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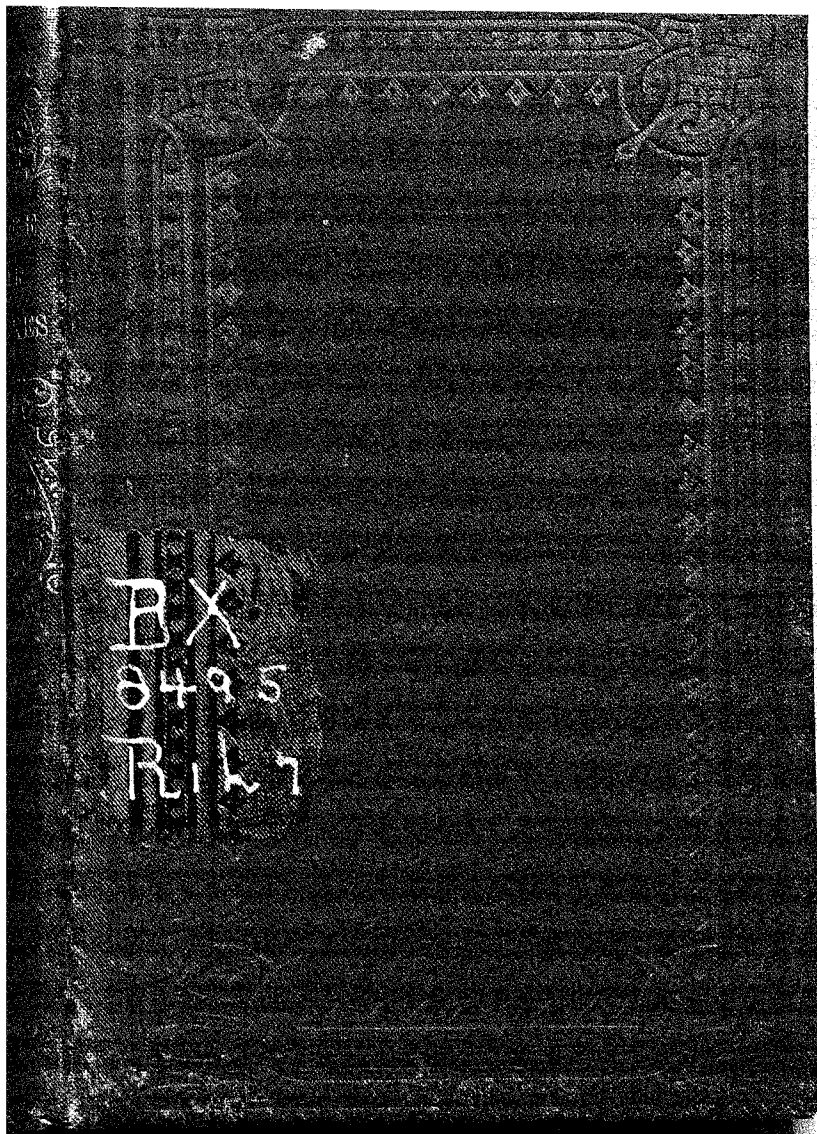
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SKETCH OF THE LIFE
OF
ROBERT RAIKES, ESQ.,

AND OF THE
HISTORY OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

BY W. F. LLOYD.

FROM THE LONDON EDITION.

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SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

ROBERT RAIKES, Esq.

AND OF THE HISTORY OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

PERHAPS no efforts of modern benevolence have been more successful than Sunday Schools. When we consider, that in Great Britain and Ireland a million of scholars are now taught by 90,000 gratuitous teachers, and that these institutions are spreading in foreign countries, we have indeed reason to bless God for the success which he has granted to this "work of faith and labour of love." In tracing the history of Sunday Schools, we regret that we have but few materials to illustrate the history of their Founder; he occupied a private station in life, and his personal history is not much known beyond the circle in which he moved; however, his name, as connected with Sunday Schools, will be had in everlasting remembrance.

ROBERT RAIKES was born on the 14th of September, 1736, in the city of Gloucester, where his father was the printer and publisher of the *Gloucester Journal*. To his business the son succeeded, and is said to have acquired a competent property. Respecting the education of our philanthropist, or the events of his earlier years, we possess no information; yet the wise

and generous occupations of his manhood may satisfy us that his youth was neither idly nor ill employed.

At a period of life when success rarely inspires moderation in the pursuits of fortune, Mr. Raikes remembered the great law of his Christian profession, that *no man liveth to himself*. He looked around for occasions of disinterested, yet not unproductive, exertion, and found them near at hand. Prevention of crimes by instruction or reproof, and compassion for even justly suffering criminals, were united in his idea of Christian benevolence, which

To every want and every wo,
To guilt itself when in distress,
The balm of pity will impart,
And all relief that bounty can bestow.

According to the *European Magazine* for 1788, (xiv. 315.)

“The first object which demanded his notice was the miserable state of the county Bridewell, within the city of Gloucester, which being part of the county Jail, the persons committed by the magistrate, out of Sessions, for petty offences, associated, through necessity, with felons of the worst description, with little or no means of subsistence from labour; with little, if any, allowance from the county; without either meat, drink, or clothing; dependent, chiefly, on the precarious charity of such as visited the prison, whether brought thither by business, curiosity, or compassion.

“To relieve these miserable and forlorn

wretches, and to render their situation supportable at least, Mr. Raikes employed both his pen, his influence, and his property, to procure them the necessaries of life; and finding that ignorance was generally the principal cause of those enormities which brought them to become objects of his notice, he determined, if possible, to procure them some moral and religious instruction. In this he succeeded, by means of bounties and encouragement given to such of the prisoners who were able to read; and these, by being directed to proper books, improved both themselves and their fellow prisoners, and afforded great encouragement to persevere in the benevolent design. He then procured for them a supply of work, to preclude every excuse and temptation to idleness."

Mr. Raikes could not pursue his generous purpose towards these forlorn outcasts from civilized life without many serious reflections. His mind must have been peculiarly affected with the sad consequences arising from the neglect, or rather the total absence, of opportunities for early instruction among the poor. He was thus prepared to indulge a second project, the success of which he lived to see extending, probably, beyond his most sanguine expectations.

We are enabled to state from a memorandum in Mr. Raikes's own handwriting, that his first Sunday School was established at the close of the year 1781, or the beginning of 1782.

In the *Gloucester Journal* of Nov. 3, 1783, Mr. Raikes inserted the following paragraph:

“Some of the Clergy in different parts of this county, bent upon attempting a reform among the children of the lower class, are establishing Sunday Schools for rendering the Lord’s-day subservient to the ends of instruction, which has hitherto been prostituted to bad purposes. Farmers, and other inhabitants of the towns and villages, complain that they receive more injury in their property on the Sabbath, than all the week besides: this in a great measure proceeds from the lawless state of the younger class, who are allowed to run wild on that day, free from every restraint. To remedy this evil, persons duly qualified are employed to instruct those that cannot read; and those that may have learnt to read, are taught the catechism, and conducted to church. By thus keeping their minds engaged, the day passes profitably, and not disagreeably. In those parishes, where this plan has been adopted, we are assured that the behaviour of the children is greatly civilized. The barbarous ignorance in which they had before lived being in some degree dispelled, they begin to give proofs that those persons are mistaken, who consider the lower orders of mankind as incapable of improvement, and therefore think an attempt to reclaim them impracticable, or at least not worth the trouble.”

This notice of Sunday Schools was copied into the London papers, in consequence of which numerous applications were addressed to Mr. Raikes. Among the rest, Colonel Townley, a gentleman of Lancashire, seeing

this anonymous paragraph, wrote to the mayor of Gloucester to request further information on the subject. The following letter was written as a reply to him, by Mr. Raikes :

Gloucester, Nov. 25, 1783.

"SIR,—My friend, the mayor, has just communicated to me the letter which you have honoured him with, inquiring into the nature of the Sunday Schools. The beginning of this scheme was entirely owing to accident. Some business leading me one morning into the suburbs of the city, where the lowest of the people (who are principally employed in the pin manufactory) chiefly reside, I was struck with concern at seeing a group of children, wretchedly ragged, at play in the street. I asked an inhabitant whether those children belonged to that part of the town, and lamented their misery and idleness. Ah! Sir, said the woman to whom I was speaking, could you take a view of this part of the town on a Sunday, you would be shocked indeed, for then the street is filled with multitudes of these wretches, who, released on that day from employment, spend their time in noise and riot, playing at chuck, and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid, as to convey to any serious mind an idea of hell rather than any other place. We have a worthy clergyman, (Rev. Thomas Stock,) minister of our parish, who has put some of them to school; but upon the Sabbath, they are all given up to follow their inclinations without

restraint, as their parents, totally abandoned themselves, have no idea of instilling into the minds of their children principles to which they themselves are entire strangers.

“This conversation suggested to me, that it would be at least a harmless attempt, if it were productive of no good, should some little plan be formed to check this deplorable profanation of the Sabbath. I then inquired of the woman if there were any decent well-disposed women in the neighbourhood, who kept schools for teaching to read. I presently was directed to four. To these I applied, and made an agreement with them, to receive as many children as I should send upon the Sunday, whom they were to instruct in reading, and in the Church Catechism. For this I engaged to pay them each a shilling for their day's employment. The women seemed pleased with the proposal. I then waited on the clergyman before mentioned, and imparted to him my plan. He was so much satisfied with the idea, that he engaged to lend his assistance, by going round to the schools on a Sunday afternoon, to examine the progress that was made, and to enforce order and decorum among such a set of little heathens.

“This, sir, was the commencement of the plan. It is now about three years since we began, and I could wish you were here to make inquiry into the effect. A woman who lives in a lane where I had fixed a school, told me some time ago, that the place was quite a heaven upon Sundays, compared to what it used to be

The numbers who have learned to read and say their catechism are so great that I am astonished at it. Upon the Sunday afternoon the mistresses take their scholars to church, a place into which neither they nor their ancestors ever entered with a view to the glory of God. But what is yet more extraordinary, within this month, these little raggamuffins have in great numbers taken it into their heads to frequent the early morning prayers, which are held every morning at the cathedral at seven o'clock. I believe there were near fifty this morning.— They assemble at the house of one of the mistresses, and walk before her to church, two and two, in as much order as a company of soldiers. I am generally at church, and after service they all come round me to make their bow, and, if any animosities have arisen, to make their complaint. The great principle I inculcate, is, to be kind and good natured to each other ; not to provoke one another ; to be dutiful to their parents ; not to offend God by cursing and swearing ; and such little plain precepts as all may comprehend. As my profession is that of a printer, I have printed a little book, which I give amongst them : and some friends of mine, subscribers to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, sometimes make me a present of a parcel of Bibles, Testaments, &c., which I distribute as rewards to the deserving. The success that has attended this scheme has induced one or two of my friends to adopt the plan, and set up Sunday Schools in other parts

of the city, and now a whole parish has taken up the object, so that I flatter myself in time the good effects will appear so conspicuous as to become generally adopted. The number of children at present thus engaged on the Sabbath are between two and three hundred, and they are increasing every week, as the benefit is universally seen. I have endeavoured to engage the clergy of my acquaintance that reside in their parishes. One has entered into the scheme with great fervour; and it was in order to excite others to follow the example, that I inserted in my paper the paragraph which I suppose you saw copied into the London papers. I cannot express to you the pleasure I often receive in discovering genius and innate good dispositions among this little multitude. It is botanizing in human nature. I have often, too, the satisfaction of receiving thanks from parents for the reformation they perceive in their children. Often have I given them kind admonitions, which I always do in the mildest and gentlest manner. The going among them, doing them little kindnesses, distributing trifling rewards, and ingratiating myself with them, I hear, have given me an ascendancy greater than I ever could have imagined; for I am told by their mistresses that they are very much afraid of my displeasure. If you ever pass through Gloucester, I shall be happy to pay my respects to you, and to show you the effects of this effort at civilization. If the glory of God be promoted in any, even the smallest degree, society must reap some benefit.

If good seed be sown in the mind at an early period of human life, though it shows itself not again for many years, it may please God at some future period, to cause it to spring up, and to bring forth a plenteous harvest.

“ With regard to the rules adopted, I only require that they come to the school on Sunday as clean as possible. Many were at first deterred because they wanted decent clothing, but I could not undertake to supply this defect. I argue, therefore, if you can loiter about, without shoes, and in a ragged coat, you may as well come to school, and learn what may tend to your good in that garb. I reject none on that footing. All that I require, are clean hands, clean face, and the hair combed; if you have no clean shirt, come in that which you have on. The want of decent apparel, at first, kept great numbers at a distance, but they now begin to grow wiser, and all are pressing to learn. I have had the good luck to procure places for some that were deserving, which has been of great use. You will understand that these children are from 6 years old to 12 or 14. Boys and girls above this age, who have been totally undisciplined, are generally too refractory for this government. A reformation in society seems to me only practicable by establishing notices of duty, and practical habits of order and decorum, at an early age. But whither am I running? I am ashamed to see how much I have trespassed on your patience, but I thought the most complete idea of Sunday

Schools, was to be conveyed to you by telling what first suggested the thought. The same sentiments would have arisen in your mind had they happened to have been called forth, as they were suggested to me.

"I have no doubt that you will find great improvement to be made on this plan. The minds of men have taken great hold on that prejudice, that we are to do nothing on the Sabbath-day which may be deemed labour, and therefore we are to be excused from all application of mind as well as body. The rooting out this prejudice is the point I aim at as my favourite object. Our Saviour takes particular pains to manifest, that whatever tended to promote the health and happiness of our fellow-creatures, were sacrifices peculiarly acceptable on that day.

"I do not think I have written so long a letter for some years. But you will excuse me; my heart is warm in the cause. I think this is the kind of reformation most requisite in this kingdom. Let our patriots employ themselves in rescuing their countrymen from that despotism, which tyrannical passions, and vicious inclinations, exercise over them, and they will find that true liberty and national welfare are more essentially promoted; than by any reform in parliament.

"As often as I have attempted to conclude, some new idea has arisen. This is strange, as I am writing to a person whom I never have, and perhaps never may see; but I have felt that we think alike; I shall therefore only add my

ardent wishes, that your views of promoting the happiness of society may be attended with every possible success, conscious that your own internal enjoyment will thereby be considerably advanced. I have the honour to be, sir, yours, &c. R. RAIKES."

At Colonel Townley's request, this letter was published in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1784, (Vol. 54. p. 410.) and thus the subject of Sunday Schools was diffused through the kingdom.

Mr. Raikes had very soon occasion to answer another inquiry, from Bradford in Yorkshire. His letter is dated "Gloucester, June 5, 1784," and agrees in substance with the foregoing, yet we are sure our readers will be pleased to see it.

"Having found four persons who had been accustomed to instruct children in reading, I engaged to pay the sum they required for receiving and instructing such children as I should send to them every Sunday. The children were to come soon after ten in the morning, and stay till twelve: they were then to go home, and return at one; and after reading a lesson they were to be conducted to church. After church they were to be employed in repeating the catechism till half past five, and then to be dismissed with an injunction to go home without making a noise, and by no means to play in the street. This was the general outline of the regulation.

"With regard to the parents, I went round

to remonstrate with them on the melancholy consequences that must ensue from so fatal a neglect of their children's morals. They alleged that their poverty rendered them incapable of cleaning and clothing their children fit to appear either at school or at church: but this objection was obviated by a remark, that if they were clad in a garb fit to appear in the streets, I should not think it improper for a school calculated to admit the poorest and most neglected. All that I required were clean faces, clean hands, and the hair combed. In other respects they were to come as their circumstances would admit. Many children began to show talents for learning, and a desire to be taught. Little rewards* were distributed among the most diligent; this excited an emulation. One or two clergymen gave their assistance, by going round to the schools on the Sunday afternoon, to hear the children their catechism; this was of great consequence.

“Another clergyman hears them their catechism once a quarter publicly in the church, and rewards their good behaviour with some little gratuity.

They are frequently admonished to refrain from swearing; and certain boys who are distinguished by their decent behaviour, are appointed to superintend the conduct of the rest, and make report of those that swear, call names, or interrupt the comfort of the other boys in

*The rewards are books, combs, shoes, or some articles of apparel.

their neighbourhood. When quarrels have arisen, the aggressor is compelled to ask pardon, and the offended is enjoined to forgive.—The happiness that must arise to all from a kind, good-natured behaviour, is often inculcated.

“This mode of treatment has produced a wonderful change in the manners of these little savages. I cannot give a more striking instance than I received the other day from Mr Church, a considerable manufacturer of hemp and flax, who employs great numbers of these children. I asked him whether he perceived any alteration in the poor children he employed. ‘Sir,’ says he, ‘the change could not have been more extraordinary in my opinion, had they been transformed from the shape of wolves and tigers to that of men. In temper, disposition, and manners, they could hardly be said to differ from the brute creation. But since the establishment of the Sunday Schools, they have seemed anxious to show that they are not the ignorant, illiterate creatures, they were before. When they have seen a superior come, and kindly instruct and admonish them, and sometimes reward their good behaviour, they are anxious to gain his friendship and good opinion. They are also become more tractable and obedient, and less quarrelsome and revengeful. In short, I never conceived that a reformation, so singular, could have been effected amongst the set of untutored beings I employed.’

“From this little sketch of the reformation

which has taken place, there is reason to hope, that a general establishment of Sunday Schools would, in time, make some change in the morals of the lower class. At least it might, in some measure, prevent them from growing worse, which at present seems but too apparent.

“ I am, Sir, &c. R. RAIKES.”

“ P. S.—The parish of St. Nicholas has lately established two schools; and some gentlemen of this city have also set up others. To some of the school-mistresses I give two shillings a week extra to take the children when they come from work, during the week days.”

Joseph Lancaster states, in referring to an interview he had with Mr. Raikes.

“ I was naturally desirous of gaining information and instruction from a venerable man of seventy-two, who had, in a series of years, superintended the education of 3000 poor children; who had been actively engaged in visiting both the city and county prisons, whereby he had gained an ample opportunity of knowing if any of the scholars were brought in as prisoners; and who, on appealing to his memory, which, although at an advanced age, is strong and lively, could answer—*none!*”

Mr. Lancaster adds, that when Mr. Raikes was first revolving the subject of Sunday Schools in his mind, the word TRY was so powerfully impressed on his mind, as to decide him at once to action, and he remarked to Mr. L., “ *I can never pass by the spot where the word*

TRUTH came so powerfully into my mind, without lifting up my hands and heart to heaven, in gratitude to God, for having put such a thought into my heart."

The following fact is adduced by Mr. Lancaster, to show the kind, condescending, and judicious conduct of Mr. Raikes, in his visits to the poor :

He was frequently in the habit of visiting the parents and children at their own houses. He called on a poor woman one day, and found a very refractory girl crying and *sulking*. Her mother complained that correction was of no avail, obstinacy marked her conduct, and it was very bad. After asking the parent's leave, he began to talk seriously to the girl, and concluded by telling her that as the first step towards amendment, she must kneel down and ask her mother's pardon. The girl continued sulky. "Well then," says he, "if you have no regard for yourself, I have much regard for you. You will be ruined and lost if you do not begin to be a good girl, and if you will not humble yourself, I must humble myself, and make a beginning for you:" with that he kneels down on the ground before the child's mother, and put his hands together with all the ceremony of a juvenile offender—"Pray forgive," &c. No sooner did the stubborn girl see him on his knees, on her account, than her pride was overcome at once, and tenderness followed; she burst into tears, and directly on her knees, earn

estly entreated forgiveness: she never occasioned any trouble afterwards.

For three years, the schools gradually extended in Mr. Raikes' neighbourhood, to which they appear then to have been confined, and where several clergymen, besides the minister mentioned by Mr. R., very laudably contributed to the success of the scheme, by their personal attentions. The report of that success, in and about Gloucester, could not fail to draw attention from other parts of England. In 1784, the plan was adopted in Yorkshire, by several manufacturing towns. In Leeds, 1800 children were speedily collected. In this year the Sunday School at Stockport was opened. This school has since exceeded in magnitude any other single establishment of this kind.

In the year 1785, William Fox, Esq. formerly a merchant in London, and afterwards of Lechdale in Gloucestershire, being anxious for the general education of the poor, endeavoured to excite the public attention to the subject, and wrote the following letter to Mr. Raikes:

MR. FOX TO MR. RAIKES.

London, June 15, 1785.

"Sir,—The liberality and goodness of heart manifested in your benevolent plan of Sunday-Schools, will, I trust, render unnecessary any apology, though from a stranger, when it is considered, his only view in writing is, that he may be enabled to copy after so worthy an example.

"You must know, Sir, long before your excellent letter appeared in the papers, I had felt

a compassion, and entertained sentiments for the indigent and ignorant poor, extremely similar to your own. This led me to set up a school in one of your villages, (Clapton, near Bourton on the Water;) but, as it is a daily one, and, therefore, attended with far greater expense, and, perhaps, less utility than yours, it will very much oblige me, and probably greatly promote the design I have in view, if you will please to favour me with a further account of your plan, (if any alteration,) and what particular advantages have arisen from it since the publication of your letter. I have been apprehensive (and shall be extremely glad to find myself mistaken) that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to teach children to read, by their attendance on schools only one day in seven. This is very material for me to know: and, if they can, it will also be as desirable to ascertain the average time it takes for such instruction, together with the age at which they are taken, the mode pursued by the teachers, and the expense attending the same. The reason I am thus particular is, because a society is forming in town, to which I belong, for carrying a plan of this sort into general use. The design, I dare say, will appear to you laudable, but at the same time difficult: its success depends on the concurrence and aid of well disposed Christians throughout the kingdom. Great events, however, having frequently taken their rise from small, and, to human appearance, trifling beginnings, we wish to make a trial; and, as the

committee for drawing up a plan, meet on the 23d instant, I beg the favour of your reply prior to that time, that we may have the benefit of an experienced work, in order to assist our deliberations.

"I remain, Sir, your obed't humble servant,
"W. M. Fox."

To this letter Mr. Raikes thus replied :

"Gloucester, June 20, 1785.

"SIR,—You very justly suppose, that an apology was utterly unnecessary for a letter like yours. I am full of admiration at the great, the noble design of the society you speak of as forming. If it were possible that my poor abilities could be rendered in any degree useful to you, point out the object, and you will find me not inactive.

"Allow me to refer you to a letter I wrote, about a week ago, to Jonas Hanway, Esq. upon the subject of Sunday Schools: if you ask him for a sight of it, I dare say he will send it to you.

"With respect to the possibility of teaching children, by the attendance they give upon the Sunday, I thought with you, at my first onset, that little was to be gained; but I now find that it has suggested to the parents, that the little progress we made on the Sunday might be improved, and they have, therefore, engaged to give the teacher a penny a week, to admit the children once or twice a day, during the recess from work, at dinner time or evening, to take a lesson every day in the week. To one of my

teachers, who lives in the worst part of our suburbs, I allow 2s. a week extra, (besides the shilling I give her for the Sunday employ,) to let all that are willing come and read in this manner. I see admirable effects from this addition to my scheme. I find mothers of the children, and grown up young women, have begged to be admitted to partake of this benefit. Sorry I am to say, that none of the other sex have shown the same desire.

"A clergyman from Painswick called upon me this afternoon, and expressed his surprise at the progress made there. Many boys now can read, who certainly have no other opportunity than what they derive from their Sunday instruction. This he assured me was the fact. I hear the people of the Forest of Dean have begun to set this machine in motion among the children of the colliers, a most savage race.

"A person from Mitchel Dean called upon me a few days ago, to report their progress. 'Sir,' says he, 'we have now many children who, three months ago, knew not a letter from a cart wheel, (that was his expression,) who can now repeat hymns in a manuer that would astonish you.'

"I have been out of town, or should have answered your polite letter sooner. I now have only time to give you these facts. When you have seen my letter to Mr. Hanway, you will be able to judge whether farther use can be made of the little experience I have had, in this attempt at civilization. I can only say, show

wherein I may be useful, and command without reserve. Your most obedient servant,

“R. RAIKES.”

After two meetings it was agreed that a circular letter should be sent to various individuals with a view of obtaining a more general meeting. The following is a copy of the letter :

“SIR—Encouraged by the promising success of the Sunday Schools established in some towns and villages of this kingdom, several gentlemen met on Tuesday evening, the 16th instant, at the King’s Head Tavern, in the Poultry, to consider of the utility of forming “A Society for the Establishment and Support of Sunday Schools, throughout the Kingdom of Great Britain.”

“At this meeting it was agreed to form such a Society; and a committee of fourteen gentlemen was chosen to draw up a code of laws for the government of the said Society, and a set of proper rules for the regulation of the Schools.

“The committee having met, and drawn up a plan for the intended Society, and the laws and rules necessary for it and the Schools, they propose to submit their plan to the consideration of all such gentlemen as shall attend a public meeting, to be holden on Tuesday next, the 30th instant, at the Paul’s Head Tavern, Cateaton-street, at four o’clock in the afternoon.

“To prevent vice—to encourage industry and virtue—to dispel the darkness of ignorance—to diffuse the light of knowledge—to bring

men cheerfully to submit to their stations—to obey the laws of God and their country—to make that useful part of the community, the country poor, happy—to lead them in the pleasant paths of religion here—and to endeavour to prepare them for a glorious eternity, are the objects proposed by the promoters of this institution.

“To effect these great, these noble ends, they hope to form a Society, which will be enabled to establish Sunday Schools, upon a plan so extensive as to reach the remotest parts of this island; and they flatter themselves they shall receive the support, assistance, and patronage of persons of every rank and description.

“Private advantage and party zeal are entirely disclaimed by the friends and promoters of this laudable institution. However men may be divided into political parties, or however Christians may unhappily separate from each other, on account of difference of sentiment, here they are all invited to join in the common cause, the glory of God—the good of their country—and the happiness of their fellow-creatures.

“Permit me to request the favour of your attendance at the proposed meeting.

“I am, sir, by order of the Committee, your humble servant,
WILLIAM FOX.

“Friday, Aug. 26, 1785.”

This meeting was announced for the 30th of August, and the celebrated Jonas Hanway was

called to the chair on the occasion. A resolution was passed, "That great benefit would accrue to the community at large, from the adoption of such a measure, and that a society be formed for carrying the same immediately into effect." In the meantime, the following letters passed between Mr. Raikes and Mr. Fox:

MR. RAIKES TO MR. FOX.

"DEAR SIR,—My brother, T. Raikes, enclosed to me yesterday, a circular letter he had received with your signature, which has given me more pleasure than I can express.

"I observe, by that letter, that you are to hold a meeting tomorrow. I regret that I am not situated near enough to attend it: but, as I was present yesterday se'nnight at a meeting, which is intended to be established as an anniversary, at Mitchel Dean, a little town in this county, on the verge of the Forest of Dean, it occurred to me, that a sketch of the pleasing scene I there beheld, may not be improperly laid before the gentlemen who attend your summons to the Paul's Head Tavern.

"Maynard Colchester, and William Lane, Esqrs. two gentlemen of property in the neighbourhood, having heard of the happy effects arising from an attention to the morals of the rising generation of the poor, determined to try what could be done among the little lawless rabble, which inhabit the borders of the forest near Mitchel Dean. About Christmas last they established two schools, and admitted about fifty or sixty scholars of both sexes; some of

them the most ignorant, uncivilized beings in the country. Ten or twelve of the respectable inhabitants of the town readily engaged to subscribe; but what was of greater moment, they took upon themselves the superintendence of the establishment; and to their zeal may be ascribed, under the Divine blessing, its success. The promoters of the undertaking did me the honour to invite me to dine with them on their anniversary, to witness the progress that had been made in this effort at civilization. The children, though many of them in apparel very ragged, were extremely clean. They walked in great order, two and two, to the church, where they were placed in a gallery, exposed to the view of the whole congregation; and their behaviour, during the service, was perfectly silent and becoming. In the repetition of the Lord's Prayer they all joined, and formed a charm that made every heart dilate with joy. The clergyman of the parish, a curate of £26 a year, gave an admirable discourse from Mark iv. 28. This valuable young man had taken great pains in admonishing the children, and impressing them with due notions, how greatly their own happiness would be increased, by introducing into their general behaviour, habits of quietness and good nature to one another. The tenor of argument in his discourse was to prove, that if good seed be sown in the moral, as in the natural world, a plentiful harvest was no less to be hoped for, but that we must look for it in the same order; it might be some time before it

made its appearance,—and then by small beginnings;—first the blade, &c.

“After church, the children were conducted to the inn, where an examination took place of the progress made in reading. I was highly pleased to see the proficiency some of them had made. Several could read in the Testament; and I found among them two or three with extraordinary memories. They have learned to repeat several chapters.

“Near fifty of them were perfect in their Catechism, and all could repeat some of Dr. Watts’ Hymns. The children were so much pleased with those pieces, that two or three of them could repeat the whole book. But what pleased me most of all was, the result of my inquiry into the effect upon their manners. ‘That boy,’ said one of the gentlemen, (pointing to a very ill-looking lad, about 13,) ‘was the most profligate little dog in this neighbourhood. He was the leader of every kind of mischief and wickedness. He never opened his lips without a profane or indecent expression. And now he is become orderly and good-natured, and in his conversation has quite left off profaneness.’

“After dinner, the gentleman called in six boys, who had previously been taught a hymn, which, I assure you, they sang to admiration. I observed that one of the singers was the boy before mentioned.—The silence that prevailed among the children was very remarkable: their benefactors dined in a room adjoining, but were not disturbed with their talking.

"I have given you this little recital, and if it tends to prove the practicability of doing good to our fellow-creatures, I hope it may prove an incitement to the work you are bringing forward. I am, with great respect, sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"R. RAIKES.

'*Gloucester, Monday, Aug. 29, 1785.*'"

MR. FOX TO MR. RAIKES.

"DEAR SIR,—The favour you did me by your kind letter of the 29th ult. was more than you can possibly conceive. This letter, together with extracts I made from some of your other letters, were read, and afforded much useful information.

"Presuming upon the friendship with which you honoured me, and particularly encouraged by your last favour, I took the liberty of waiting on your brother, the Bank Director, to request his acceptance of the Chair, well knowing how much depended upon such a choice. Both your brothers received me with the greatest politeness and cordiality; promised the design countenance and support; but declined the chair, as the Bank Director was just going out of town. They then advised me to go to Mr. Thornton, another Bank Director; and your elder brother accompanied me to him. He also made the same kind offer of support, &c., which your brothers had done, but was unfortunately going out of town likewise, and advised to apply to Mr. Hanway, who took the chair soon

after five o'clock. The report of the Committee was read over, but not fully entered into, because the meeting was called by circular letters to the clergy, magistrates, and principal inhabitants, and not advertised in the public papers. The business, therefore, is put off till next Wednesday, when another meeting will be called by public advertisement, to be held at the same place and time as the last. Should any thing occur which you think likely to forward the important design, your communicating the same will confer the greatest obligation on,

"Dear sir, your much obliged friend,
"and humble servant,

"London, Sept. 2, 1785. Wm. Fox."

"N. B.—The fire which you had the honour to light up in Gloucester, having now reached the Metropolis, will, I trust, never be extinguished but with the ignorance of every individual throughout the kingdom."

On the 7th of September, 1785, the Society for the support and encouragement of Sunday Schools was formed, and issued the following letter :

"London,

"SIR,—The deplorable ignorance of the children of the poor, in many parts of this kingdom, and the corruption of morals frequently flowing from that source, have long been matter of deep concern to all who are solicitous for the welfare of their country.

"In manufacturing towns, where children

From their infancy are necessarily employed the whole week, no opportunity occurs for their receiving the least degree of education. To remedy this evil, some gentlemen, actuated by the most benevolent motives, have established, in some of these towns, Sunday Schools, where children and others are taught to read, and are instructed in the knowledge of their duty as rational and accountable beings.

“The Sunday, too often spent by the children of the poor in idleness and play, or in contracting habits of vice and dissipation, is by the children of these schools employed in learning to read the Bible, and in attending the public worship of God, by which means they are trained up in habits of virtue and piety, as well as industry, and a foundation is laid for their becoming useful members of the community.

“The numerous benefits arising from Sunday Schools, of which the most indubitable testimonies have been given, and the great importance of extending their salutary effects, have induced a number of gentlemen, stimulated by the successful attempts, to establish a Society in London, for the support and encouragement of Sunday Schools in the different counties of England.

“The committee for conducting the affairs of this Society, anxious to extend the beneficial influence of these schools as speedily as possible, have taken the liberty of addressing you, Sir, on this occasion; and of requesting you to communicate to such of the inhabitants of ———,

as may be disposed to encourage such an undertaking, the wish of the committee to establish a Sunday School in that ——. For more particular information they beg leave to refer you to the printed plan, —— copies of which are sent herewith to be distributed at your discretion, and an early intimation of the result of your proceedings will be highly acceptable to them.

“ It is the intention of this Society, on application being made to the committee from any place, to assist in establishing a school or schools therein, until the good consequences shall be so apparent to the inhabitants, as to encourage an exertion, which may render any further assistance from the Society unnecessary.

“ In forming the plan of this Society, the most liberal and catholic principles have been adopted, in hopes that persons of all denominations of the protestant faith, will be induced to unite in carrying it into execution with greater energy. The committee, therefore, beg leave to recommend to every minister of a congregation where these schools may be established, to make it known to the people of their respective charges, and to preach a collection sermon for the support of such schools as often as occasion may require.

“ If any further argument in favour of these schools was necessary, a striking one presents itself in the contemplation of our crowded prisons, and frequent executions, which shock the feelings of humanity, and disgrace our coun-

try. The sad history of these wretched victims to their crimes and to the laws, too plainly evinces that to the want of an early introduction into the paths of virtue and religion, to which this institution would lead, may be attributed, in a great degree, their unhappy end. In this point of view then, this institution may be considered a political, as well as a religious one, claiming the attention even of those, who, if not particularly zealous in the cause of Christianity, cannot be insensible to the advantages that would accrue to society from the preservation of good order, and the security of persons and property.

“The committee flatter themselves they shall find in you a friend to this cause, and that your exertions, in union with theirs, will be crowned with success, in producing a reformation of morals in the lower ranks of the rising generation.

“By order of the committee,

“HENRY THORNTON, Chairman.”

The committee also addressed a letter particularly to the clergy and ministers of all protestant congregations, which was distributed in London and its vicinity, together with the plan and rules of the Society.

In April, 1786, the following extract from a charge delivered to the clergy of the archdeaconry of Nottingham, by the Reverend the Dean of Lincoln, was published, with the consent of the Dean, by the committee.

“The last time we met together, I expressed

my wishes, that such persons as were discharged from the naval and military service, on the conclusion of the war, might be domesticated, and employed as soon as possible, in their respective parishes; and that we might endeavour, by the kind offices of society, and by general example, to make them become good citizens in time of peace.

“ And it does not appear, from the catalogue of those who have lately suffered capital punishments, that these men have been marked in the great delinquency of the times; but a more melancholy instance must be drawn from this circumstance, that the late increase of capital crimes does not proceed from the close of the war, (an event to which it might with some plausibility have been attributed,) but from the universal depravity of the people; the contemplation of which would be a gloomy office indeed, if it did not appear, that in the midst of judgment God remembered mercy. And the Divine goodness seems to have pointed out to the present age, a measure so peculiarly comprehensive in the advantages which it holds out to society, that it appears formed to counteract every evil propensity of these days, and to prevent them from being injurious to succeeding generations; which folds, my brethren, within its benevolent arms, every sect of Christianity, every description of mankind. The measure, which appears to me to possess this invaluable antidote to the poisonous manners of this depraved age, is the establishment of Sunday

Schools. The power and efficacy of these institutions reach to such extent of situation, and of numbers, as no other mode of improvement can possibly equal. Having anxiously watched their infancy, and attended to their progress, I have thought their principles the most unequivocal, and their influence the most extensive, that can be employed in the cause of general reformation.

“The due observance of the Sabbath is the first point inculcated by these institutions, and the mind is formed in its earliest apprehension, thus to feel the just value of this great security of its future conduct; for among the chief causes which the unhappy victims to the laws of their country allege for their ruin, the breach of the Sabbath must ever be accounted the first step in guilt, as it takes place before they are capable of the crimes of more mature age.

“The habit of subordination is by no means a circumstance of trivial moment, as it qualifies such children for the future relations of the community; and the cleanliness which is required in all, contributes to their health, and impresses them with a sense of decency. These essential articles must meet with universal approbation, even from those few who yet object to the further instruction of the lower ranks of life; but this opinion is now reduced to so narrow a ground, as scarcely to meet our attention, and I will add, that instruction in reading forms a considerable part of these excellent institutions.

“Nor will the benefit be solely confined to the children who partake of these benevolent aids, it will importantly affect the manners of the families, and even of the neighbourhood to which they belong.

“In the larger towns the obligation of these establishments is more strongly marked, and the capital of this country has given a most laudable example, by the early adoption of them; but I am persuaded that there are few parishes, where there will not be found children to be benefited by these institutions, whose parents cannot be prevailed upon, perhaps can scarcely be expected, at least in a political view, to spare them for instruction on the days of labour.

“And in manufacturing establishments, they who profit by the labour of such poor children, will, we trust, universally recompense them with the humane return. Most benevolent examples have already been given, and I am confident that all the proprietors of such manufactories, will, on reflection, consider it as a most solemn and responsible duty, since the children they employ on the days of labour are thereby deprived of the advantage of every other improvement.

“This object, my reverend brethren, I own to you, is nearest my heart in my present communication with you: it is a measure so unequivocal in its principle, so universal in its extent, so providentially pointed out to correct the degeneracy of the present times, that you cannot employ your influence in more humanity to in-

dividuals, and more patriotism to your country, than by giving it every assistance and protection in your power."

The first report, January 11, 1786, states

"Your committee have established five schools in the vicinity of London, and have in reply to many applications which have been made to them from various parts of the country, signified their disposition to assist the establishment of schools in those places upon the principles laid down by this Society.

"Other applications are under their consideration, and from the information already received, they are persuaded the beneficial influence of the Society is becoming more extensive.

"In order to guard against any possible inconvenience that may arise from boys and girls being together in the same school, your committee have thought it expedient to adopt the resolution, that in all schools supported by this Society, the boys and girls should be separately instructed, the boys by men, and the girls by women, the committee reserving to themselves any exception to this resolution which may upon representation appear necessary.

"The subscriptions already received for the support of the Society amount to £987. 0s. 6d."

The following letters from the bishops of Salisbury and Landaff, to Henry Thornton, Esq. were read by Samuel Hoare, Esq. at the first annual meeting, January 11, 1786.

“ Mengswell House, Dec. 22, 1785.

“ SIR,—The post has just conveyed to me your letter, with its inclosures.

“ A friend from their commencement, to Sunday Schools: I have established them in every parish where my property lies, and warmly recommended them in my diocese. I have drawn up regulations for their management; and had a spelling-book compiled under my direction for their use. From the experience I have already had of the benefits arising from these institutions to good order, morals, and religion among the lower ranks of people, I feel the most earnest satisfaction at the prospect of their becoming general.

“ I am, Sir, with much regard,

“ Your most obedient humble servant,

“ HENRY THORNTON, Esq. S. SARUM.”

“ Cambridge, Dec. 20, 1785.

“ SIR,—Allow me to return thanks to the committee appointed by the Society for the establishment of Sunday Schools, for the communication of their plan. I have long thought favourably of the institution of Sunday Schools, and that experience alone would be the sure test of their utility; yet I have ventured to take some steps towards introducing them into the large towns of my diocese. I pray God to prosper the undertaking which you have so benevolently set on foot.

“ I am, Sir, your obliged servant,

“ R. LANDAFF.”

The following letter from Mr. Raikes, dated October 7, 1786, was addressed to the Sunday School Society :

“ The parish of Painswick exhibited on Sunday, the 24th ult. a specimen of the reform which the establishment of Sunday Schools is likely to introduce.

“ An annual festival has for time immemorial been held on that day; a festival that would have disgraced the most heathenish nations. Drunkenness and every species of clamour, riot, and disorder, formerly filled the town upon this occasion. Mr. Webb, a gentleman who has exerted the utmost assiduity in the conduct of the Sunday Schools in Painswick, was lamenting to me the sad effects that might be naturally expected to arise from this feast. It occurred to us that an attempt to divert the attention of the vulgar from their former brutal prostitution of the Lord's day, by exhibiting to their view a striking picture of the superior enjoyment to be derived from quietness, good order, and the exercise of that benevolence which Christianity peculiarly recommends, was an experiment worth hazarding. We thought it could do no mischief; it would not increase the evil. It was immediately determined to invite the gentlemen and people of the adjacent parishes, to view the children of the Sunday Schools, to mark their improvement in cleanliness and behaviour, and to observe the practicability of reducing to a quiet, peaceable demeanour, the most neglected part of the com-

munity, those who form the great bulk of the people.

“In the parish of Painswick are several gentlemen who have a taste for music; they immediately offered to give every assistance in a church service; and my benevolent friend, the Rev. Dr. Glasse, complied with our entreaty to favour us with a sermon. Mr. Campbell, a very active justice of peace, Mr. Townsend, Mr. Sheppard, Mr. Webb, of Ebworth, and several other gentlemen engaged to give their countenance; we were highly gratified too with Mr. Boddington's company, who kindly came from Cheltenham to take a view of this progress in civilization; he is one of your vice-presidents, and from his report you will receive a far more perfect idea than my pen can give. On the Sunday afternoon the town was filled with the usual crowds who attend the feast, but instead of repairing to the alehouses, as heretofore, they all hastened to the church, which was filled in such a manner as I never remember to have seen any church in this country before; the galleries, the aisles, were thronged like a play-house. Drawn up in a rank around the church yard, appeared the children belonging to the different schools, to the number of three hundred and thirty-one. The gentlemen walked round to view them; it was a sight interesting and truly affecting: young people, lately more neglected than the cattle in the field, ignorant, profane, filthy, clamorous, impatient of every restraint, were here seen cleanly, quiet,

observant of order, submissive, courteous in behaviour, and in conversation free from that vileness, which marks our wretched vulgar. The inhabitants of the town bear testimony to this change in their manners. The appearance of decency might be assumed for a day; but the people among whom they live, are ready to declare that this is a character fairly stated.

“After the public service, a collection, for the benefit of the institution, was made at the doors of the church. When I considered that the bulk of the congregation were persons of middling rank, husbandmen and other inhabitants of the adjacent villages, I concluded that the collection, if it amounted to twenty-four or twenty-five pounds, might be deemed a good one. My astonishment was great indeed, when I found that the sum was not less than fifty-seven pounds! This may be accounted for from the security which the establishment of Sunday Schools has given to the property of every individual in the neighbourhood: the farmers, &c. declare that they and their families can now leave their houses, gardens, &c. and frequent the public worship, without danger of depredation; formerly they were under the necessity of leaving their servants, or staying at home themselves, as a guard; and this was insufficient, the most vigilant were sometimes plundered. It is not then to be wondered at that a spirit of liberality was excited on this occasion. A carpenter put a guinea in the plate, and afterwards brought four more to Mr. Webb: “It

was my fixed design,' says he, 'to devote the sum that I received for a certain job of work, to the support of Sunday Schools. I received five guineas, one only I put in the plate; it did not become me to put more, it would have looked like ostentation; but here are the other four,' giving them to Mr. Webb. Another instance of spirit, occurred in a man upwards of eighty years of age, who seemed about the rank of the yeomanry: 'Oh! that I should live,' said he, 'to see this day, when poor children are thus befriended, and taught the road to peace and comfort here, and happiness and heaven hereafter.' The old man gave a guinea; and said he would leave another in the hands of a friend, if he should die before the next anniversary. When the matter of the collection was settled, we went to the schools to hear what progress was made in reading, &c. The emulation to show their acquirements was so very general, that it would have taken up a day to have gratified all the children. In the mean time, the town was remarkably free from those pastimes which used to disgrace it; wrestling, quarrelling, fighting, were totally banished; all was peace and tranquillity. I fear I have been too prolix, but I could not convey the complete idea that I was desirous of imparting to the generous promoters of Sunday Schools, without writing these particulars.

"I forgot to mention that Mr. Fox, one of the worthy members of your committee, was present with us at Painswick. The Sunday Schools

were first established at Painswick, in the summer of the year 1784. The children had been bred up in total ignorance: of the number that attend the schools, two hundred and thirty can read in the Bible or Testament, eighty can read in the Sunday Scholar's Companion, and about twenty-one are in the alphabet. These children have no teaching but on the Sunday; what they learn at the leisure hours in the week, is the effect of their own desire to improve; many have their books at their looms, to seize any vacant minute, when their work is retarded by the breaking of threads. To relieve the parish from the burden of clothing these poor creatures, Mr. Webb proposed, that such children as by increase of industry would bring a penny every Sunday towards their clothing, should be assisted by having that penny doubled: this has had an admirable effect; the children now regularly bring their pence every Sunday; many of them have been clothed, and the good consequences of laying up a little are powerfully enforced. It is pretty evident that were every parish in this kingdom blessed with a man or two of Mr. Webb's active turn and benevolent mind, the lower class of people, in a few years, would exhibit a material change of character, and justify that superior policy, which tends to prevent crimes, rather than to punish them.

“The liberality with which the members of your society have stood forth in this attempt to introduce a degree of civilization and good order

among the lowest ranks, entitles them to the thanks of the community, and particularly of an individual, who will ever be proud to subscribe himself," &c.

"P. S. The gentlemen of Painswick intend making a request to Dr. Glasse to publish his sermon.

"The happy choice of the text had a remarkable effect in commanding the attention of the audience. The Scriptures could not have furnished a passage more literally applicable to the subject. It was taken from Deut. xxxi. ver. 12, 13.—'Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children *which have not known any thing*, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as ye live.'"

The following letter of the poet Cowper, will show his expectations as to Sunday Schools. It is dated at Olney, September 24, 1785, and was addressed to the Rev. John Newton:

"Mr. Scott called upon us yesterday; he is much inclined to set up a Sunday School, if he can raise a fund for that purpose. Mr. Jones has had one some time at Clifton, and Mr. Unwin writes me word that he has been thinking of nothing else day and night for a fortnight. It is a wholesome measure that seems to bid fair to be pretty generally adopted, and for the good effects that it promises, deserves well to

be so. I know not indeed, while the spread of the Gospel continues so limited as it is, how a reformation of manners in the lower class of mankind can be brought to pass, or by what other means the utter abolition of all principle among them, moral as well as religious, can be prevented. Heathenish parents can only bring up heathenish children, an assertion no where oftener, or more clearly illustrated than at Olney, where children of seven years of age infest the streets every evening with curses and with songs, to which it would be unseemly to give their proper epithet. Such urchins as these could not be so diabolically accomplished unless by the connivance of their parents. It is well indeed, if in some instances, their parents be not their instructors. Judging by their proficiency, one can hardly suppose any other. It is, therefore, doubtless an act of the greatest charity to snatch them out of such hands before the inveteracy of the evil shall have made it desperate."

The late Bishop Porteus, then bishop of Chester, recommended the formation of Sunday Schools in his extensive diocese. This prelate, as we are informed by his biographer, had early conceived a very favourable opinion of the plan, and in several instances privately encouraged it. "But, as an act of prudence, he determined not to give it the sanction of his public approbation, till, as he observes, 'time and experience, and more accurate inquiry, had enabled him to form a more decided judgment of its real value, and

its probable effects.' When, however, repeated information from various quarters, and particularly from some of the largest manufacturing towns in his diocese, had convinced him that such institutions, wherever the experiment had been fairly tried, had produced, and could not fail to produce, if discreetly regulated, essential benefit, he no longer hesitated in promoting them generally throughout his diocese. With this view, as the wisest and most effectual mode of giving publicity to his sentiments, he addressed to his clergy a very excellent letter, containing, in a short compass, a plain, temperate and judicious exposition of the advantages of Sunday Schools, and of the rules by which they should be conducted."—*Life of Bishop Porteus*, p. 93.

The following extract of a letter of the Rev. John Wesley, written in his 84th year, to the Rev. Richard Rodda, Chester, will show the opinion of the venerable founder of Methodism, in favour of Sunday Schools.

"London, June 17, 1787.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad you have taken in hand that blessed work of setting up Sunday Schools in Chester. It seems these will be one great means of reviving religion throughout the nation. I wonder Satan has not yet sent out some able champion against them."

From the years 1785 and 1786, Sunday Schools were established in a great many dis-

tricts throughout England, and were found eminently useful wherever they were properly conducted. The great impediment to their prosperity was the expense of hiring teachers. It appears, that from 1786 to 1800, the Sunday School Society alone paid upwards of £4000 to hired teachers. At Stockport, in 1784, the teachers were paid one shilling and sixpence every Sunday for their services; but by degrees gratuitous teachers arose, so that in 1794, out of nearly thirty teachers, six only were hired, the rest "voluntarily put themselves under the direction of the visitors as regular teachers." The beneficial effects of employing gratuitous teachers were soon apparent, and from the time they offered their services, the number of scholars and teachers, and the amount of the subscriptions regularly increased. In a few years hired teachers were wholly relinquished in the Stockport school.

We are not able to state who were the first gratuitous teachers who devoted their services to Sunday Schools, or what place has the honour of originating this material improvement in the system. We rather imagine that when Sunday Schools attracted the attention of those true Christians who possessed active benevolence, that they spontaneously offered their gratuitous labours, from love to Christ, and to the young; probably, such individuals were so numerous, that it would at present be impossible to say what person first set the example of gratuitous teaching; could he be discovered, we should

place him in the next rank to the immortal Raikes, because, an imitation of his example had led to the present flourishing state of these institutions, and is the surest pledge of their purity and perpetuity. To show the importance of gratuitous teachers, it will be sufficient to state, that if the 90,000 gratuitous teachers who are at present engaged in Sunday Schools were to be paid eighteen pence each Sunday, this expense alone would amount to £2,457,000 in seven years, reckoning this as the average period of each teacher's services. That man must be unworthy of the name of a Briton, and still more of a Christian, whose heart does not glow with gratitude to God for raising up so many benevolent instructors of the youthful poor; may their labours be blessed abundantly; in watering others, may they own souls be watered with the selectest influences of the Holy Spirit; and hereafter may they receive the welcome of their Lord and Saviour, not of debt but of grace, "Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matt. xxv. 40.

Mr. Fox had communicated to Mr. Raikes a pleasing and exhilarating account of the first Anniversary of the Sunday School at Colchester, at which he was present. After describing the scene, Mr. F. says,—

"Not a single occurrence interposed to embitter or in the least interrupt the pleasures of the day; all was harmony, peace, and love;

for, however divided in political sentiments, or separated from each other by diversity of religious opinions, in this important undertaking, wherein the glory of God and the good of mankind are so intimately concerned, the most perfect unanimity has, from its commencement, constantly prevailed. How worthy of imitation is this example! Should it be universally followed, and should that spirit of bigotry, which disgraced former times, and in some instances prevents improvement in the present, be proscribed from the breasts of all, as it is from the wise and good, we might expect to see, not only 234,000 poor children (which the Sunday Schools in England are now calculated to contain) emerging from ignorance and rescuing from vice, but such an extension of the institution, as could not fail, under the Divine blessing, to produce *universal* good to the poor, and security to the rich."

The following is a copy of the reply Mr. Raikes sent to Mr. Fox, dated July 12, 1787; and we give it with a view of illustrating the excellent spirit of that good man.

"DEAR SIR,—I regret that the variety of my business and engagements, when I was last in town, prevented me from devoting an afternoon to the enjoyment of your company.

"The loss was mine; for I find new pleasures equal to those, which arise from the conversation of men who are endeavouring to promote the glory of the Creator, and the good of their fellow-creatures.

"I consider you, too, with the greater respect, as I believe you were one of the first of my encouragers at the outset of the little plan I was the humble instrument of suggesting to the world.

"I thank you, my good friend, for communicating the pleasing recital from Colchester. What a wide and extensive field of rational enjoyment opens to our view, could we allow the improvement of human nature to become the source of pleasure.

"Instead of training horses to the course, and viewing with delight their exertions at Newmarket, let our men of fortune turn their eyes to an exhibition like that at Colchester. Impart to them a small portion of that solid enjoyment, which a mind like yours must receive from the glorious sight. Children, more neglected than the beasts of the field, now taught to relish the comfort of decency, and good order, and to know that their own happiness greatly depends on promoting the happiness of others. When the community begins to reap the benefit of these principles, let us hope that this nation will manifest to the world the blessed effects of a general diffusion of Christianity. The great reformers of past times have been only removing obstructions in our way. Let us hope that the day is approaching, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." The number of children admitted into a state of culture in this short period, seems to me little less

miraculous than the draught of fishes; and would incline us to think, that the prophecy above quoted is advancing to its completion. Some French gentlemen, members of the Royal Academy at Paris, were with me last week; and were so strongly impressed with the probable effects of this scheme of civilization, that they have taken all the pieces I have printed on the subject, and intend proposing establishments of a similar nature in some of their parishes in the provinces, by way of experiment. We have seen the rapid progress of Christianity. Dr. Adam Smith, who has so ably written on the Wealth of Nations, says, "No plan has promised to effect a change of manners, with equal ease and simplicity, since the days of the Apostles." "I have sent you my paper of this week, that you may see we are extending towards Wales, with the improvement of a School of Industry.

"I have only room to add, that I am, dear sir,

"Your sincere friend and servant,

"July 12, 1787. R. RAIKES."

"P. S.—Send me "The World," in which the Colchester letter appeared."*

The following resolution was adopted at the general meeting of the Sunday School Society, held July 11, 1787:

"Resolved, unanimously, that in considera-

* Mr. Fox had published his Account of the Colchester Anniversary in the paper called the World June, 1787.

tion of the zeal and merits of Robert Raikes, Esq. of Gloucester, who may be considered as the original founder, as well as the liberal promoter of Sunday Schools, he be admitted an honorary member of this Society."

January 10, 1787, the committee report, "that sundry answers to their circular letter to the superintendents had been received, from all of which they have the pleasure to observe that the schools are in general well attended, that the scholars not only learn to read, but that their general behaviour affords ample proof of the utility of the design. Nor can your committee help remarking, that children thus educated *have, in many instances, by an orderly conduct shamed their parents from the practice of vices to which they were before addicted.* And that the very neighbourhoods in which such schools are established, exhibit examples of decency, regularity, and security, to which they had long been unaccustomed."

April 9, 1788, the report states, "your committee have reason to hope that an attempt will be made in Ireland to form a society similar to that of our own, and they are about sending over the several papers and letters which they have generally circulated here, with a view of giving every information and encouragement to promote so desirable an undertaking in that kingdom." This was effected after an interval of more than twenty years, as we shall hereafter relate.

In October, 1788, it was suggested to the

Sunday School Society, that it would be desirable to extend its aid to Wales, but the subject was adjourned, on account of the state of the finances. July 11, 1798, an additional subscription was commenced for the benefit of Sunday Schools in Wales; and on the 9th of January, 1800, both the funds were united together. So great was the progress of Sunday Schools in Wales, that, in three years, 177 schools were established, containing 8,040 children. In July, 1799, the committee informed the Society of their intention, "if possible, to print an edition of the New Testament, in the Welch language, a measure which they had much at heart, being convinced of its great propriety and necessity; that the knowledge which had been acquired in Sunday Schools might be directed to the Scriptures, which are of infinite importance to the bodies and souls of men." We have heard that this want of the Scriptures, occasioned by Sunday Schools, led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and our country has surely the greatest reason for gratitude, that when her poor were taught to read, and to appreciate the word of God, by Sunday Schools, a society was formed which puts the Bible into the hands of our well-educated youth. The following extract from the report of the committee, delivered the 10th of October, 1804, is to this point:

"While the committee rejoice in the testimonies which they have received of the *particular* good consequences resulting from their

labours, they cannot but advert with more than ordinary satisfaction, to that *general* impression which the Society, under the blessing of God, has made upon the minds of the lower orders of the community. It has been recently proved that the Scriptures are sought for with uncommon avidity in many parts of the island; and it is worthy of remark, that the very evidence which proves that a desire to peruse the Scriptures has been excited, affords an equal proof that the honour of having excited it, belongs in the greatest degree to the institution and encouragement of Sunday Schools."

The exertions of the Rev. Thomas Charles, of Bala, were eminently successful, in establishing Sunday Schools in Wales: they were commenced about 1789, and have proved extensively useful.

Sunday Schools have continued to prosper in Wales, to the present time, and have taught great numbers, both of the young and the adult poor, to read and to value the sacred Scriptures.

In the report of the Stockport Sunday School for 1797, it is remarked, "that several who were taken into the school, ignorant of letters, are now making the most grateful return by becoming diligent teachers therein; others, grown to years of maturity, are comfortably settled in life, and become useful members of society, whilst some who had been cut off in the bloom of youth, had died in full prospect of a glorious immortality, with their latest breath praying for their benefactors."

In the history of Sunday Schools, not only has the providence of God appeared in raising up gratuitous teachers, but also in rendering these institutions the means of self-perpetuation. And we may state, from experience and observation, that some of the most effective teachers have thus been raised from the ranks, who have been thoroughly initiated in the system of instruction, and devotedly attached to their work, from a sense of gratitude, as well as duty. May the number of such individuals be increased a thousand fold!

In Scotland, which has long been distinguished by its attention to education, it was at first thought that Sunday Schools were not needed, and consequently very few were established till about the year 1797. It should be observed, that the Sabbath Schools in Scotland, are generally held only in the evening, from six to eight o'clock, and that the communication of religious instruction is their sole object, as the children have been taught to read the Scriptures, before they are admitted.

The Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath School Society opened its first school in March, 1797. The Aberdeen Sabbath Evening School Society was established the same year, and, soon after, similar societies and schools were established in most of the populous places in Scotland.

The next remarkable era in the history of Sunday Schools, is the establishment of the Sunday School Union, in 1803.

In reviewing the state of religion we are

struck with pleasing surprise at beholding its rapid progress during the few years which have elapsed since the commencement of the nineteenth century. In our opinion, nothing has contributed more to produce this pleasing effect than that unity and love by which the children of God have been so generally influenced. Formerly, the spirit of Christianity seems to have been almost lost in the collision of parties, and the animosities of jarring sects; and thus while religion at home was drooping, very few efforts were made to diffuse its blessings abroad. But when the public mind became enlightened and sanctified by pious instruction, and the circulation of the Scriptures, bigotry, hatred, and discord, withdrew, like spectres, compelled to retreat at the approach of daylight, and they now only haunt the imaginations of the timid, the unenlightened, or the superstitious. The society of which we are about to give some account, bears the name of UNION in its title, and a union it is for a most important purpose,—to promote the great cause of Sunday Schools. The efforts of any individual, however wise or active he might be, would be productive of but little benefit, when compared with the good resulting from the combined exertions of *many* benevolent persons. Raikes might have laboured till the termination of his long life, surrounded by a few Sunday scholars in the vicinity of his residence, had he not aroused the attention of his countrymen to his plans, and directed their energies to these institutions.

In detached situations, with different plans of instruction, and without any means of communicating with each other, Sunday School teachers continued for a considerable time to proceed silently in their benevolent employment. But it was found that zeal thus private and retired would be likely soon to languish; improvements in education would be only partially known or adopted, and intelligence which might animate wavering exertion, direct inquiring benevolence, and promote more energetic and extensive plans for instruction, could not be generally communicated by any existing mediums. Hence the necessity of a Sunday School Union, in which gratuitous teachers from different schools might assemble to encourage and direct each other in their arduous labours.

This becoming the subject of conversation at a prayer meeting among some Sunday School teachers, who were much impressed with a sense of the importance of the object and its practicability, they resolved to call a meeting of the teachers and friends of Sunday Schools, to consider this subject more at large, and to adopt measures for carrying it into execution. Accordingly, on the 13th July, 1803, a numerous assembly was convened at Surry Chapel school rooms. The subject excited considerable attention, its expediency and usefulness were generally acknowledged, and the fundamental rules of the Society were formed.

The *objects* of this Union are: First,—To stimulate and encourage those who are engaged

as Sunday School teachers to greater exertions in the education and religious instruction of the ignorant. Secondly, By mutual communications to improve the methods of tuition. Thirdly, to enlarge existing schools, ascertain those situations in London and its vicinity, where Sunday Schools are most wanted, and endeavour to establish them. Fourthly, to supply books and stationary suited for Sunday Schools at reduced prices. Fifthly, To correspond with ministers and other persons, in the United Kingdom and abroad, relative to Sunday Schools, and to afford them such assistance in the formation of Sunday Schools, and Sunday School Unions, as the funds will permit; but in carrying these objects into effect, this Society shall not, in any way, interfere with the *private* concerns of Sunday Schools.

When the Union was thus commenced, one of its first employments was to consider what spelling books were best adapted for Sunday Schools; but finding none exactly suited for the purpose, especially with respect to religious and moral instruction, they determined to compile one, in two parts, for general use. This spelling book, the lessons of which are chiefly extracted from the Scriptures, must have occasioned considerable labour, and is certainly creditable to the infant exertions of this Society.

Besides this, "a plan for the formation and regulation of Sunday Schools," and several other very useful books were published by the Union, and these beneficial exertions have been

continued and increased up to the present time. "The Youth's Magazine" was also commenced under the sanction of the Committee.

In 1810, the principle of Sunday School Unions was carried into the country, and the Nottingham and Hampshire Sunday School Unions were formed.

Soon many counties, cities, and large towns, adopted a similar plan; so that, at present, upwards of seventy of these societies have been organized, which have diffused the means of instruction to a great extent in many parts of Great Britain, and have been productive of innumerable benefits, wherever they have been instituted.

Previous to the establishment of the Unions, Sunday School teachers resembled scattered warriors in an enemy's country: individually, and in their separate stations, they had been valiant and victorious; but a combination of talent, of energy, and of means, was much needed. By these societies, the instructors of the young, led forward under the banner of Union, have commenced a combined, and, we trust, irresistible, attack against ignorance and vice,—those worst of enemies to the human race.

The disunited efforts of pious individuals may produce several local benefits; but it is by *the union* of many, that great and extensive plans must be carried into effect, and a general attack be made on the strong holds of folly and wickedness. Hence arises the necessity of the establishment of *Sunday School Unions in every district of Britain*, as the most effectual plan

for removing the ignorance and depravity which still too much prevail. Let the friends of Christ and of the young unite their efforts universally, and soon, in every village and every hamlet, where ignorance has long maintained an undisputed dominion, the voice of instruction will be heard,—the Sabbath will be kept holy to the Lord,—the youthful poor will rise up to call the Redeemer blessed,—and the hills and the valleys will re-echo the Saviour's praise, from the mouths of babes and sucklings.

The advantages which flow from the establishment of Sunday School Unions are too numerous to be all minutely detailed; we shall state a few of them, for the encouragement of those who may be desirous of forming such institutions.

At the formation of a Sunday School Union, the public attention is directed to investigate the state of education throughout the district; and the leading object of the society is, to endeavour to supply this deficiency. When the Union is established, the natural inquiry at the several meetings of the committee is, What places are destitute of schools?—What churches or chapels in the district are without Sunday Schools?—And how can we supply them? or stimulate the attention of others towards them? Union furnishes both the plan and the means; individuals may form projects and suggest plans of extensive utility, but it is only by *union* that they can be carried into full effect, and become generally adopted. The tendency of Unions

to promote the extension of Sunday Schools, is not merely theoretical: happily, in those districts where these Societies have been established, practical experience has proved their beneficial influence; so that many thousands, and tens of thousands of children, who would otherwise have continued immersed in ignorance, now rise up as evidences to prove the extensive utility of Sunday School Unions. The advantages of Unions have also been felt in schools already established. They have been supplied with books from the *Depot in London*, at the lowest scale of prices, by which their funds have been rendered adequate to more extensive usefulness; and their union has led to an increase in the number of teachers and scholars; to improvements in the methods of imparting instruction; to augmented zeal and activity in the teachers; and thus they have advanced the general welfare of these establishments.

A Sunday School Union produces many advantages which can be attained in no other way. Great are the benefits which flow from mutual advice and assistance, in promoting the objects of Sunday Schools. Information is extended—useful plans and pleasing facts are reported—the general experience is rendered available to individuals—mutual encouragements excite each other's zeal—mutual prayers, ascending to the throne of grace, bring abundant blessings from the God of love. Every labourer in this cause must feel that he sometimes requires stimulating, that he is tempted to grow languid,

and decline from his toils, and to fear that all his exertions have been futile, and may as well be discontinued; but, by the mutual intercourse which a Sunday School Union establishes, his zeal is invigorated, his heart is warmed, and he is excited to go on, through every difficulty, labouring more zealously for the promotion of the religious interests of the rising generation.

In the Union of Sunday School teachers, there is no sacrifice of principle, no compromise of duty, no interference with the internal management of the several schools. All discordant elements are banished, and union with Christ and with each other, forms the basis of the association. Union, to be effective, must consist in something more than the name: the feelings must be deeply excited, the whole soul interested, and we must sincerely sympathize with each other in our joys and sorrows. We must gladly bear each other's burthens, and thus fulfil the law of Christ. We must blend the harmlessness of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent, and evince our love to Jesus, to his cause, and to his people, by the ardour of our feelings, the energy of our conduct, and the amplitude of our benevolence.

Some teachers may reason thus: "We are doing very well, why should we unite with others; we will leave them to themselves, while we restrict our attention to our own particular schools." Alas! that a Christian should think of confining his affections and his labours within the narrow circle in which he moves; and

that he should feel no fervid desire for the extension of the Sunday School system. We cannot help pitying and admonishing that individual teacher who is not anxious to advance the general cause of Sunday Schools; or who refuses to unite with his fellow Christians in promoting, to as wide an extent as possible, the general diffusion of religious education. Is not such conduct unworthy the character of a Sunday School teacher? If all who have engaged in this work had been of a similar mind, we venture to state our conviction, that Sunday Schools could not have been extended so widely as they are at present. Let the contracted feelings of party spirit be now banished from our minds; let us meet together as Christians, and as fellow-labourers, and "let brotherly love continue." *Why should not those unite in exertion here, who expect to unite in praise hereafter?* May the spirit of heaven, of unity, and of love, be more influential in the hearts and lives of all true Christians, and especially among those who are employed in educating the rising generation.

Facts, however, are the best proofs of the advantages of Sunday School Unions. The following returns are specimens of the beneficial effect of Unions in extending Sunday Schools:

| | <i>Scholars Reported.</i> | <i>Scholars Reported.</i> |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Nottingham Sunday School Union, in 1810, 4834 in 1825, 23,240 | | |
| Hampshire . . . ditto . . . 1810, 1743 ditto 7,116 | | |
| Sheffield . . . ditto . . . 1813, 3186 ditto 11,182 | | |
| Bath . . . ditto . . . 1813, 864 ditto 5,608 | | |
| Increase in Four Unions 36,579 | | |
| | <u>47,206</u> | <u>47,206</u> |

Sunday Schools have, in a particular manner, prepared the way for the operations of the Bible Society; and as all denominations unite in diffusing the Scriptures, they should surely join in bestowing the ability to read them; for the gift of a Bible to those persons who are incapable of reading it, would be like presenting a warrior's sword to the helpless babe: the untutored poor are unable to wield that mighty weapon, "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Let the friends of the Bible and of the youthful poor concur in their labours of love. Let a Sunday School Union be established in every neighbourhood, and we have no doubt that it will be found most delightful and beneficial. Sunday School Unions strengthen the bonds of brotherly love; they prevent languishing schools from declining; and lead to the establishment of new schools in situations which require them. They are eminently calculated to advance one of the best causes—the religious instruction of the young, by one of the best means—the pious and disinterested exertions of Christians; who, by union of strength and division of labour, act with greater energy and success. We are persuaded, that if Sunday School Unions were universally established, the beneficial consequences would be incalculably great to the present rising generation, and their advantages would be perpetuated throughout future ages; but it is eternity alone that can fully develop the blessed results of Sunday Schools and Sunday School Unions.

The total numbers reported to the Sunday School Union up to the first of May, 1825, were,

| | <i>Schools.</i> | <i>Teachers.</i> | <i>Scholars.</i> |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| In Great Britain, - - - - | 5,764 | 62,447 | 666,535 |
| In Ireland, - - - - - | 1,967 | 12,337 | 171,492 |
| Total, - - - - - | 7,731 | 75,284 | 838,027 |

It should be here observed, that these returns, as to scholars and teachers, are frequently defective; and that from many parts of the country no returns have been yet obtained, consequently the actual number are much greater than these totals exhibit.

On the 13th of May, 1812, the anniversary of the Sunday School Union was agreed to be held in the large room at the City of London Tavern, Bishopsgate-street, at an early hour in the morning; after breakfast the Report was read, and the general business transacted. These public meetings have been continued since, and have been kept up with increasing interest to the present time. As the Reports of the Sunday School Union from 1812 have been published from year to year, we shall conclude our notice of its operations, by stating, that the Society is proceeding prosperously, and that it merits far greater pecuniary support than it has ever yet received.

For nearly thirty years Mr. Raikes was permitted to witness the growing extension of Sunday Schools, and he was humbly thankful that the Divine blessing had so remarkably attended these humble seminaries. From 1809 to 1811, Mr. Raikes' health was declining. On

the evening of the 5th of April, 1811, he experienced an oppression on his chest; a physician immediately attended him, and declared that his case was hopeless; in little more than half an hour he expired, in his native city, Gloucester, and in the 75th year of his age.

Thus he came *to his grave in a full age*, and might, surely, have solaced his life's decline with the promise of his great Exemplar—*Blessed art thou, for these cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*

In the south aisle of the ancient church of St. Mary de Cyrpt, Gloucester, this venerable philanthropist was buried. There is an inscription on his monument, the first part of which relates to his parents; we copy the remainder, concerning the Founder of Sunday Schools:

ROBERTI etiam horum Filii natu
maximi Qui Scholis Sabbaticis
hic primum a se institutis
nec non apud alios
Felici opera Studioque sub com-
mendatis obiit die April 5
Anno { Anno Salutis 1811
 { Etatis suæ
 75.

Also, of
ROBERT
Their Eldest Son
By whom Sabbath Schools were first instituted

in this place;
 and were also,
 By his successful exertion and assiduity,
 Recommended to others.
 He died on the 5th day of April
 In the Year { of our Salvation 1811.
 { of his age 75.

While heroes who have fought for their country have their names recorded on splendid public monuments, this humble inscription is all that commemorates one who was a greater benefactor to this nation than its most successful warriors; but perhaps the best monuments to the memory of Raikes are the numerous Sunday Schools which are spread throughout our country—the best tribute we can render to his memory, is an energetic imitation of his example.

We are happy to inform our readers, that an excellent portrait of the Founder of Sunday Schools has been published, and is sold at 19, Paternoster Row. From the best authority we learn “that the resemblance is accurately preserved.” Certainly Mr. Raikes’ fine countenance is a model of mildness and benevolence, worthy of his inestimable character.

We shall conclude our sketch of Mr. Raikes’ life by the following anecdote, which he himself related :*

* Taken from Douglass’ Facts and Anecdotes of Sunday Schools.

“One day as I was going to church, I overtook a soldier just entering the church-door; this was on a week day. As I passed him, I said it gave me pleasure to see that he was going to a place of worship.” “Ah! Sir,” said he, “I may thank you for that.” “Me!” said I, “why, I do not know that I ever saw you before.” “Sir,” said he, “when I was a little boy, I was indebted to you for my first instruction in my duty. I used to meet you at the morning service, in this cathedral, and was one of your Sunday scholars. My father, when he left this city, took me into Berkshire, and put me apprentice to a shoemaker. I used often to think on you. At length I went to London; and was there drawn to serve as a militia-man in the Westminster militia. I came to Gloucester last night with a deserter, and took the opportunity of coming this morning to visit the old spot, and in hopes of once more seeing you.”

He then told me his name; and brought himself to my recollection by a curious circumstance, which happened whilst he was at school. His father was a journeyman carrier, a most vile, profligate man. After the boy had been some time at school he came one day and told me that his father was wonderfully changed, and that he had left off going to the ale-house on a Sunday. It happened, soon after, that I met the man in the street, and said to him, “My dear friend, it gives me great pleasure to hear that you have left off going to the ale-house on

the Sunday; your boy tells me that you now stay at home, and never get tipsy." "Sir," said he, "I may thank you for it." "Nay," said I, "that is impossible: I do not recollect that I ever spoke to you before." "No, sir," said he, "but the good instructions you give my boy, he brings home to me, and it is that, sir, which has induced me to reform my life."

The next subject that requires our attention is the establishment of Sunday Schools in Ireland. We do not know at what time they were introduced; it is probable that some of these institutions were formed in a private manner, soon after their commencement in England, but no general efforts were made till November 1809, when the Sunday School Society for Ireland was organized. The object of this very important Society is, to disseminate the most approved plans of instruction, and to supply spelling-books and the Scriptures gratuitously, or at reduced prices, to the Sunday Schools throughout Ireland, without any interference with their internal management. This Society is patronized by some of the most exalted and most excellent persons in Ireland, and has proceeded in its benevolent course from year to year, with growing success.

The following statement, taken from the latest report of the Society, will show the progressive increase in the number of its schools, from the period of its establishment in November 1809, to the present time.

| | | Schools. | Scholars |
|------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1810 | - Nov. | 2 | 87 |
| 1811 | - Do. | 44 | 5,172 |
| 1813 | - April | 117 | 15,800 |
| 1814 | - Do. | 175 | 23,529 |
| 1815 | - Do. | 252 | 28,598 |
| 1816 | - Do. | 335 | 37,590 |
| 1817 | - Do. | 418 | 49,981 |
| 1818 | - Do. | 522 | 57,819 |
| 1819 | - Do. | 762 | 81,114 |
| 1820 | - Do. | 1,021 | 108,774 |
| 1821 | - Do. | 1,247 | 127,897 |
| 1822 | - Do. | 1,395 | 144,848 |
| 1823 | - Do. | 1,519 | 149,782 |
| 1824 | - Do. | 1,640 | 157,184 |
| 1825 | - Do. | 1,702 | 150,831 |

From the Parliamentary Report of the Irish Education Inquiry, dated 30th May, 1825, we make the following extracts, which both shew the proceedings of this important Society, and illustrate the Sunday School system.

“The number of scholars in the schools of the Society over Ireland generally appears to have been, at the period referred to (March 1824,) in the ratio of one to 44 of the whole population. It is to be observed, however, that this does not furnish the total number of scholars receiving instruction in Protestant Sunday Schools, as there are others not connected with this Society, which are either aided by other associations, or carried on by individuals who do not apply for assistance. The comparative extent to which the system has been already carried in Ulster, may be estimated from the circumstance, that the Sunday School teachers

in that province are nearly double the number of the scholars in the whole province of Munster; the teachers in Ulster being, according to the general report of the Society in 1824, 9,471; and the scholars in Munster being, by the same report, 5,663. The number of scholars in Ulster, in March 1824, was 125,272.—The total number in the other three provinces of Ireland, was 31,912.

“It appears that in the north of Ireland instances occur, where servants make it a condition of their engagement, that they shall be allowed a certain portion of time on Sunday for their attendance at the school.

“From a communication which has been transmitted to us by the secretary of the Society, subsequent to his examination, in order to show the actual state of the schools down to the latest returns furnished to them, it appears, that during the year which ended in March last (1825,) although there was an increase of 62 schools, and 259 gratuitous teachers, there was a decrease of scholars to the amount of 6,353. This reduction in the number of scholars is ascribed by the secretary to the following causes, viz.

“First.—More accurate information of the state of the schools (obtained through the medium of parochial maps, prepared by the society,) from which it was ascertained that several schools retained on the Society’s list had failed, but the failure of which had not been reported to the Society by their several conductors.

“Second.—An approved system in the man-

agement of schools, in consequence of which their conductors have furnished more accurate returns of the number of scholars in actual attendance.

“Third.—It is ascribed principally to the general establishment, during the last year, of schools held on Sundays, in the Roman Catholic chapels, which measure has withdrawn from the neighbouring Sunday Schools many of the children of that communion.

“The most remarkable features of the plan on which this Society acts, are its simplicity, and the important results which are produced when compared with its very limited expenditure. This must be ascribed in a great measure to the description of the teachers in the Sunday Schools, and to the circumstance that their services are gratuitous; a peculiarity which is, however, of still greater importance in a moral view, than in reference to considerations of economy.

“It is another characteristic of the system, that the Society assumes no direction or control whatever as to the management of the schools, or the plan of teaching. Although they distribute the Scriptures without commentary, they abstain from inquiring whether any such is superadded by the teachers. In like manner they do not forbid the use of Catechisms, although none are supplied by them. Another peculiarity which has led to the extension of these schools is, that they are formed with great facility. There is no stipendiary master to be

sought for and engaged, and no apparatus, but a few books, to be provided. The children of a district are often invited, if the use a school room cannot be had, to assemble in the church or other place of worship, before or after divine service, or they are brought to any other place convenient for the purpose.

“The mechanism of the school is also productive of important advantages. The instructors are sufficiently numerous, in most cases, to allow a division of the scholars into small classes, and thus to admit of a much closer and more scrupulous attention to the individual scholars. Another, and still greater advantage of the plan allowed and recommended by the Society, and as it is practised in most, if not all of these schools, is, that the scholar does not learn his lesson mechanically, and by the efforts of memory alone. It is the great object of a Sunday School teacher to communicate not merely the power of reading, but to insure the understanding of what is read, which in many other cases the teacher has not the opportunity, though he may have the ability of effecting. The children themselves have a peculiar pleasure in attending these schools; and instances have been stated to us, where the endeavour to prevent their resorting to them, or to withdraw them to other places for instruction, has proved unavailing. A few schools have been opened for the instruction of adults exclusively. But the Sunday School is attended occasionally by grown persons, and by many youths who are

above the age of ordinary reading scholars. It appears from a published report of the Society for the year ended April, 1822, that the number of persons attending the schools at that time, who were above the age of 15, was, in the province of

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|--------|
| Ulster | - | - | - | 14,048 |
| In Leinster | - | - | - | 2,119 |
| In Connaught | - | - | - | 616 |
| In Munster | - | - | - | 346 |

Making a total of - 17,129

“The Sunday Schools in general are composed of a more mixed description of persons, both in respect of age and station, than the attendants on the ordinary day schools; and in consequence of the places where they are sometimes held, such as the cottages of the poor themselves, or the dwelling of the patron and teacher, those individuals are often induced to join them who would be deterred by its publicity from appearing at the ordinary school house. This system of instruction has found its way also into some of the hospitals and jails, and has extended its influence to many quarters which were before inaccessible to the means of moral and intellectual improvement.

“Of the general good effects produced by this class of schools, and their influence in promoting the moral culture of the people, we have received very strong proofs from the testimony of those who have attended to their operation.

“Mr. La Touche, who has acted gratuitously

as its secretary, since its first establishment, and to whose exertions the Society has been much indebted, thus expresses himself on the subject :—" The best system of Sunday School instruction is where it is spread over the parish, and where the teachers and children live near each other, because it should not be supposed that the instruction of the Sunday School is merely that which takes place on the Sunday. The teacher forms a parental affection for his pupil, and the pupil a filial feeling towards his teacher, and that is carried on during the week, and if a child is seen doing any thing wrong in the week day, the teacher considers he has a right to find fault with him, and keeps his eye upon him,—then again, the teacher, as it has been represented to me, becomes more circumspect in his conduct, he knows he is under the eye of his pupils, and he would be ashamed to be seen doing a thing on a week day that he told the children not to do on the Sunday ;—then again the lessons for the next Sunday are to be prepared during the week ; they are generally portions of Scripture to be committed to memory, that brings necessarily not only the Scriptures before the child's mind, giving him something to think of, but it brings it before the members of the family, as he frequently puts the book into the hands of his family to hear him recite his lessons, so that the Holy Scriptures are brought more closely in contact with the poor, by the Sunday Schools."—" The Sunday School is a kind of channel in which all the good feel

ings and better principles of the upper classes can be conveyed to the lower; it brings them in contact together, and tends considerably to harmonize the different ranks of society."—"I think it is among the clergy of the Established Church that Sunday School instruction has increased, and is likely to increase—the high approbation of several dignitaries of the Church has been given to the system of Sunday School instruction."

"I am convinced that the feelings of the Presbyterian population in the north are very favourable to Sunday School instruction, and they are becoming progressively more so from the experience they have had of the excellent effects of it."

"The testimony of the Rev. Dr. Elrington, the Rev. Mr. Cooke, and others, whom we have examined on the subject, is to the same effect.

"It is impossible, indeed, to witness the proceedings of these schools, even in the most cursory manner, without perceiving their beneficial tendency.

"The influence on moral character, which has already been produced in those parts of Ireland, where institutions of this kind have been formed, is attested by undoubted authority. A marked improvement in principle and conduct, an increased respect to moral obligation, a more general observance of relative duties, and a greater deference to the laws, are invariably represented as among the fruits of the edu-

cation there received; and we entertain no doubt that it is one of the most powerful instruments for raising the character and advancing the general welfare of the people.

“Among the benefits which result generally from the exertions of the Sunday School Society, we think it important to notice those which are produced by the increased intercourse, and the more near approach, which these institutions are the means of producing, between the different classes of the people. A mutual attachment and interest is created between the teacher and the pupil, which is productive of benefit, while the course of instruction continues, and is not likely to terminate with the occasion which gives rise to it. It affords a new and powerful incitement for good conduct, the effects of which are not confined to the scholar, and which by tending to remove prejudice, and to conciliate regard, is necessarily productive of improvement in the general state of society.”

The testimony to the beneficial influence of Sunday Schools in Ireland, we trust, will be the means of exciting increased attention to these humble but efficient seminaries, which communicate far greater benefits than a casual spectator would imagine.

We may also observe that the report of the London Hibernian Society for 1825, states, that their Sunday Schools contain 17,145 scholars.

The next subject that we shall notice is the establishment of Adult Schools by the benevo-

lent efforts of the Rev. Thomas Charles, A. B., Episcopal minister of Bala, Merionethshire, in the summer of 1811. The following is an extract of a characteristic letter from Mr. Charles, to the Secretary of the Hampshire Sunday School Union, dated April 2, 1812.

“DEAR SIR,—Observing the date of your last, I am ashamed and grieved it has been so long by me unnoticed. My only apology must be, my continual engagements. It seems to me, at times, as if the Lord had given me work to do, without proportional time to accomplish it. However, God forbid I should complain of the accumulation of the most noble and important work in the world, without the success of which we may as well have no world to live in—if this does not succeed, the success of all other engagements is vain. I am happy to find, by your letter, that your spirits are invigorated to proceed with the blessed work of instructing the rising generation, notwithstanding the obstacles you have met with. My maxim has been, for many years past, to aim at great things, but if I cannot accomplish great things, to do what I can, and to be thankful for the least success; and still to follow on, without being discouraged at the day of small things, or by unexpected reverses. For many years, I have laid it down as a maxim to guide me, *never to give up a place in despair of success.* If one way does not succeed, new means must be tried; and if I see no increase this year, perhaps I may the next. I almost wish to blot the word *impossible* out of

my vocabulary, and to obliterate it out of the minds of my brethren—my fellow-labourers. Our enemy is a vanquished foe; resist him, and he will flee from you. Surely we may safely rely on the promise of him who is Almighty, and hath promised to be with us always.

“Observing and bewailing the great number of the illiterate grown-up and old people in our poor country, I have in different places published Sunday Schools exclusively for them, having another in the same place for children; telling them at the same time, that we meant to be urgent upon them—never cease to press them to attend until they came. By kindness and importunateness we have succeeded far beyond our most sanguine hopes. We have six of these schools for the aged set up within these three or four months, and some hundreds have learned, and are learning to read. By condescension, kindness, and patience, they have been engaged to learn, and their desire for learning soon became as great as any we have seen among the young people. They have their little elementary books with them often whilst at work, and meet in the evenings, of their own accord, to teach one another. The rumour of the success of these schools has spread abroad, and has greatly removed the discouragement which old people felt from attempting to learn, from the general persuasion, that they could not learn at their age. This has been practically proved to be false, for old people of seventy-five years of age have learned to read in these schools, to

their great comfort and joy. I dare not vouch positively for the conversion of any of them; but I can say, that they are much improved in their moral conduct and attendance on the means of grace. They lament with tears their former ignorance, and rejoice they can read, and repeat *memoriter* a few verses of the Bible given them to learn. In some degree their blind minds are enlightened; and their hearts are impressed by divine truths, until they are greatly melted into tears of joy, mixed with sorrow—Pray for them! I began these schools for five aged in my own neighbourhood, but mean to drive them on, and set them up in all parts of the country, as soon as I possibly can.

“I am happy to inform you also, for your encouragement, that in several districts, very great, powerful, and general awakenings have broke out, since the beginning of last winter, among the children and young people attending the Sunday Schools. Above 140 have joined one society within these three months past. I visited them last month; a hundred on a week day met me to be publicly catechised. They are of all ages, from five to thirty, and their number is so great as to include nearly all the young people in the district. I catechised them before all the country, and their responses in every instance were scriptural, and intelligent, always confirmed by a passage of scripture. I did not confine myself to one subject only; but asked them questions upon every subject of importance in the Christian religion.

to see whether they had obtained a clear connected view of them, and in every instance I was highly satisfied. Their appearance was solemn and serious, often much affected. The work goes on there, not like tugging and rowing a flat in dead waters, but like a ship sailing in full tide, with all her sails up, and the wind powerfully filling them. My own mind experienced such impressions whilst among them, as can never be obliterated. I thought it more than abundant recompense for all my labours these twenty-six years past, in endeavouring to instruct the young people of our poor country. Not unto us!—Not unto us!—But to thy name, O Lord, be all the glory. I wish you success in the name of the Lord. I shall be always glad to hear from you. Pray for, dear sir,

“Your unworthy, but faithful servant,
“THOMAS CHARLES.”

“P. S. I endeavour to go on in a wholesale way. I publicly address the whole country; press all to attend the schools, either to teach or to be taught. By persevering in this plan, I have gained upon the population in general to a great extent; in some districts all attend, without any exception.”

In a letter to Dr. Pole, dated January 4, 1814, Mr. Charles says, “We had no particular school for their instruction *exclusively* till the summer of 1811, though many attended the Sunday Schools with the children, in different parts of the country, previous to that time.

What induced me first to think of establishing such an institution, was the aversion I found in the adults to associate with the children in their schools. The first attempt succeeded wonderfully, far beyond my most sanguine expectation, and still continues in a most prosperous state. The report of the success of this school soon spread over the country, and, in many places, the illiterate adults began to *call for instruction*. In one county, after a public address had been delivered to them on that subject, the adult poor, even the aged, flocked to the Sunday Schools in crowds; and the shopkeepers could not immediately supply them with an adequate number of spectacles. Our schools, in general, are kept in our chapels; in some districts, where there are no chapels, farmers, in the summer time, lend their barns. The adults and children are sometimes in the same room, but placed in different parts of it. When their attention is gained and fixed, they soon learn; their age makes no great difference, if they are able, by the help of glasses, to see the letters. As the adults have no time to lose, we endeavour (before they can read) to instruct them without delay in the first principles of Christianity. We select a short portion of Scripture, comprising in plain terms the leading doctrines, and repeat them to the learners till they can retain them in their memories; and which they are to repeat the next time we meet.

“It is impossible for me, at present, to ascertain the number of adults in the schools: in

many districts they all attend; and the beneficial effects of them are every where observed."

Some of the earliest separate Adult Sunday Schools were formed at Bristol, by a philanthropist in humble life, William Smith, whose efforts were efficiently supported by Stephen Prust, Esq., a pious and benevolent merchant of that city. In 1813, a regular and efficient society was formed, which continues to the present time. Many similar societies have been established in various places throughout the country. We shall rejoice when the *necessity* for Adult Schools ceases, but till that time, we trust they will be continued with spirit and perseverance.

It is manifestly a great advantage for adults to be taught in schools by themselves. Wherever Adult Schools have been established, it has been found difficult to secure a regular attendance, and therefore many attempts have failed. It is highly desirable, that those persons who have not had the advantage of youthful instruction, should now be taught to read the Holy Scriptures without any further delay; and it is an encouraging circumstance, proved by numerous facts, that if adults have a real desire to learn, they make much more rapid progress than children, and, in fact, can commonly learn to read the Testament in six months.

In order to show that even aged adults can learn to read, we beg to state the following facts, extracted from the Report of the Gainsborough Adult School Society:

"An old woman, aged 94, at Ipswich work-

house, without spectacles, made better progress than the juniors, one of whom she undertook to instruct. A woman at Manchester, who, to use her own words, 'wanted only two years of 100,' went to a boys' school and received instructions from one of the monitors; she reads in the school in an audible manner. In Gloucestershire, an old woman, aged 73, and her husband, aged 80, were soon taught to read easy Scripture. The husband had been an immoral man, and a great boxer, but is now an improved character, and says, the Scripture verses afford him great comfort when he lies awake in the night. Dr. Pole mentions a child teaching its grandfather, whilst sitting upon his knee. The following communication is from Ireland: Scenes like the following are truly interesting. In a village, where lately the Scriptures were unknown, I found a venerable man, nearly 100 years old, sitting on a large stool, with a Bible in his hand, and many of his neighbours, who, after their labour, had come to hear him read. Two grandchildren were at his knee, teaching him; and as the poor old man went on reading in a faltering manner, they would occasionally correct him, saying, 'stop, grandfather, that is not the right word, this is the word.' The aged instructing the young, is a familiar sight, but here, hoary age, lamenting the want of learning, condescends to receive it of the third generation. Often have children been instrumental in awakening in their parents a concern

for salvation; a precious return for parental care, and like the above, an example of that rare class of phenomena, in which a superlative beauty arises from an inversion of the general order of nature. At Glencalvie, in the islands of Scotland, the people flocked in crowds to the schools; from the veteran Iverach, in his 117th year, to (literally speaking) the infant in its cradle; for a mother had brought her infant in a cradle to the school, that she might not be prevented from attending. The old soldier *entered the army in 1715, and entered the school as a scholar, in 1815.* After learning the alphabet, he was taught to connect short words, when his sight began to fail him."

Sunday Schools have extended from our own country to foreign parts, and we shall now present our readers with a sketch of such information as we have been able to collect on this subject.

In EUROPE, Sunday Schools have been established in France, Holland, Germany, Gibraltar, Malta, and Corfu.

FRANCE. Several Sunday Schools have been established among the Protestants, chiefly in the South. We trust, that these institutions will spread like the leaven, and become the means, as in England, of exciting a spirit of zeal and energy, such as was never before shown among the professors of religion, in France, who have, most of them, been lamentably indifferent to the spread of evangelical instruction. The difficulty of obtaining suitable teachers,

and the too common disregard which is shown to the sanctity of the Sabbath, are the chief impediments to the progress of Sunday Schools in France. Sunday Schools have also been established among the English settled near Calais, and at Charenton, about six miles from Paris.

HOLLAND. Sunday Schools have been established at several places, but it is to be regretted that few of them are conducted so as to make evangelical instruction the most prominent object. We may here make a general remark, that Sunday Schools, at home and abroad, appear to flourish or decay, in exact proportion to the zeal of their conductors, in imparting religious instruction, the exertions of gratuitous teachers may be expected soon to decay, if the souls of the children be not kept continually in view.

GERMANY. Sunday Schools have not made much progress here, but it is hoped, that as a beginning has been made, in time the little one will become a thousand. An English Sunday School has been established for some time at *Hamburg*. A German Sunday School was commenced on the 9th of January, 1825. Persecution arose against the school, but it has prospered, and now contains 119 scholars, and 20 gratuitous and pious teachers. A second German Sunday School has just been established.

In *Gibraltar* a Sunday School has been instituted by the Wesleyan Missionaries, containing 12 teachers, and 103 scholars.

In *Malta* the American Missionaries have established a Sunday School for Greek children; and the London and the Wesleyan Missionary Societies have each an English Sunday School.

At *Corfu* Mrs. Lowndes has formed a Sunday School, containing 25 children.

At the Annual Meeting of the Sunday School Union, May 1825, the following resolution relative to the establishment of Sunday Schools in *Greece*, was unanimously adopted: "That this Society, anxious to promote Christian instruction among the rising race of Greeks, engages to devote to the formation and support of Sabbath Schools among that people, whatever contributions may be forwarded to them for this specific object."

We regret that the distracted state of Greece has hitherto prevented the completion of this design, but the Committee are adopting all the measures in their power to carry it into effect.

In *ASIA*, Sunday Schools have been established in India, Ceylon, New South Wales, Van Dieman's Land, and the South Sea Islands.

INDIA. In heathen countries, where the Sabbath is not regarded by the natives, of course most of the establishments for education will be weekly schools; but we rejoice, that these have prepared the way for the religious instruction of Sunday Schools. As Christianity spreads, the observance of the Sabbath will be a sign to distinguish the Christian from the

heathen population, and we trust, an increasing number of native teachers will be raised up to train the young in Christian principles. Sunday Schools have been established at Calcutta, Madras, Chinsurah, Chittagong, Bellary, Bangalore, Vepery, Bombay, and Vizagapatam.

It is a pleasing fact, that several of the boys who have been educated in the Missionary Schools, have refused to worship the household deities of their heathen parents, and some have become decidedly pious; they will probably furnish the best teachers and missionaries to their own countrymen.

The establishment of native *female* schools in India, is one of the most pleasing circumstances that has recently occurred in the annals of Missionary labours. When it is considered, that, to the mother's care, the young are all committed, in their earliest years, when the character receives its first and most permanent impressions, perhaps no institutions are more promising, in connection with the extension of knowledge, and the diffusion of Christianity.

CEYLON. The following extract of a letter from the Rev. W. M. Harvard,* addressed to Mr. W. Marriott, dated Columbo, Ceylon, 1st September, 1815, will show the origin of Sunday Schools in this Island:

“ One point I am bound to communicate to

* From being a scholar, Mr. H. became afterwards a teacher in the same school, until he became a travelling preacher in the Wesleyan connection, and afterwards went as missionary to Ceylon.

you, as it is a subject in which you will, of course, feel so lively an interest: It is the introduction of the Sunday School system into Asia.*

“On the 4th of June last, (the anniversary of our good old king's birth-day,) we established a Sunday School in the Pettah of Columbo. We had many discouraging assurances from those who thought differently from us; but in the name of God we resolved to make a beginning, and it would have done your heart good to have seen the impulse which it produced among all orders of the people, for, though so well known in England, a Sunday School was never supposed to have an existence in this country.

“I had drawn up an address to the inhabitants explicative of our design, which his excellency the Governor, General Brownrigg, was so good as to permit to be printed gratis at the government press, and likewise that it should be inserted in the Government Gazette; so that the idea will now be circulated throughout India, and will, I hope, give rise to many similar institutions in this large and benighted quarter of the globe.

“The first Sunday, as well as the second, was employed in registering the names of the

* No doubt the first Sunday School in Ceylon; but we have been informed that the Baptist missionaries had previously established a Sunday School in India. We regret that we have not been able to obtain any particulars of their Sunday School, and therefore we must leave the subject in some uncertainty.

children who were brought to us, and who came in such crowds, that we could not give any further attention to them than merely to record their names. The third Sunday was spent in dividing them into classes; the fourth in fixing suitable teachers to them; and, glory be to God, we have one of the finest Sunday Schools I ever beheld, and it is not a few which I have seen. Our number of scholars exceeds 250, and teachers 20. Some of the children can already rehearse the whole of our '*Instructions for Children,*' from beginning to end; and in the minds of some of the teachers we trust our God is at work in a true and saving manner.

"Our press being now at work, we have begun to reprint the first part of the Sunday School Union Spelling-Book."

The Reports of the Ceylon Wesleyan Mission Schools have been very encouraging. In 1824, the number of schools was 61, containing 2,657 boys, and 297 girls. The following is a pleasing extract:

"Nearly all the children join in the responses of the Singhalese Liturgy, and manifest the most becoming attention to the plain discourses which are delivered. The attention of some of them is very striking, the emotions excited by the different turns of the discourse being very distinctly marked on their coloured countenances. A considerable number of the scholars are truly serious, and of the conversion of several of them, in the most eminent sense of the word, there is every satisfactory proof we could

ask. Thus we behold a generation rising up, who are, from their childhood, trained in religious principles and religious habits, who feel the sacredness of the holy Sabbath, and who learn to bow their knees in secret before the Father of the Spirits of all flesh; and we have every reason to trust, concerning a great part of them, that when grown up, they will not depart from the path in which they have been accustomed to walk. The rising generation will form the most solid foundation of a Christian church in Ceylon."

Five of the youths taught in these schools have been engaged as assistant missionaries, and many more are employed in communicating religious instruction to others.

The American missionaries in Ceylon report, that, after earnestly seeking the outpouring of the Holy Spirit's influences, a revival had taken place, and 80 persons, chiefly the elder scholars of both sexes, professed themselves concerned to live a Christian life to the glory of God. The Rev. B. Clough, a Wesleyan missionary, says, "during the last ten years, if I may judge from the progress made in the Wesleyan schools from 10,000 to 15,000 children have been taught to read the Scriptures." The Rev. Mr. Knight, a church missionary, says, "there has been a regular increase of girls at our morning service, from about the time when Mrs. Knight began her instruction on the Sunday afternoon; the number present at our last service was 53,—a greater number than we ever had before, for

this Sunday School is a new thing: it much excites the attention of the mothers, one and another of whom often come and see us, though we have not yet been able to get them to assemble with the other sex to hear the word of God."

NEW SOUTH WALES. It is pleasing to observe, that the excellent institutions of our own country are carried even to our most distant colonies, in which Sunday Schools are especially important, as the labour even of children is there very valuable to their parents, during the days of labour. Sunday Schools were commenced in New South Wales about ten years ago, and have been established at several of the settlements with promising success. The district report of the Wesleyan Sunday Schools states the following circumstance: "We are greatly encouraged by the remarkable but undisputed fact, that the native youth of the colony are, in general, but little contaminated by the evil example which every where surrounds them. It would naturally be apprehended that they would be very early initiated in vicious practices, 'growing with their growth, and strengthening with their strength;' but how pleasing and almost incredible is it to relate, that they are, on the contrary, for the most part characterized by temperance, industry, and an aptitude to receive instruction. Of the rising generation we indulge great and well founded hopes." The following fact, mentioned by Mr. Lawry, will show the impression which British Christian institutions produce on the minds of

savages: a young man from Tonga, one of the Friendly Islands, after visiting New South Wales, on his return described what he had seen to his relatives; he told them especially of the Sunday Schools, and the sacred attention which the people at Port Jackson pay to the Sabbath-day, and then added, "the people of Tonga will never be wise till they adopt the same measures." The Chiefs unanimously replied, "we think so too."

VAN DIEMAN'S LAND. A Sunday School has been established at Hobart's Town, and at Kangaroo Point, and an Adult School at the Penitentiary. The managers of the Sunday School remark, "Over the far greater part of our adult population, we mourn almost 'as those without hope,' so deeply has vice struck its roots into their hearts, and so firmly has it entwined around all the branches of their character. But the rising generation excites our liveliest hopes. The youth of this Colony are in general a docile and a virtuous race; and if religious instruction only be extensively and zealously imparted to their flexible minds, a reformation will be gradually effected in the tone of public morals. These considerations, founded alike on the universal character of man, and on the peculiar circumstances of this portion of the human family, are a never failing source of encouragement to the conductors of our Sunday Schools."

SOUTH SEA ISLANDS. Education is widely extending through several of these interesting

islands. At Huahine, Mr. Charles Barff, formerly a Sunday School teacher in London, thus writes to the Sunday School Union: "We are happy to be able to inform you, that we have, in addition to Day Schools, a Sunday School at Huahine. It is confined exclusively to children; the number in the school is 230 boys, and 120 girls. The reason why the boys are more numerous than the girls is, the female children were more frequently murdered, than were male children, in their horrid custom of infanticide, while the males were saved for the purposes of war, &c. All such horrid customs have long since fallen with their idolatry, we hope never to rise again. The children are instructed by pious native teachers, six females and six males, besides the superintendent."

The employment of *thirteen native teachers* in Huahine, is one of the most pleasing facts in the records of Sunday Schools; it fully attests the beneficial influence of religious instruction, on the minds of those who so lately knew no Sabbath, and felt no concern for their own instruction and salvation.

The following is another pleasing extract of a letter from Mr. Charles Barff, to the Sunday School Union:

"Our Sunday School children, of the first class, have the privilege of learning to write. Upwards of twenty of our children, who were grown up to manhood, have been comfortably married during the past year, and are not only good members of society, but are candidates for

the church of Christ. We have selected four youths to teach them English, preparatory to their reception into an academy in contemplation. Our children and teachers too have increased in number during the past year, so that we have now forty teachers, male and female, among whom are the two kings of the island, Hautia and Mahine, with their good ladies, an office they esteem more than their office of power. The rising generation is our dependence: the present generation must soon pass away, and with them the Christian religion, unless their children are trained up for God. We have 400 dear children at Huahine, and 36 at Moimiti, or Sir Charles Saunderson's Island."

AFRICA, WESTERN. Sunday Schools have been established here by the Church and Methodist Missionary Societies, and by the American Colonization Society; but, on account of the deaths of so many of the Missionaries, they have been exposed to considerable fluctuations.

SOUTH AFRICA. Sunday Schools have been established at Cape Town, also at several of the Missionary stations in the interior. In the new settlements, a Sunday School Union has been established, for the district of Albany. Mr. Shaw observes, "The children of the British settlers lately arrived in this colony, must grow up in entire ignorance, unless Sunday Schools are extensively established—the population of the district (Albany) is necessarily so much scattered as to hold out no inducement for com-

petent persons to establish day schools, in order to derive from them pecuniary advantage—and in fact, the majority of the children are fully employed in assisting their parents on their farms, during the working days, so that were it possible to establish a sufficient number of *Free Day Schools*, even this would not reach their case, in general.”

The *Albany* Sunday School Union contains 300 children, of whom 130 are Hottentots and slaves, “who,” says Mr. Shaw, “though the children of a people proverbially filthy, appear at school, every Sunday, as clean in their persons, and as decent in their attire, as the poor children of any village in England.”

In the *Mauritius*, or the *Isle of France*, Mr. Le Brun has established a Sunday School.

In *Madagascar* the children under tuition are about 1,200. The king takes a lively interest in the schools. On the Sabbath day the children are catechised from six to eight in the morning, both in English and Malagash; at half past one, they are questioned on general subjects, and the Scriptures are read by them and translated into their own language; at half past four, they meet again to sing a few hymns in English and Malagash. Several Catechisms and elementary books, and a small collection of hymns have been prepared.

In AMERICA, Sunday Schools have been introduced with very promising success.

NEWFOUNDLAND. Sunday Schools have been formed in many of the settlements, and making

some allowance for the peculiar circumstances of this Colony, they have been attended with an encouraging degree of success. They contain upwards of a thousand scholars, and have been found very useful in a Colony in which the means of grace are by no means adequate to its scattered population.

NOVA SCOTIA: Here about a thousand scholars are taught in the different Sunday Schools, by about 50 teachers, and the number is constantly increasing.

Sunday Schools have been formed in *New Brunswick, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward Island.*

In **CANADA**, where the population is very widely scattered, and many persons cannot attend the regular ministry of the word, and other means of grace, Sunday Schools are peculiarly important. It is pleasing to observe Sunday Schools rising up in the wilds of the forest in which the settler has just lifted up his axe. In many instances the children walk three or four miles through the woods to attend on the Sabbath. A general Sunday School Union has been established for Canada, which promises to be a general blessing, and there are also minor Sunday School Unions at York and Niagara. Sunday Schools are so highly esteemed, that the Legislature of Upper Canada, in 1824, voted 150*l.* to promote these institutions generally, without any distinction of name or party.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. According to a statement in the American Sunday School

Teachers' Magazine, the first Sunday School in the United States was instituted in the year 1791, and incorporated in 1796. Its object was to instruct, gratuitously, children to read and write, who were unable to attend school on other days; but the instruction was given by *hired* teachers; and their design did not extend to the *religious* instruction of the scholars.

The first suggestion of Sunday Schools on the *present* plan, was made by the Rev. Robert May, a missionary from London, who had been once a Sunday School boy himself, of very humble origin.

In a letter to the Evangelical Society of Philadelphia, in the summer of 1811, he proposed the establishment of Sabbath Schools; produced specimens of the tickets, and developed the plan. An association was formed, a school house was erected, and a school collected on the 29th of October, 1811, which was conducted under the personal direction of Mr. May himself, until his embarkation in the spring of 1812. The city of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania claims the honour of establishing the first Sabbath School, in the present form, in the United States. In the year 1809, a small moral society was formed in that city, (then only a borough,) for the suppression of vice, reformation of manners, and propagation of useful knowledge.

This led to the adoption of measures for instructing and improving the moral condition of the poorer classes of the community, who appeared to be in a very deplorable state of igno-

rance and vice. A benevolent individual suggested the advantages of a school for religious instruction on Sundays; and such a school was accordingly instituted on the 22d August, 1809, which was publicly notified by an address soliciting the attendance of scholars, and the co-operation of the citizens. This excited a considerable degree of interest, and the first school was opened on the first Sabbath of September, and attended by two hundred and forty scholars, children and adults. This school was constituted without the knowledge of the mode of organization in Europe, and coincided in its principal features with the schools now established.

Mrs. Isabella Graham and Mrs. Bethune, opened their Sunday School in New York, in June 1814. the following is an extract of a letter from Divie Bethune, Esq. New York, to Stephen Prust, Esq. Bristol, dated 10th June, 1815:

“It will be gratifying to you to learn, that your transmission of the Report of the Adult Schools has been the means of awakening towards this object a great attention *here* and *in* Philadelphia. I forward you an extract of a letter I received from a pious young lady, in Philadelphia, to whom I mentioned the Adult Schools, when there, in January last.

“The little school begun by Mrs. B. on her reading Dr. Pole’s Report, has succeeded astonishingly. She and my two daughters, assisted by a female friend, teach it on Sunday

mornings. It consists of between *eighty* and *ninety*; and the Bible class, now all able to read, is *forty-seven*! Schools for the education of poor children are rapidly increasing in this country."

Extract of a letter from a young lady, in Philadelphia, to Divie Bethune, Esq. New York:

"I had several extracts from Dr. Pole's work inserted in the 'Religious Remembrancer,' a weekly paper of our city, and the subject excited universal attention. The Free Masons have taken it up, and at a General Meeting, it was proposed and carried unanimously, that *several* schools should be established, and held in the Grand Lodge, Chesnut-street! Mr. Thomas Bradford commenced a school in the JAIL last Sabbath-day.

"Several pious females, friends of mine, propose shortly to commence one in the west end of the city—and thus you see 'how great a matter a little fire kindleth.' 'O come, let us sing praises to the Lord; bless the Lord O my soul; and all that is within me praise his Holy name.'

"I never undertook any thing that afforded such *heart-felt joy*; our precious little establishment goes on delightfully. The first member was a pious soul, 52 years of age: she comes with her spectacles on, and seems as if she would devour the book. She never fails giving us a blessing, and assures us she has *long been praying* that the Lord would open some

way, that she might learn to read the Bible; she looks at your little book with delight, and often says, 'O this blessed book—I know I shall learn to read in this book.' I feel as if her prayers were as good as a host. We have eleven scholars, two added mostly of an evening, and after the first lesson, they advance wonderfully. O what encouragement for prayer is this 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it,' saith the Lord.

"There is no doubt that all the different lodges belonging to the fraternity will take up this subject, and it will *extend over the whole Union*; one of the officers gave me this information. Great exertions have been made for the relief of the body; but O the soul, that never dies, that any thing should be done for that, is transporting. 'That the soul be without knowledge is not good.' Our city exhibits a more favourable aspect than heretofore, as it respects morality and religion. The committees that were engaged in collecting and distributing to the poor, are now making exertions to suppress the vice of intemperance, which they have discovered is the chief cause of their misery. Our churches are better attended, and vital piety is progressing."

The following interesting letters contain a statement of the first *extended and united* effort in America, on behalf of Sunday Schools:

Copy of a letter from a lady at New York, to her friend at Bristol:

"New York, January 24, 1816.

"I cannot resist the desire I feel to employ my pen in thanking you for your presents to myself and children, of so many interesting publications, from which I trust, we have derived both profit and pleasure.

"I believe I cannot express my gratitude in a manner better suited to your liberal soul, than by giving you an account of a meeting held this day in this city. Mr. B. published one of your letters in one of our daily papers; I lent the different publications relative to Sunday Schools to a number of our friends, and was in hopes the gentlemen would have come forward in the business; but, after waiting a number of weeks, I conversed with several of my own sex, who expressed a wish to unite with me in a 'Female Sunday School Union;' accordingly, we called a meeting of the female members of all denominations, who met this day in the lecture-room of one of our churches: although the notice was not as general as intended, several hundreds were present. Dr. R. opened the meeting with a very appropriate prayer. When he withdrew, the ladies were pleased to call me to the chair. I addressed the company in a few words, stating for what purpose their attendance was requested, the great need of such an institution in a city where numbers of one sex were training for the gallows and state prison, and of the other for prostitution. Likewise the great want of religious instruction in our small schools; the parents of children at

tending such, not having time to teach them, would probably gladly avail themselves of Sunday Schools, if within their reach. I said, in order to stimulate them to so good a work, I would read them several extracts from British publications, which would show them how much the Lord had blessed such institutions in the OLD WORLD; and concluded by humbly hoping that he would extend his blessing to his handmaidens, in their attempts to train up a seed to serve him in the NEW WORLD. The following extracts were then read:

“First part of the Report of the London Sunday School Union; the Second Report of the Hibernian Sunday School Society; two letters from the Rev. Mr. Charles, of Bala, to the London Society. Mr. P's two letters to D. B. The swearing father reproved by his child, a Sunday School scholar; and concluded with the Salopian Adult Scholars' Address.*

“I may venture to affirm there was *not a dry eye in the room, and tears flowed copiously down the cheeks of many*. After some conversation I called upon the ladies of *different denominations*, who were willing to collect scholars and subscriptions, to come forward, which they cheerfully did, from all except one, which I regret to say we had neglected to notify, the Moravians.

“A committee, consisting of one or two from each denomination, was appointed to form a constitution, and general rules for the Union

* From the Teachers' Magazine.

and Schools under their care, to be laid before the society at a meeting this day week.

“The committee will meet at my house two days hence. I trust, with the blessing of the Lord, we shall see Sabbath Schools in every part of the city in a few weeks. I read the rules of the Bristol Sunday School, which I think we shall adopt, with a very few alterations. I opened a school for ADULT BLACKS last Sunday morning, and I shall send you copies of our rules, reports, &c. as soon as published; thus may those *united in Christ*, although separated by the Atlantic, provoke each other to good works, until we meet around the throne to join the spirits of the just made perfect. Hallelujah. glory be to that God who works all our works in us.

“Be so good as communicate the contents of this letter to our friends, Mr. B’s family, and should you think that it would give pleasure to the friends of Sunday Schools, to hear that their transatlantic brethren are following their good example, I have only to request that you will withhold my name. Sincerely wishing you success in your works of faith and labour of love,

“I am, your’s, &c. J. B.”

Extract of a letter from a gentleman to his friend at Bristol:

“New York, February 4, 1816.

“I have but little to communicate to you, in return for all the valuable information you were

so kind as to send me by Captain C——, on subjects of religious interest or moral improvement. One effect of your zeal however will, I doubt not, prove a sufficient reward for your labour of love. *This city is in a stir throughout*, a strong interest awakened, and great exertions commenced for the instruction on Sabbath days *of children and adults*. Mrs. B. has written to you an account of the first meeting of the ladies; on that day week the second meeting was held, and so great was the crowd of ladies pressing forward, that the company had to adjourn from a lecture room to a church

“Next Sabbath, I believe, was appointed for the commencement of the work of teaching; the zeal of three of the congregations led them to begin this day. Mrs. B. visited these three schools, which, with a school of *BLACK ADULTS*, taught by my family, made up *one hundred and thirty-six scholars*, I presume the number, *next Lord's day*, will amount to *one thousand* in all the schools. I had forgot to mention that at the second meeting of the ladies, a society was formed, and a constitution drawn up, following very closely the plan which you had sent us. Mrs. B. was elected first directress, and a pious friend of hers, Mrs. M., second directress, with a view to aid the superintendents and teachers of the several schools, and to take a general charge of the concerns of the institution. The constitution will soon be published, and we shall send you a copy of it. I believe the gentlemen are mustering their numbers to follow

the example of the ladies, and to take charge of the *adults and children* of their own sex."

"10th February, 1816.

"The gentlemen of this city are now busily engaged, and a general meeting is called on Monday next, for the organization of a society for the instruction of children and adults."

This example was speedily followed by the principal cities in the United States, among which Philadelphia should be mentioned with distinguished honour.

In July, 1816, the total number of scholars admitted by the New York Female Sunday School Union, was 3,136, and 250 teachers. The Male Sunday School Union 2,500 scholars, and 250 teachers and superintendents. The First Annual Report of these two societies showed, that 5000 scholars had been then admitted; this fact is a demonstrative proof of the benefits of union in promoting the Sunday School cause.

Up to 1822, about 600 of the teachers and learners had been received as members of different churches, from the New York Sunday Schools, and about thirty had left the schools to prepare for the ministry.

The Fifth Report of the Philadelphia Sunday School Union states, "Many of the revivals of religion, for which the last two years have been so singularly distinguished in our country, have had their origin in Sunday Schools. In one instance, where 100 were received into communion with the church, 98

were at the time, or had been, connected with the Sunday School; and in another, out of 35, 27 were from the Sunday School.

“Of 30 youths, composing one Sunday School, all have become hopefully pious, and all, except one, have joined the church.”

On the 25th of May, 1824, the American Sunday School Union was formed at Philadelphia, and it was agreed, that the Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union should be merged in this national institution.

The American Sunday School Union has commenced under very encouraging auspices, and we have no doubt that it will prove a permanent blessing to the United States. This Society has published the “American Sunday School Magazine,” for their teachers, and the “Teacher’s Offering,” for their scholars. The number of books issued by this Society, in the first year of its operations, was, 356,650, and 726,000 tickets.

On the second Monday of each month, the Sunday School teachers, in connection with this Society, have agreed to meet for the purpose of united prayer to the Father of mercies on behalf of Sunday Schools throughout the world; these meetings have been well attended, and have been found very useful to the teachers.

From a letter we have received from Philadelphia, dated 30th September, 1825, it appears that the American Sunday School Union is proceeding in its cause with great energy and

success. They have engaged fifteen missionaries, in promoting the cause of Sunday Schools. It is calculated that there are about 150,000 Sunday scholars in America, and, as the population of the United States is twelve millions, there will be ample scope for the exertions of this promising Society.

We know of no subject more calculated to excite pleasing hope, than the co-operation of England and America, in works of benevolence and piety: in the course of a century, it is probable, that our language will be spoken by a great proportion of the human race, and we trust, it will be the medium of conveying the glad tidings of the gospel, and the benefits of religious instruction, wherever it is understood.

WEST INDIES. The propriety of imparting instruction to the children of slaves has been much discussed. Some persons have made use of similar arguments to those which were current in England thirty years ago; namely, that education would render the poor unfit for the humbler employments of life, and produce disaffection to their superiors. If this argument were at all tenable, under any circumstances, it certainly must be in countries where slaves form the largest part of the community; but even in such places, we have no doubt that religious instruction would be highly advantageous, both to the proprietor and his slave. If all the spiritual benefits of Christianity were left out of the question, the temporal, and moral, and social benefits of religious instruction,

would prove, that the principles of Christianity were calculated both to teach subordination and obedience to the slave, and humanity and kindness to the master. Indeed, facts prove, that the slaves who have possessed the advantages of religious instruction, are far more tractable, orderly, and valuable, than those who are left in ignorance. We may mention one fact in proof of this: During the insurrection of 1816, in *Barbadoes*, all the slaves on those estates where Christian instruction was imparted, remained at home, and kept to their work, while those on the surrounding estates were in open rebellion. We trust the time will arrive, when the proprietors of slaves universally, will learn that their truest policy is to act decidedly on those liberal principles which are most congenial to the British constitution, and the Christian dispensation.

Of all the West India islands, *Antigua* merits the post of honour in reference to Sunday Schools, which were established there in the year 1810. The church mission schools contain 1826 children, and 133 adults. The Wesleyan mission schools about 1200 scholars, and the Moravian schools a considerable number.

The following facts will show the beneficial influence of the instructions imparted: "During the time of reaping corn on one of the estates, nearly all the negroes in the great gang were detected with corn concealed about their persons; but, on examining the younger ones,

who were employed on the same occasion, not more than one was found to have transgressed in this manner. This circumstance struck the manager with peculiar force, and it was ascribed to the influence of the religious education imparted at the Sunday School, as most of the children were scholars.*

Mr. Hyde says, "I heard the following little anecdote of one of the Sunday School scholars at English Harbour. A company of strolling players endeavoured to get up a play, at Falmouth, a small town not far from English Harbour. A young lady offered a ticket to a little girl belonging to the Sunday School, who immediately dropped a courtesy, and innocently said, 'Ma'am, I thank you, but I hope I could not disgrace the school so much as to think of going to such a place.'"

In the church missionary Sunday School "at *Hope*, a new and larger school room was needed, on account of the increase of the scholars. In erecting this building, all the stones, and most of the water used in making the mortar, were supplied by the children and young people belonging to the school, on Saturday afternoons, and moon-light nights, who laboured with great cheerfulness to accomplish this much desired object."

In the year 1822, fifty young persons, educated in the Wesleyan schools, had joined the

* From the Second Report of the Parham Sunday School.

society. Sixty young persons in the church mission Sunday Schools had been awakened to a concern for their eternal interests, and brought forth fruits meet for repentance.

The following extract of a letter from a Moravian missionary, received about a year ago, shows the importance of a patient continuance in well-doing: "I remember when we began a Sunday School in St John's, fifteen years ago, there was such prejudice against it with the planters, that one of them ordered their primers to be taken away from them; but now I do not know one who objects to, and most of them further, the cause. School houses are now erected on many sugar plantations, by the attorneys, where the children receive instruction, not only on Sundays, but also some hours through the week."

It will be unnecessary to enter into full particulars of the Sunday Schools in the West Indies; it is sufficient to state, that the Wesleyan Missionaries have been particularly active and successful in establishing them, and that they have been formed in the *Bermudas*, the *Bahama Islands*, the *Caribbee Islands*, in *Jamaica*, and in *Demarara*.

HAYTI, or ST. DOMINGO. Among the emigrants from the United States of America, Sunday Schools have been formed, and the "Haytien Sunday School Union," has been very recently established at *Port au Platt*.

SOUTH AMERICA. A Sunday School has been established at *Buenos Ayres*. It is hoped,

that as commercial intercourse is extended with England and the United States of America, that their excellent institutions will be gradually introduced, in the extensive regions which have emancipated themselves from the yoke of Spain.

The next subject that requires our attention, is a brief notice of the principal publications that have issued from the press, in favour of Sunday Schools, in addition to those that we have previously mentioned.

In January, 1813, the first Number of *The Sunday School Teacher's Magazine* was published. It appeared quarterly till January 1821, from which period it has been issued monthly. This periodical publication has been very useful in promoting the cause of Sunday Schools, and the encouragement and improvement of the teachers, in their important work. The third report of the Hampshire Sunday School Union bears the following testimony to this work. "The committee cannot close their report without begging leave very strongly to recommend the *Teacher's Magazine* to the constant perusal of all who are friends to Sunday Schools. The important instruction which it affords, the delightful intelligence which it conveys, and the benevolent spirit which it breathes, conspire to render it a publication most justly worthy of their regard. By a careful perusal of its contents, the committee fondly hope, that many more young persons will be disposed to "run to and fro," and that knowledge

will be increased, till the shades of ignorance shall be completely dispelled, and 'the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.' "

The Rev. J. A. James observes, "This valuable little work cannot be estimated, in reason, at too high a rate. Its contents, from time to time, are calculated at once to interest, instruct, and excite. It should be circulated through every school, and read by every teacher. Already it has laid before the public a mass of most valuable information, and directed upon the Sunday School Institution, a stream of light which has revealed its magnitude and its beauty, much more clearly than they were generally seen before. And in order to render it still more useful, every one who has much experience in the business of instruction, and is possessed of ability to communicate his knowledge to others, should consider his talents as put under righteous requisition for its support. It might become of immense importance to the great cause. By a proper supply and compression of intelligence, it might exhibit the operations of the whole Christian world, and thus form a sort of Sunday School Panorama, in which, as in one connected and beautiful picture, the whole circle of operations may be contemplated wherever it is read."

The History of the Origin and Progress of Adult Schools, by Thomas Polc, M. D., is a valuable work; and besides the narrative, which will no doubt prove highly interesting to

a . the friends of education, it contains a variety of valuable suggestions, founded on the experience and observation of a wise and benevolent man. Our readers have been already informed of the important effects produced by this publication in the city of New York.

The Sunday School Teachers' Guide, by the Rev. J. A. James, is a very forcible and eloquent work, on the general objects of Sunday Schools, and the duties of teachers. We should esteem that individual unworthy of being a Sunday School teacher, who did not arise from the perusal of this book, more sensible of the importance of his employment, and the responsibility of his engagements, as connected with religious instruction, and the great realities of eternity. This work should be in the hands of every Sunday School teacher. The Teachers' Guide has been reprinted in America.

The "*Hints for conducting Sunday Schools, compiled by the Committee of the Sunday School Society for Ireland,*" are replete with valuable information. On some few minor subjects, on which there is a diversity of opinion among Sunday School teachers, we should partly differ from the decisions of this volume; but the spirit of Christian zeal, and devoted attachment to the religious interests of the young, which it displays throughout, merit our warmest approbation.

The advantages of Local Sabbath Schools, by Dr. Chalmers. The local system is here powerfully advocated by Dr. C. He recom-

mends that a teacher should confine himself to a small district, "a single lane or court," and concentrate his exertions in this limited sphere—that all the scholars should be taken from the same locality,—and that schools should be multiplied, upon a pervading and aggressive plan, so as to completely occupy the whole district. There are many local circumstances which oppose difficulties to the complete execution of this plan in England, but we should be glad to see a nearer approximation to it. Much might be done, if active pious individuals who are not pre-engaged, would exert themselves, especially in neighbourhoods remote from any existing Sunday School.

The Teachers' Manual, or Hints to a Teacher on being appointed to the charge of a Sunday School Class, by W. F. Lloyd, is intended to enter into full, minute, and clear details of a Sunday School Teacher's engagements. This work is thus described :

"We beg to inform our readers, that the little work now introduced to their notice is, in our opinion, the best in the English language, on what may be called the *practical machinery of a Sunday School*. No teacher in England, or in the world, should be without it. We have read it with special care, and have no fear of being charged with the sin of extravagant commendation."—*Evan. Mag.*

"The book contains much wholesome advice that may be well worth the attention of numerous teachers who have been long in office,

and abounds in precepts, which, if reduced to general practice, would greatly improve our Sunday Schools.—*Imperial Mag.*

“This is a truly excellent little book, full of the most useful instruction on the highly important subject to which it refers. It is written with great clearness, and in a very interesting manner, with great attention to detail, and with a well judged anxiety to furnish the teacher with all the information that can be available in his various engagements.”—*Congregational Mag.*

The Teachers' Manual has been reprinted in America.

In addition to these publications, numerous excellent sermons, and addresses to teachers, have been printed, for particulars of which, and of a great variety of other Sunday School books, we must refer our readers to the Catalogue of the Sunday School Union.

The next subject that demands our attention is the notice taken of Sunday Schools by Parliament. In 1815, a Committee of the House of Commons, on inquiring into the state of mendicity, examined the following gentlemen, relative to the influence of Sunday Schools among the poor:—Joseph Butterworth, Esq., M. P., a member of the Committee, Mr. John Cooper, Mr. John Daughtry, and Mr. William Hale. In 1816, a select Committee on the education of the lower orders of the metropolis, examined at considerable length the following gentlemen:—Mr. Henry Althans, Secretary of

the East London Auxiliary School Union, Mr. W. F. Lloyd, Secretary of the Sunday School Union, Mr. Edward Wentworth, of Friars' Mount Sunday School, Thomas Babington, Esq., M. P., a member of the Committee, Mr. William Hargrave, Mr. William Nettlefold, Mr. John Daughy, Mr. William Waldegrave, Mr. Joseph Christian, and Joseph Butterworth, Esq., M. P., a member of the Committee.

In 1820, Parliament published "a general table, showing the state of education in England," which stated the total number of Sunday Schools to be 5,162, containing 452,817 scholars. This table was exceedingly defective in its numbers. In many populous places, there were more Sunday Schools omitted, than were reported, in these returns. The particulars of the several parishes reported to Parliament, were published as an Appendix to Vol. V. of the Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and thus innumerable omissions were detected.

The number of Sunday Schools reported in Wales was 391, and the scholars 24,408; we believe that by far the greater number of Sunday Schools in Wales were not returned at all, by the reporters.

The number of Sabbath Schools reported at that time in Scotland was 807, attended by 53,449 scholars.

Mr. Brougham brought his plan for general education before the House of Commons. The Sunday School teachers throughout Great Britain naturally felt much interest in this sub-

ject, but they could not approve of those parts of his proposal which would have interfered with their labours, and that would, undesignedly, have counteracted their efforts for the gratuitous religious instruction of poor children. The general opinions of Sunday School teachers were opposed to Mr. Brougham's plan, and the rest of the community appear to have had other objections, so that the honourable gentleman at length relinquished a measure, which however desirable in theory, would have been full of difficulties in practice.

In endeavouring to trace the influence of Sunday Schools, we may remark, that the benefits of these institutions have not been confined to their immediate objects, the children of the poor. The teachers, in pursuing their gratuitous labours, have not only improved their scholars, but have also benefited themselves. They have been induced to search the Scriptures more diligently, and to pray more fervently. They have become more decided in their own characters, and have thus been qualified for various other situations of usefulness, connected with the cause of benevolence, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

The parents of Sunday School children have also been materially benefited; they have been visited in the time of sickness their temporal wants have been relieved, and their spiritual instruction has been promoted. The books and the lessons received at the Sunday School, have penetrated into the cottages and rooms of

the poor; and the good examples of well instructed children have powerfully influenced the minds of many parents. Many of them have also been led to attend the means of grace with their children, and have been taught to sanctify the Sabbath. The duty of attending to the instruction of their children at home, and the importance of parental example, have also been powerfully enforced on their attention, by the co-operating labours of their disinterested friends, the Sunday School teachers.

Most Sunday Schools have also proved the centres of various benevolent and religious efforts. In them, Bible Associations, Tract Societies, Missionary Associations, Visiting Societies, Saving Funds, Clothing Societies, and various other religious and charitable Institutions have arisen, which are, at the present time, diffusing abundant blessings in their several spheres.

We may also add, that the present desire for knowledge amongst the poor, and their anxiety for mental improvement, may be traced in a considerable degree to Sunday Schools. We trust that the efforts of pious benevolence will be considerably augmented, in order that this desire for improvement may not be suffered to evaporate in mere worldly and temporal acquisitions, but may be directed to spiritual and eternal objects; that our population may not only attain intellectual advancement, but be trained in a course of moral improvement, under the guidance of the sacred Scriptures; thus

will their present comfort and their everlasting happiness be at once promoted. Surely it is the incumbent duty of all who have been zealous in promoting education, instead of relaxing their exertions, to redouble them, at the present eventful period; we must not stand still, we must not be cool and indifferent spectators of the present struggles for mental improvement; but remembering our duty, as Britons and as Christians, be more than ever diligent to promote by all the means in our power, that heavenly wisdom, and that divine knowledge, which we trust will prove the stability of our times.

Greatly as Sunday Schools have extended, still much remains to be done. From the Parliamentary returns of 1821, it appears that England and Wales then contained 2,549,294 children, between the ages of five and fifteen. Of this number, we may reckon that two millions are proper objects for Sunday School instruction; here is a wide field for the exertions of Christians of all denominations, and we trust they will continue, in an increasing ratio, to "provoke one another to love and good works," till every child in our country enjoys the advantages of religious instruction on the Sabbath.

We are happy to have observed in the last ten years, a considerable improvement in the Sunday School system. This has arisen from the superior qualifications of the teachers, and the increased attention which has been paid to religious instruction. We trust, that common

daily education will soon be so generally diffused throughout our country, that Sunday School teachers will be enabled to devote their whole attention, on the Sabbath, to the communication of scriptural and divine knowledge.

On reviewing the past history of Sunday Schools, we see great reason to adore the Providence of God, which from such small beginnings, has produced such mighty results; and as to the future, we would confide implicitly in that Divine Redeemer who blessed the young on earth, and who still remembers them in heaven. As the friends or teachers of the rising generation, we cannot better close this sketch of the history of Sunday Schools than by calling upon all our readers to unite with us in the fervent prayer of the Psalmist: "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children; and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."—Psa. xc. 16, 17.

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