



# *Education*

## *Durrington*

### **THE SALISBURY DIOCESAN SCHOOL PRIZE SCHEME**

The first annual report of the Salisbury Diocesan School Prize Scheme for the year 1860 has just been published by Messrs Brown and Co., of this city. It is a remarkable and interesting document, and is highly deserving of public attention. The scheme was inaugurated in this diocese under the auspices of the Bishop, with the able assistance of the Rev. John Wilkinson, of Broughton Gifford, for improving our parochial schools by the stimulus of a general competition. The report commences by pointing out that the early age at which the children of the working classes are taken from our elementary schools is a subject of general complaint, and it appears from the reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors, that few children remain at school beyond the age of ten years. Accepting those as a social fact, against which it were vain to struggle, the report states that the practical question is, how we may turn to the best advantage those few years? And to this end it is proposed to apply to parochial schools the same principles, and the same inducements, as have been applied to all elementary seminaries of education in the country. It goes on to remark:-

“For the improvement of our parochial schools we rely on the same motive of an honourable competition, the same test of examination, and rewards, the same, in kind, as those which have on them the stamp of long experience elsewhere and which are in accordance with the national tastes and habits. We hope that the results may be the same. Without any alteration of the subjects usually taught in parochial schools, we desire to give a definite aim and method to the instruction, and thus to be useful to teachers; we desire to encourage scholars by our prizes, which, however small in pecuniary value, are proofs of their industry, and tokens of our sympathy; we desire to afford, by our class-lists, evidence to parents and managers, how far the exertions of the one and the other have been well directed. We have a good hope of success. The great interest already taken by teachers in this scheme shows us that we have not over-calculated the force of sympathy, or the influence of any such scanty meed of approbation as we may be able to bestow. The prizes are indeed given to the children, and are richly earned by them; but we would have them regarded also as marks of encouragement to teachers, and as such recognition of their services as an earnest labourer in any work values above all price.”

The sympathy which the scheme has met with during its first year suggests a hope of the success of the undertaking. There were 642 candidates, of whom 360 were boys, and 282 girls, and they came from 54 schools in the diocese. These candidates were separated into three divisions, the first consisting of those above 11 years of age, the second of those between 10 and 11, the third of those between 9 and 10. Wherever 20 children could be collected together an examination centre was fixed, and of these there were 16. Two Local Superintending Examiners were appointed to conduct the examination at each centre. The centres were at Amesbury, Blandford, Bridport, Calne, Cranborne, Devizes, Marlborough, Salisbury, Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Trowbridge, Wareham, Warminster, Westbury, Weymouth, and Wimborne. The examination took place on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, which was a wet day, but in spite of the inclemency of the weather 566 candidates out of 642 assembled at their respective centres. Three hours were spent in the morning by boys and girls in reading and writing answers to two papers on Holy Scriptures and arithmetic. In the afternoon boys and girls were occupied for one hour and a half with a Prayer-book and Catechism paper. The boys then had two hours and a-half for two papers on grammar and geography,

during which time the girls did their needlework. Certain portions of all the subjects had been announced to the candidates four months before the day of examination. The questions in each paper, and the needlework, were graduated in difficulty so as to suit the three divisions. The examination throughout was as elementary and practical as possible. The subjects were few, and for a pass nothing was required but the rudiments of those subjects. For a prize, which involved comparison, more was necessarily demanded. Of the boys 64 were placed in the first class – of whom 52 were in the first division, 4 in the second, and 8 in the third. Of the girls 55 were placed in the first class, 41 in the first division, 7 in the second, and 2 in the third. The second class contained the names of those who, to use a University phrase “satisfied the examiners;” that is, came up to a certain standard, or “passed” but were not equal to the “honours” of the first class. But not all who reached the given standard are to be found in the second class. The regulations directed, “No candidate to be classed who fails in religious knowledge.” This caused the rejection of 53 candidates who would otherwise have passed. This statement the committee make with deep regret, but they express a conviction that such a failure will not occur again. Spelling and writing were also the cause of many rejections, in accordance with the regulations, “Good writing, intelligent reading, and accurate spelling, to be allowed great weight in deciding on the merits of the candidates.” In the whole, 210 obtained places in the second class: 127 were boys; 85 in the first division, 25 in the second, 17 in the third: 83 were girls; 68 in the first division, 11 in the second, 4 in the third. The report states:-

“We would remark on all the class lists, that the competition between so many candidates has been severe, that it is no discredit to any candidate to fail under it, and that the higher the standard of merit, the greater the honour of success. Whatever be the result to any individual school, whether gratifying or not, it is at least the truth, and had not been elicited without much painstaking.”

BY the regulations of the scheme, the committee offered to distribute any special prizes, either in money or in books, given by individuals or by local boards. They acknowledge three answers to this invitation:-

“The National Society have voted a grant of 5*l.*, to be expended in books, from the Society’s Depository, to be given in prizes at the discretion of our committee.

“The West Wylde School Teachers’ Association have given 4*l.*, to form three prizes of 2*l.*, 1*l.*, 5*s.*, and 15*s.*, for those children who, out of the whole number, stand highest in Holy Scripture, Prayer Book, and Catechism. The successful candidates are Elizabeth Bedford, of Durrington; Elizabeth Graves, of Bowood; and Henry Foot, of Wareham. These prizes will be distributed by the Rev. W. D. Morrice, the President of the Association.

“The Dorset Book Hawking Society have given three prizes:- (1) Books to the value of 1*l.* 1*s.*, to the boy in Dorset who answers best in the Prayer Book and Catechism; (2) Books to the same value, to the girl, under the same conditions; (3) Books to the value of 10*s.* 6*d.*, to the boy or girl in the Deanery of Bridport who answers best. The successful candidates are Mary Elizabeth Read, of Gillingham, Thomas Cheesman, of Sherborne, and Henry John Fudge, of Lyme, who is only ten years of age. It should be added, that the result would have been precisely the same of the competition had been unrestricted and co-extensive with the diocese. These prizes will be distributed by the Rev. Thomas Sanctuary, the secretary to the Dorset Book Hawking Society.

“Having stated these triplets, it may be interesting to give those for each subject in order, except Reading, in which, from the identity of the marks, the three leading candidates cannot be ascertained. In Holy Scripture, the three best are Elizabeth Bedford, of Durrington, Elizabeth Graves, of Bowood, Edward Trent, of Lyme. In Prayer Book and Catechism they have already been stated. In Arithmetic, Thomas Cheesman, of Sherborne, Nehemiah Alley, of Westbury, Elizabeth Webb, of Wareham. In Grammar, Albert Prewett, of Alderbury, Edwin Bartlett, of Wareham, William Ramsay, of St. Peter’s, Marlborough. In Geography, William Bunt, of St. Mary’s Weymouth, Walter Lance, of Blandford, Herbert Phillips, of Lyme. The girls, it should be remembered, did not take up these two last subjects. In Needlework, Mary Read, of Gillingham, Maria Harrier, of Trowbridge, Leah Weeks, of Durrington.....

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