real religious teaching according to the formularies and doctrines of the Church of England, but in which, nevertheless, the parents should have a right to demand the withholding of religious instruction, so that the schools should not be closed to the children of persons who objected to their offspring being instructed in those formularies and doctrines. The Archbishop dwelt strongly upon the importance of preserving this right, and it is understood that he made the recognition of it a condition of his joining the Company. His views on the subject, and the position taken by the Church Schools Company in regard to it, were, however, speedily challenged by Archdeacon Denison. In a letter to the Archbishop, written in that style of which he is a master, and published as a pamphlet under the title of "The School in England, Century XIX.," he vigorously denounced the so-called "conscience clause," and declared that a school in which it was recognised and acted upon could not, in the nature of the case, be a school on the principles of the Church of England. As the controversy on this point is the only discordant note in the otherwise unanimous chorus of approval which has greeted the formation of the Company, it will be well to dwell upon it at some little length.

The position taken up by the Company with regard to it is defined by one of the Articles of Association, which runs as follows :

BYE-LAWS.

78.—The Council shall have power to make, and afterwards to vary, such regulations and bye-laws for the conduct of the schools and general affairs of the Company, as they may from time to time deem necessary ; provided that they do not contravene any of the provisions herein contained, or vary the following standing rules of the Company :

(*a.*) That in all schools set up or assisted by the Company, instruction shall be given in the doctrine and duties of Christianity, as taught by the Church of England, but with liberty to the parent or guardian of, or person liable to maintain or having the actual custody of, any day scholar, by notice, in writing, addressed to the head-master or mistress of the school, to withdraw such scholar from attendance at prayer or religious worship, or from any lesson or series of lessons on a religious subject.

(*b.*) That all head-masters or mistresses of such schools shall be members of the Church of England.

(*c.*) That all assistant-masters or mistresses in such schools shall be members of the Church of England, except in cases specially sanctioned by the Council.

It is to be observed, in the first place, that the right of withdrawal from religious education does not apply to boarders, but is strictly confined to the case of day scholars ; and, in the

next place, that, even as regards day scholars, the right, being inserted in the Articles of Association, and not in the Memorandum of Association of the Company, is not absolutely unalterable. Had it been stipulated for in the Memorandum, it could not have been cancelled without breaking up the Company; but the Articles of Association are always capable of alteration, if the alteration is carried by a majority of three-fourths of the shareholders who are present and vote, either in person or by proxy, at a meeting specially summoned for the purpose of considering it, and is confirmed by a simple majority at a subsequent meeting of shareholders held within a month of the other. If, therefore, the Archdeacon of Taunton were to join the Company, and could persuade a sufficient preponderance of shareholders to adopt his views on the subject, he might effect a reversal of its policy. He prefers, however, to stand aloof and to take up a hostile and condemnatory attitude, instead of making the attempt. He is probably perfectly conscious that any such attempt would be a failure. Much as they might desire that no reason subsisted for importing the principle of a "conscience clause," the great bulk of Churchmen of every section recognise the expediency of adopting it under present circumstances. To discard it would not only imperil the financial success of the undertaking—a comparatively unimportant consideration—but would also impair the amount of good which the Company may be expected to produce. The Archbishop, in his speech at the meeting to which we have alluded, reminded his audience that we have a venerable and successful precedent for its adoption. One important way in which the Church made such progress in the first ages of our era, was that the early Fathers, many of whom taught rhetoric, never dreamt of saying that no disciple should cross their doors to learn rhetoric, who would not also submit to direct instruction in the doctrines of Christianity. It would have been a short-sighted policy if they had done so; and their adoption of a more liberal line of conduct met with its reward in the consequences which resulted from it. The "conscience clause" will probably be more largely taken advantage of by parents of the class for which the Company's schools are intended, than it has been in the elementary schools. At the same time there can be little doubt that its retention will not, upon the whole, impair either the Christian or the Church of England influence of the movement, while it will materially contribute to give that breadth and nationality to the Company's operations which the promoters from the first designed. For the fact must never be overlooked that it is not intended to plant the new schools as competing institutions in places where other middle-class schools, whether on a Church of

England, Dissenting, or secular basis, already exist of a sufficient size and quality to meet the wants of the locality. The Company will only step in where there is an acknowledged deficiency in the provision for middle-class education. In such places it is evident that the existence of the right of withdrawal from religious instruction will render its supply of the deficiency far more complete and effectual. The deficiency will, in fact, be supplied for all, and not merely for children whose parents are willing that they should receive definite Church of England instruction of a type in accordance with the particular views of the head-master or head-mistress who happens to have been appointed to the school in the district. The existence of the Company's schools will, therefore, under the present arrangement, help to form a barrier against the encroachments by School Boards on the domain of middle-class education, and against any other scheme for bringing that education under State control.

If this should prove to be the only result of the establishment of the Company, it could not be hereafter said that the labours of its promoters had been in vain. I have already referred to Mr. Stanley Leighton's review of the results of the Elementary Education Acts in the January number of this magazine. No one can rise from a perusal of that review without the conviction that our present system of elementary education under School Boards and the Education Department is in many respects a failure, and that the effects of its extension into the domain of secondary education would be simply disastrous. In the February number of the *National Review* will be found an equally disheartening account, by Mr. Frederic Pincott, of the results of thirty years' treatment by the State of the educational problem in India. The two papers together furnish strong testimony in corroboration of Dr. J. H. Rigg's valuable article in the *London Quarterly Review* for January last, on "National Education at Home and Abroad." The fact that this article comes from the pen of a leading Nonconformist minister, lends to it all the more weight as a protest against the universal State-regulated secular system of education which some of the doctrinaire Radicals of the present day would gladly see established in our midst. Dr. Rigg discusses the methods and results of education in Germany, France, and the United States, and points out the differences and contrasts which exist in the modes in which the subject is dealt with on the two sides of the Atlantic. He shows that the State-organized secondary education which has prevailed in France for upwards of half a century is a failure, and strongly deprecates any experiment of the kind being made in this country. A perfectly sufficient and far preferable

alternative is, in his opinion, furnished on this side of the Channel by our grammar schools and endowed schools, and our many good private schools, and by the prospect which the new Companies hold out of supplying all inadequacy in the provision made by the existing institutions. It may be observed, in passing, that in his allusion to the Church Schools Company, Dr. Rigg has fallen into the curious error of supposing that its operations are to be confined to the education of boys. While it has been formed with a view to establish seminaries for children of both sexes, it will probably, as a matter of fact, number upon its roll more girls' schools than boys' schools, the deficiency in the present supply of the former being greater than in the case of the latter.

It remains to mention some few details respecting the scope and intentions of the Company, and the ventures in which it has already embarked; which latter, however, owing to the short period of its existence are naturally but few in number. As I have already mentioned, the nominal capital of the Company is £100,000 in shares of £5 each. Of this, £41,460 had been subscribed up to the end of April, partly in fully paid-up shares and partly in shares of which £1 only is at present paid up. As many of the schools will be conducted in hired buildings, involving a comparatively small outlay of capital; and as, where land is bought and schools built, additional capital can, if it is thought expedient, be raised by mortgaging them, the nominal capital when actually subscribed and called up will suffice for carrying on very extensive operations. An increase of it will always be possible hereafter, if a further development of the work is required. The primary object of the Company is the establishment of day-schools, which not only are more urgently called for than boarding-schools, but also can be started with a less outlay of capital and at a smaller pecuniary risk. Schools of various grades are contemplated, with fees ranging from £4 to £15 per annum, according to the character and wants of the places in which they are founded. In the boarding-schools which may ultimately be established, the probable scale of the yearly fees will be from £25 to £50.

The scheme is intended to be in no sense eleemosynary. The Company has been founded with the avowed intention of paying a dividend of four or five per cent. to its shareholders; and, though this of course cannot be expected during the first year or two of its existence, it will not be considered by its promoters to be a success unless it ultimately does so. As a means of ensuring, as far as possible, that a school shall not be established in a locality where it is not wanted, or where it would not be likely to prove a financial success, the Company

require as a rule that before they decide on establishing any school, shares in the Company shall be taken up in the neighbourhood to an amount representing a considerable proportion of the capital required for starting it. This course has the additional advantage of enlisting from the outset a local interest in the particular school, as well as in the Company at large —an interest which is further ensured and maintained by the plan of appointing a local committee to watch over the well-being of each school, under the control, of course, of the Council of the Company. This body answers to the board of directors in ordinary commercial undertakings, and has the general management of the Company's affairs. Besides determining where schools shall be established, it has in its hands the appointment and dismissal of the head-master and head-mistress of every school; and though, subject to regulations by the council, the head of that school has the power of appointing his or her assistant-masters or mistresses, yet the power of dismissing these at any time is reserved to the council. It is evident, therefore, that, if not the actual success or failure of the Company, at any rate the tone which pervades its operations depends, humanly speaking, on the constitution of the council and on the degree of wisdom which prevails in its deliberations.

The Articles of Association provide that it shall consist of not less than twelve, nor more than twenty-four persons, being members of the Church of England, and shareholders of the Company. At every annual general meeting one-fourth, or the number nearest to one-fourth, of the whole body are to retire from office by rotation, and their places are to be filled up by election; the retiring members, however, being eligible for re-election. In voting for members of the council, as upon other questions which may be submitted to the shareholders, every member of the Company has one vote for every share up to ten, an additional vote for every five shares beyond the first ten up to one hundred, and an additional vote for every ten shares beyond the first hundred; and votes may be given by proxy. Ladies are admissible to seats on the council; and among the four who are at present upon it, the names of Miss Beale and Miss Buss are a sufficient guarantee that the girls in the Company's schools will have the advantage of their training being directed by experienced educationalists of their own sex. Endeavours have been made to secure that all sections of the Church shall be adequately represented on the council. The idea of conducting the operations of the Company upon party lines has not for a moment been entertained, and let us trust that it never will. The list of the shareholders contains Churchmen of all opinions; and any attempt by a member of

the council to work the Company otherwise than in a manner satisfactory to the whole body would, it may be hoped, cost him his seat when it became vacant in rotation and he presented himself to a general meeting for re-election. That masters or mistresses in particular schools of the Company should have decided religious views in one direction or another is, of course, inevitable; but it must be remembered that a Church of England parent who desires to avail himself of one of such schools for his children, but objects to the tone of the religious teaching given in it, can take advantage of the "right of withdrawal" secured to him by the regulations of the Company, no less than can a Dissenting or Jewish parent.

Up to the 12th of April last, when the Company completed the ninth month of its existence, it had founded four schools: three for girls, at Surbiton, Durham, and Sunderland; and one for boys in the City of London College Buildings, in Moorfields—a building readily accessible by train from all parts of the metropolis. Of these, however, only the establishment at Surbiton, which had been started in January, was actually in working order at the date in question. The other three have been opened since Easter. In addition to the above, a high-school for girls at Bury St. Edmunds and a middle-class school for girls at Brighton have already been decided on; and negotiations are in progress for the establishment of other institutions, of which it is hoped that the majority, if not all, will be started in the course of the present summer. The enterprises thus already undertaken or now in contemplation bear a very small proportion to those in which the council has been solicited to engage. Pressing applications for the foundation of schools have come from all parts of the country, showing the need of them that everywhere exists. The council, however, have deemed it wise, at any rate at first starting, to err, if at all, in the direction of excess of caution, and not to embark the Company in any scheme which did not hold out good prospect of being a financial success. But really sound and safe opportunities of erecting schools are opening up in all directions; and the power of the Company to take advantage of them will only be limited by the funds entrusted to its disposal. It is for Churchmen as a body to decide whether they will come forward, and by subscribing the remainder of the Company's capital enable it to step in and occupy these openings, or whether they will permit some other religious or non-religious body to come in beforehand, and so lose for the Church of England an opportunity which may never again recur of securing a vantage-ground of influence over the education of the middle-class youth of our country.

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