

THE RAGGED SCHOOL MOVEMENT
AND
THE EDUCATION OF THE POOR
IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of the University of Leicester, 1973.

D.H. Webster.

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to construct a picture of the emergence and growth of the ragged schools in England during the nineteenth century. It assesses the influence on these schools of the work of John Pounds and Sheriff Watson but finds their origin in the Sunday School Movement. The history of the Ragged School Unions in London, Manchester and Liverpool is traced. Differences between metropolitan and provincial schools with regard to the philosophy of voluntarism are noted. The problems of compiling statistics relating to ragged schools are discussed and a preliminary list of English ragged institutions is offered.

Material from widely varied sources and representing different stages in the development of the schools has been used to show the patterns of ragged school education, organisation, finance and management. Particular attention has been given to the social status of the children and the parents served by these institutions.

The case study of a single school with good records offers insight into the way schools responded to religious pressures, political decisions and the social and economic conditions at the local level.

The study offers an estimate of the significance of the Ragged School Movement to nineteenth century educational history. It analyses the effects on the Movement of the work of Lord Shaftesbury and shows how the schools responded to the political decisions affecting education made by Parliament.

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I would like to express my gratitude to the staffs of the libraries at James Graham College of Education, Leeds, Bretton Hall College of Education, Wakefield, and the Institute of Education, University of Hull. They have cheerfully undertaken

a burden of extra work by tracing and procuring books and theses relevant to the theme of this essay.

Most of all, I would like to thank Mr. Malcolm Seaborne and Mr. Donald Jones of the Department of Education, the University of Leicester. They acted in succession as my supervisors and both provided a valuable critical corrective to some of my more speculative hypotheses. I wish that this study reflected more creditably their kind assistance and unflagging interest.

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D.H. Webster,
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INTRODUCTION

PART 1

PREVIOUS STUDIES OF THE RAGGED SCHOOL MOVEMENT

The Ragged School Movement receives no mention in recent general histories of education in England. It is excusable, though disappointing, in the studies of H.C.Barnard (1) and W.H.G.Armytage.² Both are hard-pressed by the problems of selection and compression. Its omission in M.Sturt is more serious and further distorts a perspective already flawed by excessive reliance on the records of central government.³ An assessment of the effects of the movement would have offered G. Sutherland a more perceptive understanding of the educational and social provision for the destitute than she is able to give.⁴ A wider consideration at some depth would have enabled D. Wardle to set English education even more forcefully in a socio-economic framework.⁵ The older histories of F. Smith (6) and S.J.Curtis (7) paid brief court to the ragged schools, perpetuating the myth of their foundation by John Pounds and alluding to the efforts of Sheriff Watson and Dr. Guthrie to establish a national system. The neglect of the subject in the general works is a reflection of the fact that neither a critical appraisal of the development of the movement at national level, nor local and regional studies which relate to this level, exist.

The church histories of the nineteenth century are indifferent to the

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1. H.C.Barnard, A History of English Education, 1961 (2nd Revised Edition)
 2. W.H.G.Armytage, Four Hundred Years of English Education, 1965
 3. M.Sturt, The Education of the People, 1967
 4. G.Sutherland, Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century, 1971
 5. D.Wardle, English Popular Education, 1970
 6. F.Smith, A History of English Elementary Education, 1760-1902, 1931, pp.201-203
 7. S.J.Curtis, History of Education in Great Britain, 1957, pp.219, 532-3

ragged schools, with the exception of O.Chadwick.⁸ It is sad that his very short report confuses national and local statistics, assumes that there was no ragged movement outside London, misunderstands its aims and is mistaken about the place of Lord Shaftesbury. The account of the social role of the Victorian Church given in D.Bowden is new and forms a valuable background to the welfare agencies which arose with the ragged Sunday schools.⁹ The studies of Lord Shaftesbury make plain his concern with the schools. That by J.L. and B.Hammond (10) underestimates the religious questions and is to some extent supplemented by J.Wesley Bready.¹¹ E.Hodder remains the undisputed authority.¹² However, a major study of Shaftesbury, which will balance his religious and social involvements and set them against the background of Victorian history, is needed.

Local historians and educationalists tracing the developments in a specific area have been scrupulous in noting the existence of ragged schools but tardy in the analysis of their records and sparing in the number of histories of these institutions which they have produced. Of those writing about contemporary events, J.Glyde's picture of the rapid urban growth in Suffolk and his account of Ipswich Ragged School have value.¹³ Thomas Britain's sketch of the first industrial ragged school in Manchester is tantalising in that it evades all of the major questions and answers all of the minor ones.¹⁴ The study of Nottingham's schools by D.Wardle is exemplary. It is unfortunate that, in spite of the most careful searching and collection of evidence, the loss of his major primary sources on ragged schools enables him to paint only a thin picture and prevents his

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8. O.Chadwick, The Victorian Church, Vol.2, 1970, p.307.
 9. D.Bowden, The Idea of the Victorian Church, 1970.
 10. J.L. and B.Hammond, Lord Shaftesbury, 1923.
 11. J. Wesley Bready, Lord Shaftesbury and Socio-Industrial Progress, 1926.
 12. E.Hodder, The Life and Work of the Earl of Shaftesbury, 3 Vols., 1886.
 13. J.Glyde, The Moral, Social and Religious Condition of Ipswich in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century, 1850, pp.124-127.
 14. T.Britain, Manchester Industrial Schools, 1884

arguing a case.¹⁵ Unpublished studies by students offer glimpses of the schools functioning as part of a total pattern of education for various parts of the country. In his work H.W.Gwilliam includes a consideration of ragged schools in Worcester (16), H.E.Walsh outlines their development in Bradford (17), while W.C.Darwell quickly etches the growth of the school in Huddersfield.¹⁸ It does not detract from the skill and patience with which these writers have located and used their evidence to note that their simple descriptions of the contents of the annual reports of a ragged school, without reference to other schools in its own and differing towns, separated from its social and economic context and unrelated to the policy of the central government or the theology of voluntarism, have a limited value. It is surprising in view of the richness and abundance of some of the source material that more adequate and scholarly studies of ragged schools have not been produced.

Of the more substantial accounts of the ragged schools which exist, that by C.J.Montague is the best known.¹⁹ He was deeply involved with the movement and utterly convinced of its role. His book is a popular work, largely anecdotal, offering a view of the history of the schools grounded in evangelical Protestantism. It would be unfair to expect from this source more than the author intended to give. He is an advocate defending his cause, not a scholar carefully sifting evidence. His portraits of leading members of the London Union lift the book out of history into hagiography. However, as at present it is regarded as the basic text for a student wishing to investigate the ragged movement, impor-

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15. D.Wardle, Education and Society in Nineteenth Century Nottingham, 1971, pp.49, 52, 77-9.
 16. H.W.Gwilliam, The Provision of Education for the Poor in the City of Worcester during the 18th and 19th Centuries. Diploma in Education, University of Birmingham, 1966.
 17. H.E.Walsh, An Outline of the History of Education in Bradford before 1870. M.Ed., University of Leeds, 1936.
 18. W.C.Darwell, A History of Elementary Education in Huddersfield from 1780 to 1902. M.Ed., University of Leeds, 1951.
 19. C.J.Montague, Sixty Years in Waifdom, 1904.

tant limitations have to be noted.²⁰ It is an account of the London Ragged Schools and their Union and does not sketch the developments in the provinces. The assumption of later historians, that what occurred in the provinces was simply a pale reflection of the metropolitan situation and could be safely ignored, derives from Montague. He does not discuss the significance of political and social changes, preferring simply to report them. His historical locus in the London Ragged School Union and its Reports, Minutes and Publications affects his work in two ways. It results in an emphasis which favours the central policy-making body at the expense of the thinking of individual schools and their supporters. It focuses attention on the internal politics of the Union and does not show the educational and social problems affecting the schools in any but the most general way. Even the account offered of the London Union is unsatisfactory. The origins receive more attention than they warrant, unexplained gaps in the development of the Union occur, structure finance and organisation are virtually ignored and the welfare services springing from the schools are dealt with in a hasty manner. It is curious that Clark finds that 'Montague's is a lucid and systematic survey . . . written with the special insight of the life-long worker'.²¹ This writer's view is that there is a grave imbalance of material and opinion which affects the book and that its oversimplifications have the effect of mis-statements. The Ragged School Movement deserves a better book, one more scholarly and more discriminating in its use of sources and with a wider reference.

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20. Subsequent books covering in part the same area draw heavily on Montague. Others are mere compilations from selected Ragged School Union Magazines with additional pious comments. Reflection on the probable market for these books quickly shows why they neglect the more academic historical analysis. E.g. G.Holden Pike, Pity for the Perishing, 1884; H.Begbie, The Little That Is Good, n.d.; H.Redwood, Harvest, 1944; R.H.Sherard, Child Slaves of Britain, 1905; A London Rambler, Romance of the Streets, 1872.
21. E.A.G.Clark, 'The Ragged School Union and the Education of the London Poor in the Nineteenth Century', M.A. (Ed.), University of London, 1967, p.9.

The thesis by K.Heasman (22) has been published as a delightful book. 23 Both book and the unpublished work give an account of the ragged schools as part of the longer appraisal of the social work connected with the evangelical churchmen in the Victorian era. Within the framework imposed by the nature of her study Mrs. Heasman is not required to consider the development of the schools, their educational policies, their responses to the policies of central government and the rise of the non-metropolitan institutions. The evidence she uses is confined to the records of the London Ragged School Union and its publications and she has chosen to present this in a descriptive manner.

The evangelical background of the ragged school movement is carefully drawn by W.H.Wright.24 Although nothing that he says about the schools themselves is new - it derives largely from J.Montague and E.Hodder - he effectively links Lord Shaftesbury with his predecessors, the Claphamites. He demonstrates with care and skill how Shaftesbury was to his generation what they were to theirs.

Two regional studies offer a picture of ragged schools outside London. The first, by R.G.Bloomer, is in two parts.25 Part 1 gives the pattern propounded by Montague and reiterated in most other works. Part 2 is devoted to 'some Lancashire Schools'. In it six schools are selected for examination. A chapter is devoted to each and simply consists of a description of high points in the school's history and functioning. The value of the thesis is in its decision to look away from London. Its failure lies in its method. It would be unjust to label the work as a

22. K.Heasman, 'The Influence of the Evangelicals Upon the Origins and Development of Voluntary Charitable Institutions in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century'. Ph.D., University of London, 1960.

23. K.Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, 1962.

24. W.H.Wright, 'The Voluntary Principle in Education: The Contribution to English Education made by the Clapham Sect and Its Allies and the Continuance of the Evangelical Endeavour by Lord Shaftesbury'. M.Ed., University of Durham, 1964.

25. R.G.Bloomer, 'The Ragged School Movement before 1870 with Special Reference to some Lancashire Ragged Schools'. M.Ed., University of Manchester, 1967.

rather banal exercise in eclecticism. However, the descriptive approach needs to be based on an understanding of the significance of the model. It requires an appreciation of the relationships between models upon which evaluative comparisons may be built. This framework is missing and, although the fundamental questions have not been asked, they have not thereby disappeared. The second study, by A.V.Parsons, throws new light on the relationship between the ragged schools and the Sunday schools and is valuable in that it locates the changes which the social class of the parents encouraged.²⁶

The only academic work on the London Ragged School Union is by E.A.G. Clark.²⁷ This is a major essay of considerable distinction but is not a definitive study. It is valuable in that he is the first historian of the movement to show a concern for the location and number of schools in London and to demonstrate the meaning of the statistics relating to the numbers of children and teachers. The history of the London Union is depicted in broad terms from its Minutes and Reports and is a welcome correction to the views offered by Montague. The present study is in disagreement with Dr. Clark in many major matters of interpretation and emphasis, but this should not obscure the debt which all subsequent students owe him for his brave and scholarly attempt to chart this area for the first time. The weaknesses in his work spring from his heavy reliance on the central records of the London Union and are fivefold. Firstly, many of his analyses need the modification or correction which a study of the records of the ragged schools would give. While it is true that the Ragged School Magazine, which he uses extensively, quotes from school reports sometimes at length, these quotations were selected because they were in concord with the official policy of the Union. Secondly, this concentration leads to the complete

26. A.V.Parsons, 'Education in the Salford District, 1780 to 1870'. M.Ed., University of Manchester, 1963, Ch.2 and Appendix to Ch.4.

27. (A)E.G.Clark, 'The Ragged School Union and the Education of the London Poor in the Nineteenth Century'. M.A. (Ed.), University of London, 1967.

omission of a discussion of the organizational structure of the schools and, more importantly, of their finances. This latter was the crucial problem for most schools throughout the period. Thirdly, his estimate of the origins of the Ragged Movement is narrowly based. The popular myth of John Pounds' connection with the schools, which was widespread in London (and actually fostered by its Ragged School Union), needs some treatment. The relationship of Sunday schools to ragged schools is complex and needs arguing for, not simply stating. His estimate of the implications of the Scottish ragged industrial schools, and particularly the work of Sheriff Watson for English schools, is perfunctory. Fourthly, it prevents him from giving a proper account of the role of the churches in the formation of the schools or an accurate estimate of importance of the voluntaryist philosophy to their supporters. Fifthly, it dissuades him from probing deeply some of the more important questions for they do not appear in the Union records as of especial importance. Thus he fails to make the connection between the social class of the parents of the ragged children and the pool of casual labour. And he is unable to discern the economic factors of organizational structure and rhythm of employment which made the destitute helpless to respond to the religious and moral imprecations of the middle classes.

PART 2

SOURCES FOR A STUDY OF THE RAGGED SCHOOL MOVEMENT AND AREAS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Two sets of primary source material are available for a study of the Ragged School Movement. They are the documents relating to individual schools and the material available from the Ragged School Unions. Most of the ragged school annual reports have not been preserved. The ephemeral nature of the schools, their size and their financial difficulties prevented many from issuing annual reports and one doubts whether there

was any need to formalise meetings by keeping a minute book. It is a general rule that annual reports were given of the larger and better organized schools which had some formal subscription arrangements for their support. These required more financing and were obliged to account to their supporters. Few of the manuscript minute books of these larger schools have survived. Where they are available, complemented by annual reports, they offer an intimate picture of the children, the teachers, the function of the school and financial minutiae as well as a detailed discussion of political and social problems. Material exists in manuscript and printed form for Norwich, Upper Tottenham, Huddersfield, Chester and Stockport Ragged Schools. For Stockport Ragged and Industrial School the complete Minutes and Reports, Logbooks, Visitors' Book and Inspection Reports are available, together with a wide variety of other related papers. None of this has been previously investigated and is of sufficient value to form a major study. There are primary sources for ragged schools in Bradford, Bath, Brighton, Birmingham, Cambridge, Chester, Cheltenham, Croydon, Gloucester, Gravesend, Halifax, Huddersfield, Newcastle, Leeds, London, Liverpool, Manchester, Oxford, Sheffield and Salford. Consecutive reports over a period of ten years offer a valuable picture of schools' problems and successes, but even single ones can be of use, particularly if they happen to include the foundation report. Little of this material has been used before, except as part of a larger study of provision for education in a specified area. The documents to hand in Manchester, Huddersfield, Chester and Leeds deserve scholarly appraisal in individual studies and offer a picture of an aspect of educational history which has been largely neglected. Reports of the ragged industrial schools in Scotland are available and are essential to an appraisal of the development of the English schools. Accounts of the establishment and growth of the schools in Dundee, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Greenock, Penicuik (Midlothian), Angus, Kilmarnock, Paisley and Kirkcudbright exist. A substantial study of the schools of industry (commencing with the attempt of the S.P.C.K. to

establish industrial work in the charity schools) which analysed the ideal of labour in the ragged, industrial and reformatory schools would be helpful in recording the practice and philosophy of a popular notion which seemed incapable of success.

The second set of primary source material derives from the Ragged School Unions. There were three which functioned with any efficiency and which can be traced: the Manchester and Salford, the Liverpool and the London Unions. A single report of the Liverpool Union survives. Slight though the document is, its value is that it gives a list of the schools in association with the Union and details of their finances and modes of operation. The Manchester and Salford Union has better records which can be complemented by a large number of individual schools' reports.

This Union's work was closely tied to that of the Sunday schools, and the mass of archival material on the Sunday school movement in Manchester - and, incidentally, nationally - deserves the attention of educational historians. Earlier studies by clergymen, superintendents and teachers who usually taught in them have failed to root the movement in its social and economic context. A modern study is lacking and needed.²⁸ The reports and minute books of the London Union are complete. The Shaftesbury Society holds with them complete runs of the various magazines and journals issued during the life of the Union. Although these were originally intended for the use of the London schools, they became national publications in evangelical circles and were also used in most of the larger non-metropolitan ragged schools. The very richness of this source can lead to neglect of the study of the reports of the schools in London. However, for three reasons the Unions' views need to be balanced against those of the managers and supporters of individual institutions. Firstly, not all of the ragged schools in London, Liverpool or Manchester were members of the Unions. Secondly, although all schools had a set of common problems

28. P.Sangster, Pity My Simplicity, 1965, is too partial and limited to fulfil this need.

centering around finance, personnel, welfare and buildings, many had unique difficulties associated with their locality. And, thirdly, minutes of schools, where they are available, and annual reports, show that management committees regarded themselves as autonomous and acted appropriately. The unions had supporting and advisory roles, but schools were not afraid to move independently. The Shaftesbury Society has not had a historian to chart its growth and analyse the changes which have resulted in its assuming its present role. It deserves better than The Shaftesbury Story (29), virtually no more than a publicity pamphlet, and H.Redwood's tale which is unctuous in manner and uncritical in analysis.³⁰ Similarly the fine records of the London City Mission, within which ragged schools were nurtured, remain unexplored in the British Museum. The story of the city missions in the nineteenth century is much more than a footnote to theological fundamentalism and rigid Protestantism. They also played a significant role in social and welfare work among the lower classes which has been neither recorded nor appreciated.

Other material on the schools requires a search of the files of nineteenth century newspapers. Most areas recorded in their papers the foundation of the larger ragged schools and usually gave some prominence to the annual reports. The topic occasionally arose in the editorial columns when the problems of crime among juveniles, the destitution of children, neglectful parents and the immorality of the lower classes were discussed.

School Board Minutes record the inspection of ragged schools for their suitability or otherwise as board schools. They are usually included in a Board's survey of the existing educational provision in a particular area. They are valuable in indicating the numbers of ragged schools functioning beyond 1870 and in recording any subsequent change of status.

The newspapers and School Board material show the necessity for looking carefully at the whole background within which the ragged schools func-

29. R.Bennett, The Shaftesbury Story, 1965.

30. H.Redwood, Harvest, 1944.

tioned. Local economic factors like the closure of a mill or a factory, the failure of a crop or a business, the upheaval created by a new technology, all affected the population of the schools, their physical condition and their length of stay. They affected donations and subscriptions from supporters and could throw schools into a crisis. They also showed the willingness or otherwise of the very wealthy to make benefactions or take responsibility for children's education by feeding and clothing them. The siting of a school was important and the street maps of major towns in the period 1840-1870 are informative about the areas within which the schools were situated and the industries located there. The gap in terms of physical location between the city centre slums and the wealthy outer areas is very marked and one of the ways in which it showed itself was in the likelihood of serious epidemics of diseases among the ragged children and their parents rather than among the wealthier groups. Sanitation, hygiene, quality of food, quality of housing, street cleanliness and lighting are relevant here. This is all work for the local historian.

PART 3

AIMS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study attempts to achieve four ends. Firstly, it tries to construct a picture of the emergence and growth of ragged schools in England. This has not been previously attempted. In doing so, some attention has been given to the origins of the schools which have long been a matter of myth or uncritical speculation. The national pattern in terms of numbers of schools, numbers of pupils on roll, the time during which they functioned has not been drawn. It is impossible to ascertain accurately for three reasons: the ephemeral nature of many of the schools, some of which functioned for only a few months with a single teacher and half-a-dozen children; the lack of clarity as to what to include under the heading 'ragged school' - they range from large industrial ragged schools in receipt of government grants to small classes operating on only one even-

ing a week as an extension of the Sunday school system; the lack of complete archival material and documentation. Despite the problems the effort to sketch the growth of the movement nationally is worth making. The gaps and uncertainties are inevitable but it is no bad thing for the historian to content himself with small truths rather than large lies. This comprises Part 1.

Secondly, it tries to show the patterns of ragged school education, organization and financing against the background of the children and parents whom the institutions served. Material from widely varied sources and representing different stages in the development of the movement has been utilised. This enables clear models to be constructed and the significant variations to be understood. The material has not been used for any similar study at this breadth. This comprises Part 2.

Thirdly, it attempts a case study of a school with good records. This enables a school to be studied in its proper context and with a detail which any other method would preclude. The existing school histories are few and without merit.³¹ Yet these schools are rewarding to the historian of education. For even in the histories of single schools the religious pressures, political decisions, the social and economic conditions with the localities are evident. It is fascinating to relate these to the national picture. This comprises Section 3.

Fourthly, it offers an estimate of the significance of the Ragged School Movement to nineteenth century educational history. This comprises the concluding chapter.

In attempting to achieve these aims the policy has been to adhere closely to the primary materials offered to the student. There is a sense in which this topic links with many others of major importance in Victorian England. However, the eschewing of prolonged discussion of matters to which others have contributed major studies or about which con-

31. E.g. H.Liddell, A Brief Account of the Hull Ragged and Industrial Schools, 1856; Field Lane Institution, The Field Lane Story, 1961.

troversy still rages has enabled a deeper and wider study of the schools. For example, there is little in this essay about the homes of the ragged children and the issues of housing, rents and wages in the middle of the last century. There is little about the health of the children and the issues of nutrition, disease and sanitation. Behind this policy has been the awareness of balance in the essay. I have preferred to tackle some of the under-explored areas about which little has been written rather than browse over the more exposed and close-bitten pasture.

CHAPTER 1

JOHN POUNDS, THE KIND OLD COBBLER

'I wants they as nobody cares for.'

John Pounds

The precise role of John Pounds in the history of the Ragged School Movement is obscure. His biographer presents him as the founder of the ragged schools.¹ It was certainly an opinion held by some within a few years of his death.² Later historians have perpetuated this view.³ J.Scotland has preferred to describe him as a pioneer (4), while E.A.G. Clark has suggested that he was an exemplar.⁵

A problem arises here for two reasons. Firstly, primary source material is lacking. Nearly half a century elapsed before Pounds' biography was published. This was a patronising and largely anecdotal account written by a clergyman who met him only four or five years before his death and who was not able to claim close friendship with him.⁶ Other references to the work and life of the hunchback cobbler in the early annual reports of ragged schools in Britain, in the Ragged School Magazine, the Ragged School Union Quarterly Record and Ragged School Missions, are of little help. They repeat or elaborate the corpus of largely mythical

-
1. H.Hawkes, The Recollections of John Pounds, 1884, p.295.
 2. E.G. York Herald, 4 May, 1850. 'The origin of this movement commenced with one very humble in life (John Pounds).' Report of a speech made by the Rev. Canon Trevor.
 3. J.H.Brown, Schools in England, 1961, p.53
W.M.Eager, Making Men, 1953, p.120
R.Bennett, The Shaftesbury Story, 1965, p.6.
F.Smith, A History of English Elementary Education, 1706-1902, 1931, pp.201-203.
 4. J.Scotland, The History of Scottish Education, Vol.1, 1965, p.273
 5. E.A.G.Clark, 'The Ragged School Union and the Education of the London Poor in the Nineteenth Century', University of London, M.A.(Ed.),1967.
 6. Later accounts of the work of J.Pounds either select from or condense H.Hawkes, op.cit. E.g. R.E.Jayne, The Story of John Pounds, 1925; C.J.Montague, Sixty Years in Waifdom, 1904.

MONUMENT TO JOHN POUNDS IN THE GROUNDS OF THE
JOHN POUNDS' MEMORIAL CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH.

BUST OF JOHN POUNDS
IN THE JOHN POUNDS' MEMORIAL CHURCH,
PORTSMOUTH.

Source:

John Pounds' Memorial Church,
Portsmouth.

stories which surrounded Pounds from the early years of the movement. Secondly, it is evident that within a couple of years of his death the exalted stereotype of the simple, homespun saint had replaced the real human being. Forgotten were the wit, fun and kisses, the repulsive looks, coarse speech and the crude workmanship of this filthy cripple. Pounds became an example of that evangelical piety which the Victorian Church promoted in its efforts to provide England with a social gospel. Alderman Meek, Lord Mayor of York, told the supporters of the York Ragged Schools that Pounds

. . . had, whilst earning a scanty livelihood, succeeded before his death in training to be useful members of society no less than 500 outcasts without fee or reward except the testimony of his own conscience, and the approval of his Maker. Let each of us in our station go and do likewise. 7

This attitude was crystallised in F.D.Maurice's concern that

. . . all thought shall dwell upon action and express itself in action, that it shall not dwell apart in a region of its own. 8

The facts of John Pounds' life are simple. He was born on 17 June, 1766, the son of a carpenter. After a few years of indifferent schooling he was apprenticed to the dockyard as a lad of twelve. Two years later a fall in the dry dock partially crippled him and was responsible for his grotesque gait and appearance. At this point he became apprenticed to a cobbler and continued at this trade for the rest of his life, though he was able to do only rough work. It was in his last sixteen years that he began to teach children. This phase of his life was accidental: 'I'se not think of it at all. It come of itself like'.⁹ He undertook to look after a lame nephew and invited children into his shop to play with the child. In talking with them he began to teach them. Soon parents asked if their children might come to listen to him. He agreed and found himself with a group of thirty to forty children each day.

The school was situated in St. Mary's Street, part of the old ghetto

7. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.33.

8. F.D.Maurice, Letters to Ladies on Practical Subjects, 1855, p.60.

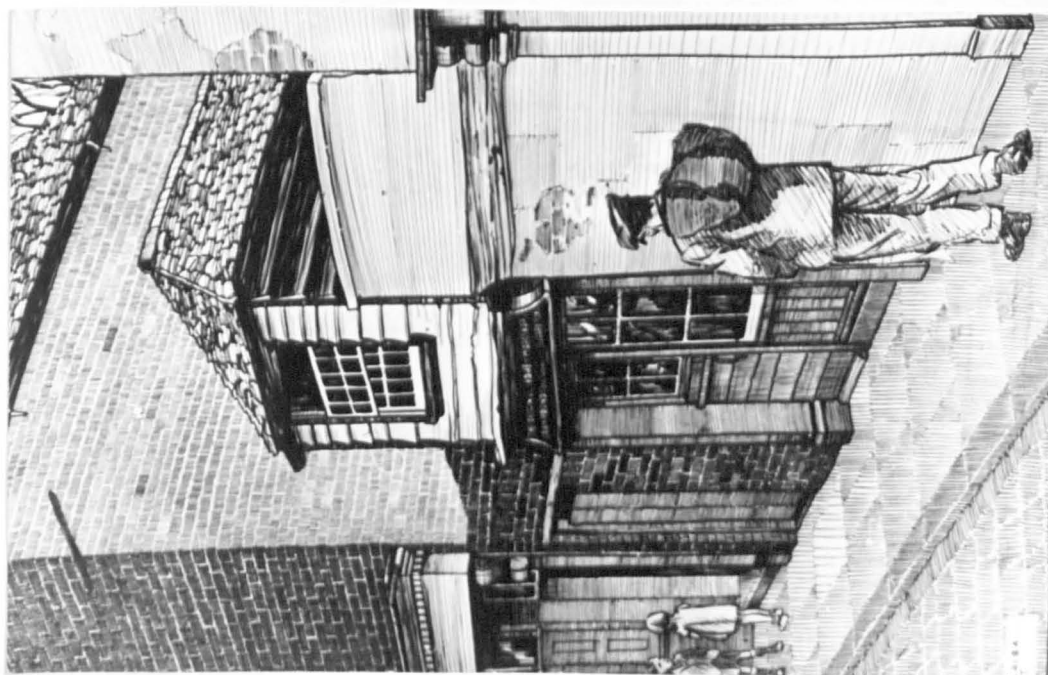
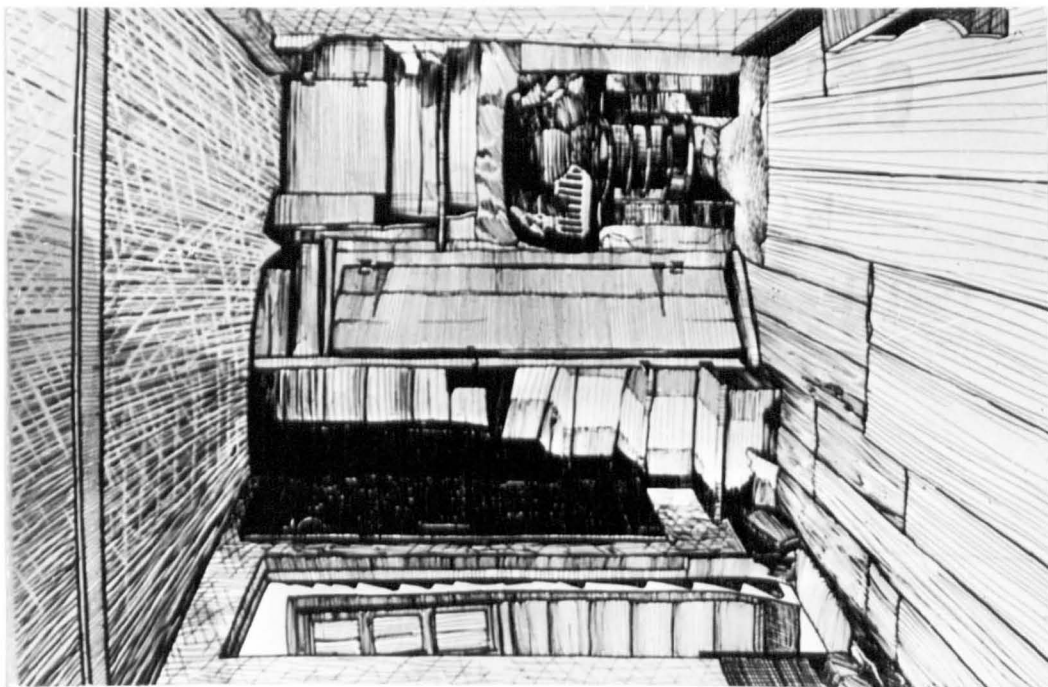
9. H.Hawkes, op.cit., p.130.

EXTERIOR OF JOHN POUNDS' SHOP,
PORTSMOUTH.

INTERIOR OF JOHN POUNDS' SHOP,
PORTSMOUTH.

Source:

John Pounds' Memorial Church,
Portsmouth.



area of Portsmouth bounded by Warblington Street, Quay Gate and Prospect Row. It had two rooms, a bedroom and a workshop. The frontage was two yards, the width was five yards and the height on the ground floor was six feet. Children sat on a tiny form, old boxes and the stairs. Those without a seat leaned against the walls or, in the summer, stood outside by the open window of the shop. A visitor commented:

His shop was full to overflowing, some with slates or bits of slates, some with books or a leaf of a book, some looking at flowers, some amusing themselves with playthings. 10

Besides the children there were in the shop many cages for birds and animals. Pounds was passionately fond of wild life and kept canaries, linnets and goldfinches, as well as a crow and a raven. There were cats, a dog, some guinea pigs, together with a collection of plants, flowers and leaves. These latter were taken from a nearby common. It is reported that Pounds said:

An' while I's a-sitting all day on my bench, working at my trade, I's be able to tend all they little rascals. I hears 'em read and say their lessons; and it's no hindrance to my trade. My work goes on all the same. 11

The education which took place in the tiny cobbler's shop was varied, humane and often quite humorous. Writing was taught, though there were no exercise books - the children using broken pieces of slate. All the visitors to the school commented on the high standard of reading achieved by the children, despite the lack of suitable books. A few Bibles were available, stray leaves from discarded books, handbills and scraps from newspapers. The boys were taught the mathematics which would be most useful to them. It comprised business arithmetic and computations necessary for simple navigation. Pounds' view was that 'the Book of Nature's a Divine Book to larn 'em out of'.12 He showed the children how to care for all the animals he

10. H.Hawkes, op.cit., p.39.

11. Ibid., p.130.

12. Ibid., p.140.

kept, encouraged them to collect wild flowers and took them on nature rambles to Portsdown. He taught them practical country wisdom about mushrooms, sheep and rabbits, while extending their local knowledge. The older boys' interests were directed either to the sea or to cobbling. The life and duties of a sailor were explained and the ships at anchor in the dock discussed. Not surprisingly many of his pupils went to sea when they left him. The older girls were taught plain cooking - that which they prepared each day John Pounds ate for his lunch and supper! Moral education was pointed and within the experience of the children. The death of his favourite 'little Polly' provided him with the theme of mortality, which he summed up as: 'We's all to go, Jemmy; some goes first, some follows after'.¹³ A passing drunkard gave him the opportunity to discuss the evils of liquor. Religious education was brief, clear and informal.

'Who made the buttercups and takes care of them?'

'God.'

'There's no end to the good things that God's always doing for us. ¹⁴ Sunday school attendance was not compulsory for his children. He took his more able pupils with him once he had managed to find suitable decent clothing for them.

His methods were dictated by the poverty of circumstances and were mostly interrogative. 'I questions 'em a good deal I does; on all sorts o' things.'¹⁵ It could also be that this method suited his personality. Hawkes suggests that he injected colour, wit, information and love into his teaching. There was certainly some understanding of children and a degree of common sense in Pounds' practices. He was sympathetic, too, with the inability of the children to cope with continued academic work.

For they poor little things to be kept hard at head work for two or three hours together with nothing to freshen 'em up like - it's too much of it. ¹⁶

13. H.Hawkes, op.cit., p.119.

14. Ibid., p.20.

15. Ibid., p.140.

16. Ibid., p.137.

He used to say: 'I likes fun and I likes work. A bit of fun makes work go light and easy'.¹⁷ The children he took were ill-clothed, usually hungry and often without enough sleep. Realising this, he let the children sleep in the school, from his own very meagre resources provided food for the worst cases, and passed on old clothes given to him by neighbours.

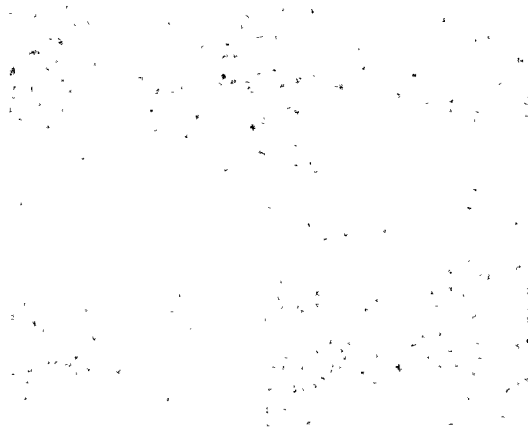
Shortly before his death Mr. Sheaf, a journeyman shoemaker, painted a picture of Pounds in the shop surrounded by his children. It was sold to Mr. Edward Carpenter, an engraver and stationer in Portsmouth, for £5. At the death of John Pounds in January, 1839 his obituary appeared in the weekly Portsmouth newspaper, The Hampshire Telegraph, under the headline: 'Philanthropy and Real Charity in Humbler Life'. Continued interest in Pounds prompted Mr. Carpenter to have a lithograph made from Mr. Sheaf's picture. A short pamphlet was produced to accompany it entitled: A Memoir of the Late John Pounds of Portsmouth, Shoe-maker and Gratuitous Teacher of Poor Children. Its text was produced in the March issue of The Christian Reformer, a monthly magazine with a national circulation, which was published in London. Thus the story of the Portsmouth cobbler became common currency, as also did the lithograph from Sheaf's painting.

Some inaccuracies in the account given to the public stem from this picture. It depicted Pounds as having black hair, a clean skin and a small stature when, in fact, he was grey-haired, with ingrained dirt in his hands and face and was over six feet tall.¹⁸ It showed him working in a coat and a shirt whose collar fastened neatly to the neck, whereas he never wore a coat at work and always left his shirt collar open. His workshop was not as spacious as the picture indicated. It was never as clean nor

17. H.Hawkes, op.cit., p.67.

18. Ibid., where he is described thus: 'His face, neck, chest, arms and hands; all were black as if seldom washed. There was a repulsive coarseness about his features. His voice was harsh and loud as he spoke to the children. What he said, and his manner of saying it, all would have given us the impression of coarse vulgarity.' p.13. And '... his body from the hips to the shoulders leaned so much forward that his long back was nearly parallel with the ground. One hip bulged largely out.' p.44.

SHEAF'S PAINTING OF JOHN POUNDS AND THE RAGGED
CHILDREN.



Source:

The Shaftesbury Society.



as bereft of children as Sheaf suggested. The friends of Pounds did not like the portrait. When it was first painted they expressed their disapproval of the idealised scene.¹⁹ However, it fitted well with the romantic story which was written for the public. Certainly the picture was deeply moving. In 1841 Thomas Guthrie, Minister at Old Greyfriars and Magdalene Chapel, Cowgate, in Edinburgh, and later a powerful advocate of the cause of ragged schools, explained his reactions in his Memoirs.

My first interest in the cause of Ragged Schools was awakened by a picture which I saw in Anstruther, on the shores of the Firth of Forth. It represented a cobbler's room; he was there himself, spectacles on nose, an old shoe between his knees; that massive forehead and firm mouth indicating great strength of character; and from beneath his bushy eyebrows benevolence gleamed out on a group of poor children, some sitting, some standing, but all busy at their lessons around him. Interested by this scene we turned from the picture to the inscription below; and with growing wonder read how this man, by name 'John Pounds', by trade a cobbler in Portsmouth, had taken pity on the ragged children, whom ministers and magistrates, ladies and gentlemen, were leaving to run wild, and so to ruin on the streets, how like a good shepherd he had gone forth to gather in these outcasts, how he had trained them up in virtue and knowledge . . . I confess I felt humbled, I felt ashamed of myself. I well remember saying to my companion . . . 'That man is an honour to humanity'.²⁰

Other inaccuracies arose from the elaboration and dramatic heightening of Pounds' ordinary activities. It was his practice to look out for starving children poking about in the gutter and ask them: 'Will ye have a tatty?'²¹ He would then offer them a boiled potato which he had ready in his pocket. The child would often follow him home for another morsel of food. 'As sure as he comes once he comes again.'²² By 1841 this was recorded thus:

He was sometimes seen hunting down a ragged urchin on the quays of Portsmouth, and compelling him to come to school, not by the power of a policeman, but a potato! He knew the love of an Irishman for a potato and might be seen running alongside an unwilling boy with one held under his nose, with a temper as hot and a coat as ragged as his own.²³

19. H.Hawkes, op.cit., p.172.

20. D.K.Guthrie and C.J.Guthrie, Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie, D.D., and Memoir, 1877, pp.438-439.

21. H.Hawkes, op.cit., p.128.

22. Ibid., p.129.

23. D.K.Guthrie and C.J.Guthrie, op.cit., p.439.

It was a scene which proved useful to the Management Committees of the ragged schools in their efforts to raise subscriptions and is a commonplace in their annual reports. John Pounds seems to have inspired Charles Dickens' portrayal of the schoolmaster in The Old Curiosity Shop.²⁴ If this is so, then the distortion is such that the original becomes unrecognisable. The benevolent Mr. Marton, sitting peacefully among the flowers, gazing contentedly at his beehives, reveals more the affectionate and whimsical humour of his creator than gives any useful information about the model used. There are, however, many correspondences between this gentle and kindly oldman and the popular image of the Portsmouth cobbler.

The Ragged School Movement accepted Guthrie's opinion that John Pounds was a genius.²⁵ Its historian reveals the extent of the belief.

Nearly everything in the operations of the R.S.U. existed in germ in that wonderful little shop. Even the fresh air movement had its counterpart, for the scholars took turns at sitting on the step and form outside. The clothing department was represented by the garments Pounds loaned to the children to enable them to attend Sunday School. The cripple department was foreshadowed by that curious contrivance of leather he made for his crippled nephew . . . he taught his girl scholars to cook simple food so that the ragged school cookery class had its origin in the shoemaker's shanty. To the lads he taught his own trade and this would represent industrialisation, while the reading and writing and arithmetic in which they were thoroughly grounded stood for education. Being doctor and nurse to his young charges, he may be said to have had a medical department as well. As a maker of bats, shuttlecocks and cross-bows for the youngest, he exhibited an interest in recreation. Even the Robin Dinner was anticipated by the good old man in the plum pudding feast he held for the children every Christmas Day. ²⁶

This is simply ludicrous adulation by an uncritical disciple. To see, in spontaneous acts of love and the convenience of necessity, a miniature of the whole educational and social service system of the Ragged School Unions is a historical extravagance which goes beyond the facts in two ways.

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24. J.Manning, Dickens on Education, 1959, p.80, note 31. Manning observes that 'Dickens was in Petersham and London in 1839 and, because of his interest in ragged children, would have been attracted by the account of Pounds' work on their behalf'.
25. D.K.Guthrie and C.J.Guthrie, op.cit., p.439.
26. C.J.Montague, Sixty Years in Waifdom, 1904, p.41.

Firstly, it ignores the evidence of the minutes of the Ragged School Movement Management and General Committees. These show clearly reasons for establishing the various social agencies. In all of the argument and discussion Pounds and his work are never mentioned. This is odd because these minutes explore minutely the theories concerning the relief of the destitute and examine closely the Unions' motives for their actions. Secondly, it takes no account of the Annual Reports and Management Committee Minutes available for individual schools in Great Britain. The early reports are particularly valuable because they frequently point to the model on which the school is to be based. Montague says: 'When the workers sought for the nearest corresponding agency in the history of the past to that which they were forming, they found the type in the work of John Pounds.'²⁷ In fact, these reports make no reference to Pounds in this respect. The early schools looked to the example of Scotland, particularly to the institutions set up by Sheriff Watson in Aberdeen or, less frequently, to those founded by Dr. Guthrie in Edinburgh. The later ones usually referred to the system worked by the London ragged schools and occasionally to the methods of the Manchester or Liverpool Ragged School Unions.

It is not difficult to see why this should have been so. Even if Pounds deserved 'the tallest monument ever raised on British shores' (23), there was nothing in his practice which could help the managers of a ragged school. They were faced with the problem of making some educational provision for and giving some material relief to a large group of destitute and wild children. Pounds' individual solutions could not be extrapolated to these new situations.

Yet advocates of the ragged school, particularly the journalists, insisted on systematising the individual kindnesses of Pounds and institutionalised his informal generosity. They saw, in ordinary neighbourly acts, evangelical fervour in action. The real achievement of Pounds is

27. C.J.Montague, op.cit., p.36.

28. D.K.Guthrie and C.J.Guthrie, op.cit., p.439.

difficult to assess. The evidence points to a kindly, old eccentric whose posthumous fame was completely accidental and largely ill-founded. That five hundred were educated by Pounds is difficult to believe. There was no register of attendance and the number is obviously an estimate. The impression given by the Ragged School Movement is that these children were sufficiently educated to enable them to take up positions as responsible members of society. Yet the history of these schools shows the enormous problems created by absences. Reports issued annually continually complained that children were not able to attend frequently enough to gain from the teaching. Nor were they able to remain long before being put to work by their parents or friends, or before they simply ran away. It is beyond belief that Pounds was not troubled by the same problems and that, while continuing his work and attending to his customers, was able to educate the children to the standards claimed. Some of the ragged schools themselves, with better finance, more materials, full-time personnel and a higher teacher/child ratio, found the problem difficult enough. In all the recorded instances of visitors listening to Pounds' children reading or testing their mental arithmetic, it is significant that he always picked out the children to be heard. It is understandable that sympathisers should have generalised from his specific and perhaps limited successes.

The John Pounds myth was a stimulus to the charity and social concern of the middle and upper classes. The lonely, old cobbler who took children into his shop and talked to them was not the founder of the ragged school movement. His was an isolated and individual venture which occurred at an opportune time and yet which bore no real relation to the subsequent schools. Even the free institutions at Portsea, erected as direct Memorials to him and 'designed to carry forward gratuitously the same good work' (29), operated on entirely different principles from his own.³⁰ He had no pro-

29. H.Hawkes, op.cit., p.274

30. The plans of this school show it to be a very substantial, spacious and well-conceived building. It comprised ten classrooms, separate playing area for the boys and girls, a gallery, as well as floor with three bedrooms, parlour, kitchen and scullery for the use of the master.

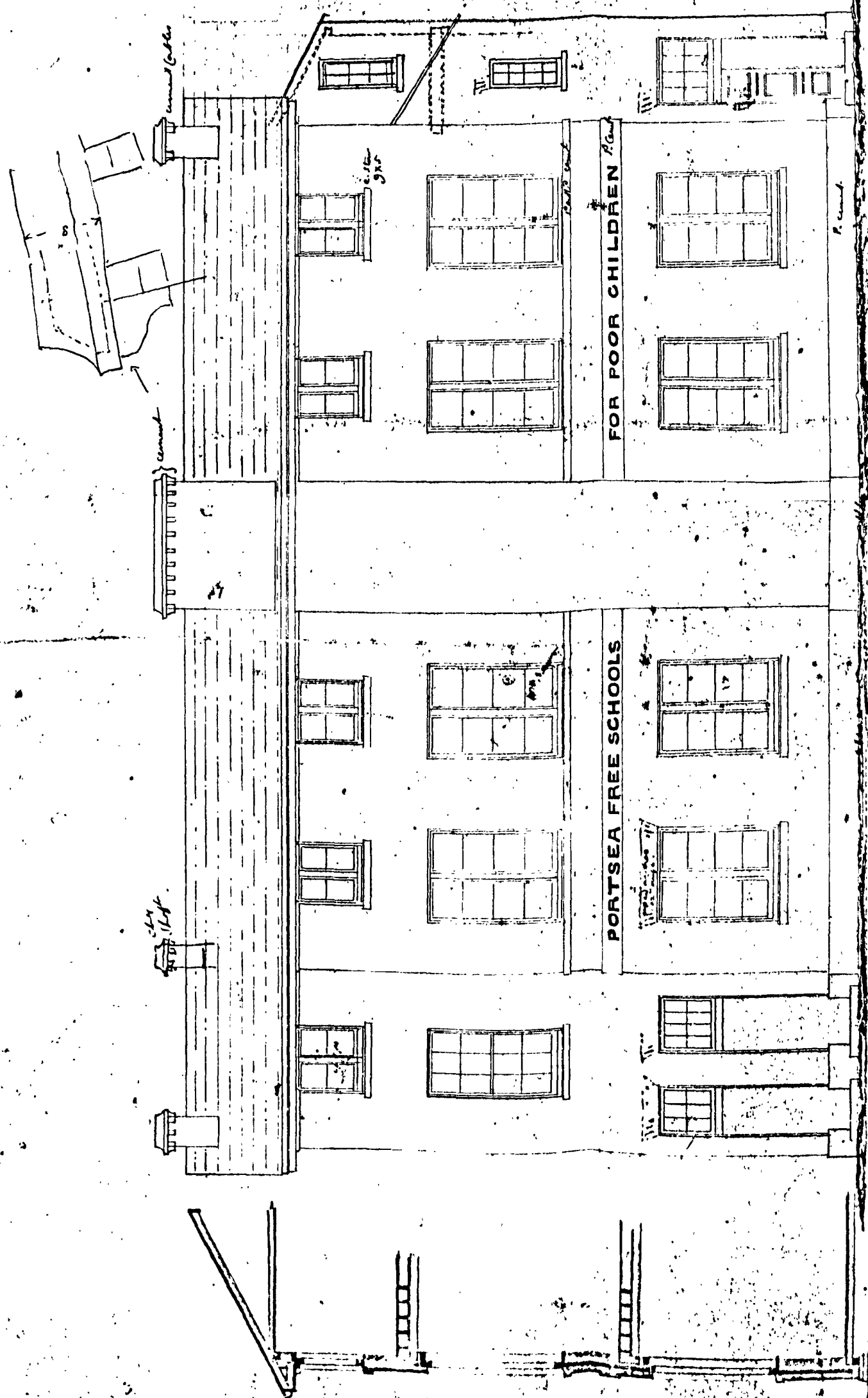
FRONT ELEVATION FROM THE PLANS
FOR THE FREE SCHOOLS, PORTSEA.
(THIS WAS A MEMORIAL TO THE WORK
OF JOHN POUNDS AND WAS ONE OF
THE FIRST OF THE LARGER AND
SPECIALLY BUILT RAGGED SCHOOLS).

Source:

Portsmouth Record Office.

4.15.9.12 N° 4

FREE SCHOOLS - PORTSEA



Old foundation

FRONT ELEVATION

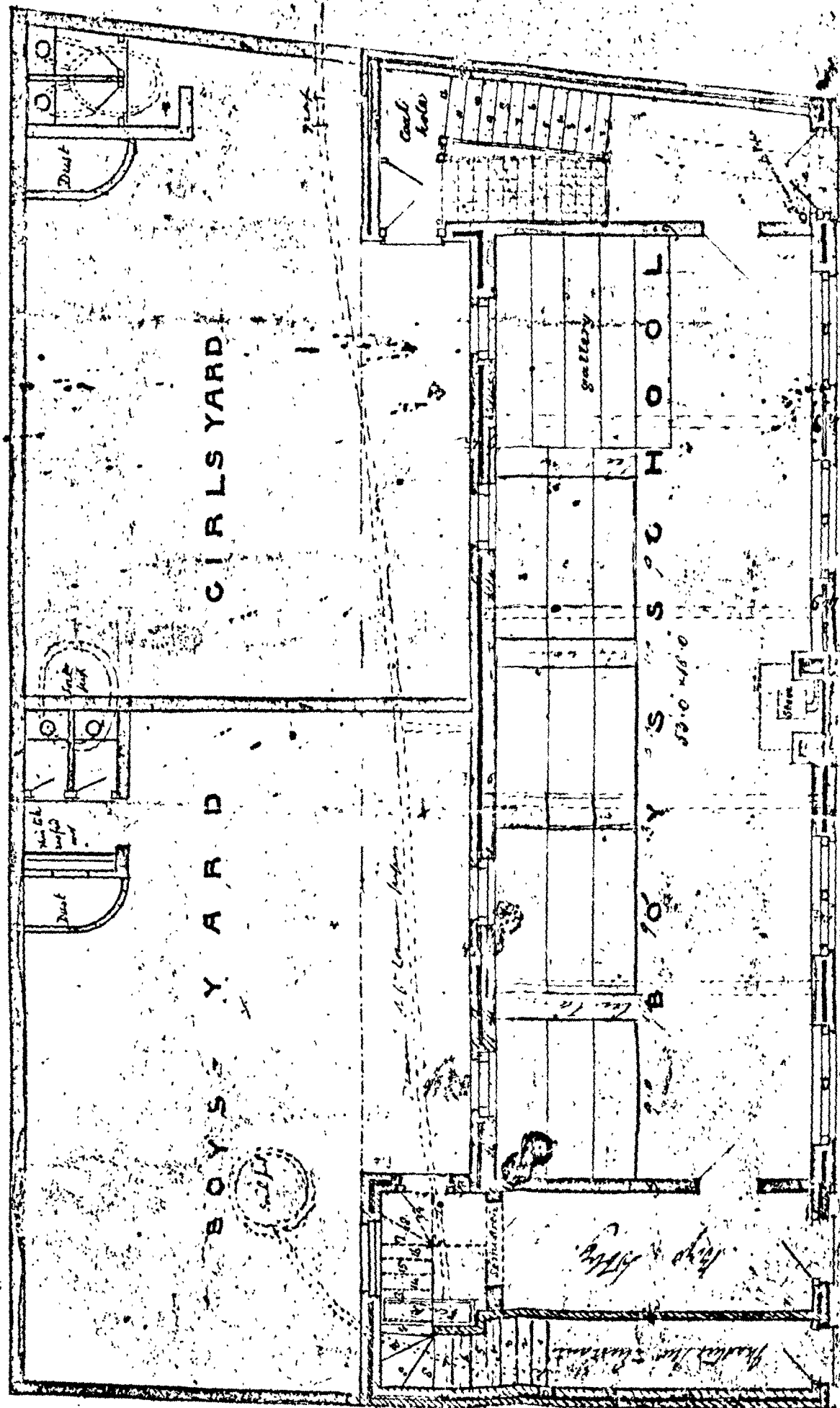
Concrete

GROUND PLAN FROM THE PLANS FOR
THE FREE SCHOOLS, PORTSEA. THIS
SHOWS THE BOYS' SCHOOL AND YARD
AND THE GIRLS' YARD.

Source:

Portsmouth Record Office.

FREE SCHOOLS - PORTSEA



a small entrance
 through front door the
 large lobby & beneath
 the gallery in the
 fact class room for
 a water closet &
 a large plan attached
 to the main building
 with

73.3 cubic feet

GROUND PLAN

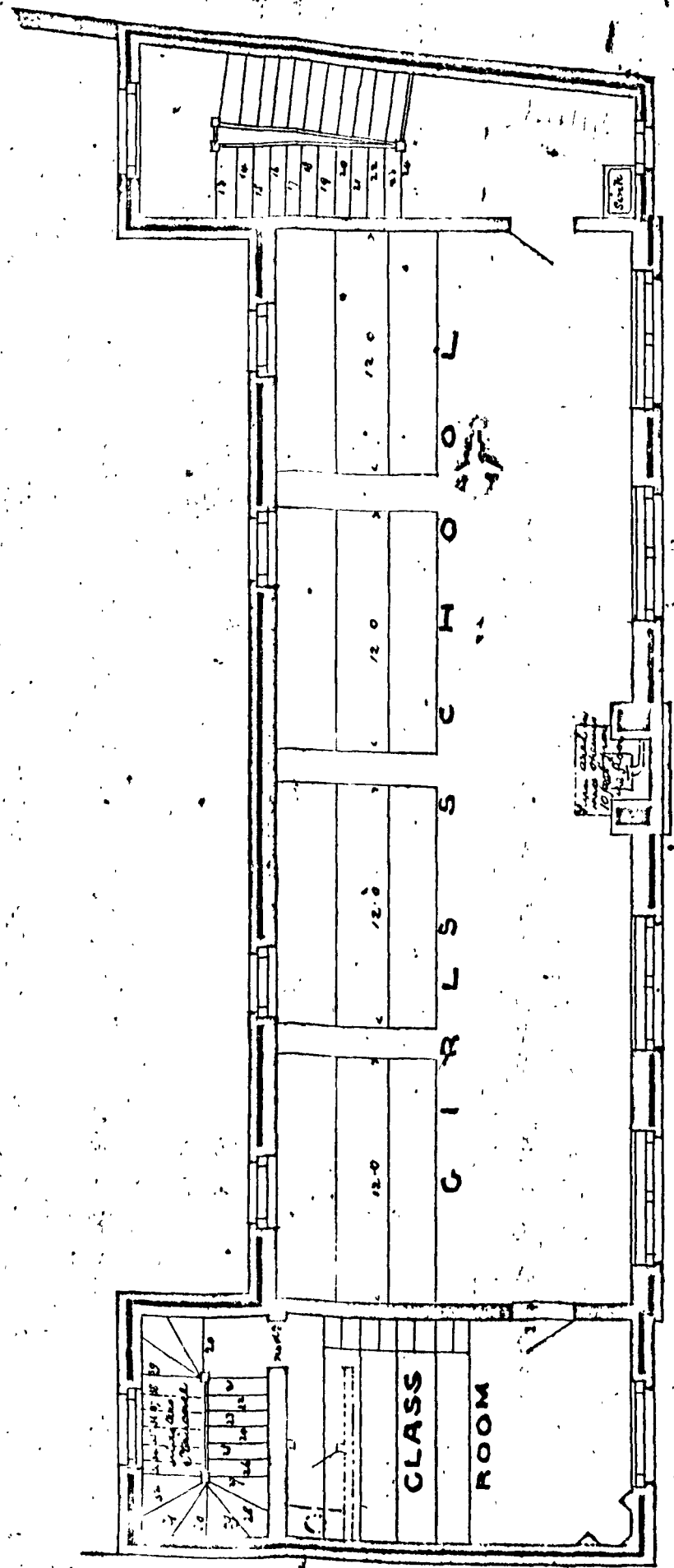
FIRST FLOOR PLAN FROM THE PLANS
FOR THE FREE SCHOOLS, PORTSEA.
THIS SHOWS THE GIRLS' SCHOOL.

Source:

Portsmouth Record Office.

4-159272
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 No 2

FREE SCHOOLS- PORTSEA



C for master and
 the gallery

ONE PAIR FLOOR

Scale 8 ft to an inch

gramme of constructive reform and no opportunity of catching the ear of anyone more important than the minister of his chapel. He was hardly the exemplar of the movement. His achievements are uncertain, his theory negligible, and his practice was probably worse than the prevailing pedagogy of the time. What attracted those working for the establishment of ragged schools to him was his compassion for the poorest, most neglected and destitute children, and not particulars of his activity or work. These played no significant part in the founding and development of the schools.

It seems likely that his compassion was rooted in his Christian religion. The Ragged School Movement overplayed this and read back into Pounds' life their own efforts to give to the commercial classes an ethic of service and duty. It hardly noticed that the foundation of his curriculum was not Scriptural Instruction, and it always conveniently glossed over the fact that he was a Unitarian. It is likely that Pounds' own religious beliefs were very simple and there is no evidence to show that he thought very deeply or very often about them. His biographer, a clergyman, has very little to say on the subject, which is surprising in view of the evangelical foundation on which the Movement stood.

Although the accolade of history has fallen upon John Pounds, to some extent this was fortuitous. The love of the ghetto populace for the old man who looked after their children; who brought them soup in the dreadful winter of 1837-8; who made crutches for them when they broke their legs; who made splints for injured birds and who talked to his cats, was the love of a group for a generous and well-meaning eccentric. Some local publicity taken up at national level, popularisation by Lord Ashley, misinformation by Dr. Guthrie, and an inaccurate painting by Sheaf gave rise to extravagant claims for him. Yet, in association with the Sunday school movement or the evangelical revival, efforts similar to Pounds' have been recorded in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Somerset and Buckinghamshire. Credit for prompting the ragged schools could go to Jimmy o' the Heys, the old bobbin winder who taught children gratuitously while still pursuing his trade

at Little Lever in Lancashire, with as much justification as to John
Pounds.³¹

31. J.H.Turner, Idle Upper Chapel Sunday School, 1907, p.35.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHILDREN'S SHERIFF AND THE FIRST INDUSTRIAL RAGGED SCHOOLS

On the last night of 1839 William Watson wrote in his diary

What have I done for my fellow men? Nothing! Nothing! Nothing! What can I do? What does He will that I do? That I love Him with all my strength and might - and my neighbour as myself. How can I love the Father and not the child? I must no longer live for myself but for His little ones. Faith without works is dead. 1

This excess of self-abnegation hardly indicates that the writer was the generous, enlightened and progressive Sheriff-Substitute of Aberdeen; that he had held this post with singular distinction and humanity for ten years; that he had organised a flourishing House of Refuge for the destitute; that he had instituted and largely supported by his own exertions The Society for the Education of the Poor; that he had taken up the cause of prison reform and discussed the conditions in the Aberdeen gaol with Elizabeth Fry. Yet it does underline the extent to which the needs and demands of 'the poor bairns' weighed on him. It is from this time that his previous hopes for an industrial school in Aberdeen took definite shape.

The problems which William Watson attempted to solve were part of a larger complex of difficulties which arose from the fact that in the first half of the nineteenth century ten millions were added to the population. This increase occurred in the large towns and cities and strained the organs of communal life to the point of breakdown. Services and institutions were not equipped to deal with the explosion. Local government, the police, buildings, sanitation, health services, schools - even cemeteries - were totally inadequate. So the slums emerged. Hideous reports and stories about the barbarised areas were not wanting. Edwin Chadwick's The Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain (1842) was the classic document, and along with the reports of Drs. Kay, Arnott and Southwood Smith embodied in the Fourth Report of the Poor

1. M. Angus, Sheriff Watson of Aberdeen, 1913, p.58.

Law Commission (1838) and The Reports of the Royal Commission on Large Towns and Populous Places (1844-45) paved the way for the first national measure of its kind, the Public Health Act of 1848 - tentative and restricted though this was. Comment was prolific but embodied no real social analysis - the honourable exception being the Rev. Thomas Beames' famous The Rookeries of London (1851). Too much was an elaboration of the theme that the 'slummers' were satisfying their own preferences or paying the penalty for moral lapses. An appeal for a more intense spirituality and a stricter code of behaviour from the poorest classes, for more charity from the philanthropists and more zealous activity from the clergy and their helpers, tended to obscure the fact that fundamental legislation was required. There was, however, a deep-rooted fear of government intervention. Even as late as 1882 the Liberty and Property Defence League, which had a powerful parliamentary lobby, attempted to thwart the growth of collective responsibility for housing under the banner 'Self-Help Versus State-Help'.

Thirty-nine thousand people inhabited the cellars of Liverpool and fifteen thousand those of Manchester in 1842. In many places open sewers ran down the streets and invariably overflowed in the wet weather. In Bethnal Green a row of pig-sties emptied their refuse into a nearby pool of stagnant water. A survey by the Royal Statistical Society in 1847 showed that the population of Church Lane, London, in which there were twenty-seven houses, rose from 655 to 1,095 in six years.² A classification of the employments of the inhabitants of the Seven Dials district in 1848 showed that the majority fell into these categories: thief, vagrant, gambler, beggar, costermonger, scavenger, charwoman, seamstress and prostitute.³ The publication of the Rev. Andrew Mearns' little pamphlet, The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, in 1883, showed that the living conditions of the urban poor remained as squalid and unhealthy as those of half a century earlier. It caused con-

2. Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, 1849, pp.1-19.

3. Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1848, p.26.

siderable comment and reawakened the public conscience. Charles Booth confirmed and amplified this in his Life and Labour of People in London (1889-97). Sanitation and water supplies were improved, but many other measures were blocked by the opposition of the vestries, the Treasury and governments wedded to a laissez-faire doctrine.

The immediate social consequences of Victorian capitalism were disastrous. Contemporary estimates of national income distribution, actuarial tables and the annual reports of the Registrar General give a broad skeleton of figures which charts the problem. Analyses of separate areas by students of urban history give further elaboration and an account of the cost of industrialisation in human terms.⁴ Thus, in Oldham, one child in five died before it reached its first birthday; one in seven female mill-workers in the 25-34 years age range died usually of T.B; one miner in five could expect to be killed during a normal working life. During the regular periods of mass unemployment over 40% of working-class families experienced primary poverty.⁵

Statistical tools were not refined and opinion and impression formed the basis of some of the figures offered in the literature of the time. Nevertheless, the macabre and pitiful picture is clear. There were plenty of suggested solutions, some visionary, radical and hopelessly impracticable on any scale. Others were more soundly based and had been previously proved on a small scale. General William Booth was the last of a line of distinguished and sincere Christians to suggest mass emigration. 'There are multitudes of people all over the country who would be likely to emigrate', and such an opportunity would be particularly valued by 'women and young girls'.⁶ Others thought that the urban slums could be decanted to

4. E.g. J.Foster, 'Capitalism and Class Consciousness in Earlier Nineteenth Century Oldham', University of Cambridge, Ph.D., 1966; W.H. Chaloner, The Social and Economic Development of Crewe, 1780-1923, 1950. Vide also Ed. H.J.Dyos, The Study of Urban History, 1968.

5. Ibid., p.37.

6. W.Booth, In Darkest England and the Way Out, 1890, pp.150-151.

form rural colonies. This was an adaptation of an old idea and had worked at Saltaire (near Bradford) and Akroydon (near Halifax) where miniature factory towns had been planned by two Yorkshire woollen manufacturers.

Educational provision for the increasing numbers were totally inadequate. As early as 1816 a Select Committee under Lord Brougham had estimated that more than half of the children in the poorer parts of London received little or no education. The total without access to schooling in the metropolis was put at 100,000 children.⁷ However, the means of arriving at these figures involved guesswork and a more scientific and sound investigation was carried out by the Manchester Statistical Society into educational provision in that city. It took place in 1834 and revealed that about a third of all children between five and fifteen received 'no instruction whatsoever'.⁸ And it has to be remembered that two years earlier Dr. Kay, in his report The Condition of the Working Classes of Manchester, had found that half the children of the poor died before they reached the age of five years. With educational destitution at such a level it caused no surprise to the reformers to learn that there was a serious increase in crime in the decade 1836 to 1847. In England and Wales in 1836 there were 20,984 committals, in 1847 there were 28,333. The relative proportion of children and young people to adult offenders was a matter of concern. Of the 25,107 offenders committed for trial in 1846 in England and Wales, 1,640 were under fifteen and 6,236 under twenty.⁹

The government looked to the penal system to solve the problems of juvenile crime. It was a system which rested on assumptions which were not self-evident to many. Questioning at the national level was prompted by the work of the Spitalfields Quaker, Peter Bedford.¹⁰ His committee col-

7. Report of the Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders, 1816, p.123. Evidence of William Allen.
8. S.E.Maltby, Manchester and the Movement for National Elementary Education, 1800-1870, 1918, Appendix 3.
9. The North British Review, May, 1849, pp.83-84.
10. W.Tallack, Peter Bedford, The Spitalfields Philanthropist, 1865.

lected evidence relating 'to the causes of the alarming increase in juvenile crime in the metropolis' and set up a sub-committee to investigate the conditions within prisons. The startling findings of one member, Mr. T.Foxwell Buxton, were published in the Edinburgh Review.¹¹ His conclusion was that the prisons as reformatory institutions were gloomy failures. They encouraged rather than prevented crime. He quoted a warder at St. Albans prison who confessed that he had seen a great many children 'who came in comparatively innocent go out quite depraved, but never one who, coming in wicked, went out better'.

The reports on a few prisons were more encouraging. At Millbank Penitentiary some of the boys were taught shoe-making, and at Ilchester instruction was given in reading and in writing. However, until the Reformatory Schools Act of 1854, any special provision for children and young people in prison was a voluntary matter.¹² Thus, the juveniles endured the 'silent system', risking a flogging whenever they spoke. Or else they were abused by the idea which received such widespread support in the nineteenth century, the separate system which was akin to solitary confinement. The First and Second Reports of the House of Lords Select Committee of 1847, 'relating to the execution of the Criminal Law especially respecting Juvenile Offenders', with its appendices, contain some hair-raising evidence regarding the treatment of young people and many brutal suggestions for 'improvement'.

The confusion of philosophies, the inappropriate punitive measures, the inadequate arrangements, the degrading conditions and the poor quality of the staff made the prisons quite unsuitable places in which to place the young. Attempts were made to provide more suitable penal institutions. In 1839 a separate prison at Parkhurst was opened for young offenders which gave them industrial training and some schooling. However, there was a very rigid discipline and the energetic and forthright educationalist Mary

11. Edinburgh Review, Vol.30, Sept. 1818, p.474

12. D.L.Howard, The English Prisons, 1960, p.94.

Carpenter complained:

It is utterly vain to look for any real reformation where the heart is not touched and where the inner springs of action are not called into healthful exercise; this cannot possibly be done for children under the mechanical and military discipline of Parkhurst.¹³

A modification of the penal system was not the only approach to the treatment of young people. Experiments were taking place. Stretton-on-Dunsmore, Warks. had been established in 1818 as a Farm Colony, taking boys from Birmingham and Warwick gaols. It was not its purpose to terrify and degrade but to offer the security and moral influence of a well-ordered family.¹⁴ Rauhe Haus, near Hamburg, established in 1833, extended the idea of the family system.¹⁵ At Mettrai, in France, in 1839 M. deMetz founded a similar institution run on competitive lines.¹⁶ This was copied at Redhill, in Surrey, by the Philanthropic Society in 1849. These reformatories attempted to ensure that their boys became 'true men and honest labourers'. The Rev. Sydney Turner, who was to become the first Inspector of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, expressed the view of many reformers when he wrote

Let there be no high education . . . but only plain and useful instruction such as may place the boy on the fair level of the labouring classes.¹⁷

William Watson found himself among an avant-garde group of thinkers wanting a more humane and carefully-organised approach to the problems of juvenile vagrancy and delinquency. He attempted in 1840 to gain support for the plan to establish ragged schools in Aberdeen for those children who lived in the grossest poverty and who continually fell into the hands of the law. He was prompted to take the initiative after receiving a report from the Committee of the Managers of the Poor's Hospital in 1840, urging that poor children should be helped

13. M.Carpenter, Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes and for Juvenile Offenders, 1851, p.323.

14. Ibid., p 342.

15. The Quarterly Review, Vol.98, Dec. 1855, p.39

16. R.Hall, Mettrai, 1854.

17. Edinburgh Review, Vol.94, Oct. 1851, p.421.

BOYS EXERCISING AT TOTHILL FIELDS PRISON.

FROM: H. MAYHEW, 'THE CRIMINAL PRISONS AT LONDON', 1862.



. . . by adopting a proper system of education . . . by bringing them under a proper system of religious and moral training, and superinducing upon their minds such habits of industry as will make labour of some useful kind a pleasure.¹⁸

Previously to this he had received a report from the rural Police, indicating that in 1839 'three hundred and twenty-eight children were vagabondising the county'. The Superintendent of the City Police of Aberdeen had told him that upwards of two hundred and eighty children within the city were common beggars and thieves.¹⁹ And he was aware that the City prison held on average each year seventy-five children under fourteen years of age. He wrote to his supporter, Mr. Thomas of Banchory:

What could be more cruel or absurd than to send a child of 8, 9, 10 or 11 years to prison for theft, begging or breach of the peace, when it is known that unless by begging or stealing 99 in a 100 have no way of subsisting?²⁰

And again, to his brother: 'I think it is high time to attempt another institution'.²¹ His first industrial school was opened in Chronicle Lane, Aberdeen, on 1st October, 1841. There was much opposition which regarded the scheme as a wild enterprise, 'the product of a heated imagination'.²² Nevertheless, it was a success. The boys were taught reading and writing, and they worked at teasing hair and making salmon nets. They received breakfast, dinner and supper in the school and they were forbidden to beg. Numbers grew and so did the staff, until Watson knew that his experiment had been justified. In 1843, on June 5th, in Long Acre, his female school of industry was opened. His third 'Soup Kitchen School' was successful because of an initial act of benevolent despotism. Conscious that the problem of the vagrant children had not been eradicated by his previous efforts, he asked the police to bring to the new school every child found begging in the streets. The date was 19th May, 1845, and in the course of the day

18. W. Watson, The Juvenile Vagrant and the Industrial School, 1851, p.9

19. Ibid., p.9.

20. M. Angus, op.cit., p.59

21. Ibid., p.58.

22. Ibid., p.72.

seventy-five children were brought to the new school, aged from three to fourteen years.

Confusion and uproar, quarrelling and fighting, language of the most hateful description, and the most determined rebellion against everything like order and regularity, gave the gentlemen engaged in the undertaking of taming them the hardest day's work they have ever encountered in their lives.²³

It was soon established and in its first year one hundred and fifty-nine children were admitted. This levelled off to an annual average of seventy-four (forty-three boys and thirty-one girls). The Sheriff and his co-workers were convinced that there was an obvious causal connection between the foundation of the industrial school system in Aberdeen and the dramatic fall in criminal statistics relating to young persons.²⁴

TABLE 1

The Number of Juvenile Vagrants Apprehended by the Rural Police
in Aberdeenshire, 1841-1849

| | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1841 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 328 |
| 1842 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 297 |
| 1843 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 397 |
| 1844 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 345 |
| 1845 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 105 |
| 1846 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 14 |
| 1847 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6 |
| 1848 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6 |
| 1849 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |

TABLE 2

The Number of Juvenile Delinquents Under 12 Years of Age Committed
to Prison in Aberdeen, 1841-1849

| | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1841 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 61 |
| 1842 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 22 |
| 1843 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 53 |
| 1844 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 41 |
| 1845 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 49 |
| 1846 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 28 |
| 1847 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 27 |
| 1848 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 19 |
| 1849 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16 |

Despite criticisms that these figures had been affected by an increase in private charity, a more liberal administration of the New Poor Law and a

23. North British Review, May 1847, p.76.

24. W.Watson, op.cit., p.16.

diminishing vigilance by the police, they were widely publicised at the national level and impressed many. The early years of the ragged school movement were to see continuing attempts to correlate the foundation of the schools with statistics of juvenile crime.

Sheriff Watson's ideas spread rapidly and, before the half century, he was a national figure in Scotland. Seven years after its foundation, the Management Committee of his first school noted with some pride

It has been the model of the numerous Industrial Schools that have been established within the last two or three years.²⁵

Enough of the first annual reports of the schools has survived to confirm this claim. The Committee of the Dundee Industrial Schools Society states clearly that it 'was framed after the model of the similar Institution in Aberdeen'.²⁶ William Watson had attended the public meeting in Dundee on 9th September, 1846, held to promote the plan for a ragged industrial school, and was even instrumental in engaging its staff.²⁷ The Committee wrote of him

To his benevolent exertions we are indebted for the first idea of such an institution as the Industrial Schools . . . The Directors would beg to express their deep sense of obligation to the Sheriff, for the assistance he so kindly rendered them in the formation of our Society, and for the great interest he has all along evinced for its welfare, and which well entitles him to be called the Father of our Industrial Schools, as well as of those in Aberdeen, which have served for a model to all the other similar institutions which have since sprung up throughout the land.²⁸

Edinburgh had its first industrial school in 1847.²⁹ Greenock established one in 1848, with Inverness, Falkirk, Rothesay, Ayr, Stranraer and Dumfries quickly following suit. In each place the 'Children's Sheriff', as he was coming to be known, went to explain the 'Aberdeen System'.

The ragged and industrial schools in England developed a much more

25. Aberdeen School of Industry for Boys, Annual Report, 1848, p.1.

26. Dundee Industrial School, Annual Report, 1847, p.3.

27. Ibid., p.7.

28. Ibid., p.12.

29. It was in Ramsay Lane, Castle Hill, and was called the Edinburgh Original Ragged Industrial School. Annual Report, 1854, p.1.

flexible pattern and there were few which completely adopted the 'Aberdeen System' as envisaged by Watson. Yet they recognised the ideas impelling them and the methods they were attempting to use as the Sheriff's and acknowledged this. The Manager of the school at Hull corresponded with him before forming their own society. Their first annual report offers the thanks of the members, describing him as 'the originator of these schools' and records his warning to them that

. . . it will require all of our prudence and caution to prevent our being drifted away from the original principles on which our institutions have been based. 30

In 1849 he travelled to Liverpool to support the formation of a school for the destitute children and he corresponded widely in the attempt to foster his ideas. Behind the establishment of the ragged schools in Manchester was the knowledge of the

. . . success which has attended the ragged schools in the metropolis and other parts of the United Kingdom. 31

This is a reference to the London schools and those in Aberdeen, Dundee and Perth. The work of Watson is fully described and was an obvious model for the Manchester Committee. An anonymous pamphlet, making a strong plea for a ragged school in Leeds, designates Watson as the institutor of the ragged school. 32 While the first industrial schools of the London Ragged School Union were

. . . projected, begun and . . . continued in imitation of the schools of a similar character in Aberdeen which have proved so successful in repressing juvenile crime and encouraging juvenile industry. 33

At Newcastle-on-Tyne the master of the newly-founded school spent

. . . a week in the principal Ragged School in Edinburgh, by kind permission of its managers, for the purpose of learning the system. 34

The schools in Edinburgh were instituted by Dr. Thomas Guthrie, a personal

30. Hull Ragged and Industrial School, Annual Report, 1850, p.5.

31. T.Britain, Manchester Industrial Schools, 1884, p.5.

32. Anon., Beggars, Criminals, Fevers and Ragged Schools, 1843, p.9.

33. The Ragged School Union Magazine, 1848, p.4.

34. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Annual Report, 1848, pp.3-4.

friend and admirer of Watson, and ran on similar lines.

The idea of the industrial school became a significant contribution to reformatory education and an important element in the first twenty years of the ragged school movement. This is due to the ability of Sheriff Watson to organise small groups of men and women into societies, with clear and orderly plans for helping destitute children. He attracted a large following because he offered a workable solution suited to the temper of the times to a problem which could not be ignored. It was Thackeray's opinion that he was 'doing more good than all the members of Parliament in Great Britain', though he was high-handed, lacking in discretion and inclined to act on impulse. He had none of the impassioned eloquence of Dr. Guthrie and considered himself to be rather a lazy person. Nonetheless, he had considerable political courage and he fought hard against the strong opposition to his many plans. He had a sensitivity which was outraged at the plight of the poorest children and the treatment meted out to them. Above all, his vision was essentially practicable - or, at least, so it appeared in the short term.

The terms 'industrial', 'ragged' and 'reformatory' were used and connected together very loosely in the 1840's and early '50's. Watson, placing his emphasis on industrial training, held that all his pupils would be ragged, and that many would be potential if not actual law-breakers. Those concerned with children in prison stressed the value of industrial training in new and specially-created institutions. The various Ragged School Unions, though they might be enchanted by the humanity and the economy of the industrial idea, knew that their Sunday and evening schools were not industrial, though they hoped they might be reformatory. However, they set out to encourage industrial training in two ways: they promoted the foundation of industrial schools; and they pressed for the inclusion of 'classes of industry' in the curriculum of the ragged schools.

The first industrial school established under the auspices of the Ragged School Union (London) was in Westminster in 1847. There were few others,

though by 1856 half the London ragged schools had industrial classes. 35

Some clarity was brought to the situation as the specific interests of reformers were outlined and as legislation was contemplated. One of the most tireless and compassionate workers for reform was Mary Carpenter. As the Superintendent of her local Sunday school she visited the homes of her children and became concerned at the conditions of poverty in which many lived. She opened a ragged school in Lewin's Mead, Bristol in 1846 and later added a night-school. Her views on ragged schools were widely circulated and she attempted a forthright defence of them. However, she was one of the few people who, although deeply committed to the movement, could nevertheless see its limitations. She proposed in 1851 the establishment of three types of schools, with separate but related functions: the Free Day (Ragged) School, the Industrial Feeding School (rate-aided, with compulsory attendance) and the Reformatory School. 36 In the same year she was also instrumental in organising a conference in Birmingham to which many parties, interested in the needs of the depressed poor, came. A pamphlet, summarising the proceedings, was printed and circulated and the London Ragged School Union gave it full coverage in its Magazine and Annual Report. 37

A Standing Committee was set up in an attempt to bring pressure to bear on the government for legislation. The next year a committee of the House of Lords was given the task of investigating and making recommendations regarding 'the present treatment of criminal and delinquent juveniles in the country'.

Ensuing legislation separated industrial from reformatory schools. In 1854 the first Reformatory Act was passed, encouraging the formation of new reformatories and giving standards to those already in existence, e.g. Hardwicke, near Gloucester; Stoke Works, near Droitwich; Kingswood, near Bris-

35. M.Carpenter, Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, 1851

36. The Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1853.

37. The Ragged School Union Magazine, 1852.

tol; Saltley, near Birmingham. 38 Managers could apply to have their reformatories licensed and receive Treasury aid. Magistrates were empowered to send children under sixteen years to a reformatory, though the managers retained the right to refuse any particular child. The Act was disfigured by a clause which stated that a child had to be committed to a prison for at least fourteen days (longer if the judge directed) before being allowed to go to a reformatory. However, the Bishop of Oxford's attempt to remove this clause was defeated. 39 As Sydney Smith pointed out in its defence, it would never do to treat those guilty of 'vice and mischief' better than the children of respectable and honest parents'. 40 The reformatories thus became schools receiving children of under sixteen years who had been convicted of an offence.

The industrial schools received those not guilty of breaches of the law but who were considered likely, in view of their background, to join the delinquent band. By the Industrial Schools Act of 1857 (41) and further provisions in 1861 (42) and 1866 (43), schools were permitted to apply for 'certification'. Authority was given to a Certified Industrial School to receive children found begging, wandering without proper guardianship or means of subsistence, 'frequenting the company of thieves', or who were orphans. Treasury aid was supplied, although there were provisions requiring parental contributions. The significant difference between the schools coming within these Acts and those established by William Watson was in the provisions regarding the boarding and clothing of the children. It was not until 1876, thanks largely to the efforts of Mary Carpenter, that School Boards were able to set up day industrial schools. (44) In the 1850's and

38. 17 and 18 Vict., C.86.

39. Hansard, 3rd series, Parliamentary Debates, Vol.143, Col.229.

40. Report of the Inspector of Certified Reformatory and Industrial Schools, 1876, p.10.

41. 20 and 21 Vict., C.48.

42. 24 and 25 Vict., C.113.

43. 29 and 30 Vict., C.117

44. 39 and 40 Vict., C.118.

1860's the ragged schools found themselves trying to deal with large numbers of poor children for whom there were no industrial schools and who could not be sent to a reformatory. The various ragged school unions differed as to how best they could serve these children. The London Union was deeply committed to a policy of 'voluntaryism' - the hand of Lord Shaftesbury is clear in many of its statements. The provincial unions saw less reason to fear the consequences of State aid for their activities.

The industrial schools were 'but reformatories of a milder sort' (45), while the ragged schools either overlapped with the industrial schools - in activity if not in legal status - or attempted to preserve as much of the spirit of industrial training within their curriculum as was possible. In spite of the advocacy by all unions, provincial and metropolitan, of the industrial idea, there were difficulties. Only a small number of ragged schools became schools able to offer industrial classes, many fell below the ideals of the founding managers. There were many reasons for this: common among them were lack of finance, poor premises and the type and quality of the work produced by the children.

William Watson demurred from accepting the credit for the industrial idea. 46 He interpreted the idea for his age and systematised it. What started in a loft in 1841 had attained expansion to a national level fifteen years later. Scottish schools copied the initial schemes very closely and clung to the idea of the industrial feeding school. English schools adapted the idea and married it to others which were being worked out within the ragged schools. Thus this lively man, full of practical energy but without the art of charm or the virtue of tact, lived to see his schemes develop in a variety of institutions: ship schools, agricultural schools and reformatories, as well as urban schools engaging in a very diverse group of industries. He watched the extension of his principle in the shoe-black brigade, the 'step-

45. Report of the Inspector of Certified Reformatory and Industrial Schools, 1869, pp.15-16.

46. W.Watson, op.cit., Preface, p.v.

pers', the 'broomers', the 'messengers', the 'sweepers' and the house boy brigade. The industrial class was a major contribution to the thinking of the ragged school movement. Though it required for its implementation financial resources not within the reach of all schools, there were few inside the various unions who did not agree with John (Rob Roy) Macgregor when he wrote

The hand and the eye must be taught to work as well as the head stored with book learning, and a school which has no industrial class leaves an essential part of the machinery of improvement unemployed. 47

47. J. Macgregor, Ragged Schools, Their Rise, Progress and Results, 1853, p.37.

CHAPTER 3

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS ON THE RAGGED SCHOOL MOVEMENT

When Robert Raikes lamented the plight of the poor in Gloucestershire an inhabitant said to him:

Ah sir, on Sunday these wretches 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. 1

Previous experience of prisoners had convinced Raikes of their need of education and moral training. The wretched state of the local poor children and the trouble they caused impressed upon him their similar need. He told a correspondent that he was 'struck with concern at seeing a group of children wretchedly ragged at play in the streets'. 2 He set out to arrange schooling for them at his own expense on the only day when they were not at work.

The early Sunday schools included children from the lowest classes.

In a letter reproduced in The Gentlemen's Magazine Raikes wrote:

Many were at first deterred because they wanted decent clothing . . . 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 do you good in that garb . . . If you have no clean shirt, come in what you have on. 3

Accounts of the inception of early Sunday Schools show that some organisers were faithful to this principle. The first children at Sunday school in Cleckheaton, Yorkshire, were all 'unruly urchins'(4) and those at Pendleton, Lancashire, in the Charlestown Independent School had neither 'shoes nor

1. B.Rodgers, The Cloak of Charity, 1949, p.101.

2. Ibid.

3. Letter to Col. Townley of Sheffield, Nov.25, 1783. Quoted in R.Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, 1898, p.215.

4. G.Roberts and W.Hartley, Souvenir Service of the Old Red Chapel and Providence Place Sunday Schools' Centenary, Cleckheaton, 1905, p.3.

stockings'.⁵ At Wigan they were said to be 'little savages and young hooligans'.

The school was often uproarious and pupils were frequently admonished to refrain from swearing. Manners they had none and their habits were beastly.⁶

The Manchester Sunday School Committee emphasised that the Salford Sunday schools were for 'poor children not likely to be found in day schools'.⁷ William Groser, recalling his father's experiences of the early days in the Saffron Hill district of London, a notorious 'rookery' area, says:

There was given him a class of boys, ragged and dirty, shirtless and shoeless, to whom he was commissioned to teach the alphabet from a large board placed on his knee.⁸

The Sunday schools remained for the children of the working classes. Even at their peak of success in the 1870's and 1880's, when three out of every four children in the population attended, it was not usual to find the children of the middle or upper classes in them.⁹ Yet, at the beginning of the 1820's, it was evident that the Sunday schools were no longer catering for the children of the most deprived poor. The evidence for this is embedded in the regulations which governed the various schools and in the complaints of those who were concerned with this group. It was usually the case that more children than could be admitted were anxious to attend. This circumstance, arising from obvious financial limitations, led to a determination on the part of the organisers and teachers of the schools not to waste cash and time on pupils who were not prepared to be regular or careful of the rules. It was a circumstance exacerbated by the fact that there was usually only a very limited period in which the children could be given any schooling. Rules were framed to ensure that the best use was made of the available resources. In practice these ex-

5. W.E.A.Axon, Annals of Manchester, 1871, p.178.

6. C.D.Little, Our Sunday Schools, 1933, p.17.

7. A.V.Parsons, 'Education in the Salford District, 1780-1870', University of Manchester M.Ed., 1963, Ch.2.

8. W.H.Groser, A Hundred Years' Work for Children, 1903, pp.13-14.

9. O.Chadwick, The Victorian Church, 1970, Vol.2, p.257.

cluded those not belonging to the 'respectable' labouring poor. It was a commonplace to all sets of rules that:

All scholars are to come clean, washed and combed.¹⁰

If a scholar be convicted of cursing or swearing, or quarrelling, or wilful lying, or calling nick names, or using indecent language, he shall be admonished for the first offence, punished for the second and excluded for the third.¹¹

The children are to come perfectly neat and clean, or a mark of disgrace will be entered in the book for every offence: if often repeated it will lead to expulsion.¹²

As early as 1789 the Rev. William Myers, Curate of Tetney, Lincolnshire, reckoned that the Sunday schools would cater for those who attended day school so little 'as to reap no advantage thereby' and 'for servants and apprentices who have no other opportunity of learning anything'. He imagined that this would enable the 'poorest children' to be instructed.¹³ Even at this stage of development such provisions excluded a significant minority, particularly when applied to the growing urban industrialised areas. By 1851 the most needy children had been successfully, if unintentionally, excluded. No longer did the Sunday school regulations speak of the impropriety of 'despising another on account of his dress'.¹⁴ That problem was no longer of any significance. Schools like the one founded at Angel Street Church, Worcester, in 1797, were no longer instituted because the minister was worried by the misery of the street urchins who were forced to beg and steal to maintain their existence.¹⁵ Instead there was general agreement that an established element of educational provision in the first half of the nineteenth century flowed through the Sunday schools. This was the

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10. Rules of the Methodist Sunday School, Cleethorpes, 1827, Rule 4.
 11. Rules of the Methodist Sunday School, Stallingborough, 1824, Rule 8.
 12. Rules to be Observed in the Sunday School, Great Coates, 1837, Rule 2.
 13. W.Myers, The Benefits and Advantages of Sunday Schools Considered, 1789.
 14. Rules and Regulations of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School, Grimsby, 1820, Rule 7.
 15. H.W.Gwilliam, 'The Provision of Education for the Poor in the City of Worcester During the 18th and 19th Centuries', University of Birmingham Diploma in Education, 1966, p.30.

case in both urban and rural areas, as many local histories demonstrate.¹⁶ The wider responsibilities of the Church to the children of the working poor dominated the minds of ministers. From the 1820's anxiety was expressed about those obviously not coming to the schools. The Rector of Easingwold wrote, in 1821:

But are there not still many children . . . rude and ignorant and idle and not unlikely to fall into some more immoral habits by constant Sabbath breaking?¹⁷

It was a rhetorical question on many lips. Attempts were made in Manchester to quantify the problem. Disturbed by the inaccuracies of returns made to Parliament on 'the Educational Supply in Certain Districts of Manchester', the Manchester Statistical Society set up a committee in 1834. It examined the state of the Day, Sunday, Infant and Charity Schools in the Borough. Its returns, which were hailed nationally as truly scientific, showed that 23,185 children had as their only means of schooling some years at Sunday school. The most disturbing feature of the report was the finding that about one third of all Manchester children between the ages of five and fifteen received no instruction at any school.¹⁸ Within this group were the very poorest children. In his evidence to the Select Committee in 1834 Benjamin Bradley, Constable of Manchester, said that the most degraded children did not go to Sunday schools as they were generally of 'filthy appearance'.¹⁹ The Secretary of the Sunday School Union, W.F.Lloyd, admitted

A very large part of the population we cannot touch at all; I refer to the most degraded of the poor; I mean the children of trampers, and beggars and gypsies, and people of that kind . . . The great impediment we have in Sunday schools, and in all schools, is the bad example and bad habits of the parents.²⁰

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16. E.g. Ed. B.J.R.Parker, Education in Bradford, 1970, Ch.2.
R.C.Russell, A History of Schools and Education in Lindsey, Lincolnshire, 1800-1902, 1965, Vol.2.
This is contrary to the opinion of M.G.Jones who describes the Sunday School Movement as primarily urban in character. Cf. M.G.Jones, The Charity School Movement, 1938, p.144.
17. E.Paley, A Letter to the Inhabitants of Easingwold, 1821.
18. Central Society for Education, Returns, 1837, p.29
19. Report of the Select Committee on the State of Education, 1834, p.177.
20. Ibid., p.103.

The ragged Sunday schools were the heirs to that concern for the most destitute children which many Christians had at the beginning of the Sunday school movement. In the 1830's and 1840's it was very evident to those working among the most deprived in the slum areas that the existing Sunday schools could not solve the problem of these children. City missionaries working in London set up their own schools for the most wretched children in the course of their normal pastoral duties.²¹ Their efforts met with such a degree of success that there was pressure from some supporters of the Mission to extend this work. Such an extension would, however, have altered the character of the work of the missionaries which was primarily evangelical, not social and educational. The Mission set its face against this, though it was sympathetic to the efforts of other groups to tackle the problem. It asserted

It is not the work of the Mission to conduct schools, although its missionaries have in several cases been the instruments of founding 'ragged schools' for the benefit of children who would be shut out of other schools.²²

It appealed to the Home and Colonial Infant School Society to set up schools in areas of great need, particularly in Field Lane and Cow Cross.²³ However, the response came from Sunday school teachers who formed themselves into a committee in 1842 to organise Field Lane Sabbath School. The committee advertised in 'The Times' during February, 1843 for money and helpers to make permanent their school

for instructing (free of expense) those who, from their poverty or ragged condition, are prevented going any other place of religious instruction.²⁴

Field Lane was in a notorious district near Holborn Hill, known as Jack Ketch's Warren, from the numerous criminals bred there who were hanged at Newgate. One of the volunteers was Lord Ashley, later Lord Shaftesbury.²⁵

21. London City Mission Annual Report, 1836, p.12.

22. City Mission Magazine, 1841, p.192

23. Ibid., p.193

24. The Times, February 18, 1943.

25. E.Hodder, The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., 1886, Vol.1, p.484.

The Ragged School Union of London, formed in 1844 and giving some unity to many private charitable ventures, sent a circular to its supporters showing its area of concern.

Ragged schools for poor children, who have no means or opportunity to attend a Day School, and who are generally reckoned to be too ragged or dirty for admission into a Sabbath School, or even a place of worship, are surely deserving the countenance and support of every real Christian.²⁶

The Union urged upon its officers the advice of Lord Ashley to 'stick to the gutters'. Its rapid growth did not divert this ideal and it was established that

Schools should be open for the lowest poor and the character and appearance of the candidate for admission should not prevent such a person becoming a scholar.²⁷

Early annual reports of schools set up in the urban slum areas reiterated the same principle. Thus, at Halifax, the 'proper candidates' for the schools were 'emaciated children' characterised by their 'squalid wretchedness, thickly matted hair, starving countenances and ignorant despairing look'.²⁸ The York Ragged School Committee exercised 'the greatest caution to select the most destitute recipients'.²⁹ Oxford Ragged School was

. . . for the children of the poorest classes, whose parents could but ill afford even the smallest payment, and who were less able to provide clothing sufficiently respectable to enable them to obtain admission into any of our Public Schools.³⁰

At Southampton only the 'most degraded children' were accepted, those who were accustomed to frequent 'the prison, the Court of Justice, the Penny Theatre and the Gambling Shop'.³¹ While Bradford wanted

. . . those children who, through the neglect, the extreme poverty or the vice of their parents, or those who have the charge of them, are beggars or vagrants, or in imminent danger of becoming such.³²

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- 26. The Second Circular of the Ragged School Union, 1844.
 - 27. The Ragged School Union (London) Minute Book, 16 Oct., 1845.
 - 28. Halifax Ragged School Annual Report, 1857, p.4.
 - 29. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.5.
 - 30. Oxford Ragged School Annual Report, 1860, p.3.
 - 31. Lower Canal Walk Ragged School, Southampton Annual Report, 1852, p.6.
 - 32. Proposed Rules of the Bradford Ragged School, 1854, Rule 1.

The first children in Barnsley Ragged School were members of a gang of young thieves 'who did not attend any school'.³³ The initial intake at Brighton inspired verse.

Here naked children round the alley run
And, rolled in dust, are bronzed beneath the sun.
To union forced by crime, by fear or need,
All are in morals and in modes agreed . . .
Need and Misery, Vice and Danger bend
In sad alliance each degraded mind.³⁴

It was clear from 1845 onwards that the model set by the London Ragged School Union had been enthusiastically accepted. A positive attempt with some central co-ordination was made to meet the needs of the least promising children.³⁵

The ragged Sunday schools developed from within the Sunday School Movement and maintained their close connection. Even the ragged day schools, which developed in many respects from the early movement for industrial schools, reflected the ethos and practices of the Sunday schools. The contemporary view was that the ragged school movement

. . . was a recommencement of the Sunday School system precisely where Raikes was moved to take it up in 1781, leading more rapidly than in the first instance through week-day evening meetings of the Sunday school to the establishment of day schools.³⁶

Sunday school teachers were prominent in the founding and maintaining of the ragged Sunday and day schools. Sometimes they worked with their minister or priest, occasionally with a wealthy benefactor, often with

33. J.H.Burland, Annals of Barnsley, Vol.4, p.408 (ms.vols. covering period 1859-1864).

34. St.John's Ragged School, Brighton, Annual Report, 1870, p.86

35. In the period up to 1840 there were of course many individual efforts aimed at reaching the worst cases of neglect and abuse. These were local, isolated and sporadic, ending with the death or waning interest of the founders. One of the most noteworthy was the attempt made by a working-class tailor, Thomas Cranfield. Appalled at the squalor and the filth of the children living in the area of the Mint, he succeeded with a group of friends in building up an organisation of nineteen Sunday schools before his death in 1838. These catered for the children of thieves and vagrants, those turned out by their parents or who had run away, youngsters 'of the foulest parts'. Cf. W.M.Eager, Making Men: A History of Boys' Clubs and Related Movements in Great Britain, 1953, p.121.

36. Minutes of the Committee in Council on Education 1848-50, Vol.2, p.296.

a city missionary and, in a few instances, by themselves. Even the staff of the day schools had usually received a background in Sunday schools; e.g. James Short, master in charge of the Newcastle Ragged School, had previously worked for five years with the London City Mission in its Sunday schools. And it is a commonplace in those reports covering appointments of staff to find such short curricula vitae. From these it is evident that Sunday school experience was regarded with some importance by the Management Committees. Once schools were running, it was usual for them to participate in the Sunday school functions organised within their localities by the non-ragged schools. Typical of these were the Whitsuntide parades held annually in Barnsley, when the children walked the streets of the town with their flags, attended a short service and then adjourned to nearby fields to play and have a picnic.³⁸

However, it would only be true to say that the ragged schools accepted more easily kinship with the Sunday School Movement than the latter accepted its association with those schools catering for 'the dirty infantry of the streets'. Established Sunday school opinion is well represented by the Rev. E. Jackson. In a New Year's sermon in 1879 he contrasted the schools of the previous century with those currently existing. One of the most significant changes concerned the improved condition of the children.

How wonderfully respectable and well-dressed these scholars appear . . . they do not give the impression of being the children of working people . . . we have scarcely any in our Sunday schools, except the infants, who cannot read, and generally read well.³⁹

He is referring to the children of the working poor, the artisan and lower middle class. By this time a network of other ragged Sunday schools was catering for the children excluded from this system. For a short time until 1877 the Salvation Army engaged in this work, largely in connection

37. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Annual Report, 1848, p.6.

38. J.H.Burland, op.cit., p.470.

39. The Rev.E.Jackson, The Past and Present: A New Year's Address to Parents, 1879, pp.3-4.

with children's missionary schemes.⁴⁰

In 1861 the view of the Newcastle Commission was that

. . .the Sunday schools had ceased to be places of direct secular instruction except to a very limited extent. The primary aim seemed to be to teach religious truth and religious principles and not to be a substitute for the day schools. Writing was universally banished and reading was taught only to the infants and one or two of the lower classes during part of the school hours , . . the rest was used for religious instruction. The rest of the classes read the Bible verse by verse, either according to a known pattern or according to the desire of the teacher . . . Considering all of the difficulties of irregular attendance, the time spent on teaching being two hours on a Sunday and the teaching given being far from efficient, and that all secular instruction was beginning to be avoided as far as possible, the Sunday schools were in a direct sense a very feeble auxiliary to the day school. The utmost they could possibly effect in the way of secular instruction is to teach the child the rudiments of reading.⁴¹

It was not a friendly judgment. The ragged schools were dismissed as of 'only a slight influence over a very limited class', a judgment based on the evidence to the Commission of Patrick Cumin. It was unfortunate for the schools that his evidence was partial, largely inaccurate and misleading. Less weight was given than might fairly have been to the evidence of Mary Carpenter. However, the influence of Sunday schools on the ragged schools, the similarities and parallelisms of method and organisation are attested in the general condemnation of the Newcastle Commission. They may be compared in several important respects.

Firstly, the ragged schools employed the same system of voluntary teachers as the Sunday schools for their Sunday and part of their weekly work. Raikes' original plan involved paying teachers, but it was John Wesley's plan which eventually found wide-spread acceptance. From 1785 Methodist Sunday

40. It proposed to build in Poplar 'a new hall, ragged school, soup kitchen, Bible depot and reading room'. Cf. R.Sandall, The History of The Salvation Army, Vol.1, 1947, p.91. Curiously, General W. Booth ordered the abandonment of The Salvation Army's Sunday Schools at the Conference of The Christian Mission in 1877. It was his view that 'saving the man must be put first, for his salvation would change for the better everything in which he was concerned, whether in his home or elsewhere'. Ibid., p.190. In fact, he realised that the children's work would involve a whole new organisation with special leaders and held that it would take many years to effect this aspect of Christian work.

41. Réport of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England, 1861, Vol.2, pp.234-5. .

schools were organised and taught by voluntary helpers. The pitfalls were as obvious as the advantages. That there were continuing and vital problems over the standards of the teachers is evident from the stream of hints, advice, plans and proposals for the improvement of teachers. They recur ceaselessly in the Church Congress Reports and the minutes of individual Sunday School Unions throughout the country. Typical is the portrait of the good Sunday school teachers of Bradford. They were not

. . . highly educated, but they needed to have some ability and some capacity of bringing their ideas out clearly, so as to make them intelligible to the young. They should be thoroughly instructed in Scriptural truth, and to be good teachers they must have some knowledge of the world and the things which were going on around them, and to be acquainted with the circumstances of their pupils. They should have a hearty sympathy with those they teach.⁴²

The portrait of the ragged school teacher recommended by the London Ragged School Union appeared in a prize-winning essay by the Rev. George Hall, for which he received fifty pounds.⁴³

He should be one that is originally gifted with some aptitude for teaching . . . His education and general attainments should be about the same as are required for the best of our National and British Schools . . . His words will be with power . . . In him the loveliness of honesty, diligence, truthfulness and godliness will be seen . . . (He is) father, mother, teacher all joined in one.⁴⁴

Figures in the Sunday School Unions and the Ragged School Annual Reports, giving the average attendance of teachers, coupled with frequent appeals for them to meet weekly 'to examine' themselves, imply that few of these paragons were available. The supply of efficient male teachers was always acute throughout the nineteenth century. It was feared by some that the 1870 Education Act's provisions would mean that the children 'would be well up in elementary education and too advanced to be taught by teachers of the present standard'.⁴⁵

42. Bradford Observer, 1869, May 3rd.

43. G.J.Hall, Sought and Saved, a Prize Essay on Ragged Schools and Kindred Institutions, 1855.

44. Ibid., pp.49-51.

45. Yorkshire Conference of Sunday School Unions, Report, 1871.

The actual achievements of the teachers are very difficult to determine. With regard to the Sunday schools, one method of obtaining a rough and ready estimate was embedded in the provisions of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act, 1753, which stipulated that the couple must sign their names in the marriage register or make their mark. This makes possible the compilation of literacy tables. When the exact educational provision for an area is known, these tables can give a guide to the level of achievement of the schools. Where such tables have been compiled they support the thesis that the level of illiteracy fell very little during the first half of the century and that it was not until after 1870 that any dramatic fall was observable. They show further that there was markedly more illiteracy among women than men.⁴⁶ There are clear dangers in pressing this evidence. The Sunday schools were more concerned with reading than writing as a skill and many would be able to read who could not write. Where more direct evidence was obtained, it was still depressing. An investigation concerning 2,000 children in Manchester Sunday schools, aged 13-14 years, revealed that 53 per cent could not read and 88 per cent could not write their own names.⁴⁷

Regarding the ragged schools, the best evidence of the standards achieved lies in the tables of employments gained by leavers in the annual reports. There exists no digest of this evidence. Although one is occasionally surprised by an entry like

A boy in one of the London Ragged Schools, having shown a great taste for acquiring languages, has been sent out as an interpreter to Balaclava and frequently dines with Lord Raglan,

the majority of children clearly took labouring positions.⁴⁸ Clerical positions were obtained by only a small minority. The inference must be

46. W.P.Baker, Parish Registers and Illiteracy in East Yorkshire, 1961.

47. H.Mathew, Methodism and the Education of the People, 1949, p.53.

48. Cambridge Ragged School, Minute Book, 1848. (Undated cutting attached to inner cover.)

that the standards were poor in both Sunday and ragged schools.⁴⁹ Of course, academic distinction was not the prime aim of either movement. A foundation of moral and religious virtue does not permit quantitative assessment, except in crude measures like church attendance and criminal statistics. Yet this was more nearly their fundamental target. Even when their success here was denied, both movements clung to the view that, as a soldier lay dying or as a woman was in sickness near her end, the belief of childhood in a Saviour, first learned at their schools, would reassert itself. However, at this point historical evidence fades into theological imagination.

Secondly, both movements organised their schools according to the same patterns. There was some variability according to the degree of evangelical fervour of the churches represented. Non-evangelical Anglicans were much more accustomed to using the catechism or simplified versions of it as part of their teaching. The Ragged School Union of London supported the view that there should be no

. . . overtaking of (the children's) small powers of endurance and attention. This has been too much the fault of our Sunday school system hitherto. Little children have been shut up - we might almost say, imprisoned - have been kept in a most unchildlike quietness for three or four hours together, during the whole of school time and public service, in a way that not even adults could endure . . . How can a sermon intended for grown-up people and advanced Christians be otherwise than useless and wearisome to children? . . . Custom and prejudice close their eyes against any improved methods, to the great loss and injury of the scholars, and of the Sunday school system.⁵⁰

At the inception of the Sunday school movement the classes and worship took up most of the day, having morning and afternoon sessions. At Chester the children were taught from 9 a.m. until mid-day and from 1.15 p.m. to 4 p.m.⁽⁵¹⁾ and, at Baildon, in 1788, there were two periods of two and a half hours each

49. Individual differences among schools and among the children were wide. This accounts for evidence like that collected by B.Simon, Studies in the History of Education, 1730-1870, 1960, p.183. In particular, he quotes S.Bamford, Passages in the Life of a Radical (Ed.H.Dunckley, 1893), p.12. 'The Sunday schools of the preceding thirty years had produced many working men of sufficient talent to become readers, writers and speakers in the village meetings for Parliamentary reform.'

50. G.J.Hall, op.cit., pp.87-89.

51. H.F.Mathews, op.cit., p.55.

at a variable time.⁵² Idle Sunday School, in Yorkshire, met during the morning, afternoon and evening for a period of up to eight hours.⁵³ There are small signs that the act of worship with the adults which concluded most sessions was a trial for some children at least. The Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School at Grimsby decided that

. . . the Preachers be respectfully requested to conclude the service by the end of the hour, or within one hour and five minutes

and the children were warned

. . . not to go out of the Chapel during the service; and if, either by word or action, they disturb those who are near them, their names will be taken down, that they may be reported when they return to the school.⁵⁴

The pattern of the lengthy Sunday school, with only slight modifications, according to locality or sect, admitted of only one major exception in the first forty years of the nineteenth century. Conservative Anglican priests were reluctant to countenance Sunday schools - they were nowhere authorised in the Book of Common Prayer. Their own concession would be to attach a catechetical exercise for the children to afternoon service. This was seldom more than an hour and a half. However, this remained a largely rural problem, worsened to some extent by the practices of plurality of livings and non-residence on the part of the clergy. Towards the middle of the century, as the Sunday schools became less concerned with secular instruction and increasingly concerned with religious teaching and children's services, the schools met for shorter periods, though usually in the mornings and afternoons. The regulations available point to morning periods of an hour and afternoon ones of up to two hours.⁵⁵

The ragged Sunday school assembled at 9 a.m. 'The elder children

52. N.B.Roper, 'The Contribution of the Non-Conformists to the Development of Education in Bradford in the Nineteenth Century', University of Leeds, M.Ed., 1967.
53. J.H.Turner, Idle Upper Chapel Independent Sunday School, 1907, p.76
54. Rules and Regulations of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School, Grimsby, 1826.
55. E.g. Rules and Regulations for the Management of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday Schools in the Bradford West Circuit, 1863.

then go to their classes and the younger to the infant school room'. At a quarter past ten 'all meet again in the large room, and after singing a verse of a hymn, a short interval is allowed for a change of engagements'. At half-past ten 'order is restored for teaching is now to be followed by devotion, work by worship'. After the worship, at twelve o'clock, they are sent home.

In the afternoon, like that in the morning, teaching lasts about an hour; after which an address is delivered to the whole school.⁵⁶

The only significant variation in this pattern was a tendency to replace the morning with an evening session.⁵⁷ Competition for staff to serve in the schools was largely responsible for this. Bent Street Ragged School in Blackburn held that

Teachers do not necessarily need to sever the connection with their own Sunday-school when coming down to work in the Ragged School, but rather to keep up the connection so that the link from the Ragged School to the Sunday School and Church or Chapel may afford opportunity for Ragged School scholars getting into fellowship with Christ's church on earth.⁵⁸

Neither the Sunday nor ragged schools could begin their work of reclamation until they had taught the children to read. The organisation of the Sunday schools was adapted to this necessity and early reports, newspapers and periodicals connected with the movement suggest a variety of schemes. These were all very similar and the basic pattern was that recommended by The Sunday School Repository of 1819 in its article, 'On the Establishment and Management of Sunday schools'.

- 1st Class. The alphabet and words of two letters. (The alphabet and boards containing all the words of two letters in the English language.)
- 2nd Class. All words of one syllable. (The first pages in the First Part Spelling Book, containing words of one syllable.)
- 3rd Class. Words of two syllables. (The whole of the First Part Spelling Book, and the words of two syllables in the Second.)

56. G.J.Hall, op.cit., pp.91-93.

57. Woolwich Ragged Schools, Annual Report, 1870, p.7.

58. Bent Street Ragged School, Blackburn, Annual Report, 1884, p.8.

4th Class. The whole of the Second Part Spelling

5th Class. The New Testament and the Third Part Spelling

6th Class. The Old Testament and the New Testament and the Third Part Spelling.

Other schools included the catechism, though this fell into disuse and attempts to revive the practice were mercifully unsuccessful.⁵⁹

The ragged schools inherited the same problem and that they viewed it seriously is obvious from the remarks and figures given in annual reports. At Halifax, where it was held that reading would help the poor children 'to shine as stars in the Redeemer's crown', the following typical figures are given

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| Could read a little | ... | ... | ... | 12 | |
| Knew the alphabet | ... | ... | ... | 4 | |
| Knew not the alphabet | ... | ... | ... | 59 | 60 |

A flurry which, for a time, assumed the proportions of a controversy, occurred over the teaching of writing in Sunday schools. It was the solution to this problem which anticipated ragged school organisation, provided a strong link between the two movements and further uncovered that reservoir of voluntary helpers without which neither movement could function. It was observed of Methodist Sunday schools that

the art of writing was generally taught, and in some instances arithmetic, if not geography also! ⁶¹

It was held that the practice was not conducive to a holy frame of mind.

The mending of pens, the examination of copies, the correction of mistakes, seem to me to exert a most unfavourable influence.⁶²

In any case, the Methodist Conference had asked their schools to discontinue the plan in 1808. It was regarded as an infringement of the Sabbath. The schools of the established church were not as deeply implicated as those of

59. Various, The Centenary Memorial of the Establishment of Sunday Schools, 1881, p.36.

60. Annual Report of the Halifax Ragged School, 1858, p.7. Cf. Annual Reports of the Salford Industrial and Ragged School, 1855-70.

61. V.Ward, Observations on Sunday Schools, 1827, p.14.

62. Ibid., p.21.

the dissenters, though there was a local cause célèbre at Leeds when it was discovered that a teacher who was also 'a collector of public money' made use of the services of his children to do his accounts.⁶³

The most generally acceptable solution to this problem was to teach writing at an evening school once or twice a week. A bald statement that 'writing and accounts are taught on two evenings during the week' (64) became common in Sunday school reports during the first forty years of the century. The actual numbers reached were pitifully small.⁶⁵

In the second half of the century the evening work connected with the Sunday schools and the ragged schools increased. A wide variety of practical subjects was offered and an attempt made to appeal to the adults. In general the ragged schools were able to offer fewer secular subjects, though singing and sewing were common. They preferred to concentrate on Bible study and moral instruction. Out of this activity both movements organised small libraries for their members and a number of improvement societies. Their educational functions diminished as their social ones grew.

Thirdly, both movements expounded with selfless enthusiasm and saintly sincerity a conservative theology which disintegrated in the course of the century into an absurd fiction. The dogmatic tradition, both in its Catholic and Protestant forms, met intellectual forces at the end of the eighteenth century which tended to isolate it from the prevailing outlook. In the nineteenth century Catholicism turned to a stronghold of absolute authority. Protestantism, after dissention and much misgiving, attempted some compromise. Historical study of the Bible had undermined traditional ideas concerning revelation and inspiration as well as the customary style of literalist exegesis. However, the evangelical parties within the Protestant

63. T.Furbank, Friendly Advice on the Impropriety of Teaching Writing in Sunday Schools on the Lord's Day, 1832, p.14.

64. Leeds Sunday School Union Annual Report, 1841, p.19.

65. A.V.Parsons, op.cit., Ch.2.

groups were the last to capitulate to the new thinking. It was the evangelicals who were in large measure responsible for the establishment and successful continuance of the Sunday and ragged schools. Both had sprung from a corybantic version of Christianity.

This had various effects. It meant that there would be throughout a strong individualistic outlook. This was evident in the theology of the evangelicals which stressed individual salvation by faith and was based on the truth of the Bible - seasoned with more than a dash of Calvinism. It was seen in the importance of personalities and families to whom philanthropy was an essential aspect of their way of life - the Wesleys, Whitefield, Fletcher, Newton, Berridge and the 'Clapham Sect', the Corys, the Crossley brothers, Lord Shaftesbury, Quintin Hogg, the great Quaker families. It can also be traced in the attempts of many little-known or anonymous individuals who realised that the concomitant of faith was brotherly love, and who chose to express this in their concern for poor children. A handful of Raikes' predecessors are known, though there must have been others whose praises were not sung and whose work died with them: Joseph Allein, the Independent Minister of Taunton, held popular children's services(66); Catherine Bowey of Flaxley, in Gloucestershire, taught children in her own home each Sunday(67); The Vicar of Catterick, the Rev. T. Lindsey, set up his Sunday school in 1763 and his friend and former assistant, Mrs. Cappe of Bedale, started one in her kitchen a year later.⁶⁸ Those who knew Raikes said that he 'drove over in a chaise and pair', visiting men already attempting Sunday school education.⁶⁹ He talked with Samuel Webb, a cloth manufacturer of Painswick; William Twining of Sheepscombe; and William King of Dursley, a woollen card-maker.⁷⁰

66. J.H.Turner, The Idle Upper Chapel Independent Sunday School Centenary Memorial, 1907, p.34.

67. Ibid.

68. J.Howard, Historical Sketch of the Origin and Work of the York Incorporated Sunday School Committee, 1876, p.2.

69. R.Harris, Robert Raikes, The Man and His Work, 1899, p.59.

70. Ibid.

The London Ragged School Union Minutes indicate some of the 'saints' of the rookeries.

Mr. Sants and Mr. Cartwright from Smiths Building. Mr. Romanis, Mr. Dart, Mr. Kennedy from Wells Street. Mr. Philips from Turnville. Mr. Starey, Mr. Loake from Field Lane.⁷¹

These were men working in four of the ragged schools before the work of the Ragged School Union began. There were at least twenty other similar schools⁽⁷²⁾ and the initial meeting of the Ragged School Union gathered together '40 friends of the cause'.⁷³ To the nineteenth century evangelical, conversion to Christ implied as its corollary devotion to man.

A further effect of the evangelical basis of both Sunday and ragged schools was to make their aim primarily religious. To a large extent one movement anticipated many of the problems of the other, there being difficulties of interpretation and application. In 1784 Raikes' firm printed the regulations of Stroud Sunday school. One of them stated that the children should be

. . . instructed in the duties of the Christian Religion with a particular view to their good and industrious behaviour and their character as labourers and servants.⁷⁴

A couple of years later in the schools of Peterborough the children were taught 'the true principles of Christianity . . . and promise fair to make sober, diligent and faithful servants'.⁷⁵ Individual schools' practice confirms this aim and typical of the majority was the Sunday school at Dewsbury where the pupils were 'instructed in the Holy Scriptures'.⁷⁶ This does not confirm P. Sangster's unsubstantiated opinion that the Sunday

71. Ragged School Union (London) Minute Book, July 5, 1844.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., 26 April 1844.

74. B.Rodgers, The Cloak of Charity, 1949, p.103.

75. R.C.Russell, Sunday Schools in Lindsey, p.11.

76. Anonymous, History of the Dewsbury Church Sunday School, 1862, p.14. Cf. also J.Stringer, A Sermon Preached at the Chapel, Wetherby, on the Formation of a Sunday School in that Town, 1814, p.13. 'Therefore as Sunday Schools are professedly instituted to promote reading of the Bible among the children . . . who can tell but a Baxter, a Fletcher or a Locke, may hereafter date the unfolding of his genius from the time he commenced as a scholar in the Wetherby Sunday School?'

schools were clearly 'secular'.⁷⁷

The ragged schools were equally explicit with regard to their aim. The Ragged School Union of London held that the object of their institutions was 'the moral and spiritual elevation of the scholars'.⁷⁸ Annual reports of schools usually open with the pious motives of the managing committees - often expressed in the dramatic clichés of a fervent revivalism. They attempted to 'snatch as brands from the burning a few of the poor, perishing souls' at Halifax.⁷⁹ To the supporters of the Lower Canal Walk School at Southampton Lord Cholmondeley affirmed that the object

. . . was to rescue the poor, degraded children and bring them to the knowledge of that Saviour of whose name they had probably never before heard except in scorn or jest.⁸⁰

Lord Palmerston summed it up clearly and drily, stating at Leeds that the job of the schools was to inculcate 'maxims of religion and moral principles'.⁸¹

While the evangelical revival resuscitated English religious life and sustained philanthropy, no such comparable impetus was given to theology⁽⁸²⁾, which was unable to free itself from the dead hand of the past. The effect of this was a narrowness of viewpoint and a dogmatic position which was unable to come to terms with a temperate rationalism. Both the Sunday schools and the ragged schools long pursued practices based on outworn principles which had little but the inveteracy of custom or habit to support them. The early Sunday schools clung to ideas popularised by the S.P.C.K. at the height of the success of the charity schools. Their first text book by Jones Hanway⁽⁸³⁾ had all the atmosphere of manners and morals carried over from the

77. P.Sangster, Pity My Simplicity, 1963, p.110.

78. Ragged School Union (London) Minute Book, 16 October, 1845

79. Annual Report of the Lower Canal Walk Ragged School, Southampton, 1852.

80. Annual Report of the Halifax Ragged School, 1858.

81. Annual Report of the Leeds Ragged School, 1860.

82. K.J.Heasman, 'The Influence of the Evangelicals upon the Origin and Development of Charitable Institutions in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century', University of London, Ph.D., 1960. Also K.J.Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, 1962.

83. J.Hanway, A Comprehensive View of Sunday Schools, 1786.

old regime.⁸⁴ Succeeding ones were even worse.⁸⁵ The ragged schools looked to the Bible as the source of much of their work in the classroom. Texts were learned regularly and expounded. The extreme conservatism of the method and content of the teaching in the ragged schools ignored more liberal and sympathetic ideas which had begun to be expounded in text books of the previous century.⁸⁶ The organisation of classes in the Sunday and ragged schools was characterised by that cold and rather fearsome logic which had been popularised by James Talbott.⁸⁷

The ragged schools are rightly regarded as a branch of the Sunday School Movement. The impulse which promoted them, as well as the methods establishing them, were largely identical. Always owing more to nonconformity than the established church, both movements attempted to provide an education for the poor which was characterised by adherence to unequivocal and evangelical religious principles. Neither succeeded. Yet it was the failure of the Sunday schools which ensured the birth of the ragged schools. Their inability to continue to meet the needs of the poorest and most neglected groups of children pointed the way for others who felt that a solution lay in education and the development of social services. Their increasing dependence on the day school to teach the rudiments of reading meant that their role changed and they became more concerned with religious teaching and less with secular instruction. This further excluded the very poor. However, they were directly linked to the ragged schools by their attempts to set up evening schools during the week, by their utilisation of the voluntary principle, by their emphasis on the primacy of evangelical aims in education and in much of their method and organisation.

84. C.Northcott, For Britain's Children, 1953, p.22.

85. E.g. J.Fawcett, Advice to Youth, 1778. (Popular until 1840). J.Hodson, The Young Christian's Introduction to the Knowledge of His God and Saviour, 1788. (Suitable for twelve-year-olds.) R.Taprell, A Plain Discourse for Children, 1789.

86. E.g. T.Smetham, The Practical Grammar, 1774. D.Fenning, The Universal Spelling Book, 1755.

87. J.Talbott, The Christian Schoolmaster, 1707.

Both movements resisted new currents of thought which exposed the theological absurdity of their foundations. Yet this theoretical rigidity yielded to a broad humanity and practical good sense in meeting the needs of the groups which they served.

CHAPTER 4.

THE LONDON SCHOOL RAGGED UNION.

This is the age of societies. There is scarcely one Englishman in ten who has not belonged to some association for distributing books or for prosecuting them; for sending invalids to the hospital, or beggars to the treadmill; for giving plate to the rich, or blankets to the poor.

Thomas Babington Macaulay.

On April 11th, 1844, four men met at No. 17 Ampton Street, Grays Inn Road, to share their anxieties over the condition of children living in the 'rookeries'. They were Mr. Moulton, a second-hand tool dealer, Mr. Morrison, a city missionary, Mr. Locke, a woollen draper and Mr. Starey, a business man. After prayer and discussion, they resolved unanimously

that to give permanence, regularity and vigour to existing Ragged Schools and to promote the formation of new ones throughout the Metropolis it is advisable to call a meeting of Superintendents, Teachers and others interested in the schools.¹

These men, already connected with ragged and Sunday schools (2), following the energetic lead of Mr. Starey, had decided to promote collaboration among the existing ragged schools and set up a central body to co-ordinate individual and local efforts to organise such schools. Subsequent meetings made it clear that the first two problems for the group and its supporters were to define their relationship with the London City Mission and to gather much more information about the ragged schools already functioning.³ The City Mission gave a cordial welcome to the group, promising to assist 'insofar

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1. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1844, April 11th.
 2. The schools were Field Lane School, Colonnade Sunday School, Smith's Buildings Ragged School and Britannia Ragged School. D. Williamson, Lord Shaftesbury's Legacy, 1924, pp.28-29.
 3. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1844, April 26th.

as sending scholars and teachers to the various schools under our directions' (4), but politely bowed out where material aid was concerned, pointing out that their hands were 'already fully charged with the care of the 102 Districts of the Metropolis'.⁵ A list of ragged schools was drawn up by Mr. Ainslie, a missionary, but found to be incomplete and additions were made by Mr. Locke.⁶ During the summer months, interest in the group waned and at the October meeting only six people attended.⁷ The lukewarm support for the scheme and the uncovering of the difficulties of the work proposed did not deter Mr. Starey and his friends. They assumed that people were misinformed about their aims and arranged for an explanatory circular to be printed and distributed.⁸

Support rallied and what had been a loose association began to crystallise into a more formal and permanent structure. Rules were devised by Mr. Moulton 'such as he has found most efficient in the management of Sunday schools and ragged schools'.⁹ They are important in that they put down guide lines for the initial thinking of the group and expressed their aspirations clearly and simply.¹⁰

Rule 1. That the name of this association be called the Ragged School Union,

4. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1844, May 24th.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., July 5th.

7. Ibid., October 4th.

8. Ibid.,

9. Ibid., June 21st.

10. Ibid., November 15th.

- Rule 2. That the objects of this Union be to encourage and assist those who teach in ragged schools, to help such by grants of money where advisable, to collect and diffuse information respecting schools now in existence and provide for the foundation of new ones, to suggest plans for the more efficient management of such schools and for the instruction of the children of the poor in general, to visit the various schools occasionally and observe their progress, to encourage teachers' meetings and Bible classes and to assist the old as well as the young in the study of the Word of God.
- Rule 3. That all Teachers and Superintendents representing Ragged Schools and all subscribers of 10/- p.a. and upwards be members of the Union and have the privilege of attending its meetings.
- Rule 4. That the financial affairs be solely conducted by the Managing Committee (including the vice-presidents, treasurers and secretaries) to be elected at an annual meeting of the members and whose services shall be entirely gratuitous.
- Rule 5. That the Union shall not interfere with the financial concerns or the internal management of particular schools.
- Rule 6. That the Union shall exclude no denomination of evangelical Christians and that all the meetings shall begin and end with prayer.

The next step taken by the infant Union was to be one of the most important in its long term effect on the direction in which it moved and on its image. A letter was sent to Lord Ashley, requesting him to become President of the Union. He agreed, and his letter of acceptance was ordered to be reproduced in the minutes.¹¹ It concluded with the sentence: 'I think we may do much for these poor children'. However, his association with the Union almost ended in disaster after only a few weeks.

11. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1844, December 6th.

He threatened to resign over the issue of clergy consent to the formation of ragged schools in their parishes.¹² He was reluctant to act without clerical sanction. It was the far-sighted and vigorous Mr. Starey who persuaded him to change his mind.

After a few months, when the Union had finished searching for its identity, it was able to increase its activities. Members of the committee visited many ragged schools (13); grants were made to help them to continue their work (14); advice and encouragement were given to those proposing to start new schools (15); the Union received annual reports and accounts of progress from existing schools (16); and it was tireless in the invention of rules, byelaws and regulations for itself and in the production of circulars for its members and supporters.¹⁷ The following two years saw the rise of all of the problems which were to tax the energies of the Union - the quality and supply of teachers, evening school work and secular instruction, emigration, voluntary and salaried staff, buildings, discipline, relations with other similar groups outside London and a host of internal problems relating to the affairs of individual schools as well as the vexed question of associated industrial schools.

- 12. Ibid., 1845, January 3rd.
- 13. Ibid., 1844, November 15th.
- 14. Ibid., 1845, January 3rd.
- 15. Ibid., January 17th.
- 16. Ibid., March 7th.
- 17. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1845, April 4th.

The Sunday schools had demonstrated the existence of a reservoir of enthusiastic evangelicals willing to work voluntarily in schools and the R.S.U. offered them further opportunities. The Sunday School Movement had also shown what some of the problems were in using these men and women.¹⁸ They were repeated and magnified by the activities of the ragged schools. The twin difficulties were the quality and the supply of teachers. Sincerity and dedication could be taken for granted in most of them, knowledge of method and organisation could not. The very best were brilliant and coherent, the worst were hesitant and remote. Proposals were made at the meetings of the R.S.U. to encourage lectures on methods 'generally adopted to instruct the young'.¹⁹ Offers were made to the Union by Mr. Olver, a teacher (20), and by the British and Foreign School Society to allow

anyone we may introduce as wishing to become a teacher to attend gratuitously for 9 months to learn the system and they would provide dinner free of cost.²¹

Haphazard and local efforts were made to help the voluntary workers and dozens of articles were written for them on method and organisation, but these measures were only palliatives and could not replace sound training. The result was that the

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18. R.T. Newman, George Hamilton Archibald and the Beginning of the Graded Sunday School Movement, 1956, p.12. 'It might be well for the cause of Sunday school instruction if there could be what are termed normal schools in this department of labour - schools in which teachers having zeal and Christian love might themselves be trained to teach others also'. (Report of the South Bucks. Sunday School Union, no date.)
19. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1845, April 4th.
20. Ibid., May 2nd..
21. Ibid., June 6th.

reputation of the ragged school teacher from the professional point of view was very low. He was placed below the workhouse teacher.

The difficulty was exacerbated by the growing feeling that the week-day evening work of the schools should be increased.

Lord Ashley asked the committee to

have a paid teacher on one or two evenings a week at each school to give some secular instruction such as reading, writing and arithmetic as an encouragement.²²

It was sympathetic and a month later considered closely the financial aspects of the proposal.²³ Increasing financial

support meant that it could offer to subsidise schools engaging paid workers.²⁴ The following meetings abound with entries like:

£5 paid to Mr. Playford, teacher at Vine Court for 6 months' service

£2. 10s. paid to the teacher at Union Mews School for 3 months' service.²⁵

Finally, the Union began to recognise that the expansion of the activities of the schools and the stability of each institution required full-time salaried staff. It discussed appropriate salaries and decided that £75 p.a. was reasonable. Lord Ashley challenged this, pointing out that an efficient man would want more. He won the issue and the Union agreed that £100 p.a. would be offered to a person who was found to be competent after 'the first six months' services'.²⁶

22. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1845, May 9th.

23. Ibid., June 10th.

24. Ibid., November 20th.

25. Ibid., 1846, September 4th.

26. Ibid., November 23rd.

However, the majority of the teachers were voluntary workers and the fate of many schools was directly related to their enthusiasm. The schools were in the habit of commenting to the Union about the availability of staff. The quarterly Meeting of Delegates in 1846 had a series of reports from schools which underlined this aspect.²⁷ Somerset Place School, Hammersmith, was fortunate.

The supply of teachers is good and comes from the Wesleyan, Baptist and Independent Congregations in the town.

Old Pye Street School had teachers

whose attendance is regular, consequently the order of the school is improving.

Yet, St. Anne's School was 'shut up for want of teachers' (28), and Fulwood Rents 'could enlarge the school if they had more teachers'.²⁹ The attendance of the girls at New Pye Street was drastically affected by the 'illness of the governess'.³⁰

The figures given in the R.S.U. minutes refer to the number of teachers who might come along for one evening only within a specified number of weeks. Thus it is deceptive at first to read that Fulwood Rents had five teachers for twenty children (31), that the Lamb and Flag Court School had eleven teachers for eighty children (32), that Grey's Yard School had sixteen teachers for fifty children.³³ King's Cross School had 'twelve to

27. Ibid., September 18th.

28. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1845, September 5th.

29. Ibid., November 7th.

30. Ibid., September 18th.

31. Ibid., 1845, November 7th.

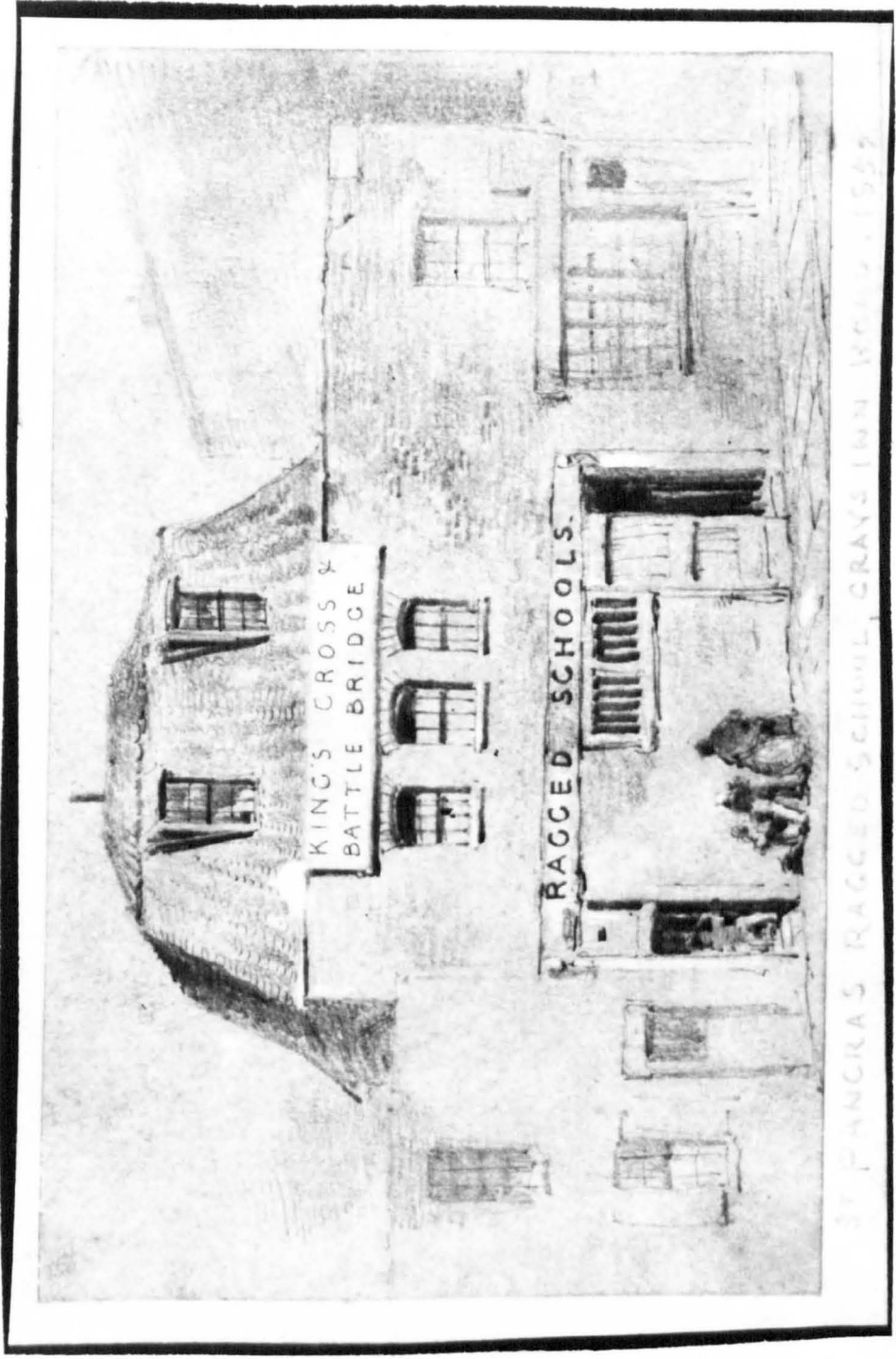
32. Ibid., November 7th.

33. Ibid., November 7th.

ST. PANCRAS RAGGED SCHOOL,
GRAYS INN ROAD, 1859.

Source:

County Hall, London.



ST PANCRA'S RAGGED SCHOOL, GRAYS INN ROAD, 1859

seventeen teachers' (34) but the paid teacher, Mr. Jeffcote, reported that

He has seldom anyone to render him any assistance and is therefore of necessity obliged to adopt the collective method of instruction.³⁵

The voluntary teaching system offered a simple solution to a complex set of problems but it failed for it proved too costly even for a fervid evangelicalism.

A second group of problems to emerge in this early growth of the R.S.U. was focused on the internal problems of the schools. The Union was pledged not to interfere but, as many of these difficulties were common, it felt free to discuss the principles involved. Complaints about the indiscipline of the children were numerous. Lord Ashley had stressed the fact that the ragged schools dealt with a class of children 'of peculiar habits and manners' who could not be offered the

advantages of your National Schools, your British and Foreign Schools or any other of your educational establishments.³⁶

This was based on careful knowledge of the working of the schools. The Management Committee of the Union was so anxious about the safety of teachers that it obtained information relating to the cost of having a policeman on duty at each school.³⁷ However, at 3s. 6d. a day, this was thought to be prohibitive, though the

34. Ibid., 1845, November 7th.

35. Ibid., 1846, September 18th.

36. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1847, May 18th.

37. Ibid., 1845, November 20th.

Union was assured that there would be police protection where a breach of the peace was threatened.³⁸ Except for a few notorious occasions, the teachers managed to cope within the classroom, but children outside of the school frequently made grave difficulties. Typical of many early entries is the one reporting on the conduct of Agar Town School.

In consequence of the violent conduct of the boys outside the building, it is again necessary to make another application to the police for assistance.³⁹

Some of the problems within the class can be seen from the description of the master of King's Cross School.

Attendance varies in consequence of a plan that he finds prevails among the boys following their leader or, as he is called, Captain. When he is present, the attendance is always good but the disorder great, such as putting out the lights, fighting the teacher, etc. When he is absent, the number present is usually small and of a more docile class.⁴⁰

Certainly, many of the pupils in the early ragged schools were known to the police.⁴¹

Inadequate buildings and lack of equipment meant further problems for local management committees, though the R.S.U. was able to give some help. Most schools took place in cheap rooms, improvised and adapted as far as available funds would allow. The ephemeral nature of the ragged schools, particularly in the early years, discouraged a policy of constructing special

38. Ibid., December 5th.

39. Ibid., 1846, September 18th.

40. Ibid., September 18th.

41. Ibid., June 2nd.

schools. It is clear from the minutes that local committees took what they could afford. The Flood Street Sunday Evening Ragged School Committee converted one of the arches of the Greenwich railway bridge for £35 into a school (42) and the Bermondsey Railway Arch School was held in a tunnel. The New Cut Ragged School had been 'formerly used for a penny theatre' (43) and the premises of the Golden Lane School 'had been used for stabling cart horses'.⁴⁴

The R.S.U. gave considerable help to schools which were unable to equip themselves. Just over a year after its foundation it was anxious about the lack of washing facilities in the schools and it asked its supporters for increased funds to deal with this matter.⁴⁵ It offered assistance with books. When the school at Broadway, Westminster, opened for fifty children it had ten books. The R.S.U. made a grant for the purchase of '100 elementary reading books and 1 doz. testaments'.⁴⁶ This is one of many examples. Sometimes it bought large numbers of books for general distribution, as, for example, when it ordered 1,000 copies of Gall's Sacred Songs.⁴⁷ Small monetary grants were made for alterations to interiors in order to make rooms usable. The following are details of grants made in February, 1847. ⁴⁸

42. Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1845, April 4th.

43. Ibid., 1846, September 18th.

44. Ibid., January 2nd.

45. Ibid., 1845, June 10th.

46. Ibid., November 20th.

47. Ibid., 1847, February 5th.

48. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1847, February 5th.

Hammersmith £13, King Edward Street £12, Deptford £12, Field Lane £20, Hopkin Street £24, George Street £20, Old Pye Street £12.

It was hardly eighteen months after its inception that the R.S.U. debated the idea of industrial classes in ragged schools and even of the formation of a school of industry. There was much enthusiasm for the idea within the management committee of the Union and no realisation that they were adopting a scheme which had a history of lamentable failure. The R.S.U. was dazzled by successes in Scotland and took no account of the experience of the S.P.C.K. or the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor. However, the local committees in general refused to respond. Faced as they were with irregular attendance, a fluctuating population, poor premises, young children, local fears about the labour market, the possibility of 'injuring honest workmen' as well as a continuing shortage of funds, they felt unable to commend the idea to their supporters. In the event, they proved wiser than the parent organisation.

A sub-committee of the Union examined the difficulties which would be met in starting an Industrial School and prepared estimates.⁴⁹ They suggested that the Thieves' Public House in Westminster would be an appropriate place; it could be had for £30 p.a. and would need £50 for alterations.⁵⁰ It would be opened from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. for children between 8 and 14 years old. They would spend something in the order of 5 hours in

49. Ibid., 1846, October 30th.

50. Ibid., November 17th.

'THE CORNER OF OLD PYE STREET AND DUCK LANE', by H. SHEPHERD,
(SHOWING THE WESTMINSTER SCHOOL OF INDUSTRY - LEFT).

Source:

County Hall,
London.



T. H. S. MEA. SHE-PALAD.

industrial pursuits, have 4 hours' instructions and 3 hours for meals and recreation. Breakfast, dinner and supper would be given to the children and it was reckoned that the cost of this would be 3s. per head each week.⁵¹ The school was to cater for a hundred boys when established but was to take fifty at first. They agreed that

The lowest and most destitute class should be admitted, giving preference to those children of that class who have no parents or who have been forsaken by them.⁵²

Circulars appealing for funds were printed, advice on the appointment of an efficient master was taken from the Glasgow organiser of industrial schools and an Under Secretary of State gave it as his opinion that the children, having been improved, should be sent to the Colonies.⁵³

The expansion of the R.S.U. and the publicity attaching to its work brought it into contact with other groups in the country attempting similar work. It lacked the vision, finances and personnel to establish a national system of ragged schools. Moreover, it struck attitudes and clung to opinions which many progressives regarded as archaic. It was unable to offer a lead at national level to induce the government to offer some support to its ventures and drew back from involving itself with the reform movements. It was essentially an inward looking movement concerned with conditions in London. Its expansion was one which was limited to the

⁵¹ Ibid. ,1846 November 17th.

⁵² The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1846, November 9th.

⁵³ Ibid., November 23rd.

Metropolis. It was, of course, willing to encourage other towns and cities to embark upon a system of ragged education. Members of the London R.S.U. Committee visited many other centres, advising and helping in fund-raising activities. But they refused the role of national co-ordinator.

The Union defined the area of its activity clearly. It extended 'five miles round London' (54), though it agreed that

the formation of similar unions should be encouraged in different parts of the country where needed.⁵⁵

A visit was made to Liverpool to help in the formation of their Union (56) and the work of groups in Southampton (57), Bath and Manchester was noted.⁵⁸

54. Ibid., 1845, July 4th.

55. Ibid., July 4th.

56. Ibid., 1846, December 4th.

57. Ibid., 1847, April 1st.

58. Ibid., May 18th.

II. Growth and Expansion, 1850-1860.

By 1850, the Ragged School Union had evolved the principles which were to guide it for the next forty years. It had established a successful central organisation; it attracted into its service men of the calibre of William Locke, S.R. Stary and Joseph Gent, who gave unstintingly to the work in hand; it had obtained the services of Lord Ashley, whose active interest promoted the cause of the Union among the wealthy; it had defined its role in relation to a national system of schools. Somewhat optimistically it observed:

Ragged Schools are now allowed on all hands, whether it be in the light of philanthropy, patriotism or Christianity, whether in respect of benevolence, economy or duty.⁵⁹

This ignored the opposition to the movement which was to be both articulate and damaging in the Report of the Newcastle Commission and in the Education Act of 1870. The venture, however, had grown in respect of financial support, as its official statistics show.

Table: 3 Income of the Ragged School Union, 1845-1851. 60.

| | <u>Total Annual Income</u> | <u>Income from Subscriptions</u> | <u>Income from Donations</u> |
|------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1845 | £ 61 | - * | - * |
| 1846 | £ 382 | £ 20 | £ 299 |
| 1847 | £ 824 | £ 72 | £ 564 |
| 1848 | £1174 | £ 89 | £ 520 |
| 1849 | £4142 | £338 | £3168 |
| 1850 | £3370 | £520 | £1629 |
| 1851 | £3287 | £600 | £1254 |

59. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.7.

60. Abstracted from Ragged School Union, Annual Reports, 1845 - 1851.

* No information available.

The sharp rise in income for 1849 was the result of an effort to give wider publicity to the aims of the Union. It launched a Special Appeal during which ten thousand of its reports and an enclosed letter from Lord Ashley were circularised to 'Clergy, Judges, M.Ps. and all the principal Merchants and Bankers'.⁶¹ A paid secretary and a full-time collector were employed and the Union started publishing its own magazine. Its activities were also under scrutiny at national level with the consideration of Lord Ashley's motion to Parliament to finance the emigration of suitable ragged school children.⁶² By 1860, the Union's financial situation was sound and the rise in income during its early growth levelled off.

Table: 4 Income of the Ragged School Union, 1852 - 1861. ⁶³

| | <u>Total Annual Income</u> | <u>Income from Subscriptions</u> | <u>Income from Donations</u> |
|------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1852 | £3510 | £ 788 | £1700 |
| 1853 | £4800 | £ 924 | £1497 |
| 1854 | £9858 | £ 865 | £ 960 |
| 1855 | £5085 | £ 869 | £1209 |
| 1856 | £5297 | £ 844 | £1091 |
| 1857 | £7824 | £1403 | £4909 |
| 1858 | £6518 | £1206 | £2452 |
| 1859 | £6107 | £1248 | £2832 |
| 1860 | £5865 | £1258 | £1060 |
| 1861 | £5739 | £1514 | £1355 |

A legacy of £4,000 inflated the income for 1854 and legacies and bequests formed a substantial part of the income of the Union each year. An unusual feature in the Union's accounts was that

61. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1849, p.5.

62. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1849, pp. 5,6.

63. Abstracted from the Ragged School Union Annual Reports, 1852 - 1861.

donations were usually well above the annual level of subscriptions. The reason for this was the attraction which the Union had for the wealthy classes in London. It was through Lord Ashley able to approach many who might otherwise have been unaware of its existence. A policy of ensuring that its Advisory Committee comprised leading evangelicals: Bishops, M.Ps., lawyers, bankers and merchants, maintained its access to these classes. A study of the subscription and donation lists shows that many of the wealthier supporters treated their donation as a subscription, repeating it annually. It also shows that each new appeal not only gained the immediate sums required, but succeeded in involving a greater number in the financial support of the Union. The appeal of 1857 added £3,500 to the annual income. A plea by Lord Ashley was printed and circulated to 40,000 Londoners, including 'the entired Red Book names and all of the Bankers and City Merchants'.⁶⁴ The public meeting in conjunction with the appeal was chaired by the Lord Mayor.

The policy of the Union was to husband its finances and it invested considerable sums to create a reserve pool of capital, though it was not until the end of the 1870s that it required to draw on this. Interest from investments, profit from the magazines and other publications, as well as rent from buildings held by the Union, formed that part of the annual income not covered by subscriptions, donations and legacies.

64. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1857, p.16.

If the principles of action for the Union were clear in 1850, so was the enormity of the problem. Despite constant self-congratulation and 'thankfulness to God' for what had been achieved, it never rested on its gains but continually sought new ways to serve. After its rapid rise to prominence and with all of the promise of the early success, the committee members still

lamented the comparative inefficiency of all that they have yet been able to accomplish. They have constantly regretted that the schools could not be provided with Paid Teachers and Industrial Classes. They have often mourned after the still limited number of Voluntary Teachers and the laxity of discipline that has resulted from it. They have regretted the migratory and vicious habits of the children whereby all moral influence is in so many cases rendered nugatory.⁶⁵

These problems remained until the early 1870s, when the actions of the London School Board resolved them. Three important areas in the Union's activities emerge in the decade 1850 to 1860: the increase in the number of schools and scholars, teachers and volunteers; the attempt to sustain an annual emigration of ragged pupils from the schools; and the proliferation of a wide variety of auxiliary and missionary enterprises.

Firstly, the success of the ragged schools created a serious difficulty for the Union which it never satisfactorily resolved. Its own workers quickly realised that the schools were 'getting above their level'.⁶⁶ A recommendation to

65. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1850, p.6.

66. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1853, p.7.

employ a paid officer in each district to check the homes of the children and the parental income, though effected, could not be expected to solve the basic problem brought about by the improvement of the children.

What to do with such improved children puzzles your Committee and perplexes the committees of almost every ragged school in London.⁶⁷

Once turned away they did not doubt that 'the children will become ragged again and as depraved as ever', so 'until some alternative asylum be found for them, the Committee see no alternative but letting them be where they are'.⁶⁸

The purely theoretical solution which saw the ragged school as a moral cleansing agent or filtering machine, not retaining the improved and purified particles, but passing them off in order to make room for fresh impurity⁽⁶⁹⁾

was impossible. The idea was imprisoned in its own metaphor. The stark fact was that there were no schools to which the children could be transferred.

The problem arose in the day schools - the evening schools took older children who usually attempted some work during the day. These schools had increased with the growth of the movement and became of major importance in the educational and missionary work of the Union.

67. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1853, p.8.

68. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1853, p.8.

69. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1852, p.14.

Table: 5 No. of Day Schools and Paid Teachers in Association with the Ragged School Union, 1850 - 1863. 70

| | <u>No. of Day Schools</u> | <u>No. of Paid Teachers</u> |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1850 | 45 | 167 |
| 1851 | —* | 181 |
| 1852 | —* | 203 |
| 1853 | —* | 231 |
| 1854 | —* | 280 |
| 1855 | 81 | 320 |
| 1856 | 98 | 332 |
| 1857 | 103 | 355 |
| 1858 | 110 | 357 |
| 1859 | 151 | 369 |
| 1860 | 146 | 416 |
| 1861 | 151 | 354 |
| 1862 | 172 | 337 |
| 1863 | 160 | 359 |

The peak of this growth was attained in 1866, when the schools numbered 204.⁷¹ Thereafter a decline, accelerated by the creation of Board Schools and the diminution of interest in this side of the work, is evident.

The day school was rarely purpose built. Looking back on the first forty years of the movement it was felt that

it would have been a wiser economy if in the past more money had been spent in structural conveniences.⁷²

However, the fact that the early workers were thankful for

the tumbledown tenement, the adapted cottage, the improved workshop, the reformed hayloft, the whilom skittle ground, the covered back garden, the converted beer shop or the translated penny gaff

was put down to their desire to 'act promptly and not wait for

70. Abstracted from Ragged School Union, Annual Reports and Minute Books, 1850 - 1863.

71. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1866, p.9.

72. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1884, p.8.

* Figures not available.

model buildings or perfect contrivances'.⁷³ In a few places, freeholds were secured and substantial buildings erected. At Lambeth, Mr. Henry Beaufroy, a local distiller, left £10,000 to build a ragged school, with a further £4,000 to be invested to provide an annual sum for its maintenance.⁷⁴ However, for the most part the tenancy of the buildings used was found to be limited and precarious. This meant a history of frequent change for the majority of schools. Even where premises were satisfactorily negotiated, local fluctuations in numbers and teachers prompted moves. A typical example was Field Lane, one of the earliest and most famous ragged schools. It commenced in November, 1841, when Mr. Provan, the City Missioner, crowded forty five children in a small back room in Caroline Court. After a few weeks, he moved it to a lane called White's Yard. The hostility of the neighbours forced a move to the upper floor of the same house after a short time. The first anniversary of the school was celebrated in 1842, when the school occupied No. 65 West Street, West Smithfield. Mr. Provan had seven voluntary teachers by this time and, for the increased numbers of children attending, he eventually rented further rooms at the same address. The cost of the rent was three shillings per week. Continued expansion brought a search for new premises and in 1844 the school took up large premises on the corner of West Street. The rent of £35 p.a. was

73. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1884, p.8.

74. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.16.

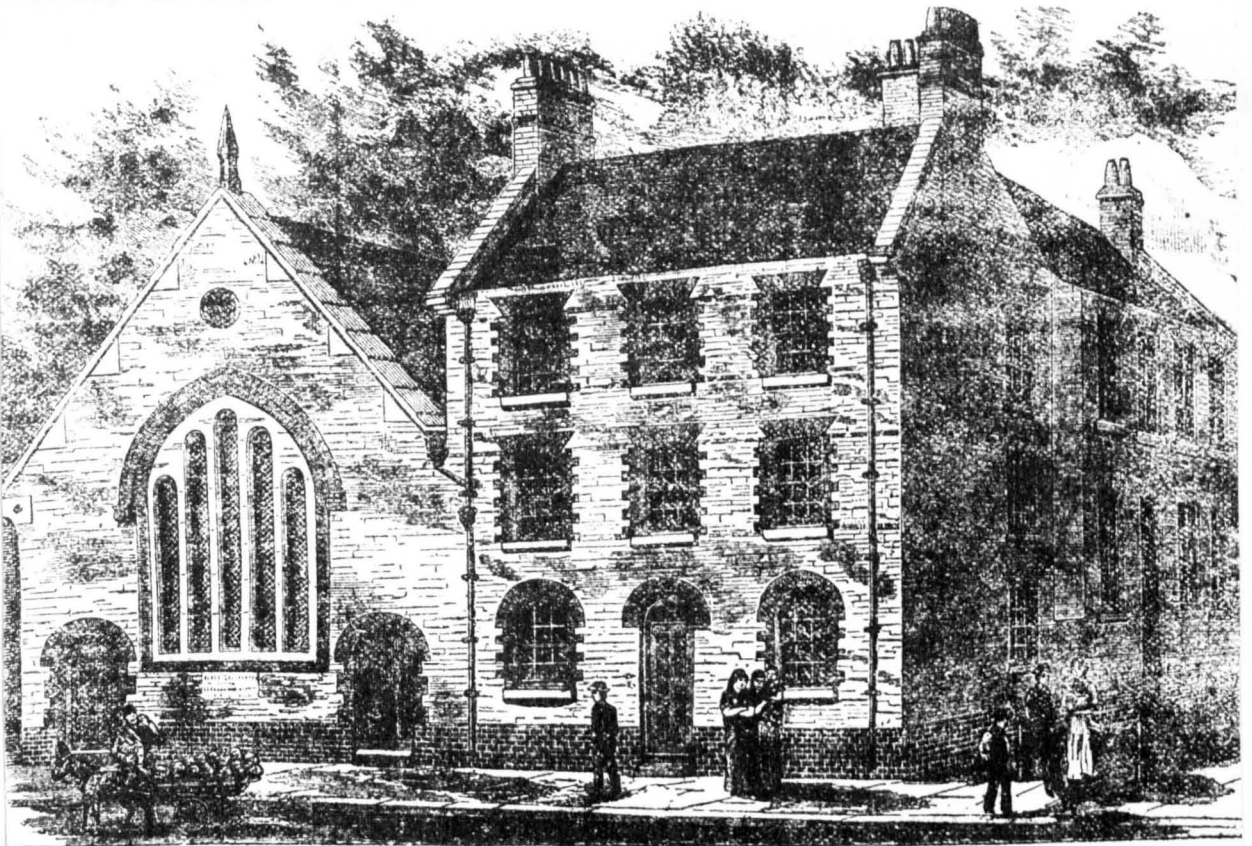
KING EDWARD RAGGED SCHOOLS,

KING EDWARD STREET,

SPITALFIELDS.

Source:

London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Public Library.



THE KING EDWARD RAGGED SCHOOLS AND CHRISTIAN MISSION, KING EDWARD STREET, SPITALFIELDS

high salary. The view of those outside of the movement was that the paid day ragged school teacher was of a similar standing to the workhouse teacher of pauper children. This was notoriously low. Edward Twissleton, Assistant Poor Law Commissioner in Norwich, expressed the prevailing opinion.

Nothing can be more lamentable than the low notions and grovelling conceptions which prevail respecting what a good schoolmaster ought to be. . . . Their ignorance is often of the grossest kind, although easily accounted for by their former modes of life. Many of these are persons who have failed in business and who think that, as a last resource, they may turn schoolmasters without previous practice. And such persons are sometimes elected, partly from a feeling of compassion and partly from an idea that there cannot be any great difficulty in teaching pauper children to read, write and cipher.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ *Eight Late Instructions, The Field Lane Story*, 1961, Chaps. 1 - 3.
⁷⁷ *Quoted from the Poor Law Commissioners on the Training of Pauper Schoolmen*, 1861, Appendix B.

partially defrayed by an annual grant of £15 from the Ragged School Union. A twenty year period of growth and consolidation of activities took place at these premises. However, the construction of the approach road to the new Smithfield meat market involved the demolition of the school. It re-established itself at Hatton Wall, Saffron Hill, in 1866. By 1877, it was in Wilderness Row, Aldersgate, occupying temporary class-rooms, due to the vacation of its premises to make way for the new Clerkenwell Road. It finally settled at Vine Hill in 1878.⁷⁵

The day schools had paid teachers assisted by paid monitors and voluntary helpers. The movement boasted that its teachers were among the finest in the country but the Union's criteria were concerned with missionary zeal, a personal religious experience and moral uprightness. By other standards, the paid teachers were usually unqualified, poorly educated and unable to command a very high salary. The view of those outside of the movement was that the paid day ragged school teacher was of a similar standing to the workhouse teacher of pauper children. This was notoriously low. Edward Twisleton, Assistant Poor Law Commissioner in Norwich, expressed the prevailing opinion.

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75. Field Lane Institutions, The Field Lane Story, 1961, Chaps. 1 - 5.

76. Report from the Poor Law Commissioners on the Training of Pauper Children, 1841, Appendix 8.

Within the Union it was felt that fully qualified teachers would over-emphasise the intellectual aspects of the children's education, to the detriment of the moral and religious parts. Mrs. Cornwallis recommended 'a six months' training on our system of mercy and patience'.⁷⁷ She probably spoke for the movement when she defined the successful teacher as the person who exemplified in his manners 'the law of love' and 'won the hearts' of the children by 'showing that what they teach to others they themselves believe also'.⁷⁸

The Union remained sanguine on the matter of its teachers, though it offered what help it could. It employed school agents to visit the schools, examine the children and advise the personnel. Their reports were rarely critical and offer little insight into the nature of the schools' problems. A 'Paid Teachers Association' was formed 'for conference and mutual improvement' and its existence was noted regularly in the annual reports.⁷⁹ However, the H.M.Is. implementing the Education Act applied standards which few of the day-teachers in the ragged schools could meet. That many of the men and women were devoted and bravely faced daunting conditions and circumstances is evident from the magazines of the Union as well as the Reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Whether they

77. C.F. Cornwallis, A Philosophy of Ragged Schools, 1851, p.66.

78. Ibid., p.85.

79. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1859, p.13.

received their salary (in practice, £75 for a man, £45 for a woman) for being a teacher or for being an evangelist was a question easily answered by even the most sympathetic H.M.I. The force of paid teachers - just over four hundred at its peak - declined after 1870 with the reduction in the number of day schools.

The voluntary workers occasionally attended to teach during the day but more usually in the evenings and on Sundays. They were regarded as 'the very crown of the Ragged School System' (80) but remained in short supply. At first sight, it is difficult to understand the annual plea for more staff, for the increase in schools of whatever character was usually paralleled by a proportionate increase in voluntary workers. The numbers quoted would appear to give an adequate force (given the standards of the Union).

Table: 6 Numbers of Children and Voluntary Teachers at Ragged Sunday and Night Schools, 1855 - 1863. 81

| | <u>Night Schools</u> | <u>Night School Pupils</u> | <u>Sunday Schools</u> | <u>Sunday School Pupils</u> | <u>Voluntary Staff</u> |
|------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1855 | 111 | 7338 | 114 | 14,682 | 1,857 |
| 1856 | 117 | 8085 | 128 | 16,937 | 2,139 |
| 1857 | 121 | 7538 | 128 | 19,946 | 2,461 |
| 1858 | 130 | 8606 | 137 | 21,051 | 2,701 |
| 1859 | 187 | 8915 | 178 | 22,718 | 2,668 |
| 1860 | 200 | 9413 | 199 | 22,310 | 2,670 |
| 1861 | 216 | 9841 | 207 | 25,264 | 2,472 |
| 1862 | 196 | 9211 | 182 | 24,337 | 2,520 |
| 1863 | 205 | 8325 | 180 | 23,360 | 2,695 |

80. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1872, p.7.

81. Abstracted from Ragged School Union, Annual Reports, 1855 - 1863.

The problem was the erratic attendance of the volunteers. The Union found 'that there is never above one third of the number present at any one time'.⁸² And it was 'next to an impossibility to get more voluntary agents', despite the fact that they believed that there were as many ragged children waiting to enter their schools as they already had within them.⁸³ In desperation it attempted to induce the wealthier suburban churches 'to render direct aid by working some ragged school as a branch of that church'.⁸⁴ There was no response to this appeal.

It was quickly realised that the calls of the day schools on the volunteers would have to be limited. The Union adopted the device of paid monitors to relieve the pressure on the teachers.

Though in many cases quite young, they are found equal to the task of teaching and controlling younger children in the Day and Infant Schools.⁸⁵

Half of the cost to the schools of this system was met by the central body. They recommended that a school with up to 100 pupils would require 4 monitors who would receive 2 shillings each per week; one with 100 to 150 pupils needed 6 monitors who would receive 4 shillings each per week; any school above 150 was held to warrant 8 monitors at a payment of 6 shillings each per week.⁸⁶ The account books of individual schools show

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82. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1859, p.7.
 83. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1863, p.6.
 84. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1865, p.8.
 85. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1864, p.6.
 86. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1866, p.13.

that few got more than a shilling a week and most between twopence and sixpence a week. They had appeared in individual ragged schools by 1850 but were not officially recognised by the Union for grant purposes until 1854. By 1858, it reckoned that there were 200 paid monitors and this rose steadily.⁸⁷ In 1859, there were 371 (88); in 1864, there were 450 (89); and, on the eve of the new Education Act, they numbered 581.⁹⁰ The H.M.Is. who visited the ragged schools were agreed in their condemnation of the system of monitors. They found them wholly ignorant, far too young and often without any temperament or inclination for the job they were attempting. It was a practice opposed by British and National schools, as they occasionally found some of their brighter pupils leaving to take up these posts.

The second major development in the decade 1850 to 1860 was the attempt to sustain the emigration of the ragged school pupils. Annual reports, the Union's magazine and the children's magazine all gave a prominence to this venture which the actual numbers of children involved barely justified. Lord Ashley's request to Parliament to finance the scheme for one year was granted in October, 1848.⁹¹ The Union attempted to reap the maximum publicity from this and included the emigrants as examples in its standard arguments to prove that 'prevention was

87. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1858, p.6.

88. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1869, p.4.

89. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1869, p.4.

90. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1869, p.4.

91. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1849, p.6.

FRONTISPIECE OF 'THE RAGGED SCHOOL UNION MAGAZINE'.



Source:

The Shaftesbury Society.



better than cure'.

A school better than a prison - a ragged teacher better than a policeman - ragged school emigrants better than government convicts - youthful training more pleasing and hopeful than adult reformation.⁹²

150 children were finally selected in the first year, 134 boys and 16 girls out of a total of 276 applicants.⁹³ From the outset the scheme was regarded as an opportunity, a change to be eagerly grasped by children whose employment prospects at home at that time were not good.

Mere destitution is not to form a qualification for this privilege. It is available to those who have given evidence of reformation of character and a certain amount of attainments.⁹⁴

It was hoped that at least a hundred children could be sent each year.

This will be at the rate of one to each school and may be regarded as a well-earned prize.⁹⁵

The children who were selected were required to be in good health and to have attended the ragged school regularly for six months. 'Each applicant underwent a careful examination... first by the officers of the Union and then by the Emigration Commissioners.'⁹⁶ They repeated the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments, worked the four rules of arithmetic, wrote from dictation, read a passage aloud and produced a certificate confirming an attendance of at least four months in an industrial class. The Union found it

92. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.7.

93. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1849, p.6.

94. Ragged School Union Magazine, 1849, p.27.

95. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.10.

96. Ragged School Union Magazine, 1849. p.27.

necessary to be quite explicit regarding its methods and criteria of selection. Critics were sceptical of the schools' ability to pick out the most deserving cases and emphasised the short duration of 'ragged education'.⁹⁷ Some wondered if the children were really being transported. The Union was firm that 'all emigrants left of their own free will and pleasure'.⁹⁸ All received parental consent. The first group to emigrate represented thirty schools. The most successful in gaining places for their pupils were Streatham Street, which sent 18 children, Grotto Passage, which sent 11, and Agar Town and Yeates Court, which sent 12 each.⁹⁹ Each of the children received a Bible 'with marginal references', and numerous tracts, as well as a new outfit of clothes.

The Union hoped that the Government would 'repeat the boon ... in succeeding years'.¹⁰⁰ When a second grant was not forthcoming in the next year it was faced with the task of organising a public appeal and creating a fund to finance the passage of the ragged scholars. It raised £1,129 and sent twenty seven boys to Australia and, at the time of printing the Annual Report for 1850, had paid for eleven more who were simply 'waiting for a ship'.¹⁰¹ Faced with a very heavy burden of expenditure on emigration if they were to sustain the initial

97. Ragged School Union Magazine, 1849, p.27.

98. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1849, p.7.

99. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1849, p.7.

100. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1849, p.7.

101. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1850, p.9.

numbers, the Union offered fewer places and managed to make some economies. It was able to reduce the fare to Australia from £20 to £15 by sending the children from Liverpool rather than London and obtained third class transport for them on the North Western Railway at half the normal fare.¹⁰² By 1852 the number stood at fifty-four - thirty seven children had gone to Australia and seventeen to America - but it was clear that this outlet was not going to provide the panacea hoped for. It was suggested that perhaps '... many would find places at home if they had something in hand as a testimony of their good character'.¹⁰³ However, the Union never changed its opinion that Government aid for the emigrants was proper and necessary. When their own Emigration Fund was exhausted in 1853 they sent a delegation headed by Lord Ashley to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir John Paketon, to appeal for assistance. He was unable to do anything for them and suggested that they were misinformed about the true extent of the 'labour shortage' in Australia. What, in fact, worried the supporters of the movement more was the discovery of gold there and the wide-spread publicity given to an adverse report from the Governor of Melbourne, Mr. Latrobe, on the depraved character of emigrants.¹⁰⁴

Thrown back on their friends and supporters again, the Union resolved that what money it could raise would be best spent in

102. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.10.

103. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1852, p.12.

104. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1853, p.10.

sending children to Canada. It sent twenty in 1854. Unfortunately, eleven were shipwrecked and only two were saved. By 1856 its funds were again exhausted and it was able to send fifteen children only. It noted that the urgency for the scheme had decreased in view of a better economic position in London and the opportunities in the army created by the war.¹⁰⁵ The majority of children to emigrate were boys. When it was decided to send girls to Canada as domestic servants, the Union had fears that the venture would be misunderstood in view of the dangers many of them had faced in their early years. It resolved the issue by sending Mrs. Edwards, Matron of St. Giles' Refuge, with the children to ensure that they got good positions.¹⁰⁶ By 1860 only a trickle of emigrants could be financed and the whole episode quietly slipped into the background in Minute Books, Magazines and Reports. After 1865 the Union did not even bother to give the total numbers sent abroad. It commented that emigration was 'considerably reduced' because employment at home was better and there was some fear that Canada might be unsafe in view of the proximity of the Civil War to her.¹⁰⁷ Thus the unctuous tone adopted by the Movement about its emigrant children was changed after 1860. As usual, it had claimed too much for too little. Inflated claims, even when supported by countless letters from ragged emigrants who had 'made good', could not disguise the fact that emigration was an answer - however good - to the wrong question.

105. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1856, p.7.

106. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1857, p.10.

107. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1865, p.21.

The third area of major activity for the Union in the decade 1850 - 1860 was in the auxiliary services and organisations which developed from its experience of the difficulties of the ragged families. Agencies, societies and associations were formed to alleviate the problems associated with their physical condition, moral state and industrial incapacity. By 1853 it had proliferated to include operations connected with refuges and dormitories, shoe-blacks, mothers' meetings, penny banks, crossing sweepers, reading rooms and industrial classes.¹⁰⁸ The most significant were those for shoe blacks and the refuges and dormitories.

The Ragged School Shoe-Black Society was established in 1851 'to give employment to deserving boys in connection with the Ragged School Union'.¹⁰⁹ It offered its privileges to boys

who have shown evidence of reformation, or whose destitute condition precludes them from obtaining other employment.¹¹⁰

Coming to public notice at the Great Exhibition, it was a very popular institution. Although not intended as more than a 'temporary livelihood', it was successful to the degree that it enabled children to save considerable sums 'as an introduction to permanent situations'.¹¹¹ Indeed, the amounts earned became a regular feature of the Ragged School Magazine and appeared

108. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1853, p.5.

109. Report on the Metropolitan Reformatories and Refuges, 1856, p.15.

110. Ibid., p.15.

111. Ibid., p.15.

until the 1880s.

The earnings of each boy are disposed of as follows: sixpence is returned to the boy as his allowance and the remainder is divided into three parts, of which the first is paid to the boy, the second is put into a fund called the 'boys' bank', to be employed for his future benefit, and the third is appropriated by the Society.¹¹²

The boys were expected to meet at the Society's offices at 7 a.m. for prayers and Scripture reading and return at 6.30 in the evening 'to account for their day's earnings'.¹¹³ Attendance at week evening ragged schools was encouraged and was compulsory at the Sunday schools.

The first Society - called the Central Reds because of the red jersey worn by the boys - was followed in 1854 by two others in the East - the Blues - and the South - the Yellows. In 1857 the North Western, the West Kent, the West London, the South Suburban, the Islington and the Kensington Societies were formed. All had their distinctive uniforms made by the girls in the ragged schools or refuges. They also made their boxes and mats. Whether the Societies achieved their major purpose of 'qualifying the children by suitable training for respectable situations in after life' is open to question.¹¹⁴ The evidence used by the Union to justify the whole operation was financial and comprised totals earned per annum. This simply pointed to its value as a short term employment agency. The sort of

112. Ibid., p.30. (The total annual sums involved can be seen from the Accounts for 1856 of the South London Shoe Black Society. The total earned was £468. Of this, £292 was paid to the boys, £89 put into the 'boys' banks', the Society took £86 towards its expenses - which totalled £157 p.a. There were 35 boys in the Society that year.)

113. Ibid., p.30.

114. Ibid., p.31.

evidence required relates to the position obtained by the children after serving in the 'Shoe-Black Brigade'. It is not usually available in the detail needed. In the first five years of the Central Red Society, one of the largest, 451 boys were employed,

of whom 83 have been provided with situations, 25 have emigrated, 6 have entered the army and navy, 2 have died, 58 remain within the Society and the rest have either left of their own accord for other employment or have been sent away for incompetence or discharged for bad conduct.115

When some clear figures are given of the number failing to obtain positions, the proportion seems high. Thus, in 1855-6, the East London Society lost 43 boys.

23 obtained for themselves situations - their good conduct on their stations having been noticed by their present employers; 6 have left on their own account and we do not know what has become of them; 17 have been dismissed for dishonesty or general bad conduct.116

The popularity of shoe-black societies as provisional employment agencies prompted similar efforts. The Union and its schools attempted to organise 'broomers' - boys employed during the winter to clear the fronts of shops; 'steppers' - girls to scrub and wash the outside steps of houses; 'messengers' - children who would take parcels up to the value of £3 from one part of the City to another; 'sweepers' - boys who would clean the roads and clear the crossings; 'house-boy brigades' - boys employed to undertake unskilled labouring work in and around the house. Their success was limited and the difficulties of properly supervising street

115. Ibid., p.15.

116. Ibid., p.30,

CROSSING SWEEPERS.

FROM: H. MAYHEW, 'LONDON LABOUR AND LONDON POOR', 1860.



Crossing Sweepers, from Mayhew's *London Labour and the Poor* 1860

occupations, together with the temptations such occupations placed before the children, led to their gradual abandonment. The zeal and devoted efforts of the members of the Union in this work were very great. The failure to attain their object for the poor children by these schemes was confessed in the attempt to devise further and different means of reaching it. The sincerity and sacrifice of the volunteers did not change the basic economic and social difficulties from which the appalling condition of the 'ragged' poor derived.

The Union expressed its concern particularly for those children who had no homes and were forced to sleep in common lodging houses or wherever shelter could be had in the open. Their plight prompted some of the ragged schools to make dormitory space available. Others instituted their own refuges in association with the schools. Some members of the movement established general refuges to which any young persons could be admitted. In 1852, nine refuges were attached to the Ragged School Union. By 1856, the figure had reached sixteen and there was no further increase. In that year the Reformatory and Refuge Union was organised, with Lord Shaftesbury as President. The Ragged School Union had feared that interest and funds were being diverted from the educational work to the refuges and suggested a new organisation to deal specifically with this problem. The new body was able to expand into reformatory refuges and institutions for the adult as well as the juvenile destitute. It retained strong links with the parent Union until 1868, when it became independent, and gave generously towards the support of refuges connected with ragged schools.

Conditions within the refuges were spartan. Grotto

Passage Ragged School and Refuge for Destitute Boys stated:

The food has, of course, been very plain and sometimes scanty, prepared by the boys themselves in turn under proper supervision. A cottagers' stove has been the only cooking apparatus ... The boys sleep in hammocks ... the average residence in the institution is twelve months; the greater part are orphans.117

Opportunities for boys were scarce.

Much trouble has been experienced in finding employment in London for the boys when prepared for situations; this arises from the reluctance of employers to take boys from such institutions. All experience points to the navy or the Colonies as the only outlets for this class.118

Nevertheless, the Union enabled children to have shelter and food in circumstances when they would otherwise have had neither. That it increased their chances of obtaining suitable employment is less certain. Refuges taking girls to train as domestic servants probably had more success than others.

The Royal Commission appointed to 'enquire into the state of popular education' reported in 1861. Part of its Report dealt with the desirability of encouraging and financing the ragged schools.119 It was crucial because it formulated that attitude of the government which was to remain until the new Education Act. Mr. Lingren, the Secretary to the Committee of Council, expressed his opinion that

Ragged Schools are to be regarded as provisional institutions which are constantly tending to become elementary schools of the ordinary kind or Industrial Schools certified under Act of Parliament.120

117. Ibid., p.6.

118. Ibid., p.6.

119. Report of the Royal Commission to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England, 1861, Part III: The Education of Vagrants and Criminals. (Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 21, Part 1.

120. Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 21, p.394.

The commissioners took their ^{view} ~~view~~ from him and reported that the present policy

is wise and should be maintained. In order to entitle any class of institution to receive aid from the grant administered by the Committee of Council, it is indispensable that they should be shown to be likely to produce valuable permanent results, but this is not the case with ragged schools. The influence which they exercise over children who would be otherwise destitute of any education whatever is probably beneficial, though there is reason to fear that little can be effected by the mere literary instruction of children who are accustomed to vicious homes and parents. The only efficient mode of reforming such children is to subject them to the strict discipline of an industrial school.

The slight influence for a very limited class is the only advantage produced by the establishment of separate ragged schools. It appears to be overbalanced by the disadvantage that such schools withdraw from the ordinary day schools a considerable number of children who would otherwise be sent there either by their parents or by the guardians of the poor, and this is a serious evil.

A further objection to affording the public assistance is that strict general rules rigidly adhered to are absolutely necessary in the administration of public money. (To obtain grants) attaining to a certain degree of discipline, the payment of certain fees by the parents and the prospect of a certain degree of permanence in the schools are necessary. If by neglecting these considerations a school might qualify itself for special grants as a ragged school there can be little doubt that the standard of efficiency in day schools would be gradually and materially lowered.

For these reasons we think that ragged schools in which industrial instruction is not given, though they may in some special cases be useful, are not proper subjects for public assistance.¹²¹

The evidence points to the fact that the commissioners did not consider the case of ragged schools at any length or fairly. It purported to reach its decisions after considering the evidence of Patrick Cumin, one of the assistant commissioners, and Mary Carpenter, who had been the prime force in initiating ragged

121. Ibid., pp.395 - 396.

schools in Bristol. The evidence of Cumin looked impressive and was based on a statistical survey of ragged schools in Bristol and Plymouth. By the side of it, Miss Carpenter's evidence was too subjective, prone to the criticism that it generalised from specific cases and was rather sentimental. Cumin's survey established to the satisfaction of the critics of the ragged schools that a ragged class did not exist. By this was meant a group who, not being outdoor paupers, could not afford to pay for their children at the ordinary day school. He skilfully compared the occupations of parents in National, British and Ragged Schools and found no differences. The only distinguishing feature of the parents of the ragged school children 'consists not in their occupations, nor in their poverty, but in their moral character'.¹²² It was deftly done and raised the question of whether or not the rest of society was to be chargeable because dissipated parents would use 'ld. for gin rather than school'.¹²³ He even questioned the continual boast of the ragged school supporters that their institutions reduced crime and delinquency in the young.

If education has any effect in checking crime, it seems not to be through the ragged school but through the ordinary day schools and the reformatory schools.¹²⁴

Miss Carpenter could not rebutt the charges made by Cumin. To some extent it was a master stroke on his part to use figures from the Bristol schools, for she had nothing comparable to offer

122. Ibid., p.340.

123. Ibid., p.390.

124. Ibid., p.392.

save her own opinion of these same institutions. The commissioners were hardly likely to be impressed by her suggestion that they visit the homes of the ragged parents to ascertain whether or not they formed a separate class. Her desire for 'a great change in the social condition of our country' and her determination to plead for it took her argument beyond the brief of the Commission.¹²⁵ The tenor of her evidence and its quality as sustained argument was reduced and finally collapsed when she resorted to eight case studies - the sort of things which appeared in their hundreds in annual reports up and down the country. The Committee receiving her report dismissed it curtly in a couple of sentences.

But such families appear to contribute a small portion of the ragged school scholars. The bulk of the scholars appear to be the children of outdoor paupers or of persons who can send their children to paying schools and would do so if there were no ragged schools.¹²⁶

No proper investigation was made into the case for ragged schools. Cumin's report, though politically astute, had not considered the major areas of ragged school development - London, Liverpool and Manchester. To argue from examples of very limited numbers of schools in unrepresentative areas to a national pattern was inexcusable. Even in its details his work was defective. In the contrast he made between the occupations of parents in the various schools he omitted to ask the single important question which could possibly have upset all his evidence, the question of the seasonal nature

125. Ibid., p.392.

126. Ibid., p.392.

of the employment. The evidence from the schools points to this as the crucial economic factor in the poverty of the children's parents. By 1861, Mary Carpenter's enthusiasm for ragged schools had waned. Her interest was centred on reformatory education and the London Union, despite their respect for her efforts, would never have admitted that she was their advocate.

It must be doubted whether the possibility of ragged schools receiving government grants was ever seriously entertained by the commissioners. Although provincial schools had requested aid in the early 1850s, the London Union had set itself firmly against this, suspecting that in its wake would come government controls. It maintained its position vociferously during the period up to 1860 and its intransigent attitude no doubt accounted for the fact that none of its members was asked to submit reports to the Commission. From the government side it would have been unwise to attempt to force grants on unwilling recipients, particularly as the Commission rightly saw the problems of establishing workable criteria for their award were very difficult. More directly, it could introduce a further variation on the religious problems bedevilling the attempts to set up a national educational system. The schools were plainly religious, openly missionary and covertly Protestant in character, but they were also unsectarian, comprising the spectrum of non-Roman Catholic groups among their organisers. That the ragged movement could resolve the tensions which existed between the established church and the dissenting groups

at a national level, the government found implausible. Thus the Commission, deaf to the slogan-choked arguments of the activists, and acting more from political expediency than a rational assessment, trivialised the matter. It did not bother to collect suitable statistics and even those which were given were incorrect.¹²⁷

Initially, the Ragged School Union was almost stupefied at the banality of the Commission's treatment of their work and problems. Not realising that its own previous positions were responsible for much of this, it allowed itself the luxury of moral indignation. The minutes of the Central Management Committee in the period 1861 to 1863 are replete with a virulent bitterness of attitude at what they took to be a deliberate misunderstanding of their work or a grossly incompetent assessment of it. It asserted its basic principle of missionary endeavour. The schools did not prize 'mere educational proficiency, book learning or high mental attainments': instead they aimed to induce 'Godly sincerity, decided Christian conduct, and a sincere profession of Bible truth'.¹²⁸ Then it accused the Commission of making no examination of the London schools and of ignoring the value of its auxiliary enterprises. Lord Shaftesbury, acting the part of Savonarola in a faithless age,

127. *Ibid.*, p.381. It stated that the Ragged School Union was founded in 1854: it should have been 1844. It gave its income for 1859 as £5,142: it was £6,107. It said that in 1859 there were 192 week-day ragged schools in London: there were 151. It gave the total number of children in the schools in London as 20,909: there were nearly 30,000 of them, in fact.

128. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1861, p.6.

and with eloquent invective, pronounced the Report anathema.

He in the Lords and the Hon. Arthur Kinneard and Sir Stafford

Northcote in the Commons introduced a motion: 'To inquire how the education of destitute and neglected children may be most efficiently and economically assisted by public funds'.

A Select Committee was set up.¹²⁹ Its members were sympathetic to the movement and they found that the Royal Commission's views were at variance with evidence of the facts. It purported to find a ragged class and praised the organisation, zeal, discretion, patience, faith and constitutions of the ragged school volunteers. Its final recommendation was that

ragged schools should be left to the missionary exertions of the ragged school managers, without any interference by the Government.¹³⁰

Its purpose, to re-establish the work as reputable and necessary, and the Ragged School Movement as an appropriate instrument for it, was achieved. The Union naturally supported the findings and held that

those engaged in Ragged Work in London were mostly averse to the Government aid for fear that Government grants would bring Government interference and deaden the voluntary religious character of the work.¹³¹

The next ten years were to bring increasing pressure on the Movement's day schools and challenge its character at its most fundamental points. That

success does not depend upon regular inspection and certified teachers or upon money grants from the state, or upon any amount of school machinery or educational appliances, but upon loving, faithful and earnest workers, upon zealous teachers of Bible truth' (¹³²)

129. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1862, p.5.

130. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1862, p.7.

131. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1862, p.6.

132. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1866, p.12.

was not self evident to those outside the narrow confines of evangelical philanthropy.

III. The Union and the Collapse of Ragged Day Schools, 1861 - 1874.

From the Report of the Commission to the Education Act, the Union continued to expand its enterprises, though the rate of acceleration was not as great as in the previous decade. It retained its characteristic of gauche eagerness and this period differed from the previous one only in its emphases and conclusions. Its finances reached their peak.

Table:7 Income of the Ragged School Union, in P^ounds, 1862 - 1876.¹³³

| | <u>Total Annual Income</u> | <u>Income from Subscriptions</u> | <u>Income from Donations</u> |
|------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1862 | 8,695 | 1,604 | 2,968 |
| 1863 | 5,909 | 1,581 | 1,001 |
| 1864 | 9,593 | 1,760 | 4,732 |
| 1865 | 7,208 | 1,672 | 1,304 |
| 1866 | 7,538 | 1,698 | 1,108 |
| 1867 | 7,279 | 1,584 | 1,525 |
| 1868 | 6,855 | 1,531 | 874 |
| 1869 | 6,824 | 1,705 | 994 |
| 1870 | 5,895 | 1,680 | 1,219 |
| 1871 | 6,675 | 1,603 | 2,584 |
| 1872 | 8,023 | 1,555 | 2,342 |
| 1873 | 5,311 | 1,470 | 1,054 |
| 1874 | 4,532 | 1,368 | 969 |
| 1875 | 4,465 | 1,404 | 759 |
| 1876 | 4,194 | 1,115 | 697 |

That the total in 1862 was nearly £3,000 more than the previous year's income was due to the Union's appeal to the public for support for its work. This raised £2,000. It felt that it would probably have got half as much again 'but for the death of the Prince Consort' and 'the appalling tragedy at Hartley Colliery'. These events 'absorbed the public mind and took money which might have come this way'.¹³⁴ The

¹³³. Abstracted from Ragged School Union Accounts, 1862 - 1876.

¹³⁴. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1862, p.15.

reduction in income in 1863 was put down to 'a year of trial and much distress'. This was a reference to the war in America and the poverty in Lancashire resulting from the cotton famine. At this time 'every religious and philanthropic society has felt its means reduced'.¹³⁵ Generous bequests raised the income of the Union to a record level in 1864, but even so it was unable to meet all of the commitments it imposed upon itself. And in that year it lamented that it 'had never yet been able to help poor schools to the extent required'. At this time seventy of the schools in association had debts totalling £2,500.¹³⁶ In order to raise this money it suggested in 1865 that clergy should take regular collections to support the schools and 'extend these valuable Home Missionary operations'.¹³⁷ The clergy did not respond. The income for 1866 was supplemented by legacies worth £2,550.¹³⁸ However, a real financial crisis loomed when it appeared that proposed legislation would rate the ragged school rooms. The Union calculated that it and the schools together would have to find an extra £3,000 p.a. if this was passed.¹³⁹ They opposed it vehemently in Parliament and in their publications. Although the measure was not finally defeated they were able to receive exemption from its provisions.¹⁴⁰ After the Education Act, its finances showed some fluctuation and declined, reaching only £3,500 in 1880.¹⁴¹ It was a period of difficulty, involving change and redirection of resources and concerns within the Union.

135. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1863, p.15.

136. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1864, p.15.

137. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1865, p.8.

138. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1866, p.23.

139. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1869, p.25.

140. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1870, pp.23-24.

141. Ragged School Union Accounts, 1880,

The day schools increased but more slowly than before. They were to be drastically cut back after 1872, but up to that time received considerable support from the Union.

Table:8 Number of Day Schools and Paid Teachers in Association with the Ragged School Union, 1864 - 1873.142.

| | <u>Day Schools</u> | <u>Paid Teachers</u> |
|------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1864 | 187 | 363 |
| 1865 | 196 | 376 |
| 1866 | 204 | 396 |
| 1867 | 200 | 429 |
| 1868 | 181 | 416 |
| 1869 | 194 | 424 |
| 1870 | 195 | 434 |
| 1871 | 186 | 428 |
| 1872 | 176 | 367 |
| 1873 | 132 | 265 |

The expansion was sustained in the other educational areas.

Table:9 The Numbers of Children and Voluntary Teachers at Ragged Sunday and Night Schools, 1864 - 1872.143

| | <u>Night Schools</u> | <u>Night School Pupils</u> | <u>Sunday Schools</u> | <u>Sunday School Pupils</u> | <u>Voluntary Staff</u> |
|------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1864 | 211 | 9,490 | 214 | 24,631 | 2,841 |
| 1865 | 204 | 8,031 | 213 | 23,290 | 2,699 |
| 1866 | 207 | 8,314 | 226 | 25,893 | 3,029 |
| 1867 | 212 | 9,314 | 224 | 29,511 | 3,241 |
| 1868 | 211 | 9,855 | 237 | 31,357 | 3,243 |
| 1869 | 209 | 9,514 | 272 | 32,339 | 3,448 |
| 1870 | 217 | 9,179 | 247 | 29,778 | 3,201 |
| 1871 | 192 | 8,748 | 237 | 31,835 | 3,351 |
| 1872 | 177 | 7,412 | 255 | 30,125 | 3,089 |

The decline in the number of night schools and of the children attending them was due to the closure of day schools. One of the concerns of the Union was that premises which were given up or taken over reduced the voluntary work not connected with the

142. Abstracted from Ragged School Union, Annual Reports, 1864-1873.

143. Abstracted from Ragged School Union, Annual Reports, 1864 - 1872.

day school itself by limiting the centres of operation. This had been a problem before the Act, for the demolition of the slums to make way for major re-building and for a new road system for London had meant some movement of population. It sympathised with the 'suffering poor' who were 'driven away' and 'compelled to herd together in other localities'. Large families 'had to find accommodation in a single room and that often a very small one'.¹⁴⁴ It was a perplexing problem for the Union. It noted that 1,500 houses had been demolished in notorious slum areas of Agar Town, Notting Hill, White Cross, Kingsland, Somers Town, Sloe Lane and Brampton Field Lane, and regretted the loss of its institutions.¹⁴⁵ However, in the year that this happened it was forced to take account of the unhealthy conditions under which people in these areas lived for a severe cholera epidemic broke out. The premises of Nichol Street and Elder Walk Ragged Schools were turned into dispensaries and were open day and night. Little Denmark Street School acted as a cholera hospital. Teachers from the Union's schools visited the sick and dying, and distributed meals and medicines. Dr. Cross, one of its Committee members, wrote a paper advising practical preventive measures and recommending treatments.¹⁴⁶

The initial attitude of the Union to the thinking which was behind the new Education Act was one of aggressive self-defence. It used its not unfamiliar practice of dignifying its own interests with

¹⁴⁴. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1867, p.7.

¹⁴⁵. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1867, p.7.

¹⁴⁶. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1867, p.21.

the name of principle. Much of its thinking was presented in rather stale evangelical clichés which prevented those outside the Movement from giving proper weight to its arguments. Its prime blunder was a political one. It underestimated the strength of those who wished for a national system of education financed from central and local funds; it overestimated what voluntarism could do and failed to see that in view of the size of the problems this philosophy was no longer relevant. Its major tactical mistake was to accept a missionary manifesto as ^a nostrum for all of the malfunctions within society.

It tried in vain to combat the theory that

secular instruction widely disseminated by a well-trained and skilful agency, but apart from Bible teaching by real Christians, will make a moral and well-ordered people.¹⁴⁷

When it was apparent that Forster's Bill would get strong support, it became hysterical and overplayed its hand by packing the court with too much partial evidence. It put itself in the position of having to defend the Bible and proclaimed its distress at a scheme of education which

excluded the Bible from state-supported schools - the best and purest literature we possess ... (which) shut the Book which was the foundation of our morality and the charter of our principles as a Christian nation.¹⁴⁸

It sought, without success, to incorporate into the Bill through its Parliamentary friends the following resolution.

147. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1868, p.5.

148. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1870, p.8.

In the case of all schools under the management of School Boards, the Bible, subject to the action of the Conscience Clause, shall be read at known and stated times.¹⁴⁹

Other recommendations, regarding the status of teachers in relation to the grants received by schools, were unsuccessfully made.

Once the Bill was through Parliament, the tone of the Union changed. It became more subdued as it felt the shock and realised how deeply this affected its own activities. A major re-adjustment was inevitable but could not be rushed in view of the procedures laid on the school boards before they could begin their activities. By 1871 it was prepared to admit that the Act

in theory is an advance in the right direction, but the difficulty will be in giving practical effect to its provisions.¹⁵⁰

But 'it would have been glad if the new Act had settled the religious question by requiring the Word of God to be taught'.¹⁵¹ When it approached the London School Board it was told that the following resolution had been passed:

That in the schools provided by the Board the Bible shall be read, and there shall be given such explanations and such instruction therefrom in the principles of morality and religion as are suited to the capacities of the children.¹⁵²

This was a reasonable compromise given the parties and interests comprising the Board. The posturing of the Union had been unnecessary.

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- 149. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1870, p.9.
 - 150. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1871, p.6.
 - 151. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1871, p.7.
 - 152. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1871, p.7.

It faced the prospect of the loss of the day schools and its influence there with a disappointed resignation. The best plan in the circumstances was for its friends to allow themselves 'to be appointed by the Board to the management of local schools' and for voluntary teachers not 'to consider themselves superceded by the new order of things'.¹⁵³

Understandably, some of the local committees of ragged schools facing a difficult financial struggle were not averse to handing over their schools. The Union correctly saw that the Board 'will not, for a long time to come, be prepared to take over any of the present schools'.¹⁵⁴ Lord Lawrence, Chairman of the London Board, sent a letter to the Secretary of the Union, urging him 'to relax no effort to maintain the schools in a state of efficient operations'.¹⁵⁵ The Boards had statutory obligations to complete returns on which to lease their decisions regarding educational provision for their areas. In any case, it was recognised that

a large proportion of our schools must fail to be recognised as efficient, either as regards the state of the school buildings or as regards the standard of teaching.¹⁵⁶

Thus the Union determined to continue its day school operations for the time being, 'though in no spirit of unfriendly rivalry'.¹⁵⁷ It claimed that it had never sought to compete with other schools

153. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1871, p.9.

154. Ragged School Union Magazine, 1871, April, p.19.

155. Ragged School Union Magazine, 1871, April, p.19.

156. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1872, p.6.

157. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1872, p.6.

and stated that its day schools were always 'tentative, to be superceded in due time by some effective and permanent arrangement'.¹⁵⁸ This was an attitude which took no note of the history of the Union and its previous principles though it did allow that the 'Society must adapt itself to the exigencies of the times'.¹⁵⁹ So it prepared itself for the loss of pupils and schools. By 1874, it had 72 day schools with 10,000 scholars. In its report for that year it noted that after the Act 26 schools with 3,000 pupils collapsed through the loss of support; 6 with 1,500 children became 'pay schools'; and 39 were transferred to the Board with nearly 9,000 pupils.¹⁶⁰ Ten years later it had only 35 day schools, with just over 1,200 children in association with it.¹⁶¹ These were schools 'where the buildings and the teaching satisfy the Education Authorities and the Committee can obtain a grant'.¹⁶² But it felt that

the system admits of no consideration being shown by the authorities for the class of backward children in attendance or the special difficulties incident to the work; the wonder is that the stipulated results are obtained.¹⁶³

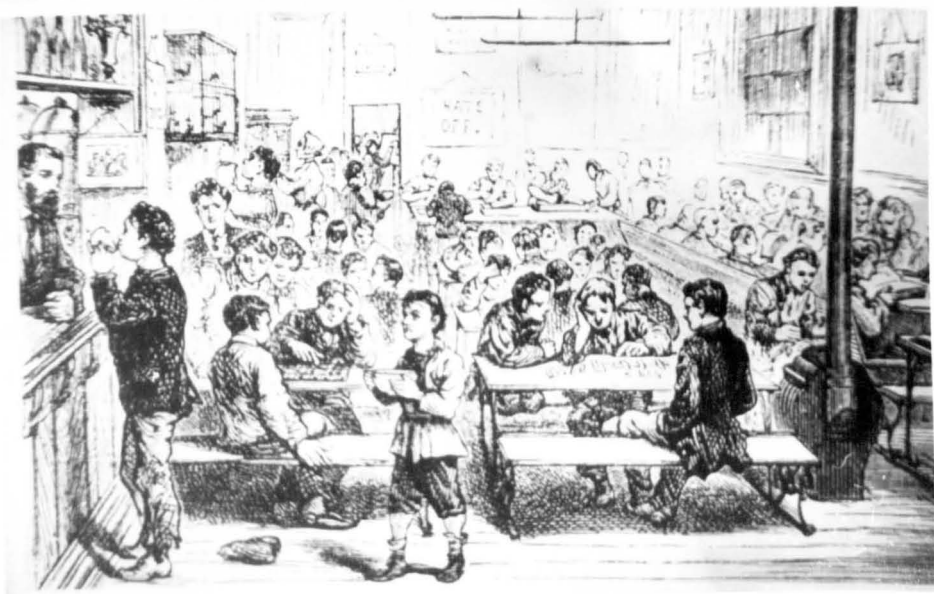
By 1873 the Union had re-appraised its role. It realised that 'the secular work will probably become less', but argued that 'the religious, moral and social work' must continue.¹⁶⁴ As an agent in ragged school education, its role was almost defunct.

- 158. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1873, p.7.
- 159. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1873, p.7.
- 160. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1874, p.6.
- 161. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1884, p.12.
- 162. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1884, p.12.
- 163. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1884, p.12.
- 164. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1873, p.7.

THE RAGGED YOUTHS' INSTITUTE,
LATYMER ROAD, LONDON, 1880.

Source:

County Hall, London.



It had now only a temporary commitment to a holding operation.

It realised that

the changes already commenced will go on until the whole of the Day Schools have either been absorbed by the School Board or are compelled to alter their character so that they will no longer be institutions specially adapted to the needs of the ragged class.¹⁶⁵

The Union's interests turned towards the expansion of a host of auxiliary missionary and social services. In the 1880s and 1890s a ragged school meant either a Sunday school - usually attached to an evangelical mission hall - or a centre of social welfare for the poor. 'It has an elastic meaning, embracing, as it does, beneficent agencies for good'.¹⁶⁶

The London Ragged School Union was a paradox. It failed to respond to the challenge of the times. It fought misguidedly - failing to relate its principles to the larger perspective of a national education system - and unsuccessfully - by clinging to a view of politics and political action which derived from theological and not social or economic realities. Shaftesbury's initial association, which had prompted much of the early success, became overbearing and resulted in the premature ossification of the Union's thinking. Provincial schools had a freedom from constraint in adapting to changing local conditions which London schools did not share. Technically, the Union was advisory and not directive in operation, but it wielded the power of the purse over institutions and schools always desperately short of money. The two crises in the Union's history, in 1861 at the Report of the Newcastle Commission and 1870 at the passing of the Education Act,

¹⁶⁵. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1874, p.7.

¹⁶⁶. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1883, p.5.

show how ill-prepared it was for newer ideas of education. The intolerance of evangelical religion translated itself into educational theory; its blindness infected its educational practice; its partial insights limited co-operation with those of wider and more liberal views. Despite the endless conflict of the Union with the emergent secular god, despite the uncertainty and bitterness with which it had to change direction, it was a lively and dynamic body within the limits of its philosophy. It explored the ramifications of voluntaryism with an inventiveness and social awareness which brought relief to thousands of destitute children and their parents. Practical provision was sensible, clear and loving. The ideals and aspirations it adopted were interpreted within the Movement with flexibility and a caring insight. Its actions were characterised by a determination and energy which did not flinch from sacrifice. It showed a rare wisdom in encouraging its offshoots to establish an independent existence. The root cause of the paradox posed by the Union's sensitivity and tenderness to the needs of those within the Movement and its insensitivity to and lack of comprehension of those groups without, lay in the fact that it had become Lord Shaftesbury's intense and absorbing hobby. It reflected the complete spectrum of his political and religious ideas - and was pleased to do so. He had rapidly become the patriarch of the Union and flawed it with his own basic defect - the inability to perceive that reverence and devotion can be expressed in many and different ways.

APPENDIX 1.The Number of Ragged Schools in London during the Early Years of
the R.S.U.

The first list of ragged schools in London in the records of the R.S.U. is that put before a meeting on July 5th, 1844.

Mr. Locke reported that he had written to Mr. Ainslie and seen him as to the list of ragged schools and that he had obtained one but found it imperfect and that the following was as near as he could come to correctness.

Lambeth Marsh; Turville School, Shoreditch; Shoreditch Road School; Albany School, Regent's Park; Oxford Buildings, Oxford Street; Wells School, ditto; Surrey Road; Pye School, Westminster; Field Lane West School, Smithfield; Smith's Buildings, Islington; St. Giles, Streatham; Cow Cross, Spitalfields; Grey's Yard, James Street, Walworth; Norfolk Place, Curtain Road.

Mr. Ainslie was employed by the London City Mission and it is possible that he gave Mr. Locke the names of those schools specifically connected with the Mission's work. The additions made by Mr. Locke may have included some which he knew which were not connected with the Mission. However, Mr. Locke did not claim that his list was final. It may be taken as indicating the names of the established ragged schools at the time.

At the Third Annual Meeting of the R.S.U., Lord Shaftesbury gave the following figures. The number of ragged schools was 44 and the average number of children attending them was 4776, for whom there were 450 teachers. 16 of the schools were open daily (morning and afternoon), 31 were open from 3 - 5 evenings a week, and 33 were open only on a Sunday. This gave a total of 80 schools conducted in 44 buildings.¹ Of these 44 schools, 22

1. The Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1847, May 18th.

received some help from the R.S.U.2

2. Ibid., Account of General Fund, June, 1846 - May, 1847.

APPENDIX 2.Grants made to Schools by the R. S. U., 1846 - 1847.

The first complete list of the grants made to the ragged schools in London by the R. S. U. is given in the Account of the General Fund, June, 1846 - May, 1847.

| <u>SCHOOL.</u> | <u>GRANT.</u> | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|----|----|
| | £. | s. | d. |
| Fulwood Rents | 8 | 4 | |
| Brock Street School | 5 | | |
| Vine Court | 10 | | |
| Philip Street | 5 | | |
| Union Mews | 15 | | |
| King Edward Street | 27 | | |
| New Cutts School | 15 | | |
| New Pye St. Evening School | 3 | | |
| Old Pye Street | 7 | | |
| Turk's Head Yard | 12 | | |
| King's Cross | 7 | 10 | |
| Gray's Yard | 7 | 10 | |
| London Passage | 12 | 10 | |
| London Street | 10 | | |
| Union Court | 5 | 17 | |
| George Street | 25 | | |
| Hopkin Street | 15 | | |
| Hammersmith | 5 | 13 | 9 |
| Deptford | 5 | | |
| Bere Street | 10 | | |
| Dolphin Court | 3 | | |
| Broad Walk | 10 | | |
| <hr/> | | | |
| Total | 235 | 14 | 9 |
| <hr/> | | | |

CHAPTER 5

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD RAGGED SCHOOLS

On April 22nd, 1858 'between three and four hundred' teachers and friends of ragged schools in Manchester met to form the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union.¹ The first annual report of the Union confirmed that

previous attempts have been made to accomplish something of the kind, but for some reason or other they were never carried out.²

This was a late date in view of the success and wide-spread publicity which the London ragged schools received and in view of the proliferation of the ragged schools in the slum areas of Manchester and Salford.

The exact date of the founding of the first ragged school in Manchester is not clear. The slight clues which are available do not corroborate each other. In the eleventh annual report of Fowler Square Ragged School is the comment that

Ragged School work is just as much a necessity at the present time as it was thirty years ago when the movement was first initiated.³

This was in 1832 and puts the foundation of the first schools in the year 1852. The short account of the centenary celebrations of the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union puts the date a year earlier.

Edward Gibb and James Brierley, two friends, secured a room in John St., Hulme, where the first Manchester Ragged School came into being in 1851.⁴

However, a Committee of the Manchester Night Asylum, meeting in 1846, agreed that

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1. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1859, p.7.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Fowler Square Ragged School Annual Report, 1882, p.4.
 4. Anon., Manchester and Salford Shaftesbury Society Centenary, 1858-1958, 1958, (no pagination)

FRONT COVER OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1922 OF THE
SHARP STREET RAGGED SCHOOL, MANCHESTER.

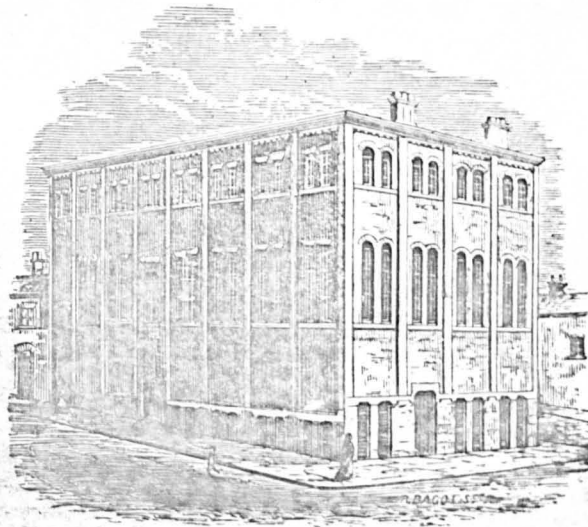
Source:

Manchester Public Library.

SIXTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Sharp Street Ragged School



ANGEL MEADOW, MANCHESTER

(Near the Rochdale Road Corporation Gas Works).

ESTABLISHED 1853.

RE-BUILT 1869.

30th JUNE, 1922.

"Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"—1 John iii., v. 17.

MANCHESTER

it is desirable that a ragged school be established and that immediate steps be taken for that object.⁵

Premises were secured in Nelson Street, Angel Meadow - a notorious slum with a predominantly Roman Catholic population - and a school was started in 1847. It had a distinguished history, becoming in 1856 a Certified Industrial School.⁶

The secretary of the Manchester and Salford City Mission, Robert Lee, wrote in his history of the Mission:

Very early in its history the Manchester City Mission recognised the value of young life and its missionaries opened ragged schools for elementary education on week-nights and Bible instruction on Sundays.⁷

The mission was founded in 1837 and the ragged schools presumably started shortly afterwards, perhaps in the early 1840's.

The annual reports of ragged schools and the records of the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union enable dates to be given for the foundation of some of the ragged schools. The earliest ones which can be definitely fixed are all in the 1850's. They are Sharp Street Ragged School, Rochdale Road(1853); Salford Ragged and Industrial School (1854); St. Ann's Ragged School, Queen Street, Deansgate (1854); Heyrod Street Ragged School (1855); Pendleton Ragged School, Ellor Street (1858); Queen Street Ragged School, Hulme (1853); Jackson Street Ragged School, Chorlton-on-Medlock (1858); Queen Street Ragged School, Salford (1859); and Red Bank Ragged School, Scotland Bridge (1859).

The earliest information regarding the number of ragged schools in Manchester and Salford is found in the first report of the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union, 1859. It lists the 12 schools which formed the Union.⁸

5. T.Britain, Manchester Industrial Schools, 1848, p.5.

6. Ibid., p.4.

7. R.Lee, Tales from Two Cities, 1927, p.142.

8. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1859, p.8.

PENDLETON, SALFORD AND ADJOINING MANCHESTER RAGGED SCHOOLS
SHOWING THE NEIGHBOURHOODS IN WHICH THEY FUNCTIONED.

Source:

Manchester Central
Library.

Key To The Location Of Ragged Schools In Pendleton, Salford
And Adjoining Parts Of Manchester.

1. John St. Ragged School, Pendleton.
2. Ellor St. Ragged School, Pendleton.
3. Greaves St. Ragged School, Off Little Peter St.
4. Lombard St. Ragged School.
5. Broughton St. Ragged School, Salford.
6. Carpenter Hall Ragged School, Brook St.
7. Queen St. Ragged School, Deansgate.
8. Bridgewater St. Ragged School, Deansgate.
9. Bury St. Ragged School, Salford.
10. Brunswick Ragged School, Salford.
11. St. Partholomew's Ragged School, Regent Rd.
12. Adelphi Ragged School, Arlington St., Salford.
13. Irwell St. Ragged School.
14. Ordsall Lane Ragged School, Salford.
15. Saville St. Ragged School.
16. Red Bank Ragged School.



Table IO. The Foundation Schools of the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union, 1858

Ormond Street, Hulme
 St. Ann's, Queen Street, Deansgate
 Junction Street, Oldham Road
 Greaves Street, off Little Peter Street
 Hope Street, Salford
 St. Bartholomew's, Regent Road
 Sharp Street, Rochdale Road, Angel Meadow
 Heyrod Street, Ancoats
 Jackson Street, London Road
 Queen Street, Chester Road, Salford
 Brunswick Street, Salford
 Ellor Street, Pendleton

Together they had 447 teachers and just under 5,000 children, though the average attendance was slightly over 3,000.⁹ However, there were certainly ragged schools which had an existence independent of the Union. The City Mission, referring to its activities in the 1860's, claimed

In nearly all of our forty-four halls, Ragged Schools, Bands of Hope and other juvenile gatherings are a sine qua non. Each Sunday there is an average attendance of 5,414 children in City Mission Ragged Schools.¹⁰

The extent of the overlap between the ragged schools of the Union and those of the Mission cannot be precisely drawn. It is clear that many of the larger, longer-established, or successful schools of the Mission joined the Union, e.g. Old Garrett Street, Charlton Street, Heyrod Street, Fowler Square, Ormond Street, John Street, Pendleton. The enthusiastic and expanding schools had much to gain from joining. The small schools doing Sunday work only and housed in adequate premises had little to gain.

The difficulties which arise in attempting to assess the foundation dates and number of ragged schools is well illustrated in the account of the formation of Gay Street Mission Ragged School, Collyhurst. A city missionary,

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9. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1859, p.8.
 10. R.Lee, op.cit., p.142.

Mr. John Jewitt,

meeting with a poor woman having 4 children, so destitute of clothing that they were unfit for ordinary school either week-day or Sunday, arranged to meet them in their own home with a few other neighbours for a ragged school and Cottage Meeting. Some boards with old boxes for supports formed the desks and seats. The work so grew that a larger place was required, when a cellar was taken in Percival St., 1867, and reading, writing and arithmetic were taught on week-evenings and the gospel on Sundays. Later a room over a coal yard was taken in Charlton St., and here under more favourable circumstances the work prospered. On Sunday evenings 200 children attended and during the week an average of over 100. A larger and more permanent building was decided upon and the present hall in Gay St. erected in 1885'.¹¹

Here is the ragged school formed as a piece of individual initiative from tiny beginnings. One guesses that there were dozens like this which lasted for no more than a few months, meeting a local or family need in the homes of the poor. Those which became established at the mission hall through the sheer numbers involved demanded a more elaborate organisation and a number of voluntary workers. Others starting in attics, stables or cellars disappeared through the lack of a permanent base for their operations, shortage of teachers willing to undertake the work, the hostility of the neighbourhood, lack of a financial basis or the movement of the people whom they tried to serve. For every school which developed as successfully as Gay Street, it is likely that a score or more did not survive.

The conclusions which seem fair on the basis of the evidence available are:

(a) Prior to 1840 those activities which later characterised ragged schools were a matter for individual churches and were not organised in a distinctive way.¹²

(b) In the period 1840-1850 the ragged schools were closely associated with the Manchester and Salford City Mission. Many of them began as Sunday

11. R.Lee, Mission Miniatures, 1937, p.45.

12. Two examples would be Great Bridgewater Street and Queen Street, Hulme, Chapels, which early in the nineteenth century formed successful Sunday schools, widened their activities to cater for the very poor in the 1830's but which only officially formed ragged schools in 1859 and 1858 respectively. Cf. E.Farrow and C.J.Wallworth, A Souvenir of Great Bridgewater Street Wesleyan Chapel and Sunday School, and Queen Street Sunday School, Hulme, 1898.

schools which were held in the evening. Initially the emphasis was on the Sunday school teaching but later it spread to include secular work during the week.

(c) Between 1850 and 1860 a group of schools - probably not more than 20 in number - flourished and expanded, making worthwhile the formation of the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union.¹³

The Union laid down its aims quite clearly.

Rule 2. . . That the objects of this Union be, to encourage and assist those who teach in Ragged Schools; to help such by small grants of money where advisable; to collect and diffuse information respecting schools now in existence, and promote the formation of new ones; to suggest plans for the more efficient management of such schools, and for the instruction of the children of the poor in general; to visit the various schools occasionally and observe their progress, to encourage teachers and Bible Classes; and to assist the old as well as the young in the study of the Word of God.¹⁴

The subsequent history of the Union is a commentary on that rule. The teachers and subscribers were encouraged to continue their work and extend their liberality by a welter of promises from Scripture which figured prominently in the proceedings of the annual meetings of the Union. Statistics were produced to show that the efforts of all associated with the schools had resulted in a decreasing rate of delinquency. When results were not all that might have been expected, the teachers were comforted with the thought of the seed growing secretly.

Grants of money were made to schools to cover minor alterations, provide equipment and help them when they ran into difficulties.¹⁵ Table II shows the high-water mark of this side of the Union's activities - 1863 to 1873. Prior to this it was still gathering momentum. The slow decline which followed this period was caused principally by the increasing provision made for the education of the very poor by the Manchester School Board and in part

13. The Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union commented in 1859 'Many of these institutions have been carrying on operations for years in the back streets and courts of our city'. M.S.S.R.S.U. Annual Report, 1859, p.7.

14. Ibid., p.4.

15. Cf. Table II, p. II9.

by the decreasing number of pauper families. The grants were by no means automatic. Obviously they depended upon the availability of certain sums of money in any particular year. The sharp drop in 1874 of the number of schools receiving aid was a direct result of the death of Robert Barnes, the philanthropist. His yearly subscription had amounted to almost half of the annual income of the Union.¹⁶ The officers of a school applying for aid were expected to reach unanimous agreement on the amount required and the work for which it was requested and to present a statement of the finances of the school.¹⁷

The information which was distributed to the schools was largely statistical.¹⁸ Figures were given of the number of teachers involved in Sunday School work and of the average attendance of the pupils at Sunday, Week-Evening and Sewing groups.¹⁹ The figures in Table 12, collected from the various annual returns of the Union, show a steady attendance at Sunday evening school. The figures for the evening schools show a stubborn refusal to decline very quickly. The reason is that given by the committee of the Poland Street Ragged School, who found that the

majority of the most regular attenders at this class are those who, by reason of their age, do not come within the reach of the Board Schools.²⁰

The slow decline of the sewing classes was inevitable as it ceased to be necessary for women to make all the clothes for their children or to alter second-hand articles.

The foundation of the Union gave impetus to the ragged school movement in the Manchester area.²¹ Table 13 gives the details regarding the number of schools joining the Union. The sharp rise during the 1860's is very clear. However, not all the schools formed during the first 10 years of

16. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1874, p.8.

17. In 1871 the Union changed its rules to clarify its priorities in the matter of grants. Ibid., 1871, p.5.

18. Vide ~~Table~~ II, 12, 13, 14.

19. Vide Table 12, p. 121

20. Poland Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1876, p.7.

21. Vide Table 13, p. 124.

TABLE 12. The Average Attendance of Children at the Sunday and Week Evening Schools and Sewing Classes, together with the Number of Teachers of the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union 1859-1885

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Number of Sunday School Teachers</u> | <u>Average Attendance at Sunday School</u> | <u>Average Attendance at Week Evening School</u> | <u>Average Attendance at Sewing Class</u> |
|-------------|---|--|--|---|
| 1859 | 447 | 3,253 | 975 | 555 |
| 1860 | 426 | 3,564 | 1,916 | 675 |
| 1862 | 557 | 4,530 | 1,706 | - ⁺ |
| 1863 | 584 | 6,238 | 1,875 | - ⁺ |
| 1867 | 652 | 5,420 | 1,540 | 519 |
| 1869 | 639 | 7,398 | 1,709 | 567 |
| 1870 | 687 | 7,725 | 1,740 | 598 |
| 1871 | 693 | 7,464 | 1,634 | 627 |
| 1873 | 665 | 6,931 | 1,234 | 499 |
| 1874 | 640 | 7,800 | 1,289 | 428 |
| 1875 | 718 | 7,225 | 1,096 | 486 |
| 1876 | 597 | 6,342 | 862 | 331 |
| 1877 | 622 | 6,508 | 858 | 366 |
| 1878 | 547 | 6,453 | 804 | 331 |
| 1879 | 609 | 7,081 | 856 | 298 |
| 1881 | 621 | 7,236 | 1,284 | 254 |
| 1882 | 587 | 7,461 | 695 | 300 |
| 1883 | 640 | 7,702 | 1,136 | 344 |
| 1884 | 660 | 7,708 | 1,004 | 375 |
| 1885 | 629 | 8,142 | 439 | 265 |

+ No figures given

the Union's existence became members immediately, though much of the inspiration for their foundation is probably due to the Union.²² The records of the Union also indicate those schools which were unable to continue their existence.²³ On only one occasion did the Union actually expel a school for financial irregularity.²⁴

The Union adopted the practice of visiting schools in order to give them more effective practical help. All schools were visited at least twice in each year and some received much more attention when their circumstances were particularly distressing. The visitors examined the records of attendance both of teachers and children and reported on the progress and the efficiency of the schools. Their report of 1869 underlined the difficulty which plagued the schools throughout their existence - the inadequate supply of suitable voluntary teachers.

The greatest deficiency we found in the majority of schools was the insufficient supply of teachers . . . An excellent plan is adopted in some schools of selecting and encouraging some of the more advanced scholars to take temporarily the place of absent teachers.'²⁵

A solution so far as the week-evening schools were concerned and one which gave 'great advantage' was

the employment at a moderate remuneration of qualified teachers for the secular instruction'.²⁶

-
- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 22. | <u>E.g. School</u> | <u>Foundation Date</u> | <u>Date of Joining M.S.S.R.S.U.</u> |
| | Charter St. | 1861 | 1869 |
| | Red Bank | 1859 | 1863 |
| | Saville St. | 1865 | 1877 |
| | Dark Lane | 1863 | 1867 |
- N.B. These are examples only. Evidence for a complete list does not exist.
23. Up to 1872 there were 10, viz. St. Bartholomew's, Hope Street, Junction Street, Brunswick Street, Hayes Street, Nelson Street, Worsley Street, Gun Street, Carpenter Hall and Percival Street. No records of these schools are available from other sources and the presumption is that they went out of existence.
24. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1873, p.10. 'Your Committee regrets that in consequence of inefficiency and financial irregularity the Gun Street Ragged School is not now in connection with the Union'.
25. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Visitors Report, 1869, p.14.
26. Ibid., p.13.

However, the financial returns of the ragged schools themselves show that very few took action on this line.

Table 14 shows the general decrease in subscriptions during the 1870's. Attempts were made to halt this decline in the fortunes of the Union. Renewed efforts were called for. The principal cause for the loss of revenue was the Education Act and the Union was faced with the task of justifying its existence. It tried to combat

the impression that seems to have been made upon some of the friends and subscribers, that the Education Bill lately passed is about to render unnecessary any such institutions as Ragged Schools, and that therefore there is no longer need for continued support on their part'.²⁷

It reminded its supporters that 'School Boards have failed to reach many of the children who need attention'.²⁸ And it maintained

There will never be a time when it will be superfluous to gather together the children of the poor and impart to these instruction'.²⁹

However, the rate of formation of new schools slowed dramatically after 1870, the number going out of existence decreased, while a few who could meet the standards required by the School Board handed over their management to it. Part of the 'raison d'etre' of the Manchester and Salford Evening Ragged School Union had gone. The public were aware of this and eventually the Union itself had to accept the realities of a changing social and educational situation.

The number of subscribers and the amount subscribed continue to grow less year by year, and no special effort has been made to fill up the gaps because the committee has enough money for its purposes'.³⁰

The reports of the 1880's show an emasculated Union, financially curtailed in its activities by the death of its longstanding supporters.

For some years, in consequence of the death and removal of old friends, the annual subscriptions have been decreased in amount and the small reserve capital has had to be trenched up year by year.³¹

27. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1871, p.12.

28. Ibid., 1873, p.5.

29. Ibid., 1871, p.12.

30. Ibid., 1885, p.12.

31. Ibid., 1884, p.12.

TABLE I². The Number of Schools in the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union 1859-1885

| <u>Year</u> | <u>No. of Schools in the Union</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 1859 | 12 |
| 1860 | 15 |
| 1862 | 16 |
| 1863 | 21 |
| 1867 | 25 |
| 1869 | 29 |
| 1870 | 30 |
| 1871 | 30 |
| 1873 | 31 |
| 1874 | 32 |
| 1875 | 32 |
| 1876 | 30 |
| 1877 | 30 |
| 1878 | 28 |
| 1879 | 29 |
| 1881 | 28 ⁺ |
| 1882 | 29 ⁺⁺ |
| 1883 | 29 ⁺⁺⁺ |
| 1884 | 29 ⁺⁺⁺⁺ |
| 1885 | 29 ⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺ |

-
- ⁺ No current statistics were given to the Union by two schools. The previous year's were repeated. They were Holt Town and Holland Street.
- ⁺⁺ No statistics were given by Holt Town and Dark Lane, Ardwick. The previous year's numbers were repeated.
- ⁺⁺⁺ Holt Town sent no statistics. The previous year's numbers were repeated.

TABLE 14. The Income of the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Through Annual Subscriptions 1859-1885

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total of Subscriptions</u> | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|----|---|
| 1859 | 318 | 17 | 6 |
| 1860 | 222 | 19 | 6 |
| 1863 | 221 | 2 | 0 |
| 1867 | 241 | 19 | 6 |
| 1869 | 247 | 0 | 6 |
| 1870 | 242 | 1 | 6 |
| 1871 | 235 | 0 | 0 |
| 1873 | 130 | 11 | 0 |
| 1874 | 184 | 5 | 6 |
| 1875 | 143 | 1 | 6 |
| 1876 | 143 | 6 | 6 |
| 1877 | 112 | 16 | 6 |
| 1878 | 108 | 6 | 6 |
| 1879 | 103 | 18 | 6 |
| 1881 | 76 | 7 | 8 |
| 1882 | 74 | 8 | 6 |
| 1883 | 63 | 8 | 0 |
| 1884 | 59 | 13 | 6 |
| 1885 | 57 | 2 | 6 |

Note. Although there were some small investments, the annual subscriptions provided most of the income of the Union.

Finally the Union found a role as the Manchester and Salford Shaftesbury Society. It concentrated on mission work in slum areas and the encouragement of Sunday school work.

The ragged schools of Manchester and Salford were in full agreement about their objectives in the period 1850-1880. They worked for the spiritual and moral regeneration of the poorest children.³² John Street, Pendleton, started activities in 1858:

to impart both religious and secular education to those who either from neglect or unavoidable circumstance are left to gain their education and their morals in the streets.³³

The double emphasis on Biblical instruction and the elements of elementary education occurs in most of the declared aims. At Great Bridgewater Street Ragged School the teachers tried to

lead the neglected and depraved youth of this neighbourhood in the ways of peace and happiness, and to instruct them in knowledge useful for this life and the life to come.³⁴

Queen Street, Hulme, a justly famous school in a deplorable area, tried to sum up the essence of the work of the ragged schools.

The object of this and kindred other institutions is to gather in this class of children and teach them from the Word of God their duty to God and man, and to encourage them in the practice of morality and religion.³⁵

The committee members, the teachers and for the most part the friends of the ragged schools were men and women who believed in a sudden revelation of personal salvation. They were committed to emphasise the doctrine of salvation by faith. The aims of the ragged schools and even more their practices demonstrate their sincerity and personal piety, their deep desire to bring the poorest children to a knowledge of Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour before they left the school - or died, and an almost total blindness to all that could not be justified on the grounds of evangelical religion. The cynic might question the selfless dedication to these aims which charac-

-
- 1859, p.4.
32. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union, Annual Report,
33. John Street, Pendleton, Ragged School Annual Report, 1879, p.4. (Quotes from the First Annual Report)
34. Great Bridgewater Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1865, p.3.
35. Queen Street, Hulme, Ragged School Annual Report, 1866, p.3.

terised the nucleus of teachers in each ragged school and wonder if there was not also the gratification of selfish emotions.³⁶

The aims of the schools point to the underlying problem of the commitment of the churches to the lower classes and its work for them. The fact was that in the nineteenth century the Church failed to identify with the needs and interests of the very poor. Methodism became increasingly middle class, Anglicanism proved too inflexible in its parochial structure to cope with the twin problems of urbanisation and industrialisation. The majority of church leaders were reluctant to innovate, yet the facts of inequity and poverty in Manchester - as elsewhere in the industrial areas of England - demanded a new political economy which would come to grips with just these facts. One may be forgiven for occasionally wondering if the nineteenth century episcopate was convinced that the status quo was roughly the form of Church and Society which the Lord intended. The church leaders were too much part of the hierarchical social and economic system to be shaken by the realities facing the urban poor.³⁸ This group was left to the evangelical fringe of the various denominations and, although they sometimes seemed over-interested in counting spiritual scalps, they did something to tackle the deplorable poverty and ignorance endemic at the time.

The ragged schools organised a variety of activities in the attempt to effect their aims.³⁹ Fundamental to their work were the Sunday school classes, where

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36. Jackson Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1867, p.6. Appealing for more teachers, the committee said 'We can testify to you the pleasure of such work - that inward feeling of a golden opportunity taken. We ask you to share it'.
37. It is relevant to observe that during the period when the greatest industrial advances were taking place - and the new poor being created - roughly from 1783 to 1852, only 17 of the 104 bishops leading the Established Church had ever held an urban living.
38. Vide R.A.Soloway, Prelates and People. Ecclesiastical Thought in England, 1969.
39. Photostat of p.127 gives a typical list of the various classes.

Activities of Great Bridgewater Sunday Evening Ragged School.

(Annual Report, 1865)

Source:

Manchester Public Library.

upon a continuance of their liberality for the future. If funds were available, many improvements could be effected in the working of the School, and the teachers earnestly appeal for further aid to enable them to carry out the objects desired.

The following is a brief summary of the year's work:—

SUNDAY EVENING CLASSES.

The attendance of Teachers has been the same on the average throughout, as in 1861; having been larger at the beginning, and smaller at the end of the year. Average 9 Males, and 5 Females—together 14. Average attendance of Scholars, Boys 82; Girls 69—together 151.

WEEK EVENING CLASSES.

As stated in the preamble these classes have been held with much irregularity, so that no proper average can be given.

PARENTS' SUNDAY EVENING CLASSES.

There was a good attendance in the early part of the year, the average being 12, the largest attendance 20; but owing to much sickness in the latter part, it was much smaller. Two have died during the year, and we trust are now with the Saviour. The number now on the books is 18.

SAVINGS' BANK.

This branch of the Institution still continues to prosper, being of much more benefit to the scholars yearly. The deposits exceeded last year's by £2 7s. 3d. There were during the year 402 deposits made by 65 depositors. Balance in hand January 1st, 1865, £1 11s. 2½d.; deposits to 31st Dec. £11 12s. 0½d.; together £13 3s. 3d. Re-payments to 31st December, £10 19s. 2½d.; leaving a balance in hand 1st. January, 1866, of £2 4s. 0½d.

our work is primarily to teach the simple yet precious truths of our common Christianity, and to engraft by example and kindly teaching these truths into the hearts of both young and old.⁴⁰ Most schools neglected to give a description of their services and lessons, but it may be assumed that a fairly simple, common pattern prevailed. This would focus attention on the Scriptural passages and their exposition.⁴¹ It is abundantly clear throughout the history of the ragged school movement that the teachers were expected to be evangelists first - even when dealing with the 'secular subjects'.⁴² The ragged school teacher first tells little children how Jesus loved and died for them and next that he loves them because the Jesus does.⁴³ So he becomes 'the instrument of bringing them to earthly prosperity and eternal salvation'.⁴⁴ A brief picture of the Sunday evening ragged school classes is given in the report of Pendleton Ragged School. It opened at six in the evening. After the usual hymn and prayer there is teaching taken from the Old and New Testaments and the teachers explain the lesson to the classes to impress the precepts more firmly upon the memory. At seven o'clock the books are collected, a hymn sung and an address delivered in which the truths of the Bible are illustrated by simple but striking anecdotes.⁴⁵ The week-day schools were popular since they were established. The published ragged sermons, the addresses given by the missionaries and the tracts used by them indicate a mode of teaching which was evangelical in content, emotive in language, and dramatic - even histrionic - in presentation. It is in strange contrast with the largely ethical and rational content, the disciplined vocabulary and the unimpassioned presentation of the charity sermons and the catechetical exercises which were evident at the inception and early development of the charity schools a century and a half before. Yet although the pulpit oratory had changed, both movements were frozen in categories of educational thinking which admitted little change. Pedagogical theory was dominated by a rigid Protestantism. In the 30

40. Charter Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1883, p.3.

41. Fowler Square Ragged School Annual Report, 1875, p.4.

42. Ibid., p.4.

43. Pendleton Ragged School Annual Report, 1866, p.4.

years of its existence up to 1860 the Sunday school movement underwent virtually no theoretical educational development. Thus the emphases of the ragged schools in their Sunday work remained the same as those of the earlier epoch. The Sunday evening classes were always well supported by the pupils, and the reports of the majority of schools (44), as well as the figures collected by the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union, show a steady growth in attendance.⁴⁵ The schools never ceased to point out that it was only the shortage of teachers which inhibited a more rapid increase.⁴⁶ The organisers of the schools were very assured and identified vast spiritual opportunities open to energy and enterprise. They firmly believed that robbery, fornication and drunkenness, desertion and imprudence signalled a laxity in religion on the part of the poorest section of society. They met the opportunity and to their satisfaction trained many God-fearing individuals who became sober, honest, diligent and self-respecting. They subscribed to and, in part, engendered the Victorian myth that Christianity was the bastion of public morality.

The week-evening schools were popular once they were established. The Union said of its schools in 1860, 'Each school has one or more evenings a week devoted to secular instruction'.⁴⁷ But nine years later the Visitors' Report on the 29 schools in the Union said

Considerable variation exists as to the week-evening classes. In many schools they are most efficient and successful, but there are many of the others where none of the classes are established.⁴⁸

44. Vide Table I5, p. I30

45. Vide infra p.I2I Table I2

46. E.g. St. Ann's Ragged School, Deansgate, Annual Report, 1883, p.4.
Queen Street Ragged School, Hulme, Annual Report, 1866, p.4.
Poland Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1874, p.5.

47. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1860, p.7.
Cf. Ibid., 1859, p.9. 'The schools are open several evenings in the week (and some every evening).'

48. Ibid., Visitors' Report, 1869, p.13.

TABLE 15. A Schedule of Attendance on Sunday Evenings at Charter Street Ragged School 1861-1884

| <u>Year</u> | <u>1861</u> | <u>1862</u> | <u>1863</u> | <u>1864</u> | <u>1865</u> | <u>1866</u> | <u>1867</u> | <u>1868</u> | <u>1869</u> | <u>1870</u> |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <u>Summer</u> | 159 | 222 | 216 | 173 | 177 | 221 | 258 | 293 | 342 | 383 |
| <u>Winter</u> | 243 | 254 | 291 | 247 | 243 | 281 | 340 | 424 | 469 | 471 |

| <u>Year</u> | <u>1871</u> | <u>1872</u> | <u>1873</u> | <u>1874</u> | <u>1875</u> | <u>1876</u> | <u>1877</u> | <u>1878</u> | <u>1879</u> | <u>1880</u> |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <u>Summer</u> | 262 | 282 | 296 | 266 | 250 | 240 | 246 | 305 | 353 | 396 |
| <u>Winter</u> | 409 | 383 | 366 | 376 | 363 | 323 | 354 | 426 | 564 | 487 |

| <u>Year</u> | <u>1881</u> | <u>1882</u> | <u>1883</u> | <u>1884</u> |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <u>Summer</u> | 394 | 468 | 480 | 425 |
| <u>Winter</u> | 465 | 555 | 538 | 508 |

The exact number of schools in any particular year is unknown, though in view of the later returns of the Union it is unlikely that there were fewer than a half. At times it probably approached two-thirds.⁴⁹ In view of the presuppositions which many supporters of the ragged school movement had about the function of teachers and the importance of Sunday school, there was some tension when the question of secular education for the very poor arose. Speaking at the first anniversary meeting of the Union, the Rev. Dr. J. McKerrow was reported as saying,

No-one would suppose that he, a Christian minister, undervalued Scriptural Education, but he hoped that the previous speakers did not place secular instruction and Christian Education in antagonism. Both were necessary. He found that the children who had been tolerably well educated, even at a secular school, understood the principles of the Gospel much more readily than other children did.⁵⁰

There was growing support for this attitude and by 1863 the Union proclaimed as its policy the view that

It is not only expedient but necessary that the mind should be imbued with an acquaintance of those things appertaining to this life. Without this there can be no improvement personally, socially or domestically. This is one of the means of reaching the masses.⁵¹

The accounts of the schools show the efforts which were made to implement a measure of secular education, and the principles upon which it was based. The teachers at Heyrod Street Ragged School tried to give

a knowledge of the ordinary rudiment of education without which it is almost impossible for them to improve their worldly position or rise higher in the social scale.⁵²

This meant that reading, writing, arithmetic and sewing were being taught on two evenings a week. The boys attended on one of them and the girls on the other. They were only permitted to use the school if they attended 'regularly on the Sabbath night' - an unusual but understandable stipulation.⁵³

49. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1871, p.6. The total number of schools in the Union in this year was 30, 'of which twenty are open two or three evenings a week.'

50. Ibid., 1859, p.29.

51. Ibid., 1863, p.8.

52. Heyrod Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1862, p.8.

53. Ibid., p.8.

A master was employed for the week-evening work at a salary of £10 a year.⁵⁴

Queen Street Ragged School, Hulme, asserted that

The main object is to teach reading, writing and arithmetic and to implant information most likely to stimulate and help raise themselves in the social scale. The ability of many of the scholars to read Bibles and Testaments is due to the teaching of those week-night classes.⁵⁵

An average of 45 attended each Friday for this instruction. Occasionally

'additional interest' was given 'by lessons in geography, aided by a large school map' and by 'readings in English history'.⁵⁶ Pendleton Ragged

School started its evening classes with an average attendance of 100, but by 1862 the average had risen to 250. It was opened on two evenings a week and there the boys were encouraged

by the remembrance that the men who have been most eminent in the history of our country have raised themselves from positions in many respects similar to their own.⁵⁷

It was part of the school's hope that

by combining religious with secular instruction and also, what is scarcely less important, enforcing order and cleanliness, to instil those principles into their minds which will transform them into useful members of society.⁵⁸

The Education Act meant that the work of the evening classes would gradually become superfluous. Some schools were able to accept happily the termination of their efforts. Pendleton Ragged School, reviewing its history, commented:

On the establishment of the school-boards, we conceived that this department no longer lay within the range of our duty.⁵⁹

Its teachers had always felt that only a national system of education could solve the difficulties in educating the poor. Their views reached the Annual Report of 1868.

54. Heyrod Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1862, p.10.

55. Queen Street Ragged School, Hulme, Annual Report, 1867, p.4.

56. Ibid., p.4.

57. Pendleton Ragged School Annual Report, 1862, p.4.

58. Ibid., 1865, p.3.

59. Ibid., 1879, p.4.

The teachers hope that the time is not too far distant when a well-matured national scheme, wisely carried out, will relieve them of the arduous portion of their duties.⁶⁰

The following year the move to Wood Street Hall provided a further opportunity for this topic to receive an airing.

If any evidence was required to demonstrate the need of a more thorough plan of secular education in this country, it will be found in the extraordinary hieroglyphics and orthography by which many, even of the older scholars, conveyed the information of their names and addresses.⁶¹

At Poland Street Ragged School the committee offered to hand over the day school to the Manchester School Board: 'the expense entailed in supporting it has long been a heavy burden on our funds'.⁶² However, the Board declined the offer, considering 'the rooms and offices not sufficiently adapted to the purpose of teaching'.⁶³ The committee finally decided that

the responsibility for the secular education of the children should be left in the hands of the school board which has been elected for that purpose.⁶⁴

Charter Street Ragged School was in agreement. 'The necessity of teaching secular classes on week-day evenings' no longer pressed on the committee in view of 'the passing of the Education Act with its compulsory clauses'.⁶⁵

Most ragged schools were not able to turn their buildings over to the schools boards. Where special buildings had been erected the school was usually a focus for many carefully organised and well-administered activities. The cessation of one activity would not entail a total closure. In fact, the lapse of the evening classes left the schools with greater freedom to concentrate on Sunday work and local social work. It is interesting to note that the rooms used by the evening classes sometimes became recreational rooms or gymnasias, as in Charter Street Ragged School. Where the school was in Mission Hall premises or Church rooms the question of

60. Pendleton Ragged School Annual Report, 1868, p.4.

61. Ibid., 1869, p.4.

62. Poland Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1871, p.4.

63. Ibid., p.8.

64. Ibid., p.8.

65. Charter Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1881, p.6.

handing over buildings did not arise.

The Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union had failed to attract large numbers of the poor to the week-evening classes for various reasons. Firstly, there was a continuing and very real shortage of teachers for this work. The Visitors of the Union reported, in 1869,

The greatest deficiency we found in the majority of the schools was the insufficient supply of teachers.⁶⁶

The schools echoed this in their reports. Sometimes the ratio of teachers to pupils was very poor. Pendleton had 10 teachers for 250 pupils, 'a number quite inadequate to keep order in the school'.⁶⁷ The position was no better some years later, but even then, of the 23 teachers available, 12 were former scholars.⁶⁸ Saville Street Ragged School complained of overcrowded classes and stated that 'the shortage is leading to laxity in discipline'.⁶⁹ At Red Bank Ragged School there were 'three or four classes having to be regularly supplied from the first class'(⁷⁰), and Jackson Street Ragged School had to be 'draft scholars into other classes, thus making them inconveniently large'.⁷¹ The shortage curtailed the activities of the schools. The Friday night class at Queen Street Ragged School, Hulme, 'for want of teachers' had its 'operations' limited and could only offer classes of 'a very short and narrow character'.⁷² At Poland Street Ragged School the dearth of voluntary teachers 'confines and limits the endeavours of the Institute'.⁷³ Gun Street Ragged School had 'frequently been obliged to turn a large number of scholars from the door' in view of its inability to staff its classes.⁷⁴ Barrow Street Ragged School was in

66. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Visitors' Report, 1869, p.14.

67. Pendleton Ragged School Annual Report, 1866, p.3.

68. Ibid., 1879, p.2.

69. Saville Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1868, p.4.

70. Red Bank Ragged School Annual Report, 1865, p.5.

71. Jackson Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1866, p.6.

72. Queen Street Ragged School, Hulme, Annual Report, 1866, p.3.

73. Poland Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1874, p.5.

74. Gun Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1868, p.4.

the same position.⁷⁵ Some schools even closed their classes temporarily until the supply of teachers improved. Great Bridgewater Street Ragged School held week-evening classes 'only with the greatest irregularity on account of the scarcity of teachers' and was unable to give any statistics.⁷⁶ The committee reported

Under the best system, and with the most efficient staff of teachers, the task of training these children would be a severe test of faith and patience, but the strain is even greater without these advantages, and towards the end of the year it became a serious question whether the school would not have to be discontinued.⁷⁷

So many people wanted to attend Fowler Square Ragged School for secular instruction that the teachers in the younger classes had to stop their work and teach the older groups. All the younger children were grouped together and one person conducted a religious service for them.⁷⁸ On average 180 persons attended.

In spite of the recommendations of the Union to the contrary, there is little evidence of any widespread employment of paid teachers from the treasurers' accounts. The ragged school movement in Manchester relied heavily upon the voluntary system and suffered all its weaknesses, particularly those relating to expansion, long-term organisation and a supply of qualified personnel. Thus what was a joy on a theological level was occasionally a disaster on a practical one.

Secondly, there was the inability to break out of the evening and Sunday class pattern. Very few week-day ragged schools catering for the education of the children from Monday to Saturday were established. The known exceptions are Nelson Street Ragged School, Angel Meadow, which became in 1856 a Certified Industrial School at Ardwick Green and finally, upon receipt of a donation of £12,000, in 1867 changed to the Barnes Homes Certi-

75. Barrow Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1871, p.7.

76. Great Bridgewater Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1865, p.4.

77. Ibid., p.3.

78. Fowler Square Ragged School Annual Report, 1830, p.4.

FRONT COVER OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1883 OF THE
FOWLER SQUARE RAGGED SCHOOL, OLDHAM RD, MANCHESTER.

Source:

Manchester Public
Library.

The Twelfth Annual Report
OF THE
FOWLER SQUARE
RAGGED SCHOOL
AND MISSION,
SYCAMORE-ST., & GARRETT-ST., OLDHAM-RD.

FEED MY LAMBS.

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord.

Price six p.



FOR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st. 1883.

fied Industrial School(79); Gun Street Ragged School, which employed a master to teach young children during the weekdays at a salary of £39. 19s. 9d. per annum(80); Poland Street Ragged School(81); Broughton Road Ragged and Industrial School(82); Salford Ragged and Industrial School, which claimed to be

the only school in Salford which really takes the children, gives them food and clothing, and gives the instruction to enable them to acquire a respectable livelihood in the future.⁸³

The rest confined themselves to Sunday and evening work.

Part of the reason for the failure of the schools to break out of this pattern is financial. The early work of the Union coincided with the cotton famine in Lancashire, and school reports abound with comments on this matter. The Union 'earnestly hoped' that 'trade and commerce will resume' in 1863(84) and later commented on 'the very distressed state trade has been in'.⁸⁵ The committee at Heyrod Street Ragged School were worried by the

large demands which have been made on the purse in consequence of the depression of trade. The teachers are sanguine that when commerce has revived and some of the extraordinary demands upon the charitable have ceased, the liberality of the public will resume.⁸⁶

At Charter Street Ragged School the famine disrupted the whole work of the school. The rapid growth of the cotton industry in the boom year of 1856 and the overproduction of the years 1859 and 1860 complicated the effects of the blockage of the southern ports of North America. In the period 1861 - 1864 bankruptcies in Manchester totalled 1,193. ⁸⁷ From 1861 to 1863 378 cotton mills disappeared and the working population was reduced by over

79. T.Britain, op.cit., pp6, 17, 22

80. Gun Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1864, p.6.

81. Poland Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1872, p.4.

82. Broughton Road Ragged School Annual Report, 1854, p.6.

83. Salford Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1869, p.13.

84. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1863, p.11.

85. Ibid., 1870, p.7.

86. Heyrod Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1862, p.10.

87. W.O.Henderson, The Lancashire Cotton Famine, 1934, p.25.

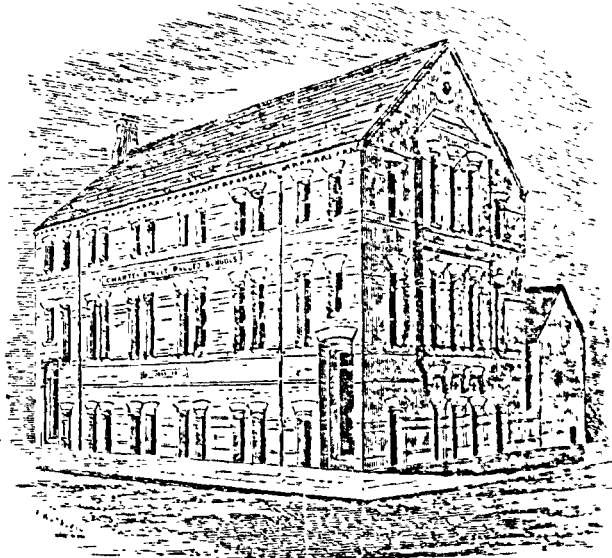
FRONT COVER OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1883 OF
THE CHARTER STREET RAGGED SCHOOL, MANCHESTER.

Source:

Manchester Public Library.

Box 33
THE TWENTY-THIRD
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
CHARTER STREET
DAY & SUNDAY RAGGED SCHOOLS

For the Year ending December 31st, 1883.



WITH THE LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS,
BALANCE SHEET,
AND
OFFICERS FOR THE ENSUING YEAR.

50,000.⁸⁸ The depression of 1869 was a further disaster. Manchester Chamber of Commerce gave figures showing that 80 spinning and manufacturing industries collapsed during the year and that was 'independent of the number of those who compounded with their creditors unknown to the general public'.⁸⁹

The destitution among the operatives caused great concern and by 1862 the strain on the Poor Law was so great that the Government appointed Mr. H.B.Farnall to be Special Commissioner to give them advice and to collect statistics. The Union Relief Acts and the Public Works Acts followed quickly, but public opinion would sanction no further help. Thus the aid which the operatives so urgently needed had to come from private charity. Indeed, some of the committees of the ragged schools set up local relief organisations and worked with the Relief Boards and church organisations to alleviate the condition of the unemployed. It was a difficult and uncertain background against which to attempt a new and costly venture, and it is easy to see why so few felt able to emulate the London Schools and organise full-time weekday schooling. A glance at the Treasurers' Reports (90) and the amounts collected show how small the budgets of the schools were, and also how dependent they were on a large number of small donations.⁹¹

The children whom the ragged schools received were those 'to be found roaming in the streets at night, and whose parents seem utterly indifferent to the company they keep'.⁹² Of the 60 children at Gun Street Ragged School a 'third are deprived of one of their natural protectors, eleven had no known father, five had no mother, and four had been deserted by their father'.⁹³ There was little wonder then that they were generally children

88. K.Marx, Capital, (Everyman Edition), Vol.1, p.465 (note).

89. A.L.Dunham, The Anglo-French Treaty of Commerce of 1860, 1930, p.202.

90. E.g. Vide pp.137.

91. E.g. Vide pp.137.

92. Pendleton Ragged School Annual Report, 1865, p.3.

93. Gun Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1866, p.4.

TREASURER'S REPORT, GREAT BRIDGEWATER STREET RAGGED SCHOOL; 1865.

Source:

Manchester Public Library

Dr.

BALANCE SHEET, 1865.

Cr.

| | £ | s. | d. | | £ | s. | d. |
|---|-----|----|----|---|-----|----|----|
| To proceeds of Public Meeting, in March | 1 | 17 | 1 | By Rent, Gas, and Coal | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| „ Subscriptions and Donations | 12 | 15 | 0 | „ Loss on Whit-week Trip | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| „ Teachers' Subscriptions | 3 | 11 | 6 | „ Printing, Stationery, &c. | 2 | 4 | 0 |
| „ Balance due to Treasurer | 5 | 0 | 11 | „ Loss on Children's Party, in December | 2 | 11 | 0 |
| | | | | „ Clogs, Clothing, &c. | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | | | | „ Lighting Fires, &c. | 1 | 9 | 0 |
| | | | | „ Sundries | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| | £23 | 4 | 6 | | £23 | 4 | 0 |

Examined and found correct.

THOMAS ELSON, Auditor.

January, 1866.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS MADE TO DARK LANE RAGGED
SCHOOL, ARDWICK IN 1883.

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| Mr. J. R. C. Carless | 0 | 2 | 6 |
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| Mr. McPhail | 0 | 2 | 6 |
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| Mr. R. L. Pickup | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. T. Calverley | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. H. Holden | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. Bull | 0 | 2 | 6 |
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| Mr. R. M. Simpson | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. Kershaw | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. Davies | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Mr. Derbyshire | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| G. R. | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Mr. R. B. Ratray | 0 | 2 | 0 |
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| Sams under 2s. | 0 | 3 | 6 |

£6 3 6

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| | £ | s. | d. |
|-------------------------------|---|----|----|
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| Messrs. D. Mosley & Son | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mr. F. J. Jackson | 0 | 10 | 0 |
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£1 8 6

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|------------------------------|---|---|---|
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| Mr. R. Rains | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. C. W. Nasmith | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. W. Rains | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. M. Haworth | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. & Mrs. W. A. Rains | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. J. Ashworth | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Mr. Hall | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. J. W. Ault | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| A Friend | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. J. Sherwin | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| T. H. R. | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| W. L. | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| J. R. | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. E. B. Woodruff | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. H. Rains | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. J. Nicholson | 0 | 2 | 6 |

£1 3 0

Collected by Miss Lambert.

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|
| Mr. Holt | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Rev. B. Bell | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mrs. Proctor | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. Glenve | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mrs. Danekloy | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| Miss A. Platt | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Miss P. Platt | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Mrs. Boyd | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Mrs. Lord | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| " | 0 | 2 | 6 |

Collected by Miss Lambert, (continued).

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---------------------|---|----|----|
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| Mrs. Taylor | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Miss Dewes | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mrs. McKie | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mrs. Crondale | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mrs. Whalley | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mrs. Dearden | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. Lockwood | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mrs. Platt | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mrs. Fay | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| A Friend | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. Wrigley | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| S. L. | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Mrs. Brown | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Mrs. Paley | 0 | 1 | 0 |

£3 12 6

Collected by Mr. W. Littlejohns.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
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| Mr. G. H. Midwood | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mr. J. Duncan | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. J. Doyle | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. W. Shaw | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. W. Littlejohns | 0 | 5 | 0 |

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|------------------------------|---|----|---|
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| Mr. H. Boddington, jun. | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Mr. J. R. Wainwright | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Mr. Eaton | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. T. Trevor | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Mr. J. East | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Miss East | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Mrs. Bennett | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Dr. Raynor | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Mr. W. J. Janance | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| A Friend | 0 | 0 | 3 |

£2 13 9

thoroughly educated in all the sharpness and deceitfulness of vice, and in all common slang terms and foul expressions which are used in ordinary conversation among this class of society. They take especial delight in the rudeness of their behaviour and the neglect of their persons. Tobacco chewing and smoking are by no means uncommon among the very young'.⁹⁴

Of education they had virtually none. Typical are the figures of Broughton Street Ragged School, where of the 83 children attending on admittance

31 could not tell a letter.

3 could form letters into words of one syllable.

9 could read tolerably.

3 had written a little on paper.

3 had written on slates.

77 had not the least idea of forming a letter.⁹⁵

At the root of this situation were several factors: a steep rise in population growth; deplorable physical conditions of living; a persistent belief in the principle of voluntarism by the churches; the inability of the leaders of Church and State to solve the religious question and devise a national system of education.

At the end of the seventeenth century Manchester was a large village.

At the end of the eighteenth century it was one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the land. It continued to grow during the nineteenth century.⁹⁶

From 84,000 at its beginning it had risen to 240,000 by 1841, and this had increased by a further 100,000 by 1881. Table I 6 gives some idea of the extent of the concentration of the urban population which was caused by the new methods of manufacturing textiles, particularly cotton.⁹⁷ No community could cope with growth of this rate without facing severe inadequacies. It is quite sensible to regard Disraeli's Millbank as a symbol of this new and growing world. Manchester certainly was a cradle of enormous wealth, for it did foster an urban aristocracy.⁹⁸ The picture painted by Engels, however biased, inaccurate or brash, contained enough truth to exonerate

94. Heyrod Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1862, p.5.

95. Broughton Road Ragged School Annual Report, 1854, p.6.

96. S.E.Maltby, Manchester and the Movement for National Elementary Education, 1800-1870, 1918, p.12 ff.

97. Vide p.I39.

98. A.Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1963, p.90.

Table I6: The Growth of the Population of Manchester
And Salford During the Eighteenth Century. *

| | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| 1724 | 12,000 |
| 1757 | 20,000 |
| 1774 (Manchester alone) | 41,000 |
| 1801 (" " " ") | 84,000 |

* Taken From S.E.Maltby, op cit, p.12

him of the charge of 'unsavoury agitator'.⁹⁹ The conditions in which the poorest men and women lived were often appalling. The Chadwick Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain of 1848 took evidence from Manchester citizens. One symptom of the housing shortage was the increase in families living in cellars. A Select Committee estimated that there were 15,000 people in these dwellings - this would be about 12% of the working population. The construction of the railway stations involved the clearing of large areas of the city centre of slum houses and intensified the problem.¹⁰⁰ The housing that was available for the poor was inadequate.

An immense number of the smaller houses occupied by the poorer classes in Manchester is of the most superficial character . . . having neither cellar nor foundation. The walls are only half a brick thick or what the bricklayers call 'brick-noggin', and the whole of the materials are slight and unfit for the purpose. Some streets became known as "Pick-pocket Row" because of the known insecure and insubstantial nature of the buildings'.¹⁰¹

The 'chief rents' varied from area to area but they were invariably high and so the 'inducement' arose

to pack houses so close. They are built back to back without ventilation or drainage, and like a honeycomb every particle of space is occupied. Double rows of these houses form courts, with perhaps a pump at one end and a privy at the other common to the occupants of about twenty houses'.¹⁰²

The ragged schools commented continually on their children's home backgrounds. It was common to record 'cases'. These described the circumstances and conditions of some of the poorest wretches. It is clear that many of the children had no proper bed, shared straw, had food at irregular intervals and lived in filthy and grossly overcrowded conditions. Charter Street Ragged School commented on a change of character in its area.

Once we were the centre of thieves of all classes, boys, men and women. These are greatly diminished and an itinerant

99. A. Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1963, p.90.

100. T.A. Marr, Housing Conditions in Manchester and Salford, 1904, p.11.

101. E. Chadwick, Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain, 1842, p.343, (Ed. by M.W. Flinn, 1965).

102. Ibid. , p.343.

class has been attracted by the cheap lodging houses, some of which are very large.¹⁰³

Dr. Baron Howard gave hair-raising evidence to the Chadwick Report about Manchester's lodging houses. They were in the main 'abominable dens of

filth, disease and wretchedness'. He commented that often 'six or eight beds are contained in a single room, and are so often placed so close to each other that there is scarcely room to pass between them'.¹⁰⁴

The scene which these places present at night is one of the most lamentable description; the crowded state of the beds filled promiscuously with men, women and children, the floor covered over with the filthy and ragged clothes they put off . . . the suffocating stench and the heat of the atmosphere are almost intolerable. The beds and bedding being seldom washed or changed are generally in the most filthy condition. Even if a bed has been occupied by a fever patient who has died . . . it is often immediately occupied without having undergone any purification'.¹⁰⁵

The streets offered no better a picture. They were worst in

densely populated and neglected parts of the town where the indigent poor chiefly reside. Whole streets in these quarters are unpaved and without drains or main sewers, and worn with deep ruts and holes in which water constantly stagnates and are so covered with refuse and excrementitious matter as to be impassable from depth of mud and intolerable from stench . . . In many of these places are to be seen privies in the most disgusting state of filth, open cesspools, obstructed drains, ditches full of stagnant water, dung hills, pig-sties, etc., from which the most abominable odours are emitted'.¹⁰⁶

Of Manchester's 687 streets surveyed in the 1840's, 248 were unpaved, 112 ill-ventilated and 352 contained heaps of refuse and pools of stagnant excreta.

A succession of medical officers of health pointed out the connection between the death rate and the density of population in the poorest areas. The death rate in Ancoats was 50 per 1,000 but in some of the worst courts it exceeded 86 per 1,000.¹⁰⁷ Other areas with an equally high death rate

103. Charter Street Ragged School Annual Report, 1831, p.7.

104. E.Chadwick, op.cit., p.413.

105. Ibid., p.413.

106. Ibid., p.413.

107. Housing of the Working Classes, 1904, A Report by the City of Manchester Sanitary Committee, p.1.

were Pollard Street, Chester Street, Oldham Road and Hulme Street. All had ragged schools in or near them. The youngest children suffered most severely as is evident from the following table. 108

TABLE 17

Deaths of Children of the Labouring Classes Taking Place in Manchester in 1840

| <u>Total No. of Deaths under Twenty Years</u> | <u>Proportion of Deaths which occurred at the Under-mentioned Age</u> | | |
|---|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| | <u>0-5 Years</u> | <u>5-10 Years</u> | <u>10-20 years</u> |
| 3,106 | 1 in 2 | 1 in 22 | 1 in 19 |

The proportion of deaths of those under 20 to the total number of deaths was 1 in $1\frac{1}{2}$.

The 'cases' of the holy deaths of children which occurred so widely in the school accounts reflected the problem of the high mortality rate among young children. These cases also appeared in the cheap tracts used by the teachers in the ragged schools. The purpose of these particular pieces was to give holy example. Children 'sank' with scriptural quotations on their lips, exhorting their parents and friends to have faith in Jesus Christ. This was but one aspect of a whole genre of children's writing in the nineteenth century which dwelt upon the theme of death in young persons. It confirms the commonplace nature of the event in the urban areas. In Manchester, for example, the average age at death of the poor was 17. In an agricultural area like Rutlandshire it was 38 years for the same group. 109

In 1845 William Fleming's Report on the Parochial and Other Schools in Manchester showed how formidable the work of educating the poor would be.

In the opinion that I have formed, that the children of the improvident poor are not generally receiving instruction in any schools, I have been confirmed by all of the best authorities in all of the schools I have visited'. 110

108. Chadwick, op.cit., p.228

109. Ibid., p.223.

110. W.Fleming, Report on the Parochial and Other Schools for the Poor in Manchester, 1845, p.16.

His experience rang true to the facts, for a decade earlier the Manchester Statistical Society had collected figures to show that about a third of all children in the city between the ages of five and 15 'received no education in any school at all'.¹¹¹ It was a commonplace observation of the time that 'the children of the improvident poor are only rarely sprinkled in our schools'.¹¹² An important factor in the continuance of this situation was the inability of the churches to come to terms with the situation and realise that educational destitution on such a scale demanded financial resources beyond their means.

Sir James Graham withdrew in 1843 the Government Factory Bill which he considered 'the best means of diffusing the benefits of religious and moral education among the working classes of the people'. The Nonconformists, led by the Manchester Congregationalist Edward Baines, forced the withdrawal. He had said

In the latter part of the same year the Church, Wesleyans and Congregationalists respectively, made efforts on behalf of education so great and so important as to prove that there is no educational want that may not be supplied by the voluntary efforts of the people themselves.¹¹³

The next year the Manchester Church Educational Society was formed to encourage and co-ordinate charitable action in education. It was quite unable to remedy the situation and the great deficiency remained. Behind the evangelical support for voluntarism in Manchester was the beloved Canon Hugh Stowell of Christ Church, Salford. Eloquent and fervid, of good intellectual calibre and godly life, he was to Manchester evangelicals what Hugh McNaile was to Liverpool churchmen. He was not a political parson of the usual type, his main interests were in his parish and his pulpit. But he brought religion to bear on municipal life in a refreshing way and he unwittingly became the leader of a majority of the laity until his death in 1865. He was concerned that the church should do its work of educating

111. Reports of the Central Society for Education, 1837, p.29.

112. W.Fleming, op.cit., p.18

113. E.Baines (Jun.), Life of Edward Baines, 1972, p.314.

the nation and he pleaded continually for it to be permitted to perform this historic task. In spite of his acknowledgment of the failures of the Church in the past, there was little in his vision of the future to appeal to those standing beyond the established Church. They recognised and respected his faith but they could not be expected to remain content with vague thinking, loose declamation and the occasional blazing indiscretion.

The voluntary movement was spent by 1867. Its energetic and verbose champion, Edward Baines, the M.P. who had for 30 years espoused its cause, finally changed his mind and turned his back on his most cherished hopes. At the meeting in Manchester of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1807 he declared in favour of a national system of education. Only a year before all the inadequacies of the voluntaryist position were evident in the appeal of the Rev. Joseph Nunn, curate of St. Thomas' Church, Ardwick. He wanted

some special means to be taken to remove from the streets the children of the most vicious and degraded . . . the only means as yet devised for their good is the day ragged school. It is much to be wished that efficient government aid could be given to ragged schools. If a sufficient number of such schools were founded in the worst localities, and the children could be induced or compelled to attend, it is believed that little would be left to be desired.¹¹⁴

The tide had turned at the national level and his hopes were quite vain. Nevertheless, the main strength of the evangelical movement has always been in the parishes - it had few scholars and fewer clergy in the hierarchy. So long as the ragged school remained a useful enterprise in the broader work of 'winning souls' it was retained. When circumstances removed this particular opportunity, new avenues were explored - though the conservatism inherent in the evangelical movement permitted few rapid changes.

114. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1859,
p.7.

APPENDIX I

The Buildings used as Ragged Schools

The buildings used as ragged schools in Manchester fall into various categories.

(a) There were, particularly in the early days, small groups meeting as schools in the homes of the poor, in hired rooms of houses or halls, in stables, garrets and cellars. This could not have been otherwise if the schools were to function 'in the back streets and courts' of Manchester. The Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union assured its supporters that the schools were

situated in the very midst of the population for whose special benefit they are intended. The rooms in which these schools are held consist chiefly of garrets and old workshops, while others were formerly used as dancing saloons, socialist halls, etc., but which have had to advance before the steady advance of the ragged school course.115

The ragged school in Nelson Street, Angel Meadow, consisted of a moderately large lecture room'.116 When it moved to Byron Street 'two large houses were knocked into one and fitted for educational and industrial training.117 Adelphi Street Ragged School used an old mill for 20 years and moved to find better accommodation in another mill.118 For part of its history Gay Street Ragged School met in a cellar.119

(b) Other schools were conducted in a particular church or mission hall's buildings. The Great Bridgewater Street Ragged School was just behind the Great Bridgewater Street Chapel with which it was associated.

115. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1860, p.7.

116. T.Britain, op.cit., p.6.

117. Ibid., p.10.

118. H.Hill, The Story of Adelphi, 1949, p.38.

119. R.Lee, Mission Miniatures, 1937, pp.45-46.

It was by no means beautiful, either inside or out, more resembling an old mill than anything else. The first flight of stairs led to the lower or boys' school, the next the upper or girls' school. The trap door, which being let down enabled the conductor to control the two floors at the same time in historical.120

The City Mission had ragged schools in many of its halls, e.g. Heyrod Street, Charlton Street, Ormond Street, Garrett Street, Red Bank and John Street, Pendleton.121

(c) Some of the most successful schools were able to construct new premises for themselves. A gift of a very substantial nature enabled the former Nelson Street Ragged School to rebuild in 1867.122 When Fowler Square Ragged School became the Shaftesbury Institute and Ragged Schools it moved into new buildings.

The school in its entirety is well suited to our work. It is commodious, well lighted and well ventilated. The interior of the school is surrounded by a spacious gallery and around the school besides are six classrooms including an infants' school, a large room for a mothers' meeting, and we have four more classrooms to form. Attached to the school is a small house for the caretaker; under the house a small coal yard which will greatly reduce our ground rent. The total estimated cost of the school will not be far from £1,400, of which a sum of upwards of £900 has been raised or promised.123

120. C.J.Wallworth, op.cit., p.39

121. R.Lee, Mission Miniatures, 1937.

122. T.Britain, op.cit., p.22.

123. Fowler Square Ragged School Annual Report, 1885, p.4.

APPENDIX 2

The Membership of the Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union
1859 - 1885

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Ormond Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock | 1859 to 1885 |
| St. Ann's, Queen Street, Deansgate | 1859 to 1885 |
| Sharp Street, Angel Meadow | 1859 to 1885 |
| Heyrod Street, Ancoats | 1859 to 1885 |
| Jackson Street, London Road | 1859 to 1885 |
| Queen Street, Hulme | 1859 to 1885 |
| Ellor Street, Pendleton | 1859 to 1885 |
| St. Bartholomew's, Regent Road | 1859 to 1871 |
| Hope Street, Salford | 1859 to 1863 |
| Junction Street, Oldham Road | 1859 to 1860 |
| Greaves Street, off Little Peter Street | 1859 |
| Brunswick Street, Salford | 1859 |
| Hayes Street, New Islington | 1860 to 1863 |
| Bridgewater Street, Deansgate | 1860 to 1867 |
| Hewitt Street, Knott Mill | 1860 to 1875 |
| Bury Street, Salford | 1860 to 1885 |
| Poland Street, Oldham Road | 1860 to 1885 |
| Nelson Street, Angel Meadow | 1863 to 1867 |
| Naylor Street, Oldham Road | 1863 |
| Holt Town | 1863 to 1885 |
| Irwell Street, Oldfield Road | 1863 to 1885 |
| Ordsall Lane, Salford | 1863 to 1885 |
| Newtown | 1863 to 1885 |
| Red Bank, Little Scotland | 1863 to 1885 |
| Worsley Street, Spaw Street, Salford | 1863 to 1870 |
| Dark Lane, Ardwick | 1867 to 1885 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| George Street, Miles Platting | 1867 to 1877 |
| Iron School, Cheetwood | 1867 to 1875 |
| Gun Street, Oldham Road | 1867 to 1871 |
| Carpenter Hall, Brook Street | 1867 |
| Holland Street, New Islington | 1867 to 1885 |
| Old Garrett, Prince's Street | 1869 to 1885 |
| Charter Street, Angel Meadow | 1869 to 1885 |
| John Street, Pendleton | 1869 to 1885 |
| Trumpet Street, Deansgate | 1868 to 1878 |
| Jessie Ann Street | 1869 to 1877 |
| Newton Heath | 1869 to 1879 |
| Percival Street | 1869 |
| Charlton Street, Collyhurst Street | 1870 to 1885 |
| Lombard Street | 1870 to 1873 |
| Boys' Industrial Home | 1873 to 1885 |
| Fowler Square, Oldham Road | 1873 to 1885 |
| St. Mark's, Hulme | 1874 to 1885 |
| Gravel Lane, Salford | 1874 to 1885 |
| St. James the Less, Ancoats | 1874 |
| Broughton Road, Salford | 1875 |
| Wood Street, Deansgate | 1874 to 1877 |
| Saville Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock | 1877 to 1885 |
| Lower Moss Lane | 1879 to 1885 |
| Boys' and Girls' Refuge | 1879 to 1885 |
| Openshaw | 1882 to 1885 |

CHAPTER 6.

THE RAGGED SCHOOL UNION IN LIVERPOOL.1

The Liverpool Ragged School Union was founded in April, 1847.

It was inspired by the example of committees in Aberdeen, Dumfries, Glasgow, York, Bath and Bristol which had, or were about to establish, ragged institutions.² These were like 'the Beacon fires of old' and it was hoped that

Liverpool will not be the last to add her responsive signal to those which already burn so brightly.³

It tried to drum up support for its proposed schools by showing the effects they could have on delinquency, juvenile crime and street begging. The then famous figures in letters from prison governors in Aberdeen and Edinburgh, commenting on the reducing committals of young persons and attributing them to the influence of the schools, were repeated. The cost of keeping a child in an industrial ragged school was calculated to be less than half of that required for its imprisonment over a year.⁴ Returns from

-
1. The primary and secondary source material for the study of the Ragged School Movement in Liverpool is slight and refers only to the period 1847 to 1857. The most valuable pieces are the fourth Annual Report of the Liverpool Ragged School Union, 1851; a Narrative of the Origin, Progress and Details of the Industrial Ragged Schools in Scotland and England, drawn up by a member of the Committee of the Liverpool Ragged School Union, 1848; and the Annual Reports of the Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, 66 and 68 Soho Street, 1850 - 1857, (Report for 1851 is missing). A few later references occur in The Porcupine, a contemporary magazine, and local newspapers but these do not offer evidence of the developing work of the Movement and refer to individual schools. The nature of these sources and the dearth of further information accounts for the lack of balance in this section. Thus it is possible to etch only the early flowering of the movement and the preliminary development of one of the schools.
 2. Anon., Narrative of the Origin, Progress and Details of Industrial Ragged Schools in Scotland and England, 1848, p.4.
 3. Ibid., p.4.
 4. Ibid., p.8.

the Bridewell and Liverpool Borough Gaol showed that children were being punished for offences 'in which they are often rather to be pitied than condemned' (5); and on being 'loosed' on society they had become 'even more depraved than before'.⁶ The Union emphasised the experience of the Night Asylum in Soho Street to strengthen its case. In a period of five months since its commencement, it had to provide on average for about 700 destitute young boys and girls each month.⁷ Important though the economic motive was, it was 'neither the highest nor the holiest which can be urged'. The facts must 'appeal to the heart'.⁸ A religious motive was predominant and subscribers were reminded: 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble'.⁹

In its Rules, the Union defined the sort of religious affiliation expected.

The object of this Union be, to encourage and assist ragged schools, in which the Religious Instruction shall be given solely from the Bible, and that the Authorised Version alone be used.¹⁰

Its members formed congeries of Anglican and dissenting evangelicals united in their theological fundamentalism and their sincere concern for the destitute children. Its definition of itself was as much in opposition to the strong Irish-Catholicism of Liverpool as in loyalty to Protestantism. No grants were given to schools unless 'the Bible is taught'.¹¹ The Douay Bible used in Catholic education was unacceptable due to

5. Ibid., p.8.

6. Ibid., p.8.

7. Ibid., p.8, footnote.

8. Ibid., p.8.

9. Ibid., p.8.

10. Liverpool Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.3.

11. Ibid., p.3.

differences in translation which fundamentally affected the interpretation and Biblical ground of major doctrines. Most of the early schools were

in connection with congregations of the Established Church, the Presbyterian Church in England or the Independents

and the Union regretted that

other sections of the Church of Christ have not yet ... taken up their position in the work; but we trust they are alive to its importance and will shortly show themselves active in its promotion.¹²

That the Union was in earnest about its religious standards is evident from the appointment in 1851 of James Brennan as a full-time paid official to visit and institute strict enquiries about applications for grants from the various schools.¹³

At least three ragged schools had been established in Liverpool before the foundation of the Union. They were St. Bartholomew's, Naylor Street, founded by Rev. G. Dover in 1846; Cleveland Ragged School, Ashton Street, founded by the teachers of Dr. Raffles' Sabbath School in October, 1846; and Cambell Street, founded by Mr. C. Barlow 'and others' in September, 1846.¹⁴ St. Bartholomew's was a week evening school and opened from 7 to 9 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays; Cleveland functioned on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. and on Sundays from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m; Cambell Street held

12. Ibid., p.3.

13. Ibid., pp. 3, 4.

14. Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

SOME LIVERPOOL RAGGED SCHOOLS, SHOWING THE NEIGHBOURHOODS
IN WHICH THEY FUNCTIONED.

Source:

Liverpool Public Library

Key To The Location Of Ragged Schools In Liverpool.

1. Bedford St. Industrial Ragged School.
2. Girls' Industrial Ragged School, High Park St.
3. Windsor Ragged School.
4. Jordan St. Ragged School.
5. Cleveland Ragged School, Ashton St.
6. Circus St. Sunday Ragged School.
7. Gay St. Ragged School.
8. Industrial Ragged School, Soho St.
9. Limekiln Lane Ragged School.
10. Vauxhall Ragged School, Gasgoyne St.
11. Shaws Brow Ragged School.
12. Toxteth Hall Ragged School, Mill St.
13. St. Jude's Ragged School.

LIVERPOOL

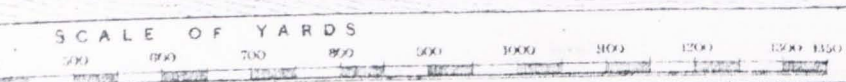
FROM AN ACTUAL SURVEY

1851

Published by H. G. Collins, London



- WARDS.
- 1. Great George's
 - 2. Rodney Street
 - 3. Abercrombie
 - 4. Lime Street
 - 5. St. Anne's
 - 6. West Derby
 - 7. South Toxteth
 - 8. North Toxteth



weekly evening classes from 7 to 9 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Sunday school at 2.30 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m.¹⁵

The Union noted that at Cambell Street

secular instructions forms part of the Sabbath teaching - a state of things which the Managers would do well in altering.¹⁶

By 1851, nineteen schools had received grants from the Union.

They were:

York Street Ragged School, founded in 1848,
 Old Swan Ragged School, founded in 1849,
 Limekiln Lane Ragged School, no doubt of foundation,
 Harper Street Ragged School, founded in 1848,
 Bedford Street Ragged School, no date of foundation,
 Industrial Ragged School, Soho Street, founded in 1849,
 Windsor Ragged School, founded in 1849,
 St. John's (Hodson Street) Ragged School, founded in 1849,
 St. Jude's Ragged School, no date of foundation,
 St. Simon's Ragged School, founded in 1849,
 Gay Street Ragged School, no date of foundation,
 St. Bartholomew's Ragged School, founded in 1846,
 Clare Street Ragged School, founded in 1850,
 Gill Street Ragged School, founded in 1850,
 Bedford Street Industrial Ragged School, founded in 1849,
 Edge Hill Ragged School, founded in 1849,
 Jordan Street Ragged School, founded in 1850,
 Bedford Street Ragged Evening School, no date of foundation,
 Shaws Brow Ragged School, founded in 1851.¹⁷

Additional to this were the following ragged schools which had not received grants from the Union, either because they had not applied or because they had so recently been established that their claims had not been investigated.

Wilde Street Free Evening Ragged School, founded in 1851,
 Stanhope Street Ragged School, founded in 1851,
 Pembroke Day and Evening Ragged School, founded in 1851.
 * Bedford Street Ragged School, founded in 1851.
 Girls' Industrial Ragged School, High Park Street, founded in 1851,
 Knotty Ash Ragged School, Blackhorse Lane, founded in 1851,

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid. and Liverpool Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.3.

* This was a second school in Bedford Street.

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** Christ Church Ragged School, Clare Street, founded in 1851,
Vauxhall Ragged School, 63 Gasgoyne Street, founded in 1849,
St. Saviour's Free Evening School, Hoden Street, founded in 1849,
Circus Street Sunday Ragged School, founded in 1848,
Park Street Industrial Ragged School, Toxteth, founded in 1848,
Toxteth Hall Ragged School, Mill Street, founded in 1847,
Cambell Street Ragged School, founded in 1846,
Cleveland Ragged School, Ashton Street, founded in 1846.18

Thus at least thirty three ragged schools had been attempted by 1851 in Liverpool, of which the majority were Sabbath and week evening schools. Most opened on three or four evenings in the week for two to three hours' instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. To this, York Street, Harper Street and Cleveland Ragged Schools added sewing classes.19 There was only one Day Ragged School, at Pembroke Street; and three Industrial Ragged Schools in Soho Street, High Park Street and Park Street, The Park Street School was a former ragged school in Bedford Street which was taken over as a personal charity by the Hon. Mrs. E. Cropper and removed to new premises.20 The Liverpool Ragged School Union founded one school - the Soho Street Industrial Ragged School - though members of its Committee were involved in the formation of six others: at Pembroke Street, Shaw's Brow, Christ Church, the Old Swan, Hodson Street and York Street.21 It spoke of the encouragement it was

to observe friends of the noble cause of Ragged Schools, who perhaps scarcely knew of the existence of your Union, organising new schools in different parts of the town by their own self-denying exertions.22

It withdrew from any attempt to create the impression that 'all or even the majority' of schools owed their origin to its

** This was a second school in Clare Street.

18. Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

19. Ibid.

20. Liverpool Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.3.

21. Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

22. Liverpool Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.3.

activities.²³

The schools were in slum areas of Liverpool. St. Bartholomew's was 'surrounded with hovels of the worst description'; Harper St. was 'one of the most debased districts of the town and proverbial for its juvenile profligacy'; St. Simon's was situated 'in the midst of brothels'; Hodson St. was 'in the mist of the most filthy, destitute and ignorant class to be found'; in the vicinity of the Old Swan was 'a large number of the lowest class, cadgers, etc.'²⁴ The children who came to them were described as 'thieves', 'vagrants', 'chip and grit sellers', 'rope workers', 'butchers' boys', 'apprentices', 'boys of a precarious means of living', 'the lowest class of labourers' children', 'factory workers', 'dockers' children' and 'boys who work during the day'.²⁵ The twin problems of inadequate finance and the scarcity of voluntary teachers appeared early in the history of the Movement. Teachers could not be persuaded to work in the depressed areas with the destitute children. By 1851, the Union knew of three schools which had been closed 'for want of labourers' (26) and the notes to the Statistics of Ragged Schools showed the problems committees had. At Cleveland

the irregular attendance of Teachers checks its progress ... Children of both sexes are frequently refused admission on account of the want of Teachers;

at Toxteth Hall additional Religious Instruction could be given 'if the paid teacher had the necessary voluntary assistance'; at

23. Ibid., p.3.

24. Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

25. Ibid.

26. Liverpool Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.5.

St. Simon's 'the attendance of teachers is very irregular and the work consequently much retarded'; the school at Windsor could not open a girls' school because the 'Female Voluntary Teachers are not forthcoming'; and at the Old Swan 'additional Voluntary Teachers are very much wanted'.²⁷

The statistics relating to numbers of teachers and children with the annual expenditure of schools show the size of the problem.

Table :18 Annual Expenditure of Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.²⁸

| | |
|--|-----------|
| St. Bartholomew's, open 3 evenings per week | £70 |
| Cleveland, open 2 evenings per week and Sundays | £50 |
| Cambell Street, open 3 evenings per week and Sundays | £50 |
| Toxteth Hall, open 4 evenings per week and Sundays | £60 |
| Harper Street, open 4 evenings per week and Sundays | £50 |
| York Street, open 4 evenings per week and Sundays | £80 |
| St. Simon's, open 3 evenings per week | £10 |
| Windsor, open 2 evenings per week and Sundays | £20 |
| Edge Hill, open 3 evenings per week | £10 |
| Vauxhall, open 3 evenings per week and Sundays | £10 |
| Hodson Street, open 2 evenings per week and Sundays | £60 |
| Jordan Street, open 4 evenings per week and Sundays | £40 |
| Gill Street, open 2 evenings per week and Sundays | £18. 10s. |
| Clare Street, open 4 evenings per week and Sundays | £30 |
| Christ Church, open 2 evenings per week | £15 |

The small amounts involved show the very limited scale of operations and suggest that there can have been very few paid teachers in the schools at this stage. The list is tantalising in that it is rather what one would expect to find in the very early history of the schools. Whether the next stage of increased day provision actually took place cannot be answered through lack of further evidence. Even if it did, it cannot have made a noticeable difference to the pool of destitute children for, in 1865, the Liverpool magazine, The Porcupine, commented on the City's failure to effect any diminution in its size. It estimated that 25,000 children between 5 and 14 years roamed the

27. Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

28. Abstracted from Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

streets by day and crept into foul rooms, fouler cellars or slept in the open by night.²⁹ It referred to detailed statistics from two representative streets.

In one, 436 children between the ages of 5 and 14 were found. Of this number, 57 went to school, but some only in the evening, while 385 went to no school at all and were left to be educated by the streets. In another street, 484 children were found: of these, 47 went to school occasionally and 437 were left to the training of that popular teacher - the streets.³⁰

The total income of the Liverpool Ragged School Union in 1851 was £168, mostly from donations and subscriptions.³¹ Its ability to help other schools was limited, though in that year it offered grants of £10 to Shaw's Brow, St. Bartholomew's and Harper Street Schools; £5 to Bedford St., Edge Hill, Gill St., Windsor, Clare St., St. Simon's and Jordan St. Schools; and £2 to the new school in Bedford St.³² From such small beginnings in London and Manchester, larger successful and permanent day schools had been established. The only evidence of these schools beyond 1851 refers to the Soho Street Industrial Ragged School, founded by the Union itself, and this indicates a steady growth pattern.

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Table I: Numbers of Children and Teachers in Liverpool Ragged Schools.

| | <u>Average Attendance</u> | | <u>Nos. of Teachers</u> | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | <u>Boys</u> | <u>Girls</u> | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> |
| St. Bartholomew's | 140 | 130 | 16 | 10 |
| Cleveland | 90 | 80 | 10 | 12 |
| Cambell Street | 60 | 66 | 6 | 9 |
| Toxteth Hall | 80 | 70 | 12 | 6 |
| Harper Street | 30 | 80 | 4 | 4 |
| Parker Street | 60 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

29. The Porcupine, December 23rd, 1865.

30. Ibid., December 23rd.

31. Liverpool Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.7. Treasurer's Account.

32. Ibid., p.7

33. Abstracted from Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

| | <u>Average Attendance</u> | | <u>Nos. of Teachers</u> | |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | <u>Boys</u> | <u>Girls</u> | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> |
| York Street | 65 | 60 | 10 | 10 |
| Circus Street | 70 | 80 | 6 | 6 |
| St. Saviour's | 36 | 30 | 4 | 6 |
| St. Simon's | 90 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Windsor | 50 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Edge Hill | 50 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Vauxhall | 25 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Soho Street | 75 | 48 | 3 | 2 |
| Hodson Street | 74 | 60 | 12 | 14 |
| Old Swan | 20 | 30 | 1 | 2 |
| Jordan Street | 36 | 26 | 8 | 6 |
| Gill Street | 58 | 40 | 6 | 5 |
| Clare Street | 60 | 15 | 4 | 5 |
| Christ Church | 65 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Bedford Street | 0 | 40 | 0 | 4 |
| Shaw's Brow | 0 | 40 | 0 | 8 |
| Knotty Ash | 18 | 40 | 3 | 0 |

The voluntary character of the teaching created problems for the schools and these numbers rather disguise the most fundamental one - that of the pupil-teacher ratio. A school with a certain number of teachers on roll would not expect them all to attend every evening. A rota was usually worked and teachers often attended for one evening only on alternate weeks. When this fact is taken with the waning enthusiasm of the volunteers, of which all Unions complained, then the constant pleas for more teachers become understandable. The wants of the Liverpool Union in 1851 were clear.

We need money, but no less urgently do we require Ragged School Teachers.³⁴

Whether these needs were overcome completely may be doubted - they remained continual problems for the metropolitan and other provincial schools. Certainly, in 1851 they prevented the growth that was desired in Liverpool.

34. Liverpool Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1851, p.5.

Other of the Ragged Schools have expressed their willingness to open Day Schools for young ragged children - a plan which it is most desirable to promote - and naturally look to this Union for that assistance which it is unable to render.³⁵

The members of the Union were conscious of 'many thousands of untaught children in our streets' about whom they could do nothing. No practical proposals were made to deal with this situation - rather they pleaded with the population of Liverpool to listen to the voice which cried: 'Come over and help us, ere we die', and the other which said: 'Feed my sheep'.³⁶ The experience of the London Union was that more direct and less generalised appeals stood a better chance of success and it can hardly be thought that this plea of the Liverpool Union would attract a large flow of money and personnel.

The Union had not dispelled doubts about the value of its work by 1866. The Porcupine commented:

If Ragged Schools, or any other philanthropic association, will step in and do for children what parents neglect to do, or what some people think they ought to be compelled to do, they will never lack pupils; nay, the supply of schools will never keep pace with the demand.³⁷

It claimed that thousands of the children on the streets had parents who could keep them in comfort and decency. That the ragged schools took them off their hands acted as a disincentive to improvement and probably encouraged a dissolute mode of living. The schools were

35. Ibid., p.4.

36. Ibid., p.5.

37. The Porcupine, June 2nd, 1866.

clearly working into the hands of degraded and drunken parents, and benevolence is taxed for what fathers and mothers should be made to pay.³⁸

It was the argument of Patrick Cumin to the Newcastle Commission, the one which it had chosen to accept. The solution proposed was common enough, but immediately unworkable.

We are not hopeful of any scheme until we see the education of children made compulsory. Parents must be compelled to pay or they must be punished.³⁹

THE INDUSTRIAL RAGGED SCHOOL, 66 and 68 SOHO STREET, LIVERPOOL.

The Management Committee of the Liverpool Industrial Ragged School opened their institution on March 1st, 1849, 'on the same plan as the schools in Scotland'.⁴⁰ The members were impressed by the work of Sheriff Watson in Aberdeen and the effect which ragged schools had on the problems of juvenile crime and vagrancy in Glasgow.⁴¹ They were disturbed that the ragged schools being established in Liverpool 'are opened only occasionally: some two, others three, evenings in the week and most of them on Sundays'.⁴² For they took the view that the recipients of this charity required food and clothing before 'they are to be brought under the influence of instruction'.⁴³ These could only be offered within the context of a day school with a dormitory for those unable to sleep at home. Given that the estimate of those children without any means of instruction in Liverpool was about 20,000,

38. Ibid. June 2nd.

39. Ibid. June 2nd.

40. Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, Annual Report, 1852, p.26.

41. Ibid., 1852, p.26.

42. Ibid., 1850, p.7. They held that such schools, 'however useful they may be in their particular sphere, can never be made the direct means of putting stop to juvenile delinquency'.
Ibid., 1852, p.27.

43. Ibid., 1850, p.7.

it was clear that one day ragged school could do comparatively little.⁴⁴ But

it can do something, and should it meet with the support it deserves, and subscriptions flow in liberally, the Committee confidently hope that this one school will prove only as a nucleus from which many others are to emanate.⁴⁵

The lack of a complete run of minutes and reports of this school and the Liverpool Union prevents a description of the role which the Soho Street Committee played in the ragged school movement. However, the reports of the school which are available are deserving of close study for two reasons. The Ragged Industrial School was formed by the committee of the Liverpool Ragged Union and was intended to be the exemplar. Thus the pattern for future developments within the movement existed. Secondly, those reports which are available cover, with the exception of the missing second annual report, the period 1850 to 1858. This was the time of the foundation and early development in the school when it encountered all of the characteristic problems in attempting to offer a ragged education. The years of growth and final success are vividly charted with figures and reports of rather more detail than was usual. The student has in these sources a picture of the institution as organised and managed by the central co-ordinating body on ragged education in the city.

The school in Soho Street started as an experiment.

44. *Ibid.*, 1850, p.17.

45. *Ibid.*, 1850, p.13.

While conflicting parties are disputing about various schemes of national education, nothing is done; the question has been debated year after year and there it rests ... While ... theorists are propounding their different plans ... there is a considerable proportion of our juveniles who are utterly ignorant, utterly destitute, and who must starve or steal.⁴⁶

The Committee members decided not to spend a great deal of time explaining the theory of the industrial ragged school but made

a beginning, even on a small scale, so that they might be able to point to the practice.⁴⁷

They were disappointed that there seemed to be 'no likelihood of any state machinery being set to work' for the reclamation of the children they admitted.⁴⁸ But they were comforted by the thought that schemes to improve the lot of the poorer classes which had been dismissed 'by many of the wise and great as altogether visionary' had been worked quietly by a persevering few who eventually had proved their practicality.⁴⁹ They undoubtedly saw themselves as leaders in exploring the concept of the ragged industrial education within the Liverpool situation.

Their experiment started well and many prominent citizens became annual subscribers, including the local Member of Parliament, Mr. T.B. Horsfall, who gave the school a free Christmas Dinner each year, and the famous Liverpool preacher, Dr. M'Neile. At its inception, the Committee received letters of support from Lord Ashley, whom it invited

46. Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, Annual Report, 1852, p.23.

47. Ibid., 1850, p.12.

48. Ibid., 1855, p.11.

49. Ibid., 1857, p.6.

to take the chair at the first annual meeting, Sheriff Watson of Aberdeen, Dr. Guthrie of Edinburgh and the Hon. and Rev. Grantham Yorke, who had established a ragged school in Birmingham.⁵⁰ Its financial basis was sound and, although for the first six years its accounts were in deficit, the expansion and growth was obvious. As was usual at the foundation of a large new school, donations, often of a 'once and for all' nature, exceeded subscriptions. Later, the more familiar relationship between them was attained.

¹⁰
Table:¹⁰ Income of the Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, Soho Street, 1849 - 1856.⁵¹

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total Income</u> | <u>Subscriptions</u> | <u>Donations</u> | <u>Grant of the Privy Council of Education</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|--|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 1849 | 598 | 108 | 281 | |
| 1851 | 907 | 211 | 254 | |
| 1852 | 1080 | | 690* | |
| 1853 | 1097 | | 740 | |
| 1854 | 1126 | | 735 | 99 |
| 1855 | 1299 | | 714 | 110 |
| 1856 | 1785 | 424 | 188 | 475 |

These figures show the important role played by the Government Grant in the finances of the school. It was often a crucial factor in a school's successful functioning and once it could meet the building requirements, teaching standards and staffing ratios set, it seldom failed for want of other voluntary support. This was not true of other ragged schools without Government aid. The profit from the work done in the industrial department of the school was substantial. This school managed to accomplish with the labour of the children what the theorists

50. Ibid., 1850, p.56.

51. Abstracted from the Annual Reports of the Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, 1850 - 1857.

* Donations and subscriptions were not separated in the Treasurer's Accounts, 1853 - 1856.

and Unions continually proclaimed but what few other schools actually achieved. A considerable proportion of the money earned came from the printing work, though this employed very few of the boys.

Table 2: Actual Profit to the School from the Work of the Industrial Department, 1849 - 1856.52.

| | £ |
|------|-----|
| 1849 | 24 |
| 1851 | 117 |
| 1852 | 104 |
| 1853 | 134 |
| 1854 | 128 |
| 1855 | 127 |
| 1856 | 137 |

The final element in the income of the school came from bequests and legacies. They accounted for an extra three hundred pounds in 1856. In that year, the Treasurer had a surplus of nearly £500 and the Committee decided to invest in the Corporation Bonds.⁵³ The Committee organised collections for the school on a district basis and was fertile in devising schemes to increase its income. One of the most novel was 'the Ladies' Basket'. It was filled 'with a variety of useful and ornamental articles of plain and fancy work' donated by the ladies.⁵⁴ These were sold 'by young persons carrying it about'. £41 was raised in this way in 1855.⁵⁵ However, the donation boxes placed in the shops and offices of 'Mr. Fisk, the confectioner; Mr. Manger, coach builder; Mr. Horrocks, baker; and Mr. Cooper, tobacconist' fetched only £3.⁵⁶

The school was thankful for the financial aid given by its friends but impressed upon them there was a service they could give which was 'beyond the mere giving of money'. It

52. Abstracted from the Annual Reports of the Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, 1850 - 1857.

53. Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, Annual Report, 1857.

54. Ibid., 1854, p.12

55. Ibid., 1856, Treasurer's Report.

56. Ibid., 1857, p.8.

was 'individual interest in the cause of neglected children'.⁵⁷

The rich must face the poor, not

in the spirit of deadly hatred, but in the spirit of sympathy and anxious desire to benefit, (showing that they) do care something for their poorer brethren.⁵⁸

Yet the very poorest class was difficult to understand and help properly. Even the monetary charity could do more harm than good. With most other schools, it asked its subscribers 'to conscientiously refrain from giving alms to children in the streets'.⁵⁹ Such children were to be asked to come to the school, where a positive and lasting good might be possible. The friends who brought children, who worked as voluntary teachers or who inspected the school could see its effects and convince others of the value of the venture. The Committee needed a favourable public opinion, for it was criticised for organising an institution which would 'pauperise and teach the children to live on charity'.⁶⁰ Sensitive to the truth which was behind the charge, it affirmed:

As we profess to take the lowest of the low and to raise them up to the position of those who, although extremely poor and wretched, have yet some means of maintenance, we conceived that it was not advisable to give them better food than that of the class up to which we wish to raise them.⁶¹

A comparison to rebut the implicit criticism that the children were indulged was offered. In contrast with the Kirkdale

57. Ibid., 1857, p.7.

58. Ibid., 1850, p.27.

59. Ibid., 1856, p.8.

60. Ibid., 1852, p.27.

61. Ibid., 1850, p.21.

Industrial School - 'a very large and well conducted institution' - which spent ls. 9d. per head per week on food, Soho Street School spent ls. 1d.62 The school further defended itself by pointing to its industrial training, which was designed 'to inculcate habits of self support and self reliance'.63

The expansion in the income of the school was paralleled by an increased intake of pupils. Six years after its foundation, the total numbers had nearly doubled.

Table 22 Average Daily Attendances and the Average Number of Children on Roll, 1849 - 1856.64

| | <u>Average Daily Attendance</u> | | | <u>No. of Children on Roll</u> | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | <u>Total</u> | <u>Boys</u> | <u>Girls</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>Boys</u> | <u>Girls</u> |
| 1849* | 70 | | | | | |
| 1851 | 102 | 65 | 37 | 117 | 76 | 41 |
| 1852 | 101 | 69 | 32 | 115 | 74 | 41 |
| 1853 | 109 | 71 | 38 | 127 | 79 | 48 |
| 1854 | 119 | 43 | 76 | 134 | 82 | 52 |
| 1855 | 132 | 89 | 43 | 150 | 99 | 51 |
| 1856 | 128 | 80 | 48 | 145 | 91 | 54 |

The growth of the work was urgent, for

the children must be rescued while they are yet children, otherwise there is little hope, humanly speaking, of their being rescued at all.65

The pupils brought to the school into the care of Mr. and Mrs. Oriss, the Superintendent and Matron, were among the worst that could be found in Liverpool. Annual Reports gave some indication of their nature in the cases.

62. Ibid., 1850, p.21

63. Ibid., 1850, pp. 20 - 21.

64. Abstracted from the Annual Reports of the Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, 1850 - 1857.

65. Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, Annual Report, 1854, p.12.

* Complete figures for 1849 are not available.

W.C., aged 15. This lad was brought in by one of the Town Missionaries. He had not slept in a bed for three years, both parents were dead and he had not a relation or friend that he knew of.

P.F., aged 13. Was left with two sisters and a brother, all younger than himself. Their mother having died, and their father having deserted them, they slept at the Night Asylum, and begged through the day.⁶⁶

The statistics from the annual reports give the analysis of the status of the children at the schools. The table for 1854 is typical.⁶⁷

Table 2³ The Status of Children Attending the Ragged School in 1854.

| | <u>Boys</u> | <u>Girls</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Children with both parents dead | 22 | 9 | 31 |
| Children with mothers only alive | 50 | 36 | 86 |
| Children with fathers only alive | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Children deserted by parents | 31 | 17 | 48 |
| Children with worthless parents | 25 | 19 | 44 |
| Children with parents alive but sick and disabled | 46 | 15 | 61 |
| Children motherless with drunken or worthless fathers | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Children fatherless with drunken or worthless mothers | 10 | 6 | 16 |
| Children motherless, fathers in prison | 2 | - | 2 |
| Children sent by the parish authorities | 3 | - | 3 |
| Children with step-mother only alive | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Children sent from the Police Court | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| Children with parents in Lunatic Asylum | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| <hr/> | | | |
| TOTAL | 207 | 119 | 326 |

Managers aimed to offer their charity to the neglected children of dissolute parents or orphans without a nominal protector. These were not expected to have appeared in court or to have been imprisoned, but were 'trembling upon the very

66. Ibid., 1852, p.10.

67. Ibid., 1854, p.5.

verge of crime'.⁶⁸ In fact, many of the children who attended at Soho Street had previously been committed to prison and the complaint was made that, until these were properly provided for in a reformatory school, the ragged school could not pursue its legitimate work. The large criminal element in the school was probably responsible for the size of the group which left it each year 'of their own accord'.

Table⁶⁴ Reasons for Children Leaving the Industrial Ragged School, 1849 - 1856.⁶⁹

| | <u>1849</u> | <u>1850</u> | <u>1851</u> | <u>1852</u> | <u>1853</u> | <u>1854</u> | <u>1855</u> | <u>1856</u> | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|
| | <u>B. G.</u> | <u>B. G.</u> | <u>B. G.</u> | <u>B. G.</u> | <u>B. G.</u> | <u>B. G.</u> | <u>B. G.</u> | <u>B. G.</u> | | | | | | | |
| Obtained situations | 23 | 32 | 7 | 29 | 21 | 28 | 24 | 46 | 28 | 31 | 20 | 33 | 19 | 44 | 23 |
| Died | 1 | | | 1 | | 4 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | | 2 |
| Sent to their own parish | 18 | | | 11 | | 8 | | 17 | | 14 | | 6 | | | 3 |
| Left, condition improved | | | | 8 | | 9 | | 2 | | 10 | | 5 | | | 2 |
| Left Liverpool | | | | 3 | | 13 | | 11 | | 6 | | 8 | | | 8 |
| Left school of their own accord | 83 | | | 81 | | 93 | | 79 | | 100 | | 114 | | | 85 |
| Left sick | | | | 10 | | 3 | | 1 | | 7 | | 6 | | | 1 |
| Dismissed for violent conduct | | | | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Taken to work-house | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The school was disturbed at the magnitude of the problem. It admitted:

68. Ibid., 1855, p.12.

69. Abstracted from the Annual Reports of the Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, 1850 - 1857.

The numbers who stand under the head 'Left of their own accord' have always been a subject of much discouragement ... The large majority of those who swell the tables of admission, and afterwards those of desertion, have remained in the School an exceedingly short time.⁷⁰

There was not enough chance given to have any effect for good. The school saw all of the reasons behind the problem. Family pressure was a major one. Children were induced to leave by parents or relatives 'who would not relinquish the precarious gains' 'from the children's begging or theft.'⁷¹ Another was that the children used to a vagrant life found the discipline and 'confinement' of the School difficult at first and were also prone to magnify 'present inconveniences' and in their imaginations enhance the 'enjoyments of their former circumstances'.⁷² Some felt that these children had an 'instability of character' and became 'like water when old temptations came their way'.⁷³ The school wanted a solution which would involve legislation permitting children to be taken from their parents before they had committed a felony. They wanted magistrates to be given the power to send the children to an industrial school and to compel the parents to meet the cost of their maintenance there.⁷⁴ It lamented on more than one occasion the inadequacy of the contemporary law on the matter.

The school's difficulties over the children it served were

70. Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, Annual Report, 1856, p.6.

71. Ibid., 1856, p.7.

72. Ibid., 1856, p.7.

73. Ibid., 1850, p.26.

74. Ibid., 1853, p.12.

aggravated in an unusual way by the presence of large numbers of Irish migrants in Liverpool. Numerous applications for admission from them threatened to swamp it. After prolonged discussion, the managers decided that it was their first duty to provide for the children from Liverpool.

It has been with sore hearts that we have been thus obliged to turn away many a miserable object.⁷⁵

However, this was never interpreted very strictly and the figures show that between one third to a half of the school was usually Irish.

Table: The Birth Places of Children Attending the Ragged Industrial School, Soho Street, Liverpool, 1849 - 1856.⁷⁶

| <u>Born in Liverpool</u> | | <u>Born in Ireland</u> | | <u>Born in other places</u> | |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| <u>Boys</u> | <u>Girls</u> | <u>Boys</u> | <u>Girls</u> | <u>Boys</u> | <u>Girls</u> |
| 1849 | 108 | | 79 | | 41 |
| 1851 | 98 | 56 | 55 | 31 | 28 |
| 1852 | 107 | 66 | 63 | 37 | 26 |
| 1853 | 113 | 64 | 69 | 44 | 31 |
| 1854 | 114 | 72 | 58 | 38 | 35 |
| 1855 | 148 | 79 | 57 | 28 | 37 |
| 1856 | 116 | 81 | 33 | 28 | 39 |
| | | | | 21 | 9 |

It was hoped that the ragged education would fit the children 'either to fill situations in the town or to go to sea as apprentices'.⁷⁷ The idea of training in seamanship had occurred to the supporters of the school because of a shortage of seamen at the time and because many masters felt dissatisfied with boys who went to sea with no knowledge of

75. Ibid., 1850, p.26.

76. Abstracted from the Annual Reports of the Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, 1850 - 1857.

77. Liverpool Industrial Ragged School, Annual Report, 1850, p.13.

their most rudimentary duties. It was proposed to have in connection with the school

a vessel moored in the river where those lads who evince a predilection for the sea may be trained as sailors.⁷⁸

A correspondence with the Admiralty for the use of a hulk was made, but a suitable one could not be obtained and the matter was dropped. The industrial work had developed successfully by this time and there was no point in pursuing the matter if it meant major expense and large problems as satisfactory outlets were available in the workshops. This training attempted to procure honesty in the man by encouraging industry in the child. There was a diversity of work which included sorting bristles, picking senna, helping the cooks, working the garden, making paper bags, assisting in the printing room and working with the shoemaker or tailor. Although Soho Street was economically profitable, the value of the work was in its effect on the children.

We hope that by instructing them in some trade they may be enabled to earn an honest livelihood, and that we may prepare them to become honest members of society.⁷⁹

The educational principle was that a child who 'sees the results of his work and understands that what he has achieved with his own hands' is 'something profitable' felt 'self respect' and wished for 'self-improvement' by more learning.⁸⁰ The Committee felt that the

78. Ibid., 1853, p.11.

79. Ibid., 1850, p.18.

80. Ibid., 1854, p.8.

TIME TABLE OF THE INDUSTRIAL RAGGED

SCHOOL, SOHO STREET, LIVERPOOL, 1856.

Source:

Liverpool Public
Library.

The following TIME TABLE shows how the day is appropriated in both Schools:—

| GIRLS. | | BOYS. | |
|----------|---|-----------|---|
| FROM | | FROM | |
| 7 to 8½ | Girls who sleep in the house engage in domestic duties. | 6 to 8½ | Boys who sleep in the house are engaged in cleaning and preparing the rooms for work. |
| 7 " 8½ | Girls who sleep at home assemble, wash, and prepare for breakfast | 7 " 8½ | Boys who sleep at home assemble, wash themselves, and are employed at some industrial occupation. |
| 8½ " 9 | United devotional exercises, and Breakfast. | 8½ " 9 | United devotional exercises, and Breakfast. |
| 9 " 9½ | Playground. | 9 " 9½ | Playground. |
| 9½ " 10 | Mental Arithmetic, Tables, &c. | 9½ " 10½ | Classes in the School Room, and Bible Lesson. |
| 10 " 10½ | Religious Instruction. | 10½ " 11 | Playground. |
| 10½ " 11 | Playground. | 11 " 12½ | Classes in the School Room. |
| 11 " 12½ | Reading, Writing, and Slate Arithmetic. | 12½ " 12½ | Drill, and form for dinner. |
| 12½ " 1 | Dinner. | 12½ " 1 | Dinner. |
| 1 " 2 | Playground, and preparing for work. | 1 " 2 | Playground. |
| 2 " 5 | Sewing, and other industrial employment. | 2 " 5 | Industrial employment. |
| 5 " 5½ | Recreation. | 5 " 5½ | Recreation. |
| 5½ " 6 | United devotional exercises, Supper, and dismissal. | 5½ " 6 | United devotional exercises, Supper, and dismissal. |

The elder girls are engaged on Mondays and Tuesdays washing in the Laundry.

On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, the School-rooms and Work-rooms are scoured by the elder boys.

The house boys and girls are formed into classes in their separate rooms, for self-improvement, till 8 o'clock.

In addition to their daily ablutions, each child has the benefit of a bath once every week.

SUNDAYS.—In the morning, the Protestant children are taken by the Master and Mistress to Christ Church. At half-past one o'clock, all the children assemble for dinner, after which they receive religious instruction during the afternoon.

industrial work acted as an incentive to learn and stated that the children regarded it as an interesting pleasure.

Most children like occupation, something for the hands to do ... Books are not generally interesting until the mechanical difficulty of learning to read is conquered. But many a boy and girl will really strive hard at their lessons in the morning when they know that the afternoon will be spent in the work rooms.⁸¹

The only clue to the development of the school beyond 1857 comes from the Proceedings of the Finance and Estate Committee of Liverpool Town Council for 1867. These gave the total capacity of the school as 200 pupils - 130 boys and 70 girls. In that year, of that number 148 came from Liverpool and the rest from Birkenhead and surrounding areas. There were 97 boys and 51 girls.⁸² The school had been inspected and certified as an industrial school on August 27th, 1861.⁸³ Its income in 1867 was £3,300.⁸⁴ Subscriptions stood at £380 and donations at £130. The Home Office Grant at £1,219 accounted for over a third of the income. It stood at 5s. per head per week. The Corporation paid a further 1s. per week for each child committed from Liverpool.⁸⁵ The most interesting facet of the accounts is that at this time the school had a balance of £1,200.⁸⁶

These proceedings show that only two other industrial schools were established in Liverpool which had been certified.

81. Ibid., 1854, p.8.

82. Proceedings of the Finance and Estate Committee, Minutes of Liverpool Town Council, 1867, August. Treasurer's Statement.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

This need not mean that the Liverpool Union failed to create the network of schools it wanted, for the conditions of certification were stringent when seen from the point of view of the ragged movement and few schools could meet them. There is no evidence to show whether the schools remained Sunday and week evening and mostly attached to places of worship or whether these grew into the much needed day schools as the Union hoped. One must not be tempted to read too much into the silence of School Board Reports or the Metropolitan Union. The Board's work offered only a late glimpse of existing schools, and many had closed, anticipating the future once the 1870 Act was passed, before the returns made by the Board's officials were compiled. The London Union took only a spasmodic interest in the ragged movement nationally and from 1855 to 1865 was rather too intoxicated with its own success to give much consideration to the provincial situation. In sum, the negative evidence offers nothing substantial and the positive evidence is too slender to show the proper contours of the picture. But it is apparent that the ragged schools were established in numbers sufficient to warrant a Union in Liverpool and that the Union's own school, a paradigm case, was a well-run, soundly financed institution with the problems characteristic of large ragged schools.

CHAPTER 7.

THE NUMBER AND LOCATION OF THE RAGGED SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES: SOME PROBLEMS AND A PRELIMINARY LIST.

It has not been one of the aims of this study to compile lists of ragged schools in all of the cities and counties in England, Scotland and Wales. Such lists, with the dates of foundation and period of activity of individual schools, with an indication of the numbers attending per annum, would be invaluable in providing quantitative data for the student in his attempt to assess the role and impact of the ragged school movement in education. The present state of research in this field at the local level precludes this essay. Studies of the educational provision of various areas in the nineteenth century, which include the work of Sunday, industrial, reformatory and ragged schools, are wanting. Thus the analyses do not exist which could be synthetised to offer a complete picture and, at present, such an attempt rests heavily on formulations of the 'probability' and 'possibility' kind. This study has as its objective the outlining of a broad pattern and it has been beyond its scope to undertake the numerous small local studies required.

The nature of the ragged school movement increases the difficulty of accurately preparing a schedule of schools and pupils. That many of the ragged children were 'migratory' in habit, either by choice or wish of the parents, was a commonplace observation about the movement which remained true throughout its history. This led to difficulties in assessing the numbers attending. Some schools kept no

in this way. It was only the large schools which bothered to register at all. Stratford School Board tried to deal with such a situation.

Some difficulty having been felt with respect to the non-registration of attendance of children at the Ragged School, the Clerk was requested to place himself in communication with the Managers of the School for the purpose of obtaining some definite plan for the ascertaining the attendance of Children at that School.1

Others kept a very inadequate account. Whenever the master of Huddersfield Ragged School was ill or went on holiday, the assistant did not mark the attendances.2 A close

examination of existing registers shows that some reserve is probably necessary with regard to numbers on roll.

Daily average attendances would usually be less than the number on roll by 20% to 25%. The London Ragged School Union gave figures in 1871 which indicate the sort of discrepancy between the two there.

Schools and Scholars on the Society's Lists, 1870.

Day School average attendance, 22,883. (The number of names on the book is 32,309.)

Evening School average attendance, 8,748. (The number of names on the book is 15,550.) 3

The presentation of numbers on the school register in annual reports, even when it occurred, masked a major problem of attendance. Totals did not reflect the extent to which new admissions replaced the leavers. Important fluctuations were concealed beneath fairly stable figures at Huddersfield.

1. Stratford School Board, Minute Book, 1872, October 8th.
2. Huddersfield Ragged School, Register of Pupils, 1869 - 1874.
3. London Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1871, p.10.

in this way.⁴ It was only the large schools which bothered to give a complete list which differentiated between new pupils and leavers each year.⁵ It must also be noticed that schools achieved publicity and attracted increased charity when it was seen that they were successful and attempted a major task with slender resources. Although there was little direct deceit and subterfuge as far as the presentation of numbers of children in the schools was concerned, managers tended to paint as bright a picture of the size of their operations as possible by giving incomplete figures which subscribers were left to interpret for themselves. This failure to append full figures to the annual reports prevents an assessment of the number of children served by the schools by compiling leavers' lists. Successful former pupils were noted as were those who had obtained 'respectable' or 'suitable' positions. The numbers returning to 'former habits' were rarely enumerated.⁶

A second difficulty occurs when the impermanence of the early (and some later) schools is noted. Many of the larger schools at the outset were held in barns, cowsheds, disused stables and store rooms; the small ones were held in the rooms and attics of houses. When numbers grew, it was easy to hire a larger place or, when they failed, it was easy to close down a room on monthly rental. The fluidity of what were

4. Huddersfield Ragged School, Register of Pupils, 1869 - 1874.

5. E.g., Stockport Ragged School, Register of Pupils, 1869 - 1874.

6. C.J. Montague believed that in 1857 and 1858 the ragged schools put 'nearly 4,000 children in the way of earning a livelihood in London'. C.J. Montague, Sixty Years in Walldom, 1904, p.204. This figure includes the guess that schools which had not sent reports to the Union would have placed out 'perhaps' 1,500 children.

often no more than tiny missionary groups continually hinders the compilation of a complete list of schools. The movements of the larger schools are noted sometimes in the individual union's reports; the smaller ones are not. Those latter provided no annual reports for their subscribers in the manner of the other schools. There was no necessity for this, as they would usually be run by small groups of friends who were also the teachers and who met the expenses out of their own pockets. Some information can be gleaned by comparing the lists of schools given each year by the London and Manchester Unions. However, even this is not as helpful as it might seem at first. There is doubt about the accuracy of this information - statistics relating to schools which sent in no reports to the parent union reflected the last report available, not the current situation.

The list of schools offered by the London Union fail to make clear whether new schools were in fact old ones which had been reformed with different personnel. In view of the financial pressures imposed by the completely voluntary nature of most of the schools and their dependence upon a fluctuating force of volunteers, the failure and subsequent re-establishment of schools need not be surprising. Gravesend Ragged School was founded by Mr. Henson, the town missionary, in 1851, 'in a small hut at the bottom of Bath Street'.⁷ He left the town the next

7. Anon., The Gravesend Ragged School, n.d., p.1. Public Library.

BOYS FROM GRAVESEND RAGGED SCHOOL, 1851.

Source:

Gravesend Public Library.



Photographed by T. MONK, 50, New Road, Gravesend.

GRAVESEND CHURCH MISSION SCHOOL, LOWER SCHOOL.

It is believed that the sight of these boys will give a better account of the work attempted than any thing which could be said.

The Upper School consists of boys of a higher class, mainly employed on the water.

year and the school started its collapse. It was now 'being run on lines differing from the original intentions'.⁸ The blame was 'the lack of sufficient teachers'.⁹ It finally closed in October, 1854, and the original committee was dissolved. In 1855, a ragged school was started again by the Sunday School Union, which purported to be a continuation of the original one. However, it was so thoroughly re-organised that the only resemblance it had to the previous school was in its name. Examples like these are numerous in the history of the movement. They are probably more numerous than one suspects when they involve changes of streets which cannot be located on present maps.¹⁰

A third difficulty attaches to the definition of a ragged school. Before the rise of the London Ragged School Union in 1844, schools which seemed to fit the pattern established by that Union had been organised. By 1840, London City Missioners had founded five schools

exclusively for children raggedly clothed; one in the West, a second in Lambeth, a third in Rosemary Lane, a fourth in Bethnel Green and a fifth in Shoreditch, at which 570 children are attending.¹¹

The Mission had started in 1835. Even before that, some of the Sunday schools founded by Thomas Cranfield and Rev. Roland Hill correspond in important respects to ragged schools - though one doubts that 'medieval England knew the ragged school

8. Ibid., p.3.

9. Ibid., p.3.

10. E.g., it has been impossible to trace all of the schools listed in the R.S.U. (London) Annual Reports on the available street maps of nineteenth century London held by County Hall, London. The addresses are not sufficiently detailed. Guesses with varying degrees of probability can be made. Certainty is not to be had.

11. London City Mission, Annual Report, 1840, p.16.

as an ancient institution'¹² Confusion can be caused by what to count as a ragged school. It is not always clear in some of the Reports of the Manchester and London Unions whether reference is made to ragged Sunday schools, ragged day schools, ragged week evening schools, ragged Sunday evening schools, ragged industrial schools; nor whether the ragged industrial schools were really industrial or simply had an industrial class, whether they were certified or not; nor is it sometimes known whether the day and evening schools operated on all or only certain days of the week. This sort of information is necessary if trends are to be identified and expansion analysed. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that not all the institutions undertaking ragged work joined the Unions in London, Manchester or Liverpool. Thus their lists, even when they can be correctly interpreted, are defective.

Schools which functioned after 1871 were included in many of the analyses made by the school boards when they were assessing the educational provision in their areas. A complete return cannot, however, be made on the basis of this evidence, as some of the ragged schools which were having a most difficult time maintaining their activities under heavy financial strain closed themselves quite quickly after the passing of the Education Act. They no longer existed when

12. C.J. Montague, op. cit., p.35.

the School Board came to begin its estimate of the provision for education in its area.

Local directories, county histories, charitable bequests and parish documents give some help towards identifying schools and placing their period of activity. None of them offers a complete picture.

Towards a Preliminary List of Ragged Schools in the British Isles.

The evidence of the London Ragged School Union that its system was adopted outside the metropolis is important in trying to fix the extension of the system. Its Minute Books, 1844 - 1849, contain numerous references to the commencement of ragged schools in cities and towns of Great Britain, though rarely are the schools named specifically. These references, together with the corroboration in the Ragged School Union magazines, entirely support C.J. Montague.¹³ From them, it is possible to derive the following list of towns with ragged schools, though without comment about date of foundation, or numbers of schools in each place, or what kind of ragged schools they were.

13. C.J. Montague, op. cit., Chapter 13.

In England.

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| Bath | Liverpool |
| Bideford | Luton |
| Blackburn | Manchester |
| Birmingham | Margate |
| Brighton | Newcastle |
| Bristol | Norwich |
| Cheltenham | Nottingham |
| Chester | Pendleton |
| Coventry | Portsmouth |
| Croydon | Plymouth |
| Dover | Ramsgate |
| Gravesend | Reading |
| Guildford | Sheffield |
| Hertford | Southampton |
| Hull | Whitehaven |
| Ipswich | Windsor |
| Jersey | Woolwich |
| Leicester | York |

In Scotland.

| | |
|-----------|-------------|
| Aberdeen | Glasgow |
| Dumfries | Maxwelltown |
| Dundee | Perth |
| Edinburgh | |

In Ireland.

| | |
|---------|-----------|
| Belfast | Dublin |
| Cork | Waterford |

The decision of the London Ragged School Union to limit its operations to the City directed its interest away from the provincial schools.¹⁴ An attempt in 1866 to extend activity from a 5 to a 25 miles' radius from the centre was inopportune, as was the effort 'to see if it should form some connection with Ragged Schools in all parts of Great Britain'.¹⁵ The

14. Ragged School Union, Minute Book, 1846, November 9th.

15. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1866, p.6.

time to erect a national system of voluntary ragged schools in association with it had passed. Provincial schools had evolved in their own ways and adopted their own attitudes towards voluntaryism and government aid. The hare which the Union wanted to hunt had already awakened and vacated the field. And the political motives behind the Union's move would have been identified and not necessarily supported outside the metropolis.

The Union's reporting of affairs outside London is sporadic. It offered, in 1850, a list of

Associations founded on similar principles to those of this Society: Liverpool, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Bristol, Bath, Hull, Plymouth, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen.¹⁶

This cannot be taken as complete as they describe only 'the most prominent associations'.¹⁷ In 1884, as the Movement declined in its educational activities, it gave the following list of 'Schools and Missions in the Provinces'.¹⁸

Alnick, Blackburn, Bristol, Cardigan, Colchester, Coventry, Frome, Great Grimsby, Guilford, Hunslet, Ipswich, Leicester, Lewes, Lincoln, Liverpool, Loughborough, Malmesbury, Manchester and Salford, Oxford, Pendleton, Ramsgate, Southampton.

It did not indicate whether this was to be regarded as a complete list. The only possible action for the student in view of these fragmentary, incomplete and inconclusive pieces of evidence is to attempt a blanket coverage of all of the

16. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1850, p.8.

17. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1858, p.8.

18. Ragged School Union, Annual Report, 1884, Appendix 2.

possible sources of information on ragged schools. Correspondence to all of the Borough and City Librarians, to City and County Archivists, to Universities and University Institutes of Education in the British Isles provided evidence of schools in certain areas and also directed further enquiries to solicitors, local historians, headmasters and private collectors. From the information collected, it is possible to compile a list of ragged schools in the British Isles. It cannot be regarded as complete and is intended only as an effort towards a preliminary compilation. Local studies could well provide additions. Many librarians reported that their newspaper files would probably give information even where no primary or other secondary source material is available.

Enquiries have produced no information about ragged schools in:

| <u>England</u> | <u>England</u> | <u>Scotland</u> | <u>Wales</u> | <u>Ireland</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Accrington | Hereford | Ayr | Aberystwyth | Antrim |
| Ashton under Lyne | Lincoln | Dumbarton | Caernarvon | Cork |
| Barnet | Luton | Elgin | Glamorgan | |
| Bedford | Middlesborough | Haddington | Merioneth | |
| Beverley | Reading | Hamilton | Newport | |
| Bridgewater | Rochester | Inverness | | |
| Bromley | Stafford | Kinross | | |
| Coventry | Swinton | Lerwick | | |
| Derby | Taunton | Musselburgh | | |
| Dewsbury | Truro | St. Boswells | | |
| Durham | Warwick | | | |
| Esher | Wigan | | | |
| Goole | Wolverhampton | | | |
| Harrow | | | | |

Major libraries, archives or special collections are located in these places and they might reasonably have been expected to hold

local material on ragged schools. A comparison of this list with the previous one derived from contemporary documents of the London Ragged School Union and C.J. Montague shows some discrepancies. Material relating to and references to ragged schools in Cork, Coventry, Luton and Reading has either disappeared, remains unidentified in private hands or can only be located with very detailed searching of files and contemporary street maps.

Enquiries have established, by the use of material not deriving from the London Ragged School Union, the following ragged schools (not including those in London, Liverpool or Manchester, which have been dealt with separately).

England.

Barnsley.

1. Barnsley Ragged School, Jumble Lane.

This school opened as a Sunday school in a cottage on October 5th, 1862, with 18 children. It became a day school on March 10th, 1863, when there were 48 children.

2. Baker St. Ragged School? (No other information available.)

Bath.

1. Bath Evening Ragged School, Corn Street and Weymouth Street.

This was a week evening school. No dates.

2. St. Michael's Adult and Ragged Schools. Held at St. Michael's Adult Sunday School.

This was a week evening school. (Women and girls: Tuesday and Thursday, 7 - 9 p.m., men and boys: Wednesday and Friday, 7 - 9 p.m.) No dates.

Birmingham. 19

1. St. Martin's Ragged School. Founded 1852.
2. St. Philip's Free Ragged Industrial School, Lichfield Street.

This later became the Birmingham Free Industrial School, Gem Street.

Blackburn. 20

1. Blackburn Ragged School, Leyland Street.

This was a Sunday school which opened on October 22, 1881, in a small workshop. It moved to Bent Street in 1882 and was open in the afternoons and evenings of Sundays.

Bradford.

1. Bradford Ragged School, Cropper Lane, Westgate.

This school opened in July, 1854, as a day school for 160 children. It moved to different premises in Rebecca Street in January, 1865.

Brentford.

1. St. George's Ragged School, Old Brentford.

This was founded in May, 1854. as a weekday evening school. Having commenced in a very small room (no address) it moved (no date) to St. George's Infant School, where it had about 70 pupils.

2. New Brentford Sunday Evening Ragged School.

A Sunday evening ragged school was organised in the premises of New Brentford Boys' National School, The Ham, in 1856.

3. Brentford Sunday Evening Ragged School.

A Sunday evening ragged school was organised in the premises of the old British School, Brentford, in 1856.

19. C.J. Montague, op. cit., p.212, states that in 1845 or '46 a school was opened in Birmingham, in a loft over a blacksmith's shop in the neighbourhood of Windmill Hill, for eighty children.
20. C.J. Montague, op. cit. p.224, states that the ragged school in Blackburn opened in Lune Street in 1881, later moving to the old St. Peter's Day School.

4. Brentford Ragged School, One Tun Alley.

Founded in 1862 in a temporary iron building also used as a church for the new ecclesiastical district of St. Paul's.

5. Brentford Free Day Ragged School.

This day school was established in 1867 with 95 children.

Brighton.

1. Dorset Street Ragged and Infant School, 23 Dorset Street.

In 1846 this is called a Free School. A reference in 1863 refers to it as a Ragged School. It was a day school.

2. Spa Street Ragged School. Founded in 1852.

3. Egremont Street Ragged School. Founded in 1854.

4. Essex Street Ragged School. Founded in 1856.

5. Town Mission Ragged School, George Street. Founded in 1856.

6. Ragged School, 7 Carlton Street. Founded in 1871.

7. Brighton Ragged School Mission, Chapel Street. Founded in 1873.

8. St. John's Ragged School, Chesterfield Street.

This was a day school which opened in July, 1868, for 70 children.

9. St. Mary's Ragged School. Founded in 1875 at Carlton Hill.

Bristol.

1. St. James Back Ragged School.

This was a day school which opened in Lewin's Mead during 1847.

2. St. George's Ragged School, Brandon Hill.

This school opened in April, 1847.

3. St. Philip's Ragged School. (No other information available.)
4. Temple Ragged School. (No other information available.)
5. Park Row Ragged School.

This became a certified industrial school in 1859.

Cambridge.

1. New Street Ragged School. (No further information available.)
2. East Road Ragged School.

This school, which was founded in 1850, was held in the Zion Baptist Chapel.

Cheltenham.

1. Cheltenham General Ragged School.

This school was a day ragged school and was founded in 1849 at 230 High Street. In 1863, it moved to premises in Milsom Street, when the ragged school and the girls' certified industrial school were separated.

Chester.

1. Boughton Ragged School.

This was founded in 1852 and was opened in temporary premises while a new building was erected on the corner of Boughton and Hoole Lane. In 1863, it was certified as an industrial school.

2. St. Olave's Ragged School.

This was founded in 1852 and opened in temporary premises in Lower Bridge Street until it could occupy a building adjoining St. Olave's Church.

3. Bishop Graham Memorial School, Princess Street.

This ragged school was founded in 1868.

21. Coventry Ragged School.

(No Information Available.)

Croydon.

1. Croydon Ragged School, Old Town, Croydon.

This school was founded in 1849.

Doncaster.

1. Doncaster Ragged School. (No other information available.)

Dover.

1. Dover Ragged School. (No other information available.)

Gloucester.

1. Gloucester Ragged Industrial School, Deacon Street.

This school was founded in 1851.

Gravesend. 22

1. Gravesend Ragged School, Bath Street.

This school was founded in 1851. At an unspecified date prior to 1862 it moved to Clifton Road, West Street. Its building appeal of 1861 - 1862 was successful and it moved into new premises in 1862. (Unspecified location.)

Halifax.

1. Halifax Ragged School, Winding Road.

This school was founded in 1857 as a day school for 75 children.

21. C.J. Montague, op. cit., p.226, states that a school in Coventry opened on June 13th, 1847, in the back-room of a leather seller. In 1865, a branch mission in Spen Street was opened, and in 1879 a school in Rood Lane.
22. C.J. Montague, op. cit., p.217, states that for ten years Gravesend Ragged School was in the main street before moving to New Court.



INTERIOR OF PART OF GRAVESEND RAGGED SCHOOL, 1870.

Source:

Gravesend Public Library.



23. Hartford Ragged School.

(No Information Available.)

Huddersfield.

1. Huddersfield Ragged School, Fitzwilliam Street.

This day ragged school was founded in 1861. Its trust deed (January 26th, 1865) prevented it from accepting 'juvenile delinquents who may be committed under the statutes relating to industrial schools'.

Hull.

1. Hull Ragged and Industrial School, Mill Street.

This day ragged school was founded in 1849. By 1871, it had amalgamated with the Humber Industrial Schoolship, 'Southampton'.

Ipswich.²⁴

1. Ipswich Ragged School.

This was founded in 1848.

25. Jersey Ragged School.

(No Information Available.)

Kingston upon Thames.

1. Ragged School, Waterman's Lane. (No other information available.)

23. C.J. Montague, op. cit., p.218, states that in 1852 a ragged school was started in Hertford in a cottage. It moved in 1859 to a school built for it by a Quaker.

24. C.J. Montague, op. cit., pp.226-228, states that a school was founded in 1849. At a later period in its history, the premises of the boys' school in Waterworks Street and a girls' school in Woodhouse Street are noted.

25. C.J. Montague, op. cit., p.233, states that a ragged school in Jersey was opened in 1859 over the disused granary in Cannon Street

Lancaster.

1. Lancaster Ragged School, Aldcliffe Lane.

This school was founded in 1874 and used the premises of the British School until 1879.

Leeds.

1. Leeds Certified Ragged and Industrial Schools.

The schools in connection with this institution were started at Richmond Hill in March, 1859; at Regent Street, Leylands, in July, 1859; and at Edgar Street in 1862.

Leicester, 26.

1. Leicester Ragged School, Bedford Street.

Newcastle upon Tyne.

1. Newcastle upon Tyne Ragged School, Sandgate.

This school was founded on August 11th, 1847, and moved to Gibson Street in 1848 after its first master had died from, and its second had contracted, 'the fever'. It served 50 children initially.

2. Ragged Industrial School, City Road.

This school was opened in 1854, in which year the Ragged School in Sandygate amalgamated with it.

Norwich.27

1. Norwich Ragged School.

This was a Sunday and week evening school which was founded in 1848.

Nottingham.28

1. Nottingham Ragged School, Newcastle Street.

This day school was founded in 1852 for 300 children.

26. C.J. Montague, op. cit., pp.228 - 229, states that a ragged school in Leicester was opened in 1866. In 1868, it moved to Belgrave Gate. This moved again to Yoeman Lane and in 1872 to Gladstone Hall, Wharf Street, near the brickyards and shoe factories. In 1881, it moved to the Primitive Methodist Chapel, George Street.
27. C.J. Montague, op. cit., p.218, states that a ragged school started in Norwich in 1849.
28. C.J. Montague, op. cit., p.218, states that a ragged school began in Sherwood Lane, with workshops and dormitories in Glasshouse Street.

2. Town Mission Ragged School, Colwick Street.

This day ragged school was founded in 1859 for 150 children.

Oxford.

1. Oxford Ragged School, Penson's Gardens.

This Sunday and week evening school was first opened on February 27th, 1859, and catered for 40 children.

29. Plymouth Ragged Schools.

(No Information Available)

Portsmouth.

1. Portsea Free School, Portsea. (No further information available.)

Preston.

1. Preston Ragged School. (No further information available.)

Rotherham.

1. Rotherham Ragged School. (No further information available.)

Salisbury.

1. Salisbury Ragged School. (No further information available.)

Sheffield.

1. Sheffield Ragged School.

This day school was founded in 1848. Its location is unknown. In 1855, its buildings were pulled down and it took a temporary school room in Holly Street. Its own school in Pea Croft was completed and opened in 1856 for 200 children.

29. C.J. Montague, op. cit., pp.232-233, states in Plymouth there was more than one ragged school. He offers evidence for one in Castle Street, functioning in 1853 near the fish-market. This is based on the reminiscences of a lady.

Southampton.

1. Southampton Ragged School, Lower Canal Walk.

This day school was founded in 1849.

2. Southampton Boys' Industrial Ragged School, St. George's Place, Houndwell.

This school was founded in 1849.

Stockport.

1. Stockport Sunday and Week Evening Ragged School, Wellington Street, Bridgefield.

This school was founded in 1848.

2. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School, Wellington Street, Bridgefield.

This school started in 1854. In 1856, it moved to Higher Hillgate. In 1866, it became a certified industrial school.

Warminster.

1. Warminster Ragged School. (No further information available.)

West Bromwich.

1. Moor Street Ragged School. (No further information available.)

West Ham.

Ragged Schools, Chapel Street.

The boys' and girls' day schools took over 1,000 children and were founded in 1851.

Worcester.

1. Ragged School, Upper Quay.

This day school was founded in 1864.

York.

1. York Ragged School, College Street.

This day school opened on February 22nd, 1848.

Ireland. 30Belfast.

1. The Ragged School, Barrack Street.

This school was run by the Christian Brothers during the period 1860 - 1880.

Dublin.

1. The Ragged School, Lurgan Street. (No further information available.)

Limerick.

1. The Ragged School.

This school was opened at least between 1864 and 1873.

Wales.Caernarvon.

1. Caernarvon Ragged School. (No further information available.)

Swansea.

1. Swansea Ragged School, Back Street.31

This day school was founded in 1847 by Dr. W.H. Michael, the first Medical Officer of Health for Swansea, for 40 children.

2. Ragged School, Recorder Street.

A school opened in 1856 by 'Vicar Squire'.

Wrexham.

1. Wrexham Ragged School. (No further information available.)

30. That the Ragged School Movement made so little impact in Ireland is probably due to the emergence of the National System of Education in 1831, which would have rendered its schools unnecessary.
31. Also called 'Back Lane' and 'Back Land'.

Scotland.Aberdeen.

1. Aberdeen School of Industry, Chronicle Lane.

Started by Sheriff Watson on October 1st, 1841.
10 boys met in a small room.

2. Aberdeen School of Industry for Girls, Skene Street, Long Acre.

Started in 1843, on June 5th, by Miss Ogilvie.

3. Soup Kitchen School.

This was opened on May 9th, 1845.

4. Lower Denburn Ragged School.

This started in an old weaving shop in 1853.

5. North Lodge School, King Street.

This was a school for ragged girls.

Dumfries.

1. Dumfries School of Industry.

Founded in 1848.

Dundee.

1. Dundee Industrial School for Boys.

Opened in 1846.

2. Dundee Industrial School for Girls. (No further information available.)

Edinburgh.

1. Edinburgh Industrial School, Ramsey Lane, Castle Hill.

Opened on July 7th, 1847.

Elgin.

1. The Ragged School, Lady Lane, West End of High Street.

Opened in 1856.

Glasgow.

1. Glasgow Industrial School, Abercrombie and Slatefield Streets. (No further information available.)
2. Green Street Day Industrial School, Calton. (No further information available.)
3. Mossbank and Rottenrow Industrial Schools. (No further information available.)

Greenock.

1. Greenock Ragged School. (No further information available.)

Kilmarnock.

1. Kilmarnock Certified Industrial School.

This school was founded in 1855.

Paisley.

1. Paisley Ragged School.

This school was founded in 1850.

There is a sense in which this sort of list raises as many problems as it solves. It is defective in that it records the names of the larger and more famous ragged schools which functioned over a period of years but cannot, for lack of evidence, list the smaller, unsuccessful schools which ran for only a year or two or a matter of months. Outstanding is the difficulty of deciding why so few ragged schools are to be located in large urban areas like Leeds and Birmingham, Sheffield and Newcastle upon Tyne. The history of the Movement in Liverpool and Manchester might lead one to expect between 10 and 30 in each of these cities. Their apparent paucity may indicate the loss of material which could establish

them; it may indicate a better distribution of British and National schools and reduced pressure for a ragged movement. A further difficulty is in understanding why so few were established in Wales. Although detailed local studies will no doubt locate further ragged schools, it is plain that there are many which have left no record. Thus quantitative assessment is largely guesswork.

CHAPTER 8

THE RAGGED SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

The management committees of ragged schools are quite clear about the group for whom their efforts were made. They were children 'carefully selected from the most destitute classes of the community'.¹ Their birth was

under most disadvantageous circumstances in miserable abodes where oaths and imprecations may almost be said to be the mother tongue and where the first lessons taught are those of crime. I think that there is no class of the community whose wants are so neglected, the very existence of which is hardly conceived of by man.²

Unless help was given, they were destined for 'a precarious and dishonest mode of subsistence'.³

As the 'outer barbarians dwelling in the darkness of Egypt' their end was certain.⁴ They would

grow up in ignorance and vice to swell the numbers of inmates of our reformatories and jails and, in some cases, to terminate their lives on the hulks or the gallows.⁵

Those who supported the ragged schools took every opportunity in their reports, magazines, sermons and public annual meetings to specify carefully the recipients of their charity. The repetition over a fifty-year period that their concern was with

the human vermin neglected by the ministers of state and ministers of religion, heathen in the midst of Christianity

was necessary if they were to allay the charges of their critics.⁶ Punitive elements in the public conscience looked for evidence of effort, in-

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1. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.8.
 2. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1850, p.5.
 3. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, p.4.
 4. T.Myers, Letter to a Friend on the York Ragged Schools, 1850, p.12.
 5. Woolwich Ragged School Annual Report, 1870, p.3.
 6. T.Myers, op.cit., p.12.

dependence, thrift and moral reformation among the parents of the destitute children. There was a fear that the ragged school unions would confer 'a bonus on vice'(7), that the 'gratuitous education of a neglected child would be a premium on negligence'.⁸ It was the viewpoint not simply of the new urban gentry in their roles of vestrymen, guardians or ratepayers.⁹ To a point, their social experience and puritan morality gave them little understanding of the problems of failure, fecklessness and indolence. It was also echoed by men of the calibre of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth. As late as 1863 he urged that 'the distinction between the unfortunate and thriftless classes shall not be lost'.¹⁰

The position adopted by the ragged school movement was that the group for whom it cared was a separate class to which the traditional notions of self-improvement would not apply. Lord Whearcliff spoke of the 'lowest class' which was a 'dangerous element in society'.¹¹ It was according to the Lord Mayor of Hull

a class hitherto shut out from human sympathy and whose whole career from the cradle to the grave has been one of ignorance, profligacy and crime.

The schools catered only

for those children who are supposed to be on the very verge of crime, or suffering from extreme destitution.¹³

It was a group which required 'to be humanised' before it could 'be Christianised'.¹⁴ This notion of a special class was behind the insistence of

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7. M.Carpenter, Ragged Schools: Their Principles and Modes of Operation, 1859, Introduction.
 8. Parl.Deb., Vol.CLXII, (1861), 1934. (Evidence of the Dean of Bristol to the Newcastle Commission.)
 9. G.Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England, 1962, pp.260-274, defines and traces the process of the creation of the 'new gentry' of the mid-nineteenth century with convincing scholarship.
 10. J.Kay-Shuttleworth, Memorandum on Popular Education, 1868, p.57.
 11. J.H.Burland, Annals of Barnsley, Vol.4, 1859-1864, p.342.
 12. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.10.
 13. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1852, p.13.
 14. Ibid., 1852, p.7.

CHILDREN FROM LEICESTER RAGGED SCHOOL.

Source:

Leicester Public Library.



Leicester Ragged School Children, 1875

13. *Leicester Ragged School, 1849*, p. 14.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

15. *Report of the Leicester Ragged School for the Year 1849*, p. 14.

16. *Report of the Leicester Ragged School for the Year 1849*, p. 14.

17. *Report of the Leicester Ragged School for the Year 1849*, p. 14.

18. *Report of the Leicester Ragged School for the Year 1849*, p. 14.

the members of the union that the name 'ragged' be retained. Mr. S.R. Starey, treasurer of Field Lane Ragged School and a prominent member of the managing committee of the London Ragged School Union from the beginning, hit upon the word 'ragged' in 1842.

as it forcibly and tritely expressed the low character and condition of the pupils so thoroughly depraved in mind and ragged in apparel.¹⁵

Lord Shaftesbury refused to change the name 'because it designates the peculiar class for whom these schools are intended'.¹⁶ The Newcastle Commission was unable to accept this claim of the ragged schools. It held that the actual proportion of 'the truly unkempt children' was small and that the families using the schools were comprised of outdoor paupers and the poor who could not afford to send their children to paying schools.¹⁷ The first was the responsibility of the Guardians of the Poor, at least in theory. However, their legal duty was not always taken up with any alacrity and throughout the country there was truth in the case that the ragged schools often took in some of these children. The rules of the schools frequently excluded

those who are receiving or entitled to receive support and education from the guardians of the poor.¹⁸

However, most general (or management) committees were 'empowered to make bye-laws for their own guidance'.¹⁹ And it was in the power of the acting committee 'to deal with special cases' in most schools.²⁰ Cases which continually appeared in the annual reports to subscribers make it clear that pauper children were admitted to the schools.

Whether or not the poor could afford to send their children to the

15. London Ragged School Union Magazine, 1849, p.56.

16. Ibid., 1856, p.172.

17. Report of the Royal Commission to Enquire into the State of Popular Education in England, 1861, i, p.394.

18. W.C.Darwell, A History of Elementary Education in Huddersfield, 1780-1902, p.154. University of Leeds, M.Ed., 1951.

19. Bradford Ragged School Proposed Rules, 1854, Rule 11.

20. W.C.Darwell, op.cit., p.154.

paying schools is difficult to answer generally. The evidence for the view of the Newcastle Report is slim. G.C.T. Bartley, in his educational surveys, has provided some.²¹ What is ignored by both sides in this argument is the fact that the parents of the children, be they vagrant or honest poor, were usually part of the pool of casual labour. Within this pool employment was uncertain and depended on a large number of factors, e.g. the time of the year, the hardness of the winter, the demand for certain products, the health and physique of the individual as well as his efficiency, knowing the foreman, the patterns of employment in particular industries and cyclic trade depressions. Thus dockers were taken on daily and worked by the hour. A baker might find employment only on a Friday evening selling bread for the week-end. It was normal for casual barbers to work on Fridays only. The only work a vagrant might undertake during the year was at the time of the hop harvest or fruit picking. On a certain day of a week, or for a few weeks each year, a parent could perhaps pay school pence. As a continuing and regular payment over a period of years it was probably not possible. The effects of fluctuating daily payment within the casual pool was to raise the cost of living of its members. Landlords tended to mistrust the casual workers and usually insured against their tenants' arrears and 'flits' by charging higher rents than was warranted by the property. The effect of living hand to mouth by buying only small amounts of food, usually two or three times a day, was to make food more expensive. In times of work any financial surplus was often used to repay with interest the debts incurred during unemployment. The economic situation in which most of the parents of ragged school children were caught gave them no chance to save.

The poverty of the children who attended the ragged schools was established. Most schools had written accounts in their reports which paralleled that given of the ragged school in York by its secretary and co-super-

21. G.C.T. Bartley, Educational Conditions and Requirements of One Square Mile in the East End of London, 1870, pp. 51-2; Schools for the People, 1871, p. 385.

intendent, William Camidge. His twenty-five pupils were

ill-clad, ill-fed, ill-trained members of slumdom who knew little of education and less of manners . . . None of them had decent clothing; many were lamentably deficient. Most of them were without shoes, stockings or headgear and the clothes worn by all of them were evidently "cast-offs", bearing little relationship in size to the wearers. Unwashed, uncombed, they were a motley crew.²²

It was continually pointed out that these children were so poorly dressed that they would have been unable to obtain an entry to a paying school.

Whatever circumstances you could mention that would disqualify the children from any other school in the town would qualify them for us. Filthiness, raggedness, vice, crime, bad character, excessive ignorance, laziness, lying - these are the qualifications and believe me they are not wanting.²³

It was not only poverty which received attention in defining the ragged class. The ragged children were on the borders of the criminal world and possessed socially destructive psychological characteristics.

There but for the mercy of God would all grow up - the girls to be prostitutes and the boys to be thieves.²⁴

The London Ragged School Union argued that even if charitable persons came forward prepared to pay school pence for these children they would never get into a school. Only their institutions took those who were 'too vile'.²⁵ Vile they certainly seemed, children

who have been chained, whipped, confined in the black hole and subjected to every species of punishment without effect. There are only one or two who can stoop low enough to reach these poor wretches.²⁶

Although the criminal clientele in the early ragged schools was a celebrated fact, it was denied constantly that the schools were solely for such persons. They aimed to concentrate on those

who have not yet breathed the atmosphere of the police court or the felon's cell, but who are trembling on the very verge of crime and but too certain to sink into the abyss unless seized

22. W. Camidge, York Ragged School. Its Inception and Development, 1878, p.8.

23. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1850, p.21.

24. The Cambrian (Swansea). 4th June, 1847.

25. London Ragged School Union Magazine, 1869, p.194.

26. C.F. Cornwallis, The Philosophy of Ragged Schools, 1851, p.61.

in the moment of jeopardy.²⁷

However, before legal provision was made for the committal of juveniles to the reformatories and certified industrial schools, ragged schools throughout the country found young criminals among their numbers. This was particularly the case in the early years of the London Union and is clearly documented in its reports and minutes. The members of the movement saw the reasons predisposing children to a life of crime.

Many children were compelled by their parents to sell chips and scouring stones, to gather coals and to beg. While they were pursuing these occupations their characters were subjected to baneful influences.²⁸

Others learned from inmates of the prisons to which they were committed.²⁹ Those who were deserted by parents were often faced with the starkly simple 'steal or starve'. Parental negligence, physical and moral weakness, and a violent nature were evident as causes. To some extent it fitted in with a theory of urban degeneration which became fashionable as an idea among the middle classes and the various commissions of enquiry into the distress of London's poor as the century progressed. However, the plight of the poor was not to be explained by such a myth. Londoners may have predominated in the statistics relating to pauperism, unemployment and casual labour. The reason was that the industrial revolution had a dramatic effect on the city's older industries. These industries did not attract immigrant workers from the country, thus their slow collapse or transformation affected mostly the Londoners who began to find themselves in the casual pool or pauperised.

The ragged school unions did not accept the theory. In many respects it contradicted both their religious principles and their experience as they saw the improvement - though limited - made by children in their

27. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1855, p.12.

28. J.H.Burland, Annals of Barnsley, Vol.4, 1859-1864, p.402.

29. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, pp.14-15.

schools. They were, however, committed to a partly environmental position with regard to the appalling condition in which they found children. They were to realise quickly that only by removing a child from his environment could they be sure of a continuing reformation. Most ragged day-school committees at one time or another discussed the advisability of providing boarding accommodation for their scholars. Some attempted the venture but could only provide a small number of beds for the very worst cases. The cost was prohibitive. The literature of the movement, with crude and lurid propaganda, emphasised what experience had taught management committees. Thus

In London, under the title of Gaffs, a rude sort of entertainment is given where one penny only is charged for admission; the subjects are chosen from the adventures of thieves, etc., and the language is suited to the subjects and the hearers . . . The audience of these places consists almost exclusively of the youthful part of the community. Youths from eight to sixteen years of age are the great features of such places. There is a tolerable sprinkling of girls, but usually the boys considerably predominate . . . With thousands the desire of witnessing the representations at the Penny Theatres amounts to an absolute passion. There can be no question but that these places are no better than so many nurseries of juvenile thieves. (Sixth Report of the Inspector of Prisons. J.H., aged 18. 'I read "Jack Sheppard" about five months before I began the robberies. I saw "Jack Sheppard" played twice. It excited in my mind a desire to imitate him.')³⁰

The day ragged schools had regulations and practices which were designed to ensure that only the most deserving cases received their charity. When applications were too numerous the managers applied a rule which had been used by the founders of the Scottish industrial ragged schools and which was a principle of the Poor Laws.

We were obliged to restrict the admission to those children whose parents had resided a year in the city.³¹

When Soho Street School started in Liverpool it was in danger of being swamped by the large number of Irish children and was compelled 'to refuse all children who had not been a certain time resident in the town'.³²

30. C.F.Cornwallis, op.cit., pp.27, 30-31. Cf. Wellington Street Ragged School, Stockport, Annual Report, 1855, p.6.

31. T.Myers, op.cit., p.6.

32. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1850, p.26.

A PENNY GAFF.

FROM: M. GRANT, 'SKETCHES OF LONDON', 1840.



A Penny Gaff. From Grant's Sketches in London 1849

Despite the stringency, nearly a half of the first pupils were Irish.³³ During the first thirty years of the movement schools were conscious that they were meeting the needs of only a fraction of those eligible for admission.

The Managers and Teachers feel deeply as well the inadequacy of the means at their disposal as the deficiency of their own ability and exertions for breaking up the fallow ground in so large a field as is open to them.³²

They agreed with the Management Committee of Oxford Ragged School that there are many children growing up in a most ignorant and vicious manner which our present school cannot reach.³⁵

The remedy for the situation must be to increase their income, to 'lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes'.³⁶ Thus London, Liverpool and Manchester and Salford Ragged School Unions were founded not only to help existing schools but specifically 'to promote the formation of new ones' in their own areas.³⁷

Until the supply of schools was adequate, children were to be selected for admission usually by visitors from or appointed by the management committees of the schools. Thus at Hull

The supervision of the children (so far as their being eligible for admission and continuance in the schools is concerned) is confided to the care of an agent appointed for the purpose and whose labours as a missionary to their homes have not been without success.³⁸

At Bristol, however, it was the master who was expected to

make himself acquainted, as much as he is able, with the parents and homes of the scholars, both as a means of greater influence and usefulness and as a check on the admission of those who might otherwise be taught.³⁹

33. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1850, p.26.

34. Lurgan Street Ragged School, Dublin, Annual Report, 1849, p.7.

35. Oxford Ragged School Annual Report, 1869, p.7.

36. Halifax Ragged School Annual Report, 1858, p.8.

37. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1859, p.4.

38. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1853, p.4.

39. St. James Back Ragged School, Bristol, Annual Report, 1848, p.3.

Annual reports of the schools assured subscribers of the diligence and effectiveness of the selection machinery in isolating the most needy applicants. All had pitiful stories to tell of those who were turned away. This was necessary to give confidence in the handling of the donations to the schools. In the first few years of the movement's history, and particularly in London, there were difficulties over admissions, particularly when a policy of 'first come first served' was adopted, the only limitation being the size of the room. When Agar Town Ragged School first opened

as many as one hundred were often obliged to be refused admittance, who stayed around the door only to annoy by throwing stones, brickbats, etc., which acted as a signal for those inside freely to respond.⁴⁰

Where it is possible to analyse the returns in the annual reports of schools over a continuous period it is clear that the effectiveness of the admissions procedure varied somewhat with the enthusiasm of the supporters for the cause of ragged schools. The prevailing impression, however, is that committees took their task seriously and genuinely attempted to interpret the rules of their own school and their ragged usion fairly and with sympathy. Most schools took a

census of the condition of the homes, the earnings of the parents, number of children to support, rent to be paid.⁴¹

The worst findings of the visitors often appeared in the annual reports.

They described how they went 'to the most obscure alleys and most depraved haunts of the city'.⁴² They found that the homes of the children comprised 'a room in a cellar or a corner in some dark alley'.⁴³ Typical of the many cases published was an anonymous one in the Sixth Report of

Sheffield Ragged School:

(We) visited their home in the evening and found their mother, a widow, very low and weak with her three young children. The

40. Agar Town Ragged School, London, Annual Report, 1848, p.6.

41. Brentford Ragged School, Annual Report, 1870, p.5. Cf. T.Myers, op.cit., pp.8-9.

42. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.7.

43. Halifax Ragged School Annual Report, 1858, p.4.

mother said that she had been two days without food when the eldest girl had taken her some home which she had given her at the school. The furniture in the house was an old table and a chair which a neighbour had lent her, and some stones for the children to sit upon: they had neither bed nor covering. The mother had only one pair of boots, and when one had them on the others were obliged to stop in the house. They were also such bad ones that they had to be tied on. This family lived in Spring Street - have no father, he having died in the Infirmary.44

The cases enhanced the statistics given in the Tables of Parental Occupations. Yet it is the Tables which give the clue to the underlying causes of the desperate situation of many parents.

In 1844 the London Ragged School Union attempted to designate the recipients of the charity of the schools by compiling a list giving their 'special objects'. They were

1. Children of convicts who have been transported.
2. Children of convicts in prison at home.
3. Children of thieves not in custody.
4. Children of the lowest mendicants and tramps.
5. Children of worthless drunken parents.
6. Children of step-fathers or step-mothers, often driven by neglect or cruelty to shift for themselves.
7. Children of those suitable for the workhouse but living a vagrant, semi-criminal life.
8. Children of honest parents too poor to pay for schooling or clothe their children so as to enable them to attend an ordinary school.
9. Orphans, deserted children or runaways who live by begging and stealing.
10. Workhouse lads who have left it and become vagrant.
11. Lads of the street-trading classes, oastler-boys and labourers' assistants who would otherwise get no schooling.
12. Girl hawkers working for cruel and worthless parents.
13. The children of poor Roman Catholics who do not object to their children reading the Bible.45

This list corresponded with what the schools found out about the parents of their children. At Brentford they were

tramps, costermongers, garden labourers and those of both sexes who manage to scrape a partial substance by means too varied to describe, or too improper to mention.46

Of the 228 boys admitted to Liverpool Ragged School in its first year

44. Sheffield Ragged School Annual Report, 1856, p.7.

45. C.J.Montague, Sixty Years in Waifdom, 1904, p.47.

46. Brentford Ragged School Annual Report, 1870, p.7.

112 were beggars;
 4 were known thieves;
 110 had no occupation at the time;
 12 were chip and grit sellers.⁴⁷

What the Union and the schools are defining here, both in the case of the parents and the children, was the casual labour pool. The movement never understood the reasons for the existence of this group of workers and were unable to explain its size or properly understand its characteristics. Thus their proposed solutions were quite inappropriate. There could be no hope that evangelical imprecations could solve economic problems associated with the Industrial Revolution.

The annual reports show that the parents of the ragged school children can be broadly divided into two. They were vagrants and casual labourers. The distinction is based on two factors, mobility and attitude, but complete precision is impossible. Sir Charles Trevelyan estimated that during a season of high employment about one third of all vagrants comprised largely unskilled workers shifting from one job to the next. During a time of low employment it was as high as two thirds.⁴⁸ It is worth separating out the itinerant unemployed from the professional tramps and beggars. The latter had become used to a way of living which did not value sustained labour. Their mobility was regularised. During the winter they accepted the free accommodation of the refuges, begging or undertaking whatever casual job might be available in the markets, docks or streets. In the summer they went to the country, many following the rich to the coastal resorts, others taking whatever agricultural work was offered. It was obvious that the children of the professional tramps would remain for only a short time in the ragged schools. Brentford Ragged School came to terms with this by opening from Michaelmas to Easter 'as the children would be employed in the summer'.⁴⁹ Others fretted about 'the irregularity of the

47. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1850, p.9.

48. Sir Charles Trevelyan, Three Letters on London Pauperism, 1870, p.4.

49. Brentford Ragged School Annual Report, 1854, p.6. The parents of one third of the children in this school were tramps.

children's attendance'.⁵⁰ The situation was especially bad at St. John's Ragged School, Brighton, for

The District of St. John the Evangelist is inhabited by the poorest of the population of Brighton, being also the resort of most of the wayfarers, tramps and migratory families of other towns, on account of the number of common lodging houses and kitchens which abound in the District.⁵¹

Thomas Myers, Secretary of the York Ragged School and Vicar of Sheriff Hutton, commented on the problem raised by the children of vagrants.

Their parents are a migratory race; crowding into cities in winter and dispersing far and wide during the spring and summer. It is essential - I must report it - to retain the same children long enough to eradicate evil and to implant good.⁵²

The itinerant unemployed, although classed as vagrants, were simply navvies moving from one job to the next, seamen or soldiers returning home, unemployed agricultural labourers, etc. So far as the schools are concerned, they were indistinguishable as parents from the professional tramps. Their children exhibited the same irregularity of attendance and stayed in school for a short period. They appeared to have no financial resources and looked to casual work to sustain them and their families until they reached their destinations. That they did in fact use the schools is evident from the cases supplied by the reports.

As distinct from the vagrants, the casual labourers' children tended

⁵⁰. Woolwich Ragged School Annual Report, 1870, p.5.

⁵¹. St. John's Ragged School, Brighton, Annual Report, 1870, p.9. Cf. W. Camidge, op.cit., p.7. Speaking about 'the Bedern', a notorious slum area in York, he comments that 'its large and beautiful residences were let off in flats to a degraded population and one of, if not its best, houses was occupied as a common lodging-house for hawkers, peddlars and tramps'.

⁵². T. Myers, op.cit., pp.7-8. Cf. W. Camidge, op.cit., p.9, 'The reason for absence given by the others was "gone a-camping", which meant anything. They had removed from the neighbourhood, or were out begging, or with their parents were out on the road tramping to other towns'. A further problem arising from this pattern of movement was the overcrowding of schools during the winter months. Fowler Square Ragged School, Manchester, Annual Report, 1880, p.4, reports that 'Our number has so increased during the winter months that we have been obliged to have services for the young'. (When there was pressure of numbers and insufficient teachers for them, it was the practice to abandon classes and hold an Act of Worship.)

to be more regular in attending the ragged schools. The principal cause for this was the lack of mobility of most casual labour. Men tended to remain where they were known by employers and foremen. They usually wanted to preserve their credit arrangements with landlords and local shopkeepers. Work undertaken by their wives, essential as a supplement to their own earnings, would be jeopardised by moving. Their geographical mobility was further reduced by the cost of transport and an insufficient knowledge of job opportunities elsewhere.

The cases recorded in the annual reports of the schools reflect the factors which caused the parents to enter the casual labour market. Assessment with regard to individuals is nothing more than guesswork. However, the information given fits into general facts. The employment structure of particular occupations involving heavy manual labour was such that employees found themselves unwanted as middle age approached. Fitness and strength was at a premium in navvying, some aspects of building and dockwork, in gas works and brewery labour. This group had been used to a steady employment, high wages and a degree of social respect. When age, weakness or a physical disability associated with their work (e.g. hernia, broken limb, crushing injury) ended this type of employment they were more demoralised than other workers who found themselves in the casual pool. The nature of their previous work made adaption to other work more difficult for them. Thus one wonders if the father of Solomon Huff, who 'had been sick twenty-three weeks and was unable to work', fell into this category.⁵³

One of the major causes of a decline into casual working was prolonged or recurrent sickness. It usually meant that the wife had to seek employment. Employers in the poorest districts saw the necessities which were on many female workers and were not slow to see how they could be used. The key to the woman's position was in fact the demand for her husband's

53. Sheffield Ragged School Annual Report, 1856, p.8.

work. Where illness or the seasonal depressions, as for example in the building industry, meant the suspension of work, the woman's wage was vital. However, the women's earnings were less than those of their men and it was generally felt to be a sign of poverty and loss of status for her to work. Within London there was a large glut of female labour which kept wages very low. One wonders about the exact predicament of Harraford Hill's family, whose 'father had been ill for years' (54) or the anonymous family of one of their scholars visited by the Blackburn Ragged School:

The home contained a family of eight, the father is sick and only able to work half time. The oldest child, a lad of seventeen, who was the principal support of the family, is lying on a miserable bed, sick and helpless and ready to die. He has little or no nourishment and the poor mother, who has to earn a few shillings where she can, is not able to give much time for attendance on her dying boy. Others of the children are also sick, there is little furniture in the house and less food. 55

A further common cause of the destitution of the parents of the ragged children was simply 'loss of work'. 56 There could be countless individual causes for this, e.g. dismissal without a reference, death of an employer (particularly in the case of servants), dishonesty, excessive drinking, age, loss of a particular skill. But more generally the casual labour market was a barometer of economic misfortune. The trade depressions bankrupted small traders and compelled firms to lay off. Those who were only marginally efficient went first and stood least chance of regaining former skilled or semi-skilled employment when conditions improved. The specificity of training for the unemployed man made adaption to work requiring other skills improbable. He was pushed further into the casual market. Severe winters brought economic disaster to many, increasing the

54. Sheffield Ragged School Annual Report, 1856, p.8. Cf. ibid., p.10. The letter of John Cockayne, a former pupil, says '... I went to be a table-knife cutter, till two and a half years since I fell ill, which caused my mother (a widow) and me to suffer great distress for want of proper food and clothing ... I should not have been in the Workhouse at all, but being a cripple and not very strong I could not follow my usual occupation.'

55. Bent Street Ragged School, Blackburn, Annual Report, 1884, p.11.

56. Halifax Ragged School Annual Report, 1858, p.4. ibid., p.6.

numbers without work. Shipping, navigation and dock work stopped, as well as building and transport labour. A combination of factors, a trade depression, a severe winter, the collapse of a major industry and a bad harvest increased destitution to a point where the machinery for dealing with it broke down. At such a time the number of paupers would increase dramatically. 'Loss of work' could simply indicate seasonal variations. Many occupations were affected - shoe, furniture and clothes makers, water workers, painters and builders, gas and coal workers, milliners and furriers, etc. Variation in the production of goods need not in theory imply a variation of employment. Indeed, in practice, highly skilled trades which incurred seasonal fluctuations in demand, e.g. silversmiths, jewellers, did not throw their workers on to the labour market. The deciding factor was the degree of skill of the employee. In the unskilled sections of trades where labour was plentiful the employer saw no economic point in continuous employment. The state into which the families deteriorated is clear from the journals of the visitors. The Assistant Visitor of York Ragged School recorded in his Journal:

Feb. 19th, 1849. The father of one of the children got employment last week, and was in such a state of emaciation from previous hunger that he had to leave his work on the second day from utter exhaustion. I was told that he frequently retired to rest after having had nothing except a boiled turnip or two for supper. He had the character of being a steady and industrious man.⁵⁷

In these and many other circumstances it became necessary for the children in a family to contribute what they could. Lord Ashley (as he then was) was told that children in the hovels around the Imperial Gas

Works and Fever Hospital in St. Pancras Road

are compelled at an early age to seek a living, by either selling various articles in the streets, or by some far less reputable means.⁵⁸

It was a pattern which was general over the country. Gravesend Ragged School saw

57. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.9.

58. Agar Town Ragged School, London, Annual Report, 1848, p.6.

the need for the children to work at fruit picking, hop picking and so on in order to augment the meagre family income.⁵⁹

Like many other schools, it closed until the season was finished. Recurring early reports from Liverpool show an anxiety over the large proportion of scholars lost each year to 'other employment'. The managers felt that

many are encouraged in mendicancy and vagrancy by their parents, who thus are enabled to participate in their gains.⁶⁰

Of the 120 boys who left Soho Street School in 1853 sixty-four 'left the school of their own accord and would not return'.⁶¹ Most of these latter became vagrants in the casual labour pool because their parents were

depraved enough to send out their children to beg and steal in order that they may share in the booty'.⁶²

That children could work for money which would contribute towards the family income is an interesting feature of the economy of the latter half of the nineteenth century. As far as the ragged parents are concerned, it was ironic that their children's work was one of the contributory factors in keeping them in the casual pool. The annual reports indicate that pupils found little difficulty when they left the schools in obtaining work. The work obtained reflected the discontinuity which existed in many occupations between adult and juvenile labour and which affected the casual market so significantly. Those occupations taking juveniles were very poorly paid and offered no future - errand boys, factory boys, printers' assistants, certain jobs within the building, woodwork and clothing trades. Employers either dispensed with the boys before they were twenty or they themselves left to find a higher paid employment. Their first

59. Gravesend Ragged School Annual Report, 1853, p.6.

60. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1854, p.11.

61. Ibid., 1853, p.10.

62. Ibid., 1853, p.12. It is interesting to note the occasional reference to the way in which parents used the ragged schools. The Committee at Gun Street (late Naylor Street) Ragged School, Ancoats, Manchester, observed that the numbers in the school had sharply decreased and gave as the reason 'from the revival of trade in the district, many of the children who formerly attended being now engaged at work . . .', Gun Street Ragged School, Manchester, Annual Report, 1866, p.4.

work fitted them for nothing and they could only seek other forms of unskilled labour. They became irregular workers and swelled the casual pool which probably already contained their parents.

The schools were unaware of the relationship between juvenile labour and the adult casual position. They constantly rejoiced that

of the . . . boys who have obtained situations, the Committee have had several most gratifying evidences that the instruction which many of them received has not been in vain.⁶³

At York the boys went into the glassworks(64); at Barnsley to the mines(65); in Bradford to the mills(66); at Southampton and Bristol, Hull and Liverpool a significant proportion went to sea or worked on the docks. In London a bewildering variety of casual work was available. A very small proportion of the more able children who were given good recommendations by the Master and Management Committee was able to gain apprenticeships. The evidence here comes largely from the cases recorded in the annual reports.⁶⁷ The progress of such children was watched and where it reflected creditably on the school, and especially if it indicated a moral transformation, it appeared as an example of the best that could happen to the ragged children, enabling children 'to shine as stars in the Redeemer's crown'.⁶⁸ The girls invariably went into the mills, factories or entered domestic service until such time that they were able to marry. The ladies committee, which played such a major part in the social and financial work of the schools, was usually instrumental in placing girls. In some schools it was cus-

63. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, p.11. Cf. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1853, p.3. 'Many of the children of both sexes have obtained situations during the year, and the Committee have great pleasure in saying that they can refer to some of those cases where the instruction received at this Institution has principally contributed . . . to an honourable and useful career.'

64. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.30.

65. J.H.Burland, op.cit., p.475.

66. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1858, p.6.

67. E.g. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, p.10. 'P.F., aged 13 . . . He remained in school for 18 months, was then taken as an indoor apprentice to a respectable tradesman and is doing well.'

68. Halifax Ragged School Annual Report, 1853, p.8.

tomary for intending employers to apply to the management committee for an employee.

For moral and religious reasons the ragged school unions were not altogether happy with the positions their children obtained. They saw them unable to get out of the environment which presented so many temptations and realised that the work obtained was not always held by the children for very long. They saw that there was little future in steady skilled work for most of their scholars. An underlying tension between the desire of the committees to rescue the children and their rather conservative hierarchical view of society and the place of these children within it is evident in much of the early literature. One way of resolving this was an initiative taken in its early years by the Ragged School Union of London. With Lord Ashley as their spokesman, they pressed for a policy of emigration for the ragged children and, for a short period, were successful in obtaining government assistance with the plan. Lord Ashley, reviewing the progress of the boys sent out, held that

considering the number sent out and the characters we had to deal with, I think the reports received a complete triumph.⁶⁹

When the children wrote home the ragged school unions seized the opportunity to heighten the success of the venture. Various remarks from the boys' letters became part of the early mythology of the movement. Thus Joseph James, who had emigrated in 1848, wrote to his brother to tell that 'The dogs live better here than men do at home'.⁷⁰ And Charles Philips, who sailed on the Lebanon in the same year, commented that:

Coming from England to Australia is like coming from a dirty town to the Garden of Paradise . . . Shoemakers and tailors, if they are steady, can make a fortune in this country.⁷¹

The ragged movement's opinion was that their children did well in Australia.

69. Grotto Passage Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.5.

70. C.F.Cornwallis, op.cit., p.68.

71. Ibid., p.70.

I have had a letter from a lady lately arrived from Australia which speaks highly of the conduct of our emigrants. I am assured by many . . . that none make better shepherds than handloom weavers of Spitalfields for, going out unbiassed by any system, they readily adopt the system most simple in use . . . out of the 220 sent out, all have obtained employment at good wages and, in most cases, found their way into the Bush.⁷²

It was important that the children should be kept away from the towns. They were not to have any opportunity of returning to their old haunts and vices. The evidence points to the success of the venture - without having to accept the self-congratulatory propaganda put out by the movement. It worked partly for the reason the union foresaw - the children were placed in a totally different environment, where many of their former accomplices and temptations were removed. Total moral reformation on the part of the children cannot be ruled out. However, one suspects that the underlying cause was the continual labour shortage which gave the children - and, incidentally, the many criminals who were transported - an opportunity to compete on equal terms with others.⁷³ In fact, the union need not have worried about children going to the towns, for these were generally smaller cohesive communities without the problems caused by an economic structure which demanded a large surplus of casual labour resident within them. The whole brief episode of the emigration of the ragged scholars confirmed much of the thinking of the movement's leaders, strengthened the environmentalist hypothesis and weakened any theory of urban degeneration.

There was a constant nervousness among school committees that only the most destitute classes should receive their benefit. They did admit children who appeared to be in need of help but who would require it only for a short time.

When the improved health or renewed employment of the father enabled him to maintain his child, it has been removed.

72. Grotto Passage Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.6.

73. J.J.Tobias, Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century, 1972, Ch. 13.

from the school.⁷⁴

The cases confirm that the principles were effective..

. . . A drunkard entered his four children in a ragged school. His object at the time was to get for them the support that was to be given, but shortly afterwards he became a teetotaler and withdrew his children, feeling it to be his duty to provide for them.⁷⁵

The schools were anxious that any success they had would raise the poor children above their station in life. Their president had reminded the London Union in 1856 that

you have only the training of children to fill the most subordinate offices among the working classes.⁷⁶

Certainly, schools were conscious of improvement among their children. In Swansea the school had 'done much towards elevating and improving the morals of the many urchins who used to wander about'.⁷⁷ Thomas Myers commented on the outward appearance of the children, which he thought was evidence of an 'inward and radical change'.⁷⁸

The dogged lounge has been transferred into the innocent gambol and the elastic step . . . the lour and the frown to the sparkling eye and ruddy cheek.⁷⁹

In Bristol, after two years within the school, the children were seen

exhibiting a great change for the better in the cleanliness of their persons - acquiring habits of neatness and industry by learning to make and repair their clothes - improving rapidly in reading, writing and figures and general knowledge - manifesting increased familiarity with the Scriptures and interested

74. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, p.50.

75. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.11.

76. Ragged School Union Magazine, 1856, p.172. Shaftesbury had caused a minor flurry within the London Union in 1852 when he had suggested that the schools were failing in their mission to the poorest. He stated that 'in a great many of these schools a vast body of children were to be found who ought not to be there'. Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1852-1855, p.35. The Union, anxious to confound the public criticisms of its President, began a very careful enquiry and, although it finally removed two day schools from its list, it concluded that the general public had been led to entertain doubts 'which are injurious as well as unfounded'. Ibid., pp.73-75.

77. The Cambrian, Nov.7th, 1848.

78. T.Myers, op.cit., p.17.

79. Ibid.

in them - and exercising in general sufficient self-control to behave in an orderly manner uncaused by the fear of punishment.⁸⁰

It was in the interests of the schools to dramatise their own effectiveness.

The reports of some schools read like evangelical manifestos or exercises in moral propaganda. However, they depended for their survival on the donations and subscriptions of those convinced that work worth doing was being done well. All the early schools claimed that their work dramatically reduced juvenile crime. However, it is impossible properly to judge the claim. The variability of criminal statistics in the nineteenth century is notorious and the figures given by the schools are valueless taken by themselves.⁸¹ It is true that the schools achieved a degree of discipline and influence over their children who, probably like 'F.' at Lower Canal Walk Ragged School, Southampton, were 'most troublesome, ever planning some mischief', but who 'after severe struggles' became 'teachable'.⁸² That it was ever 'astonishing to see how great a change has been made in so short a time' - in this case a few weeks - may be doubted.

There is enough evidence to suggest some disappointment on the part of management committees in many schools with their achievements. Accommodation⁽⁸⁴⁾, scarcity of teachers⁽⁸⁵⁾, opposition from parents⁽⁸⁶⁾, shortage of funds⁽⁸⁷⁾ and inadequate faith⁽⁸⁸⁾ were all blamed when schools failed to fulfil the high hopes embodied in their rules. It is not unkind to

80. St. James's Back Ragged School, Bristol, Annual Report, p.11.

81. J.J.Tobias, Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century, 1972, Ch.2.

82. Lower Canal Walk Ragged School, Southampton Annual Report, 1852, p.9.

83. J.M.Craddock, The Second Educational Era, n.d., p.95. At Brentford Ragged School.

84. Oxford Ragged School Annual Report, 1886, p.5. 'It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the advantages of the improved accommodation . . . The order of the school has perceptibly improved'.

85. Great Bridgewater Street Ragged School, Manchester, Annual Report, 1865, p.3. The shortage 'raised the serious question whether the school would have to be discontinued'.

86. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1855, p.7.

87. Poland St. Ragged School, Manchester, Annual Report, 1871, p.4.

88. Lurgan St. Ragged School, Dublin, Annual Report, 1849, p.7.

notice the frequency with which failing schools took refuge in evangelical precepts. There was a good deal in the vein of the seed growing secretly.

For although many of the scholars are callous and careless, yet much that they hear lodges effectively and permanently, and will often start to memory in quiet moments. And the teachers feel certain that God's Word, sown in faith, will not fail at His good time, and by His blessing, to bring the children to the Saviour's feet.⁸⁹

A few schools were prepared to publish subdued accounts of the difficulties in effecting improvement and changes. Mr. Edward Heath, a prominent member of the Management Committee of Liverpool Ragged School, explained to its supporters:

Now as to the results. I will say at once that we do not expect to work miracles. Interesting anecdotes of a rapid change and conversion in Ragged Schools may be perfectly true but I am compelled to say that such cases are rare - they are exceptions, the general rule being gradual improvement. The result which gives us the greatest hope and encouragement is the raised tone generally prevalent in the school.⁹⁰

Material to indicate the level in education attained by the children when they left the schools is wanting. The eagerness with which schools compiled lists indicating the want of knowledge of their entrants is in inverse proportion to the information they gave about the progress made in the schools by the leavers. The only evidence is in individual cases which are selected for publication by virtue of their unusual or outstanding quality. That some progress in reading and writing, and a little in arithmetic, were made cannot be discounted, though the emphasis on industrial training, moral improvement and religious learning, coupled with inadequate materials and poor conditions, militated against startling progress. The conclusion can hardly be resisted that the fears of the unions were groundless. Any general educational improvement was not sufficient to lift the majority of the children out of the casual labour market. This was not what the schools had in mind when they spoke of children receiving an education which would enable them to earn a respectable livelihood (⁹¹)

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- 89. Great Bridgewater Street Ragged School, Manchester, Annual Report, 1865, p.4.
 - 90. Soho St. Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, p.23.
 - 91. Broughton Road Ragged School, Salford, Annual Report, 1869, p.13.

and make it possible for them 'to improve their worldly position or rise higher in the social scale'.⁹²

Thus both the casual labourer and his children were trapped in the casual labour market. One of the economic effects of this was to define a special role for the charitable giving which relieved their necessities in times of need. Charity for the poor was variable in operation, both at the public and private levels. It was unco-ordinated and often lacked a proper method of distribution; it was overlapping and occasionally unchecked by common sense; the sentimentality on which much of it was based rendered it open to shameless exploitation by clever vagrants and paupers. Its working tended to demoralise the honest poor. The key to the situation was thought to be the indiscriminate almsgiver. A motion moved by the Mayor of Hull at the Fourth Annual Meeting of the supporters of the Ragged School pointed to

the baneful effects of indiscriminate almsgiving which is ascertained to frustrate the efforts of those who have at heart the best interests of the class on whose behalf these schools were established.⁹³

This sort of charity encouraged vagrancy, which brought to the community 'nothing but misery and burden, outrage, crime and danger' and would only diminish with a better 'direction' of available resources.⁹⁴ Relief given often 'became the occasion of revelling and drunkenness, theft and profanity'.⁹⁵

A mismanaged charity proved 'an encouragement instead of a check to pauperism; it would render the adult more reckless and profligate'.⁹⁶

Thomas Myers wished to 'condense the charitable funds of the

92. Heyrod Street Ragged School, Manchester, Annual Report, 1862, p.8.

93. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1853, p.7. Cf. ibid., pp.3-4, where the Committee observes 'charitably disposed but mistaken individuals' 'fetter and impede them in their efforts to do good, by thoughtlessly indulging themselves in indiscriminate almsgiving'.

94. Ibid., 1849, p.21.

95. T. Myers, op.cit., p.6.

96. Ibid., p.17.

97. A.P. Thompson, England, 1840-1850, p.16.

city', not disperse them.⁹⁷

The notion of the indiscriminate almsgiver disguised a deeper social malaise - the physical separation of rich and poor. Propertied, professional classes, as well as the commercial middle classes, had moved away from the cities to the suburbs during the nineteenth century. It was a phenomenon evident in the manufacturing towns, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Stockport, Newcastle, Birmingham, as well as London, Bath, Gloucester, Exeter, Oxford and York. There was fear that it could bring sharp class conflict:

Every wild theorist will delude them (the poor passes), and every turbulent disclaimer will band them together against the property and the institutions of Britain.⁹⁸

It was a situation in which, as the Bishop of London put it, 'all who made jam lived in one place, and all who ate jam lived in another'.⁹⁹ The social effects of this varied. It could result in a worsening of local government particularly, increasing corruption among workhouse and vestry officials. It changed the balance between charity and the Poor Law. This was important when the Poor Law had assumed a rough proportion of rich and poor in its districts. Finally, it encouraged depravity - the 'wages' of mendicants moving quickly and skilfully from one charity to another would be higher, and the quality of subsistence greater, than that of the honest labourer.

From an economic viewpoint, the continued preaching of the churches for charity towards the poor exacerbated the situation. Many clergy - like J.H. Newman - could only consider social questions within a theological

context. For them the poor were objects of compassion, charity and conversion. Those bishops, like Henry Phillpotts of Exeter, who championed the cause of the outcast and needy, had no workable social programme which,

97. T. Myers, op.cit., p.25.

98. Ibid., p.25. School Journal, 1850, p.4.

99. A.F. Winnington-Ingram, Work in Great Cities, 1896, p.4.

in the ethos of the time, stood any chance of success. G.F.A.Best has put it:

Charity was the greatest of the Christian virtues and the most misunderstood and malpracticed . . . Real charity meant personal service, the giving of time, self and sense, not just money and emotion.¹⁰⁰

Some of the ragged schools saw this. The Management Committee of Newcastle Ragged School were

of the opinion that the social mingling of the rich and the poor . . . and the personal interest thus exhibited in the enjoyments of the humbler classes are well adapted to strengthen and consolidate the bonds of civil liberty.¹⁰¹

At Southampton 'co-operative action' between the classes was recommended.¹⁰² Hull stated that

It is of the utmost importance to this country that there should be a blending together, that classes should be brought together, and that there should be nothing like class antagonism.¹⁰³

Management Committees asked for the wealthier classes to give their time to teach⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ and visit⁽¹⁰⁵⁾, as well as donate towards the upkeep of the schools. However, the Established Church was badly placed to act effectively. Not only did it fail to realise the economic reasons underlying the problems of ragged parents and their children, but only 36% of its available manpower worked among the 70% of the population living in towns and cities.¹⁰⁶ Its bishops found a marked reluctance among the privileged orders to have much contact with the poorest groups. For example, it manifested itself in the opposition of the 'front pew' to the abolition of pew rents. More than one bishop had to face the problem of alienating

100. G.F.A.Best, Temporal Pillars, 1964, p.489.

101. Newcastle Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.5.

102. Houndwell Ragged School, Southampton, Annual Report, 1868, p.5.

103. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.22.

104. Red Bank Ragged School, Scotland Bridge, Manchester, Annual Report, 1865, p.5.

105. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1853, p.4.

106. Church Congress Report, 1867, pp.234-50.

the very people upon whom he depended. It is also evident in the constant pleas from the schools for further help.107

Conclusion.

The descriptive account of the conditions of the ragged school children and their parents raises economic and social questions.¹⁰⁸ The destitution of the group and its vileness, which made the early supporters regard it as a special class, were in fact functions of the structure of the casual labour market. Ragged parents and their children were caught within it and were unable to heed the moral advice bestowed on them from church and self-made middle classes. The schools attempted an impossible work. However they might regulate entry to the most deserving, they could neither reach all who needed help nor act very efficiently in helping those within their classes to break away from the casual pool. To some extent the parents' condition was worsened by the children's largely separate labour market. The appalling conditions were alleviated to a degree by charity.¹⁰⁹ However, its character and organization even further demoralised many of the recipients. This depravity, which gave rise to the theory of urban degeneration, was counter-balanced by the success of emigration and eventually shown to be economic and not moral in origin, a fact which goes some way to support the environmentalist views of the ragged school movement.

107. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union, Visitors Report,
1869, p.14.

108. Cf. G. Stedman Jones, Outcast London, 1971.

CHAPTER 9

THE ORGANISATION, FINANCES AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RAGGED SCHOOLS

In 1850 John Glyde, social commentator and local historian of Suffolk, asked

But can we anticipate that the power of the voluntary principle will be sufficient to relieve us of the mass of intellectual darkness and moral depravity which now surround us? 1

Behind this question was his opinion that voluntarism was only partially successful in meeting the educational needs of the country. He refused to be dazzled by that puritan theology which kept social and economic theory subservient to a crude soteriology. Collecting his data thoroughly, he compiled statistics which indicated that, so far as Ipswich was concerned, the system in operation was failing. He did not generalise but in fact his town was simply a microcosm of the total situation. Despite the early success and rapid growth of the Ragged School Movement, urban areas remained unable to educate all their children and most observers would have agreed with him that schools were required particularly 'over the poorer districts . . . for instructing the children of the humbler classes'.² The voluntary system did not enable schools to gain on the population; its connection with the denominations prevented some from availing themselves of the services offered; it failed to provide for the labouring classes what radicals saw as their right; even when given some government support by grants it was unable to respond sufficiently to cope with the magnitude of the problem; it was always an impulsive and at root an uncertain system.

The ragged schools reflected the larger problems inherent in this approach to the provision of education. Thus they repeatedly emphasised

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1. J.Glyde, The Moral, Social and Religious Condition of Ipswich in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century, 1850, p.159.
 2. Ibid., p.142.

that they were not financially adequate to the task they were set(3); although children were supposedly admitted without enquiry into their denominational attachment, teachers and managers knew when they had Roman Catholics and they were excluded from some schools(4); the personnel were often unable to ensure a coherent and continuing education for the children(5); the voluntary system posed surmountable problems in the founding of schools; it raised insurmountable ones in their continuance and expansion. The organization, financing and management of the ragged schools were expressions of the voluntaryist philosophy and their ultimate failure was inherent in the ideology which was clearly crumbling by 1850.

Objective assessment must not disguise the value of the offerings and sacrifice of anonymous thousands who supported voluntaryism. But behind this broad philanthropy, fostered at all levels of society by the Churches, lay the vexed question of how to apply Christian principles to social and economic practices. From 1840 onwards the Victorian church was happy with a solution which involved the acceptance by the lower orders of middle class virtues which reflected Christian values - thrift, self-improvement, self-reliance, respect for labour and property. The critical may see here a

3. E.g. Sheffield Ragged School Annual Report, 1856, p.12. 'It is strange that, out of this large town and neighbourhood, not more than 180 persons are annual subscribers to the Institution - the only Ragged School in Sheffield. Scarcely a week passes but the cry of many poor helpless creatures goes up to the throne of God for aid, and yet we cannot relieve for lack of funds. The extended operations of your committee in new schools depends on your response to this appeal'.
4. The assumption that the schools would be Protestant is clear. 'Unsectarian' in the thinking of the Ragged School Movement meant not distinguishable as Church of England or Nonconformist in character. Lord Ashley observed that neither the Church of England nor the Dissenters could cope with the problems posed by the most wretched classes. 'Therefore it is necessary that we should suppress our minor differences and join heart and soul for the purpose of producing the great result of bringing these poor outcasts within the sound of the gospel'. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, May 18th, 1847.
5. Scores of examples over the period 1844 to 1880 are available. They echo Queen Street Ragged School, Hulme, Manchester, Annual Report, 1866, p.4: '... for want of teachers, operations are unfortunately of a very limited character'.

Church whose theology had not separated moral traditions from religious faith, acting as the huckster of mores for the millions. Yet dogma is not always superstition nor is belief always prejudice and it is only in periods of intense and original religious activity that the Church successfully tilts at economic and social theory. The ragged school movement was evidence of the wide generosity and firm faith among voluntaryists. However, sincerity of purpose, piety of belief and personal sacrifice among supporters do not alter economic and social weaknesses. These weaknesses, particularly as exhibited in the financing of the schools, are part of the reason for the eventual failure of the movement.

Those ragged schools of an ephemeral nature, meeting a family's or a street's need, revolving around an enthusiastic city missionary, Scripture reader or concerned layman, needed little organization or financing. Others, started by churches as extensions of the Sunday school work, tended to accept the structure of the parent body and whatever financial arrangements it cared to make for them. However, as pressure for evening and week-day schools grew, new schools were founded while many old ones expanded. These required rather more organization than the preparation of a Scripture lesson given in a room of the local chapel. Most schools of any size and permanence adopted a common pattern of organization.⁶

Schools had a General or Management Committee with ultimate responsibility for all matters connected with their school. The Rules of Oxford Ragged School stated

That a General Committee, consisting of twelve gentlemen with power to add to their number, together with a Treasurer and Secretary, be annually appointed, at a Public Meeting called by placards for that purpose.⁷

6. Despite its simplicity and prevalence in ragged schools, the pattern of organization was copied only after much discussion in many meetings. This is evident from the minute books of the schools. The best example is probably that of Norwich Ragged School. Its Minute Book for 1848 goes carefully step by step over each element in the structure of the school with meticulous attention only to arrive at the common pattern.

7. Oxford Ragged School Annual Report, 1860, p.7.

This was typical.⁸ There were variations in the number of members serving on this committee. At Bradford it was twenty.⁹ York was exceptional in having a theoretically unlimited membership.

Subscribers of a guinea and upwards, and Donors of five pounds, shall form a General Committee, in whom the management of all business shall be vested.¹⁰

It was more usual to invite donors and subscribers of variable sums to elect the General Committee.

Every subscriber of ten shillings per annum or upwards and every donor of £5 or upwards shall be a member of the Society, eligible to any of its offices and entitled to vote at general meetings.¹¹

At Newcastle members of the Boys' Ragged School had the additional privilege of recommending children to the school.

Boys recommended for admission by subscribers shall have preference to others, in point of time; but in all other respects their cases shall be subject to the same rules as other children.¹²

The General or Management Committees worked in two distinct ways. In some schools it was the effective body conducting the routine business. Where this was the case, it usually met monthly. Where it was less frequent, rules stipulated 'and as much oftener as circumstances may require'.¹³ The majority of schools opted for a second way of working which involved the General Committee in the delegation of its powers to an Acting or Sub-committee. At Stockport

A Sub-Committee shall be appointed by the General Committee which shall meet once a month for the purpose of admitting pupils and of examining the monthly accounts and of transacting the business of the Institution.¹⁴

Monthly meetings were common and few followed York with a statutory weekly

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8. E.g. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School for Girls Annual Report, 1849, p.8.
 9. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1854, Proposed Rules.
 10. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.11.
 11. Bradford Ragged School, op.cit.
 12. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School for Boys Annual Report, 1849, p.8.
 13. Oxford Ragged School, op.cit. Here it was the practice for the Committee to meet quarterly.
 14. Stockport Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, p.10.

assembly.¹⁵ Whichever method was adopted, it is noticeable that the quorum required for effective action was small, usually three or five members. Minutes of the sub-committees indicate that it was common for the routine business of the schools to be shouldered by a handful of dedicated committee members. Occasionally the teachers shared this work, as at Bristol, where the Master was allowed to admit and dismiss children 'subject to the approval of the Committee'.¹⁶

Whichever body was the effective agent, its functions were similar. It was necessary to investigate the background of applicants for admission. It was occasionally possible for one of the teachers to visit the parents and children in their own homes.

The homes of all boys desiring to be admitted shall be personally visited by the master, before their cases are reported to the committee.¹⁷

Sometimes members of the committee undertook this task in a voluntary capacity. York was unusual in having a full-time paid official

. . . to visit the parents or guardians of all children admitted, and of all applicants for admission at their own houses; to ascertain all necessary information respecting their occupation, and means of earning a maintenance for their children, and to report regularly to the Acting Committee. He shall advise the parents to a due observance of their moral and religious duties and keep a journal of his visits and conversations which he shall lay before the Committee when called for.¹⁸

The normal practice once schools were established was for parents to bring their children before the committee, though there were always cases for admission where this was inappropriate.

Its second function was to ensure that the schools fulfilled the religious purposes prescribed by its supporters. Schools normally attempted to be unsectarian within Protestantism. Bradford expressed the general hope clearly:

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15. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.12.
 16. St. James Back Ragged School, Bristol, Annual Report, 1848, p.3.
 17. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.9. Also St. James Back Ragged School, Bristol, Annual Report, 1848, p.3.
 18. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.12.

The basis of the religious instruction of the children shall be the Bible, but no party creed or catechism shall be introduced - the institution being quite undenominational both in the admission of the children and the running of the school.¹⁹

Yet there can be no doubt that evangelical theology and practice were dominant within the schools at both committee and classroom level. The maintenance of the non-sectarian viewpoint involved committee members in the censorship of books used in the schools and the approval of personnel employed there. At Oxford it was stipulated that

. . . the Superintendents and Teachers, as well as the use of books and other school materials, be subject to the approval of the committee.²⁰

And schools were careful to insist that no publications be 'distributed to the scholars which have not received the sanction of the committee'.²¹

However, in view of the continuing crisis in the supply of teachers over the whole history of the movement and the frequent use of senior pupils as teachers, committees were too optimistic about their role in the selection of suitable candidates. Their signal success in remaining within a strictly evangelical framework was one reason for their eventual failure.

Its third and most important function was financial. The committee was required to raise sufficient money to meet the needs of the school and ensure that it was being sensibly used. This was the most variable function, for committees differed considerably in what they thought were the needs of the school. A few were inclined to provide food and clothing for their children. Rather more attempted to organise a means by which children could help themselves and introduced Blanket Funds, Penny Banks, Shoe Funds and Clothing Clubs. Many saw the need to involve the parents and arranged activities designed to assist them to provide the better for

19. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1854, p.

20. Oxford Ragged School Annual Report, 1860, p.

21. St. James Back Ragged School, Bristol, Annual Report, 1848, p.

their children. All appreciated the value of industrial work, though there was diversity with respect to what they were prepared to organise and finance.²²

A very significant, though frequently unofficial, constituent of the organization of the ragged school was the Ladies' Committee. The General or Management and Acting or Sub-committees were usually male in membership - even in girls' schools. However, the women interested in this work were asked to help the children in a variety of ways. The most important was in raising money for the schools by organising collections among their friends. St. George's Place Ragged School in Southampton gave figures of the amounts received by their ladies: thus Miss Palk had £10.19s0d. from nineteen friends, Mrs. Cray, 14s6d. from four friends, Mrs. Westlake £1.17s.0d. from six friends, and the Misses Cocks £8.2s0d. from forty friends.²³ This school also had a system whereby 'almost all' lady subscribers 'presided at trays' for the benefit of the school funds.²⁴ Soho Street, Liverpool, Ladies

have a 'basket' for the benefit of the Schools. The basket is to be furnished by them and their friends with a variety of useful and ornamental articles, and the proceeds, after deducting the necessary remuneration for a person to carry it about, applied towards the general fund. In this way, many young persons may be enabled to assist, by devoting some of their spare time to working for the Soho Street Ragged Schools. Contributions of plain and fancy work will be gladly received by any member of the Ladies' Committee.²⁵

The funds to the school through this source amounted to £62.9s3d. in the first year. The important point which emerges from a study of the inventive ideas of the ladies in raising funds is their success. Amounts collected by their efforts formed a significant element in the income of the schools. They were also prominent in what some schools termed 'Miscel-

22. The later section of this chapter, commencing on page , deals with the financial aspects of the committees' responsibilities in some detail.

23. St. George's Place Ragged School, Houndwell, Southampton Annual Report, 1863, pp.8-9.

24. Ibid., p.9.

25. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1854, p.12.

laneous Donations', and others 'Contributions in Food, Labour, Material, etc.'²⁶ Indeed, a few schools depended for their continuing existence on the efforts of the Ladies' Committee.

The lady members further assisted the schools by visiting and inspecting them and, in some cases, sharing in the teaching. At York

The Ladies' Committee shall be requested to assist the superintendence of the female department, to visit the Girls' School regularly, and to report to the Acting Committee on all subjects relating to that department.²⁷

This was the normal practice in the larger schools and reports by the Ladies' Committees show that they commented on the conduct and behaviour of the pupils, their appearance, progress in their educational and industrial activities, as well as the quality of teaching given by the staff.²⁸

They frequently initiated Sewing Classes. At Stockport

It originated from observing that the wives and daughters of the operatives are often very indifferent seamstresses, nay, many of them not only incapable of cutting out but even of mending the simplest garment neatly or effectually.³⁰

They organised innumerable teaparties, bazaars, picnics, outings, treats and free dinners - especially at Christmas.³¹ All this practical help, which took the burden of much work from the men, seems to have been rather quietly effected but very efficient. One guesses that the minutes, reports and accounts of the schools give rather less recognition to the role of the women than they probably deserve. The reason is that much of their effort was mundane and routine and often it would affect and concern only

26. E.g. Halifax Ragged School Annual Report, 1858, p.9: 'Mrs. Hitchin: Pinafores and Towels.'

27. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.12.

28. Ibid., p.10.

29. Barrow Street Ragged School, Salford, Annual Report, 1871, p.7.

30. Stockport Ragged School, Annual Report, 1855, p.7.

31. Dark Lane Ragged School, Ardwick, Manchester, Annual Report, 1884, p.9.

other women.³²

It is broadly true that the men and women who undertook to work on behalf of the ragged schools were from the middle classes and for the most part anonymous. They attempted to gain for their schools the patronage of national figures and suitable local dignitaries. The opening of a school after a public subscription was a time to solicit the upper classes and give maximum publicity to the venture. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, invited both Sheriff Watson of Aberdeen and Dr. Guthrie of Edinburgh to attend its first Annual Meeting, as well as Lord Ashley and the Duke of Argyll. Hull Ragged School also asked Lord Ashley and the President of the Poor Law Board, Mr. M.T.Baines. York Committee reported its progress in the initial stages to

High Sheriffs of the County and Chief Magistrates of the city
... to the grand jurors and the lords lieutenant of Yorkshire
... to his Grace the Archbishop.³³

At Newcastle the school received the encouragement of the Bishop of Durham and the two local Members of Parliament, William Ord and Thomas Headlam⁽³⁴⁾, while, for the opening of Leeds Ragged School, Lord Palmerston, Sir J.P.Kay Shuttleworth and W.E.Forster attended, with the Bishop of Ripon.³⁵ The London Schools naturally turned to Lord Ashley to help them launch their institutions. In fact, he was a very active member of the London Ragged School Union and, although the reports of schools are peppered with polite letters of refusal at his inability to take the chair at annual meetings or accept nomination to managing committees, he always gave encouragement and usually made a donation to the school's funds. When he

32. Occasionally a perceptive secretary would indicate something of the value of the work of the Ladies' Committee. At York it was recognised that the presence of the ladies tended to 'humanize and Christianize'. 'The Acting Committee beg leave thus publicly to return their thanks for the very valuable assistance by which their own responsibilities have been so effectively shared.' York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.7.

33. T.Myers, A Letter to a Friend on the York Ragged Schools, 1850, p.19.

34. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School for Boys Annual Report, 1848, p.14.

35. Leeds Ragged School Annual Report, 1860, p.2.

did consent to act for individual schools it was usually where there was special need or where prodigious effort had been made to overcome alarming odds.³⁶

The number of national figures in politics and the church who could give unconditional support to the ragged school movement was always limited. It stood for a religious education based on evangelical principles behind which lay the voluntarist philosophy. Even those who could agree thus far found Government criticism disturbing and were forced to question the value of the education given in the schools. Details such as the impermanence of the schools, the poor quality of many of their teachers, the condition of the buildings and the primitive educational provision made for the children raised further doubts. However, at the local level many of the schools appeared to be more successful in engaging the interest of dignitaries. The larger ones usually received the support of their Member(s) of Parliament and appropriate ecclesiastical figures of distinction. The specialised population of some areas is reflected in the composition of committees. Of the fifteen members of the Management Committee of Woolwich Ragged School in 1870 eight were from the military establishment - one colonel, one major and six captains.³⁷ A glittering team of graduates of the University was among those sponsoring Oxford Ragged School. (They included, in 1869, Charles Neate, Fellow of Oriel College, and the Rev. D.P. Chase, the Principal of St. Mary's Hall.) Its subscription lists are dominated by ordained men and university teachers.³⁸ The parochial clergy of

36. E.g. He agreed to chair the public meeting of Agar Town Ragged School, an appalling area of St. Pancras Road, where a dedicated committee had managed to found a school. It was an area inhabited by about 5,000 persons but had no church, chapel or other school until the ragged school commenced in 1845.

37. Woolwich Ragged School Annual Report, 1870, p.3.

38. Oxford Ragged School Annual Report, 1860, 1865, 1869 and 1886. It is interesting to note the role played by the students in the voluntary teaching of some classes. The week night school 'has been opened under the Superintendent 68 nights during the year besides an additional evening on Mondays during term, the entire duties of which last year, both for teaching and superintendence, have been most kindly undertaken by undergraduatemembers of the University.' Annual Report, 1869, p.8.

most denominations were normally represented on the committees of the larger schools unattached to a particular church or chapel. This was obviously necessary if the charge of sectarianism was to be avoided. It was also usual to have a doctor on the committee. The annual reports rarely indicate the precise role of the individual committee members in schools' activities. The exception concerns these two, the clergy and the doctors. It was usual for the clergy to conduct services for the children and often their parents on Sundays and occasionally during the week. They also arranged to set aside certain times during the year to preach to their congregations on the work of the ragged school movement. The collections at these services were given to the schools and formed a useful part of their income.³⁹ The doctors gave their services gratuitously to the children and usually provided free medicines for them.

It was valuable for the schools to interest the civic dignitaries of the locality. It conferred a status on them which had direct financial benefits. Thus it was usual for them to attempt to secure the services or patronage of the mayor. The ragged school for twenty boys which started in Ipswich in 1849 was brought to the notice of the Mayor. He

having become acquainted with this initiatory step, convened a meeting of friends known to be favourable to the movement . . . At this meeting funds were subscribed.

The result was the extension of the work to ninety boys and the starting of a girls' school for forty children.⁴⁰ Apart from any personal religious beliefs and philanthropic ideals which local officials held, there were practical social reasons impelling them to consider the role of ragged schools in their communities. The most important concerned the degree of pauperization and the incidence of crime. T.E.Palmer, Mayor of Hull in

39. E.g. Leeds Ragged School Annual Report, 1863, p.13. A collection at Belgrave Church for the school amounted to £7. Gloucester Ragged School Annual Report, 1871, p.7. The sale of a sermon preached by a committee member, the Rev. H.C.Minchin, raised £1.

40. J.Glyde, op.cit., pp.124-125.

1850, reflected contemporary ideas when he argued that these constituted a case 'in favour of this institution'.⁴¹

It is surely far better to educate the child and train him in some industrial pursuit, than to punish the man.⁴²

Reports of the schools show that they used this interest of their citizens to solicit further contributions. Most benefactions were acknowledged by name and lists of subscribers, showing the amounts they gave, were a common feature in the annual returns. Typical is the Ragged School at Gloucester.

To the following benefactors best thanks are tendered: to the Dean of Gloucester, for his bounty to the whole school in the summer, at Christmas and on Good Friday; to J. Reynolds, Esq., for Clothing given at Christmas to the most deserving boys; to the Rev. H.C. Minchin, for Soup given weekly during the winter.⁴³

At Wellington Street, Stockport the 'Tradesmen of the town' were 'most especially and emphatically' thanked.⁴⁴ It was common for tradesmen to give furniture or wood to the schools, and to make small repairs free of charge. The shopkeepers often took collecting boxes for the schools. This was recorded in some detail and it is obvious that the committees of ragged schools firmly believed that a good example fostered financial generosity.

The major expenditure of the schools occurred in four areas. The first was payment made to teaching staff. Much teaching was of a voluntary nature, even when Sunday schools extended their work to weekday evenings and taught secular subjects. Yet it was impossible to continue a day school with voluntary teachers over any period of time. The payments made to the teachers were usually below those in the National Schools, though there were variations outside London. Schools of the London Ragged School Union usually paid their male teachers £70 to £75 and their female ones £45.⁴⁵

41. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.7.

42. Ibid., p.7.

43. Gloucester Ragged School Annual Report, 1871, p.4.

44. Stockport Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, p.7.

45. Report of the Select Committee on the Education of Destitute Children, Q.658.

Originally it had proposed £50 p.a.(46), which it eventually raised to £75 in the case of Oxford Street Ragged School.⁴⁷ Ashley thought that this was too small if the Committee wanted an efficient man. It was agreed that if the teacher discharged his duties satisfactorily then the sum could be raised to £100 p.a. after the first six months.⁴⁸ However, the financial pressures on school committees held salaries down. The London pattern was not uniformly followed in the rest of the country. Committee minutes show that each school assessed its own needs and evaluated them independently. Even within the same town there was variation. In Southampton the Master of St. George's Place, Houndwell, received £70 p.a.(49), while at Lower Canal Walk Ragged School the Master received £80 p.a.⁵⁰ £80 was also the figure offered at Bristol, though its Mistress was only given £13 p.a., with the certainty that it 'would be made up to £25 p.a. by private donations'.⁵¹ Bradford Ragged School offered one of the highest salaries at £100 p.a.(52) and Stockport one of the lowest at £50 p.a. for their Masters.⁵³ The importance of salaries is best seen when set against the total expenditure of the schools. At Stockport salaries accounted for nearly half of the outgoings(54), at York, Liverpool and Newcastle it was about a fifth (55,56,57)

46. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1846, Nov.17.

47. Ibid., Nov. 23rd.

48. Ibid., Nov 23rd.

49. St.George's Place Ragged School, Houndwell, Southampton, Annual Report, 1852, p.18.

50. Lower Canal Walk Ragged School, Southampton, Annual Report, 1852, p.12.

51. St. James's Back Ragged School, Bristol, Annual Report, 1848, p.14.

52. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1857, p.14

53. Stockport Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, p.19. These two examples in Notes 52 and 53 indicate the salary range, though exceptional cases are found outside it, e.g. Gun Street Ragged School, Ancoats, Manchester, Annual Report, 1864, p.6, indicates a salary of £39.19s9d. for their Master.

54. Ibid. , p. 2.

55. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.13.

56. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, p.36.

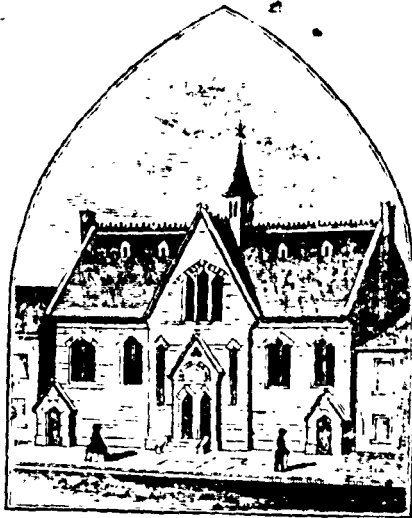
57. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School for Boys Annual Report, 1849, p.10.

THE RAGGED SCHOOL, CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY,
KENTISH TOWN, 1861.

Source:

The Builder, May 4th, 1861.

County Hall,
London.



**THE NEW RAGGED SCHOOL - CHURCH
OF HOLY TRINITY, KENTISH TOWN.**

THIS new building, of which we give a slight illustration above, is now being completed, and will be publicly opened by the Lord Bishop of London on Friday next, the 10th instant. It is built entirely of brick, with string-courses and arches of varied colours. The interior consists of one lofty room, nearly 70 feet in length by 40 feet wide: it will be used for Divine service on Sundays, and is capable of accommodating 800 people. On week-days a temporary division will be placed across the centre of the room, and schools for boys and girls thus formed for over 300 of each.

The building has been erected from the designs of Mr. Moore, of Walbrook; and the contract was taken at 535*l.*, by Messrs. Manley & Rogers, of Hartland-road, Kentish-town. The greater portion of the money has been already subscribed, but about 200*l.* will be required to meet all the necessary outlay for the working of the schools.

Situate in Ferdinand-place, Hampstead-road, in the very centre of the poorest part of a poor parish, this school-church must prove a blessing to the neighbourhood; and when we find the opening will be supported by the Bishop of London, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Ebury, Sir Morton Peto, Mr. Robert Hanbury, Mr. Joseph Payne, and numerous other warm friends of the ragged-school movement, there seems little doubt that the small sum now required will be soon subscribed.

BUILDER. 4-5-1861

and at Bradford, Cheltenham and Brighton a third.^{58,59,60.}

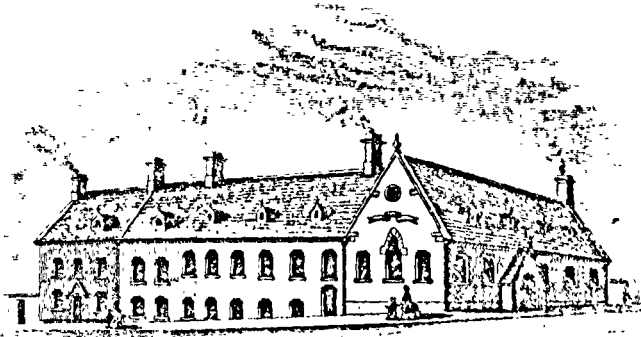
The second area concerned the provision of the schools themselves. Lord Ashley said in 1847: 'We are dealing in nothing but palliatives'.⁶¹ Many of the early schools were indeed no more than the most temporary stop-gap measures. Treasurers' accounts in the annual reports support the view that financial provision for the hiring of early schools was slight. Some schools indeed were offered temporary premises without charge. Weymouth Street Ragged School, London, took place in a six-stall stable and a double coach house loaned gratuitously for three and a half years.⁶² Many schools started for a rent of less than £12 p.a. The first school in York cost £6 p.a.⁽⁶³⁾, that in Newcastle £5 p.a.⁶⁴ St.John's Ragged School, Brighton, paid £10 p.a.⁽⁶⁵⁾ and Agar Town, St.Pancras, £11 p.a.⁽⁶⁶⁾, while Sheffield for the 'rent of temporary schools' gave only £4 p.a.⁶⁷ Schools usually found that the first premises were inadequate and were faced with raising sufficient capital to expand. A few had quite exceptional success. Twenty years after the initial rent of £5 Newcastle Ragged School's Treasurer was able to record:

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58. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1857, p.14
59. Cheltenham Ragged School Annual Report, 1861, p.8.
60. Dorset Street Ragged School, Brighton, Annual Report, 1873, p.8.
61. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1847, May 18th. Cf. Manchester and Salford Sunday Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1860, p.7, 'The rooms in which the schools are held consist chiefly of garrets and old workshops, whilst others were formerly used as dancing saloons, socialist halls, etc.'
62. Ibid., 1847, May 7th.
63. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.13.
64. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School for Boys Annual Report, 1848, p.12.
65. St.John's Ragged School, Brighton, Annual Report, 1869, p.11.
66. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1845, Nov.20th.
67. Sheffield Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, p.16.

DRAWING AND PLAN OF
BRADFORD RAGGED SCHOOL,
REBECCA STREET, 1864.

Source:

Bradford Public Library.

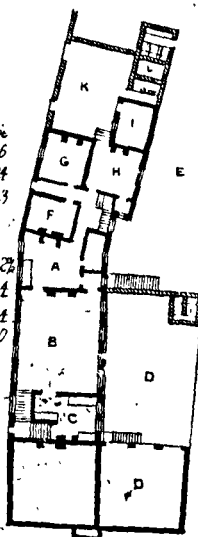


RAGGED SCHOOLS, NEAR THE INFIRMARY, REBECCA ST. BRADFORD.

G. KNOWLES & W. WILCOCK, ARCHITECTS
1884.

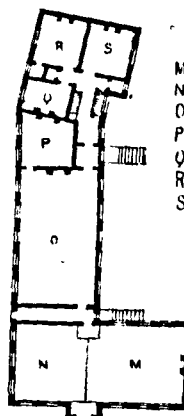
BASEMENT FLOOR

| | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|
| A | Cooking Kitchen, | 17 x 16 |
| B | Dining Room, | 33 x 24 |
| C | Bath Room, | 18 x 13 |
| D | Girls' Playground, | |
| E | Boys' Playground, | |
| F | Committee Room, | 14 x 12 |
| G | Parlour, | 15 x 14 |
| H | Living Room, | 15 x 14 |
| I | Wash Kitchen, | 14 x 10 |
| K | Masters Yard, | |
| L | Conveniences, | |



FIRST FLOOR

| | | |
|---|----------------|---------|
| M | Girls' School, | 30 x 24 |
| N | Boys' School, | 24 x 21 |
| O | Boys' School, | 21 x 24 |
| P | Class Room, | 21 x 16 |
| Q | Bed Room, | 14 x 12 |
| R | Bed Room, | 14 x 14 |
| S | Bed Room, | 15 x 14 |



TOP FLOOR

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Bed Room, | 29 x 14 |
| Bed Room, | 24 x 15 |
| Bed Room, | 17 x 15 |

| | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. | |
|-----------------------------|------|----|----|------|----|----|----|
| 1863 - Building - | | | | | | | |
| W. Gibson, Contractor | 1752 | 3 | 10 | | | | |
| Lawson and Son, Painting | 81 | 3 | 2 | | | | |
| G. Ratcliffe, Plumber | 65 | 17 | | | | | |
| W. B. Wilkinson, Plasterer | 17 | 14 | 9 | | | | |
| Foggin and Signey, Wirework | 8 | 18 | 6 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | 1920 | 17 | 3 | 68 |

The new school, with fittings and furniture, in fact cost £2454. 3s.2d. 69
Other early ragged schools secured premises for a rental of between £10 and £50 p.a., and this was a more typical range. Queen Street Ragged School, Salford, paid £20 p.a.(70), the same as Golden Lane(71) and Mortimer Street Schools.72 Lower Canal Walk School, Southampton, was obtained for £28 p.a.(73) and a former public house in Westminster used as the Old Pye Street Ragged School for £36 p.a.74. The schools in Oxford Street, London(75) and Bradford(76) used more substantial premises which included accommodation for the master and paid £50 p.a. Few schools rented for more than this at their commencement.

The value of the cheap rentals was offset in most cases by the amount which had to be spent to enable classes to be held in these premises. One of the first major financial tasks of the London Ragged School Union was to arrange a system of grants to schools to help them to make improvements. Although the Lamb and Flag Court School, London, cost £14 p.a., the alterations which had to be made before it could start cost £150.77 The school

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68. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Annual Report, 1863, p.20
69. Ibid. Cf. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool. Its first building in 1848 was rented for £24 p.a. (Annual Report, 1849, p.3). By 1851 it has expanded and offered facilities which cost £100.14s. p.a. to rent (Annual Report, 1852, p.52).
70. Queen Street Ragged School, Salford, Annual Report, 1856, p.10.
71. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1846, Jan.2nd.
72. Ibid., 1845, Nov.7th.
73. Lower Canal Walk Ragged School, Southampton, Annual Report, 1852, p.12.
74. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1846, Nov.17th.
75. Ibid., 1846, Nov. 9th.
76. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, pp.3-4.
77. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1845, March 7th.

BLOCK PLAN OF PART OF THE TOWN OF BRADFORD, BY JOHN HART,
LITHOGRAPHED AND PUBLISHED BY S.O. BAILEY, 1861.
RAGGED SCHOOL IS SHOWN OFF CROPPER LANE.

Source:

Bradford Public Library.



which was started under one of the arches of Greenwich railway was even cheaper at £6 p.a., but £35 was required 'for fitting it up'.⁷⁸ The larger and more successful schools realised the limitations imposed by a rental system and contemplated either the outright purchase of their schools or the erection of new buildings suited to their purposes. Hull Ragged School bought three houses in Mill Street for £416. 9s.1d. and paid a further £302.12s.2d. to convert and furnish them for the children in 1848.⁷⁹ This compares with the new buildings which were erected at Leeds for £800 without furniture or fittings.⁸⁰ A year later Gun Street Ragged School, Ancoats, felt that £500 would enable a new school to be built for its pupils which would be 'plain, substantial and convenient'.⁸¹ This was very cheap and more typical of the cost was that put on Bradford Ragged School at £827 (82) or the price of the new ragged school in Sheffield - £960. ⁸³

It is interesting to compare these prices with those paid by School Boards after 1870 where new buildings were required for their pupils.

'Leeds

Huddersfield

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Green Lane | £10,228 |
| Bewerley Street | £ 3,651 |
| Burley Road | £ 5,880 |

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Moldgreen | £8,407 |
| Beaumont Street | £6,550 |
| Stile Common | £6,135 ' 84 |

The comparison cannot be strictly accurate. The Board Schools were usually for larger numbers of children than the ragged schools and the date is somewhat later. Further, there was considerable variation in the cost of comparable Board Schools according to the part of the country examined - Huddersfield and Leeds are, however, good 'average' urban areas to take.⁸⁵

78. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1845, March 7th.

79. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.11.

80. Leeds Ragged School Annual Report, 1865, p.17.

81. Gun Street Ragged School, Ancoats, Manchester, Annual Report, 1866, p.5.

82. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, pp.3-4.

83. Sheffield Ragged School Annual Report, 1856, p.17.

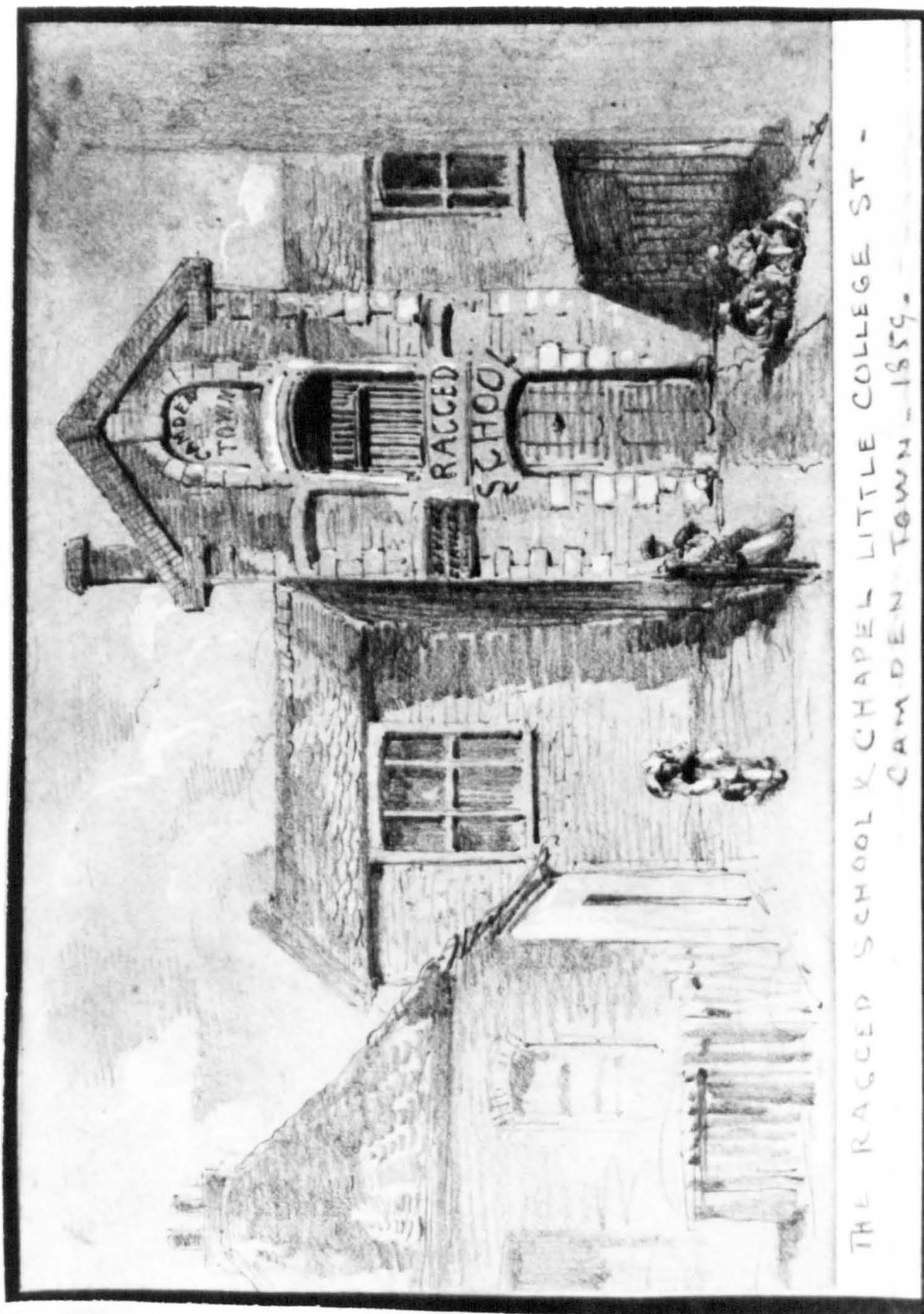
84. Huddersfield Weekly News, 1873, Jan. 16th.

85. Huddersfield School Board Triennial Report, 1877, p.27.

THE RAGGED SCHOOL,
CAMDEN TOWN, 1859.

Source:

County Hall, London.



THE RAGGED SCHOOL CHAPEL LITTLE COLLEGE ST -
CAMDEN TOWN - 1859.

Allowing these considerations, there is a sufficient gap between the figures to indicate the extreme economy of the committee of the ragged schools and the sparse provision made for their children. The same conclusion is evident from a comparison of the average cost of sending children to Board and ragged schools. The cost of maintaining each child in a Board School per annum was

| | | |
|-----------|--------------|----|
| Bolton | £l. 19s. 7d. | |
| London | £l. 17s. 4d. | |
| Liverpool | £l. 12s. 9d. | |
| Oldham | £l. 8s. 1d. | 86 |

The average cost of sending a child to Bradford Ragged School was £l.5s.6d. p.a. 87 And this price included the provision of food, clothes and dormitory accommodation which would not occur in the Board's figures.

The third area concerned the day-to-day running costs of schools involved in cleaning, effecting small repairs, heating the rooms and providing suitable materials for the children. The fact which is immediately striking here is the disparity between the two aspects. Some schools' accounts, e.g. at Sheffield, Southampton and Gloucester, show no expenditure on books, slates and writing equipment. 88, 89, 90. In others, it was so small as simply to be included under 'sundries' or 'establishment expenses' in Treasurers' reports. When figures are clear, the contrast is sharp. The domestic expenses of Halifax Ragged School in 1857 were £58.3s.1ld. and the amount spent on books and stationery was £3.8s.2d.9l 'Household expenses'

86. Huddersfield School Board Triennial Report, 1879, p.27.

87. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, p.6. Bradford is in most respects a typical ragged school.

88. Sheffield Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, p.12. Fuel, repair and cleaning costs were £17.3s.0d., about one-sixth of the total expenditure per annum.

89. St. George's Place, Houndwell, Southampton, Ragged School Annual Report, 1868, p.10. Fuel and cleaning costs were £19.15s.9½d., about one-sixth of the total expenditure.

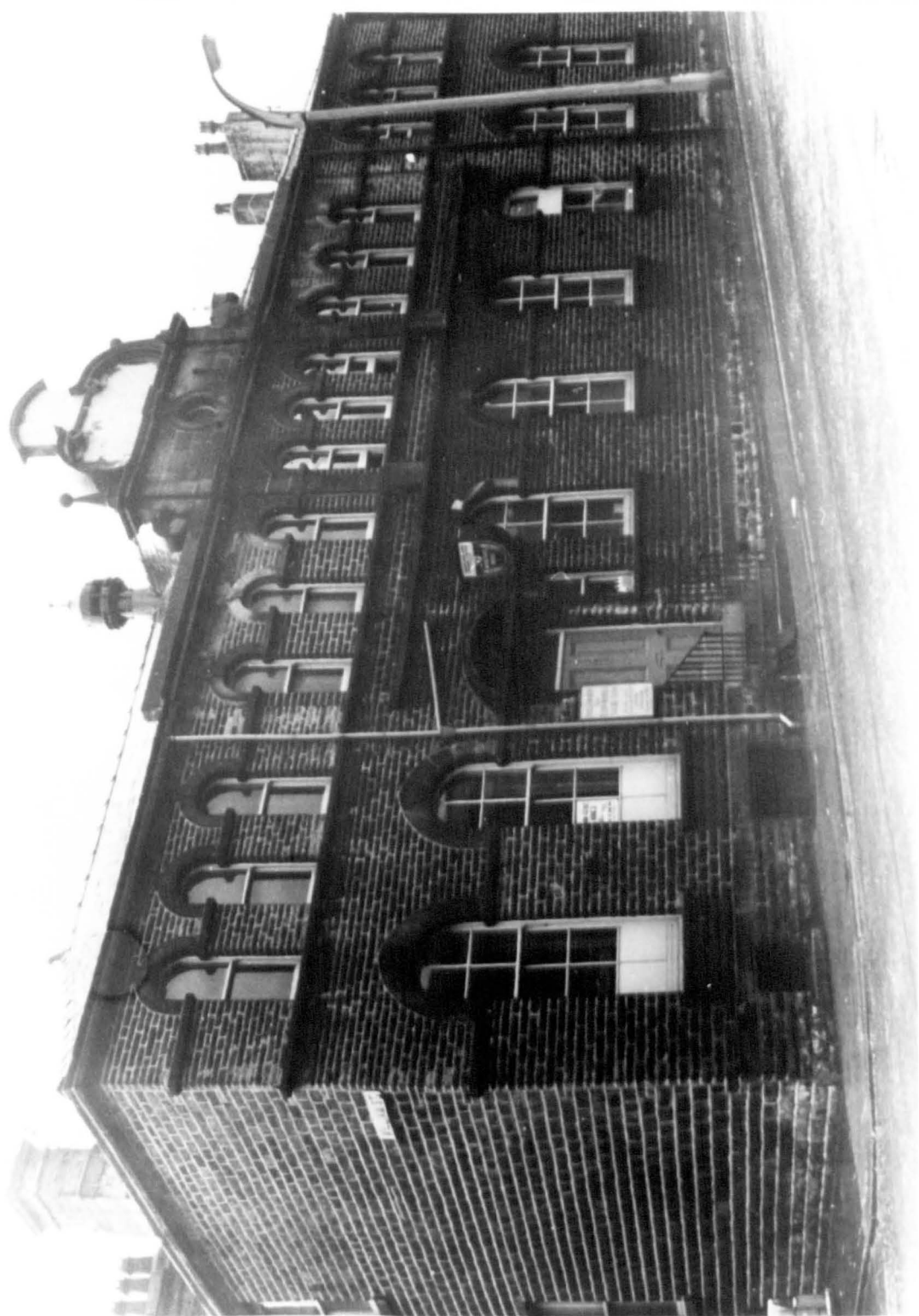
90. Gloucester Ragged School Annual Report, 1865, p.9.

91. Halifax Ragged School Annual Report, 1858, p.15. Even this figure is too high, as 'stationery' also included materials required by committee members for meetings and the cost of paper for pamphlets publicising the school.

HUDDERSFIELD RAGGED SCHOOL,
41 FITZWILLIAM STREET,
HUDDERSFIELD.

Source:

Huddersfield Public Library.



at Bradford amounted to £57.2s.3d. in 1854, 'educational expenses' were £4.15s.8d.⁹² In the two years 1859 and 1860 Cheltenham Ragged School, with between 208 and 210 pupils, spent £1.10s.3d. on books.⁹³ During the first year of its foundation Newcastle Ragged School, providing for fifty boys, had domestic expenses of nearly £100 and spent £3.11s.1d. on books and paper.⁹⁴ These figures indicate the nature of the educational philosophy of the subscribers and managers. The moral and spiritual reformation of the children, the attention given to acceptable social customs and personal cleanliness, the provision of food and clothing, with the appropriate thanksgiving for it, the habituation of children to habits of industry did not require numerous books. The Bible was the key to the ragged education. It was available at reduced prices for the children and the evidence is that schools accepted it with alacrity.⁹⁵ Other books and materials used in the school were purchased in very small quantities or more usually donated by well-wishers. Reports list the items received and show how dependent the children were on such benefactions. Typical were Newcastle, where the managers recorded their thanks to 'Messrs. Annandale - a Ream of Foolscap'(⁹⁶), 'Mr. Mark Lambert - Copy Books, value £2, British and Foreign School Society, Four Dozen Lesson Books and One Set of Arithmetical Tables'(⁹⁷), and York, where the school received from 'York Auxiliary Bible Society - 12 Bibles and 20 Testaments, Mr. Hope, Castlegate - copy books, the Religious Tract Society - a grant of tracts'.⁹⁸

92. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1854, p.8.

93. Cheltenham Ragged School Annual Report, 1861, p.8.

94. Newcastle Ragged School for Boys Annual Report, 1848, p.12.

95. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1847, May 18th.

96. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School for Boys Annual Report, 1848, p.15.

97. Ibid., 1851, p.16.

98. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.25. Cf. Oxford Ragged School Annual Report, 1865, p.4: 'Mr. Huckwell, assisted by some others of the Teachers and Friends, still supplies the children as before with The Band of Hope Review gratuitously, of which 2,052 copies have been distributed during the past year, and with Bibles, Testaments and Hymn Books, for a very small payment, being under cost price'.

The small proportion of schools which fed their children faced a fourth area of commitment which imposed a heavy strain on their financial resources. Most schools at some time or another during their history seem to have attempted to give something to their hungry children. It was often at an informal level and usually sporadic. Charter Street Ragged School, Manchester, gave breakfast once a week to their 300 pupils, 'Many of whom were found waiting on a cold winter's morning hours before the doors opened'.⁹⁹ During 1833 Fowler Square Ragged School, Manchester, distributed 2,000 breakfasts.¹⁰⁰ Its secretary commented:

We cannot refrain, however, from describing the ludicrous part of the proceedings, which demonstrates more forcibly than would a volume of argument the kind of homes the majority of the children come from. It is with regard to the articles brought to hold the coffee - some bringing preserving jars, others jugs, cans and various other utensils of a more non-descript character.¹⁰¹

A Bread Fund organized in Sheffield Ragged School made available three shillingsworth of bread a day to the hungry in the school.

Were it not for this provision, many children would be entirely without food and be compelled to beg.¹⁰²

Few schools had the resources to sustain these efforts, which were often the results of individual benefactions or special collections.¹⁰³ Where this work was continued - usually in the larger and better organized schools - the Treasurer's Accounts show the level of finance required. . . . Barnsley gave its children a mid-day meal 'chiefly of bread and soup' which cost £56.19s.11d. p.a., a third of the school's total expenditure.¹⁰⁴ The proportion was the same at Leeds, where in 1860 £282.7s.6d. was spent on food for the mid-day meal.¹⁰⁵ 'Bread for the year' cost the Lurgan Street

99. E.g. Charter Street Ragged School, Manchester, Annual Report, 1879, p.7.

100. Fowler Square Ragged School, Manchester, Annual Report, 1883, p.9.

101. Ibid., p.9.

102. Sheffield Ragged School Annual Report, 1856, p.11.

103. E.g. At Harper Street Ragged School, Toxteth Park, Liverpool, '30 orphans receive a dish of soup twice a week: the gift of a lady'.
Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

104. J.H.Burland, Annals of Barnsley, Vol.4, p.475.

105. Leeds Ragged School Annual Report, 1860, p.19.

Ragged School, Dublin £142.5s.7d., a quarter of its income for 1848.106 At Newcastle

In order to lessen the temptation to beg or steal, each boy was presented, during the first three months, with a pennyworth of bread and cheese daily. In the course of his visits to parents, the master soon discovered that a more ample allowance of food was required . . . The Committee readily consented to add a breakfast of bread and milk to the simple dinner already provided . . . The more cheerful and healthy appearance of the children is considered by the Committee an ample justification of the increased expense incurred by these changes. 107

The cost approached a half of the total expenditure in 1848.108 Of the twenty-seven schools in the Liverpool Ragged School Union in 1851 only two provided three meals a day.109 One of them, Soho Street Ragged School, noticed that there was a

change in the physical condition of those who have been there any length of time

and credited 'regularity in their diet' and the 'allowance of plain and nourishing food for their support'.110 The cost was £170.8s.4d., nearly a third of the income of the school for the year. Six years later the proportion was the same, though the cost had risen to £400.2s.8d.111 The accounts looked unhealthy and the Treasurer blamed first of all 'the high price of provisions during the past year'.112 It was a situation which was typical of larger establishments and often prompted committees to discuss the possibility of the government aid involved in certification as an industrial school. Institutions attempting a high degree of charitable relief - some even attempted to clothe their children besides feeding them - needed a more reliable source of income than donations and small subscriptions as a basis for planning their activities.

106. Lurgan Street Ragged School, Dublin, Annual Report, 1849, p.15.

107. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School for Boys Annual Report, 1848, p.4.

108. Ibid. , p.4.

109. Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

110. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, pp.10,12.

111. Ibid., 1855, p.14.

112. Ibid., 1855, p.7.

The income of the schools was based on the annual subscriptions and the donations received by the Treasurer or his collectors. The desire of most schools to expand their activities and provide better facilities placed a constant pressure on the finances. Ragged schools for boys were normally the first to be organized but, like Newcastle-upon-Tyne Committee, members were 'convinced that their duty is but half discharged until a Ragged School is provided for this class of girl'.¹¹³ Most schools wanted to foster industrial pursuits but the expense inhibited most from successfully developing the system. A typical comment is

The committee want to admit of the industrial system of education being pursued in the school; their present accommodation is not, however, sufficient.¹¹⁴

After only a year of activity Bradford Committee wished that

. . . a playground should be provided for the children. As several of the scholars are orphans, their comfort would be greatly promoted if a dormitory could be provided . . .¹¹⁵

Many of the rooms and halls hired for the first schools were inadequate and it was common for committees to attempt to change their location within the first couple of years of foundation. At Gravesend

. . . it soon became evident that the school was unfitted for the crowds meeting and was prejudicial to the health of all connected with it. The Committee then sought for more commodious and suitable premises.¹¹⁶

The urgent need for greater financial resources forced committees to consider their priorities very carefully. It is the lesson of the reports and particularly the accounts that they quickly realised that many of their ideals were impracticable financially. After the initial flush of success within the first ten years a pattern had been set for each institution which was only exceptionally broken. The first managers of schools saw greater charity as the solution to their difficulties. Fervid appeals were made,

113. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.8.

114. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, p.5.

115. Ibid., 1856, p.4.

116. The Gravesend Reporter, November 30, 1861.

elaborate systems of collecting by streets were organised, bazaars and autumn fairs were held and an inventive assortment of money-making ventures was attempted. However, these only affected the income of the school marginally after the initial period of expansion. Later managers simply thanked the public for their support and 'prayed for its continuance'. There were notable exceptions to this generalisation but it is broadly the case that financial expansion ceased after a period of five to ten years following the foundation. Committees still saw, as at Swansea Ragged School, 'the immensity of the task facing promoters and the vital need for the continuance and extension of their efforts'.¹¹⁷ The finances were too limited, however, for radical or large-scale plans. A pattern of sharply rising income reaching a plateau after a few years is typical of the finances of a majority of schools.

Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool

Annual Income

| | | |
|------|-------|-----|
| 1850 | £598 | |
| 1852 | £907 | |
| 1853 | £1080 | |
| 1854 | £1097 | |
| 1855 | £1126 | |
| 1856 | £1299 | |
| 1857 | £1785 | 118 |

The income of this school stabilised under the £2000 level, as did that of Leeds Ragged School, which started in 1859 at £929 and reached £1880 six years later.¹¹⁹ Many of the smaller schools were similar to Bradford, which saw its income start at £100 in 1853 to reach £818 in 1860 and remain under £1000 p.a.¹²⁰

117. Back Lane Ragged School, Swansea, Annual Report, 1858, p.6.

118. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Reports, 1850, 1853, 1854, 1856, 1857, Treasurers' Accounts.

119. Leeds Ragged School Annual Reports, 1860 and 1866, Treasurers' Accounts.

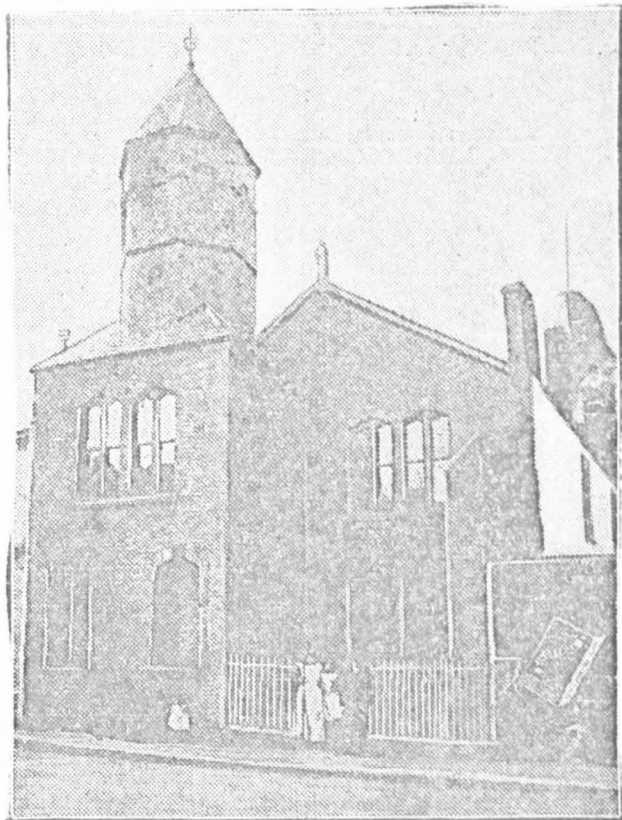
120. Bradford Ragged School Annual Reports, 1853-1860. Treasurer's Accounts.

SWANSEA RAGGED SCHOOL.

Source:

South Wales Evening Post,
November 29th, 1947.

Swansea Public Library.



OLD RAGGED SCHOOL: This was replaced by the modern building on a site provided by the Corporation in 1912.

The income of schools was often much smaller. The difficulties in showing a pattern here revolve around the impossibility of making valid comparisons. Some schools opened on Sunday only, others on various evenings, some on certain afternoons only, a few in the morning, some on one or two full days a week and various combinations of these times. Such schools were often ephemeral or showed little inclination to expand activities in such a way as to place a heavy burden on finances. They are found in all ragged school unions, though Liverpool had some of the poorest. There the annual expenditure of Cleveland School, Cambell Street School and Harper Street School was £50, that of St. Simon's in Bolton Street, and Edge Hill in Wavertree Road and Vauxhall School in Gasgoyne Street only £10 p.a.¹²¹ St. Simon's, like many of the smallest schools, was organised and superintended by its founder, the Rev. R.J.Connor. It was situated

in the midst of brothels, and the children in the streets are subject to all the demoralising influences of those dens of iniquity; the attendance of Teachers is very irregular and the work consequently much retarded.¹²²

Such bare remarks hide many efforts of individual self-giving but cannot disguise the financial difficulties which insufficient support created for such tiny institutions.

The ragged schools saw the key to their financial problems in the annual subscription system. All schools echoed the view of the Committee of Hull Ragged School.

The amount of contributions to the institution is large almost beyond expectation; but as fully two-thirds of the sum subscribed consists of donations, and as the continued efficiency of the schools altogether depends on the amount of annual subscriptions, the Committee trust that the gentlemen . . . will renew their efforts and endeavour to obtain such a subscription list as will place the school on a permanent and efficient footing.¹²³

In the event, their view was ill-founded economically, though praiseworthy theologically. The Treasurer's reports are clear that the largest factor in the income of any school was the subscription account. The only ex-

121. Statistics of the Ragged Schools in Liverpool, 1851.

122. Ibid.

123. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, p.10.

ceptions were during the first two years of a school's existence and, on occasions, when special appeals were made for building funds.¹²⁴ The fourth annual report of Hull Ragged School shows the general picture. Of a total income of £419.17s.8d., £326.8s.10d. was derived from subscriptions and £56.6s.2d. given as donations.¹²⁵ It was common for donations to make up between one-fifth and one-sixth of a school's income. At Gloucester, in 1865, the donations amounted to £21 in an income of £179 (126), while in 1871 it amounted to only £9 as against subscriptions of £115 in a total of £246.¹²⁷

Other sources of income made only a modest contribution to the financial health of the schools. It was hoped that the industrial pursuits of the children would provide a considerable amount. In their plans for Old Pye Street Ragged School, Westminster, the London Ragged School Union hoped that their estimate of £590 for the opening of a school with well-organised industrial classes for fifty boys would be reduced to £500 'by the proceeds of the boys' labour'.¹²⁸ The difficulties of finding suitable premises for such work and making the necessary alterations, in providing work appropriate to the children which could be assured of a ready sale in the school locality and in making an initial outlay for machines and materials proved insuperable for most committees. The small number of schools which did organise an effective industrial education over a period of years usually chose to accept certification as industrial ragged schools and thus availed themselves of government grants. The range of variation can be seen by contrasting the £6.17s.0d. received by Hull Ragged School 'by industrial earnings' in an income of £419.17s.8d. with that of Soho Street School,

124. E.g. Halifax Ragged School Annual Report, 1858. During its first year donations to the school totalled £114, while annual subscriptions amounted to £99.

125. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1853, p.6.

126. Gloucester Ragged School Annual Report, 1865, p.7.

127. Ibid., 1871, p.9.

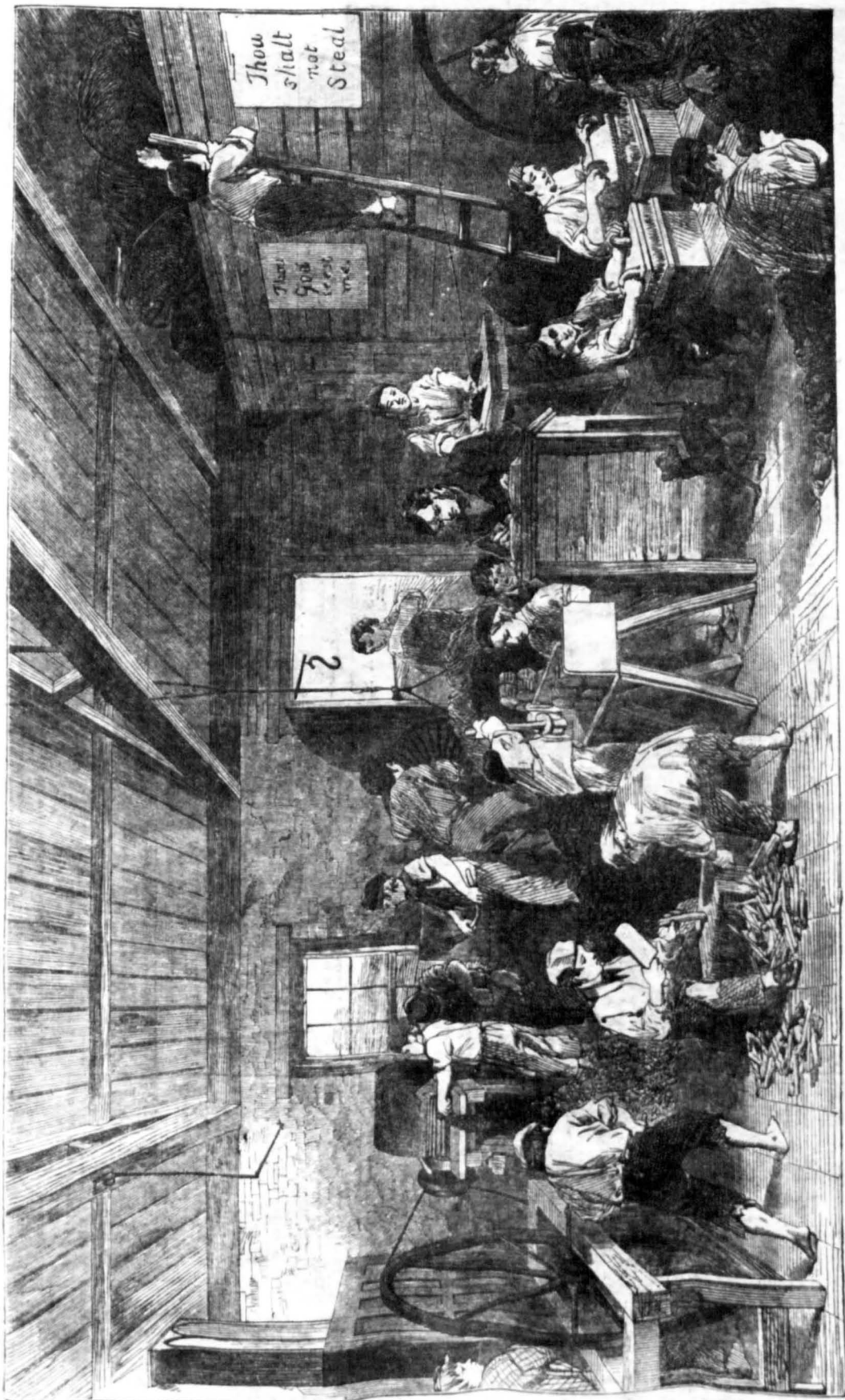
128. London Ragged School Union Minute Book, 1846, Nov. 9th.

BROOK STREET RAGGED AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL,
HENRY STREET,
HAMPSTEAD ROAD.

Source:

The Illustrated London News,
December 17th, 1853.

County Hall, London.



BEYOND STUDENT RAGGED SCHOOL—THE NEW RAGGED

Liverpool.129 Its work account in the total income of £1,785.8s.10d. was

| <u>Work Account</u> | | | |
|--|------|-----|------------|
| Received for work done by the children | £243 | 5s | 8d. |
| Cost of materials | £122 | 17s | 10d. |
| Less value of stock on hand | £ 17 | 12s | 0d. |
| <hr/> | | | |
| Actual profit | £137 | 19s | 10d. ' 130 |

It was much easier to find 'industrial occupations' for the girls. Sewing and knitting and dressmaking formed the core of their activities. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School for Girls included the making of bags, cloths, stockings, petticoats, neckerschiefs, shirts, bedgowns and chemises, curtains, pillow-cases, towels, night caps and pinafores. They also hemmed towels, sheets and blankets. The profit of £21 was made in the year 1866, when the total income of the school was at £2000. 131 This is representative of the best. In many schools the girls' work fetched so little that committees decided to concentrate on the preparation and mending of the children's own clothes and usually those of the adjoining boys' ragged school.

The annual reports of a majority of schools contained a form of bequest and it was ever the hope of the management committees that large legacies would relieve them of the main financial burden of the schools. This rarely happened, though many schools did receive small amounts.132 As important as this source was that wide range of gifts in kind offered to the schools by well-wishers. Its usefulness and variety is well illustrated by examples from the 'Miscellaneous Contributions' List at Stockport Ragged School for 1856. 133

129. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1852, p.6. Cf. Halifax Ragged School Annual Report, 1858, p.15, 'Earnings of boys at bag making, £1. 4s. 0d.'

130. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1852, p.13.

131. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School for Girls Annual Report, 1867, p.10.

132. E.g. St. John's Ragged School, Brighton, Annual Report, 1869, p.15, 'The late Lady Henley - £5'. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1860, p.7, 'Executrix of Rebecca Brady, £5', 'M.White's Legacy, £39. 2s. 10d.'

133. Stockport Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, pp.17-18.

Andrew, Mr. John - Flocks for Bedding
 Burn, Mrs. R. Scott - 12 Pairs of Clogs
 Fernley, Miss - Scripture Prints, Mottoes, Needles,
 Sewing Cotton, Worsted
 Friend, A - Scraps of leather for repairing Clogs,
 2 Cricket Bats
 Gouldthorpe, Mr. - 2 tons of coal
 Shaw, Mr. A.H. - 4 Historical Charts, 2 Reward Books,
 A treat on Shrove Tuesday
 Smith, Mr. H. - Hogshead for a temporary bath
 Smith, Mrs. T.R. - 1 Green Wool Bed Quilt
 Walthew, Mr. - 1 lb. of Grey Sewing Cotton
 Wild, Mrs. - Small wares

A final element in the income of a very few schools came from investments which were given to them or which they had purchased when income in a particular year exceeded needs. Bradford Ragged School made a prodigious effort in 1858 to raise capital by organising a Bazaar. It raised £2,290. 19s. 4d. for the school! The committee invested £2,000 in Corporation bonds at 4% and received an annual income of around £90 as the interest on this sum.¹³⁴ The interest from investments made by Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School totalled £32 p.a.¹³⁵

The economics of the ragged schools were based on a cascade of arbitrary charity; their structure was at root a system of efficiently dispensing it to the destitute. The intensification of work methods, very low wages and under-employment resulted in the chronic poverty of the parents of the ragged children. Economic solutions based on the greater participation of central government in the social and educational services were politically controversial. While a resolution to these problems was sought, private charity attempted to relieve the worst distress. The committees of the schools, wedded to voluntarism, believed that their problems lay in the capricious nature of charitable giving when, in fact, it was with the system of charity itself. Thus the worst of the old problems of the eighteenth century charity schools had appeared in a nineteenth century guise in the ragged schools.

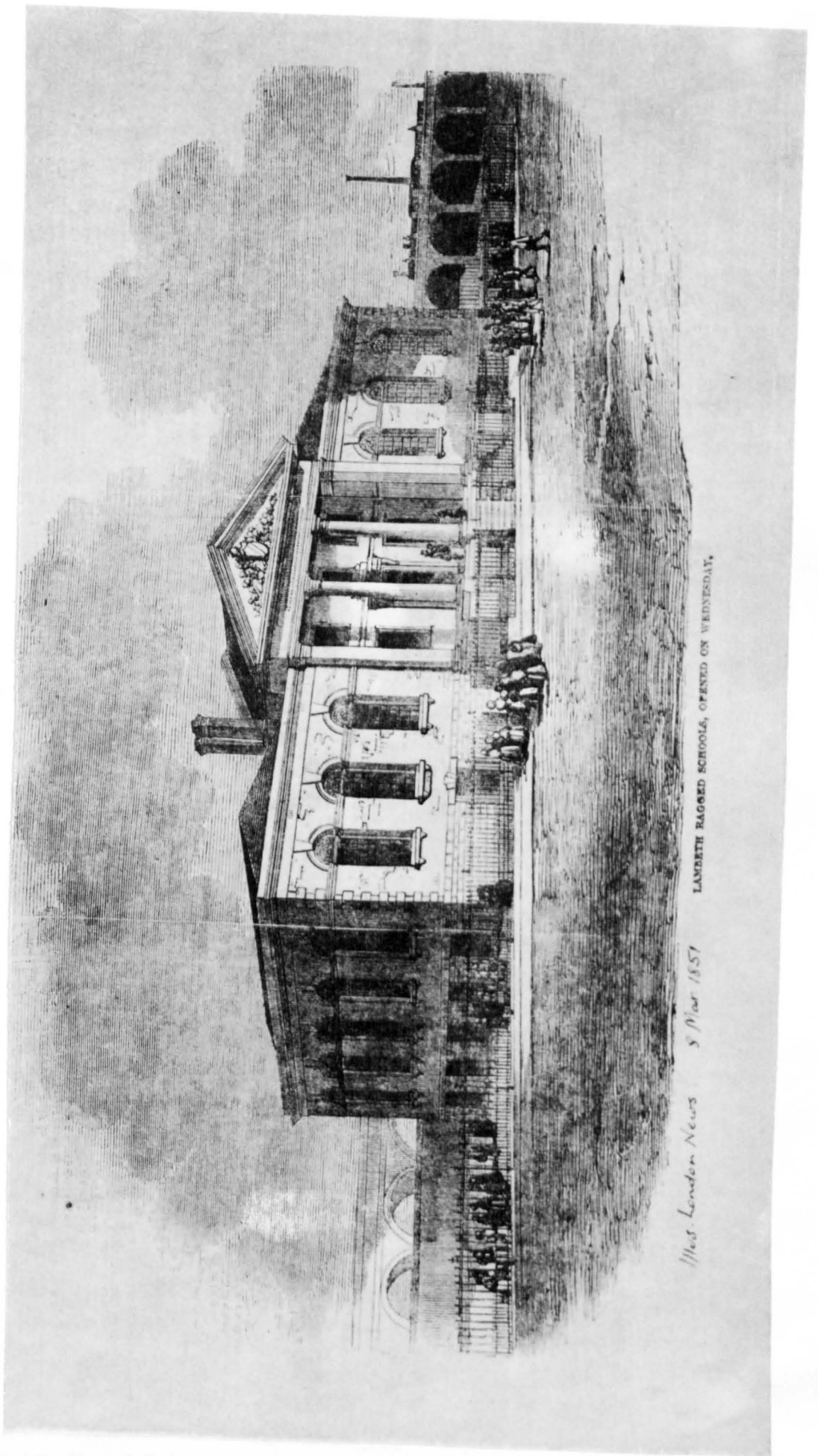
134. Bradford Ragged School Annual Report, 1858, p.10.

135. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Annual Report, 1867, p.19.

LAMBETH RAGGED SCHOOLS, NEWPORT STREET,
LAMBETH WALK.

Source:

Illustrated London News,
March 8th, 1851.



Mss. London News 8 Mar 1857 LAMBETH RAGGED SCHOOLS, OPENED ON WEDNESDAY.

CHAPTER 10

THE RAGGED SCHOOL EDUCATION

A. The Subjects of the Ragged School Education

The primacy of the evangelisation of the children who attended the ragged schools was affirmed by all the unions and the separate management committees. At the inception of the Liverpool Ragged School, Soho Street, it was put thus:

That the Word of God, alone, should be the subject of instruction, I presume no-one will attempt to dispute.¹

It was described as infidelity 'to hesitate to teach the revealed Word of the Living God'.²

In Dublin the 'Holy Scriptures' were 'the basis of instruction, portions of which are committed to memory'(3); Huddersfield School, dedicated to 'providing the benefits of a good common and evangelical Scriptural education', instructed its master that the education of its children was

to be based on the teaching of the truths of the Gospel, the Holy Bible (comprising the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in the Authorised Version only) (4);

the teaching at Gravesend was 'upon the broad principles of the Bible'(5); at Queen Street, Hulme, Manchester, the teaching was 'from the Word of God' and helped the children to understand

their duty to God and Man, and encouraged them in the practice of morality and religion.⁶

The association of a fundamentally religious education with the ragged

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1. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, p.31.
 2. Ibid., p.33.
 3. Lurgan Street Ragged School, Annual Report, 1849, p.9.
 4. Huddersfield Ragged School Rules, 1865, p.3.
 5. Gravesend Ragged School Annual Report, 1851, p.5.
 6. Queen Street Ragged School, Hulme, Manchester, Annual Report, 1865, p.3.

schools was so clear that it was sufficient for some schools to state simply that their children were

to be educated in the principles of the Ragged School Union.⁷

The religious teaching given in the schools was to be unsectarian.

There was general agreement upon this and it is mentioned in most sets of rules. Where it is not stated it is obviously assumed. Management committees were conscious of strong forces hostile to their voluntarist position, of religious party factions and of a government increasingly weary of the prolonged argument between the Establishment and Dissent. Their determination to keep sectarianism at bay was no empty formula. When framing their regulations and organising their institutions they were anxious to work in the spirit recommended by the Bishop of Manchester:

Let us not dispute on this or that plan, while in the meantime we are suffering souls to go perishing day after day.⁸

They dreaded the recurrence of the 'Edinburgh Controversy' which divided the loyalties of the supporters of the movement and threatened to spread beyond that community. It was an argument which had been raised in Dundee and Aberdeen as the ragged industrial schools were being promoted. It revolved around the question of whether the children of varying religious affiliations should be taught separately by their own ministers or priests, leaving the school to undertake the secular instruction. Dr. Guthrie's Ragged Schools in Edinburgh, it was felt by some, were being organised in a way which would necessarily exclude the children of the Roman Catholics.⁹ The meeting called by the Lord Provost was 'one of the largest and most respectable meetings ever held in that city'.¹⁰ At it the Protestant position was strongly argued by Dr. Guthrie and his supporters. They asserted

Religion is in this country interwoven with the secular instruction given in all such schools. But now it is for the first

7. Chapel Street Ragged School, Stratford, Annual Report, 1855, p.4.
8. Manchester Examiner and Times, April 14th, 1855.
9. T.Guthrie, Supplement to a Plea for Ragged Schools, 1849, p.7.
10. Edinburgh Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1848, p.9.

time proposed to make secular instruction the basis of the system, and religion a kind of appendix or supplement

and further:

there was a common ground upon which we might have conducted these schools without offending the opinions of Protestants or Roman Catholics. 11

Both points were elegantly denied by Lord Murray, the spokesman for the Catholics in a well-reasoned and eirenic speech. The Protestant thinking carried the day and there was 'loud and prolonged applause' as Dr. Guthrie concluded a speech full of emotion and cheap sentimentality with his dramatic peroration:

I shall bind the Bible to the Ragged Schools, and, committing this cause to the care of Providence, there I take my stand. 12

The problem was acute in Edinburgh for, although the Catholics formed about one-sixth of the total population, they numbered about half of the pool of destitute children for whom the schools were intended. They saw no chance of working within the prevailing system and organised the Edinburgh United Industrial School. It averred from its foundation that it was 'of the class commonly known as Ragged Schools'.¹³ However, its Constitution and Rules showed the fundamental point on which it differed from other such schools.

3. The Religious Instruction shall be distinct from the ordinary Education given to the children. Protestant children shall receive Religious Instruction from Protestants only, and Catholic children shall receive Religious Instruction from Catholics only, in separate rooms of the school . . .¹⁴

To Protestant eyes this appeared to be 'the most sectarian system that could be adopted'.¹⁵ Schools formed during the period of this controversy rooted themselves in the Protestant positions. At Liverpool it was felt to 'be a most evil thing' that religion should be 'separated from the ordinary

11. Report of a Discussion Regarding Ragged Schools, 1847, p.27.

12. Ibid., p.37.

13. Anon., The United Industrial School of Edinburgh. A Sketch of Its Origin, Progress and Practical Influence, 1851 p.4.

14. Ibid., p.41.

15. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, p.31.

LAMBETH RAGGED SCHOOL FOR BOYS IN
JURSTON STREET, OAKLEY STREET, LAMBETH.

Source:

Illustrated London News,
April 11th, 1848.

Lambeth Public Library.



THE LAMPUETH "FAGGED SCHOOL."—(BOYS).

and common affairs of life'.¹⁶ What was a purely local affair threw a shadow over the Ragged School Movement quite disproportionate to its real importance. That this was so was probably due to the national scenario. After 1832 the Catholics' cause had strengthened. They had new opportunities, new converts, bishops, an Archbishop of Westminster and a resident Cardinal. The Tractarian struggle within the Church of England had focussed attention on Roman traditions. All this made evangelical Protestants very uneasy; their fear of Rome, however irrational and prejudiced, was real enough. They saw themselves in sharply defined colours, defending the citadel of truth against the Antichrist. Their influence was exerted by refusing to countenance what was plainly Roman in doctrine. The 'separate' ragged school was an educational corollary of such doctrine.

Although Religious Instruction was the primary concern within the school, this did not lead to the exclusion of other subjects. Schools usually offered some tuition in reading, writing and arithmetic and, if an industrial class was possible, some instruction in simple domestic or labouring tasks. Typical of the aspirations of the schools was the 'Object' of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Society. It was:

The education in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and the Moral and Industrial training of the children whose poverty excludes their attendance at a superior school.¹⁷

Such a catalogue does not show how the teachers interpreted the wishes of the Managers, nor what weight was placed upon one subject relative to another. But the Committee at Hull was clearer than most in its affirmations.

Next to the moral and religious instruction of the children, the Committee attach the highest importance to their industrial training. One great object of this institution is to make the children trained within its walls religious, sober, honest, thrifty, hard-working members of society. Nothing less - nothing more. Of mere book learning, little beyond the art of reading fluently, writing legibly and accounting correctly is to be taught.¹⁸

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- 16. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, p.32.
 - 17. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Annual Report, 1843, p.10
 - 18. Hull Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.9.

LAMBETH RAGGED SCHOOL FOR GIRLS IN
JURSTON STREET, OAKELEY STREET, LAMBETH.

Source:

Illustrated London News,
April 11th, 1848.

Lambeth Public Library.



THE LAMBETH "RAGGED SCHOOL"—(GIRLS).

The twofold purpose of the ragged education served by such a curriculum is clear - conversion to the Christian faith and initiation into those patterns of behaviour suitable for the very poor. Such an educational theory, even by the standards of its own day, was both dogmatic and conservative. 'The Institutes of Popular Education', by a Leeds clergyman, Richard Hamilton, was widely read in ragged circles and commended as a valuable essay for evangelical teachers. He urged that the 'great and saving truths' of Christianity be the substance of the education of the youngest scholars. He wished them to be taught the doctrines of the Trinity, the Divine Incarnation, the Atonement, and Justification by Faith from the first.

The hold of these blessed verities on the mind cannot be too early given, and beautiful it is to see these young disciples trained to the simple confidence of those things 'which angels desire to look into'.¹⁹

The numerous cases given in the schools' annual reports testify to their adherence to this theory. Whether, in fact, ragged children between the ages of four and nine years died predicating their Christian beliefs, reciting texts, rehearsing their catechism or joyfully singing hymns is immaterial. The committees held that they did, the teachers claim to have witnessed it and the school visitors almost became inured to it.

The value of Hamilton's book for the ragged schools lay in the way he tackled the problem of the introduction of secular subjects in a curriculum designed to rescue and purify the souls of the children. He asserted directly that to base all knowledge on Christianity was absurd. In secular subjects true religion was the 'best motive and consecrating element'.²⁰

It was a position formerly recommended by the Bishop of London:

Religion ought to be made the groundwork of all education; its lessons should be interwoven with the whole tissue of instruction and its principles should regulate the entire system of discipline . . . But I believe that the lessons of religion will not be rendered less impressive or effectual by being interspersed with teaching of a different kind . . . I am persuaded that the youthful mind will recur with increased curiosity and intelligence to the great facts and truths, and precepts of holy writ, if it be enlarged and livened by an acquaintance with other branches of knowledge . . . It is desirable that they (children) should not be accustomed to consider that . . . it is difficult to reconcile a

19. R.W.Hamilton, The Institutes of Popular Education, 1846, p.68.

20. Ibid.. p.66.

due regard to the supreme importance of the one with a certain degree of laudable curiosity about the other.²¹

This natural movement from the sacred to the secular was permitted in ragged schools only when it became possible for the secular to point the return to the sacred. The books used in the schools and the magazines offered to the children show how morality and religion could be derived from natural history, geography, science and practical information about the everyday world. Hamilton's position was but a mild - and the practice of the ragged schools an even milder - reference to a controversy within educational theory which gathered momentum after 1830. It concerned the attempt to break away from that education which was principally centred on Religious Instruction. As the Ragged School Movement gathered momentum in the 1850s, most of the British and National schools had secular readers and the lists of the S.P.C.K. were being rapidly and drastically revised.²²

That religion and morality were the focal points in the ragged education, that secular subjects served the secondary purpose of illustrating evangelical truths is not apparent from the time-tables of the ragged schools. Mrs. Cornwallis, a spokeswoman for the ideal of ragged schools in their early days, on visiting an unnamed London school, found that:

Sixty or seventy boys and girls of the most squalid appearance are assembled in small groups around several well-dressed persons. They are reading or spelling, or perhaps tracing words or letters on their slates. . . . Presently the reading ceases, a gentleman mounts a kind of rostrum a little elevated above the children and addresses them. He explains the moral doctrines of Christianity, exhorts them to follow the example of Our Great Master. A prayer and a hymn sung by such of the children as are capable conclude the meeting.²³

The similarity with the Sunday schools is obvious and shows how deeply rooted its traditions were in the ragged schools. Larger schools which functioned on the week-days had a more formalised approach. The Management Committee of York Ragged School laid 'before the Subscribers the mode in

21. Charge of the Bishop of London to His Clergy, 1834.

22. J.M.Goldstrom, The Social Content of Education, 1808-1870, 1972, Ch.3.

23. C.F.Cornwallis, The Philosophy of Ragged Schools, 1851, pp.63,64.

which the education is conducted' by offering them a copy of the school time-table 'showing the division of time'.²⁴

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 7 to 8 o'clock | - The children admitted - bathe, wash and change their dress. |
| 8 | - The door closed. |
| 8.15 | - The children drilled and inspected to ensure cleanliness of dress and person - marched orderly into school. |
| 8.15 to 45 | - A hymn sung, a portion of Scripture read by the master, the children questioned on its purport, and instructed on the practical influence it should have on their conduct - a short prayer. |
| 8.45 to 9.30 | - Breakfast, the grace sung before and after. |
| 9.30 | - The school lessons commence. |
| 9.30 to 10.30 | - Writing and arithmetic. The girls retire to their own school room. |
| 10.30 | - In the yard - the school room ventilated. |
| 10.45 to 11.15 | - Spelling and reading. |
| 11.15 to 11.45 | - Scripture lesson |
| 11.45 | - In the yard - the school room ventilated. |
| 12 | - Drill. |
| 12 to 1.15 | - Walking or recreation in the yard. |
| 1.15 to 2 | - Dinner - the children wash. |
| 2 | - Drill - march into school. |
| 2. to 3.30 | - Industrial occupation, with singing. |
| 3.30 | - In the yard - the school room ventilated. |
| 3.45 | - Drill - march into school. |
| 3.45 to 5.30 | - Industrial occupation, with singing. |
| 5.30 | - In the yard - the school room ventilated. |
| 5.45 | - Drill - march into school. |
| 5.45 to 6.15 | - A hymn - portion of Scripture and a prayer, as in the morning. |
| 6.15 | - Supper. |
| 7 | - Changing their clothes and dismissal. 25 |

This is sufficiently typical to stand as a general pattern.²⁶ Variations occurred in it as the seasons changed. Some schools did not confine the industrial classes to the afternoon, preferring to take them immediately following the Scripture lesson with which the school probably opened. Ragged schools without industrial classes had a shorter day and gave more attention to Scripture and reading.

The time-tables offered to subscribers were a proof to them that the

24. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1850, pp.6,7.

25. Ibid., pp.6,7.

26. Vide e.g. Park Row Ragged School, Bristol, Annual Report, 1875, pp.7,8; Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1857, p.12; Stockport Ragged School Annual Report, 1855, p.18.

educative venture was a serious one, that the emphasis on Christian teaching did not exclude other subjects, and that some attempt was made to inure the children to 'the habits of industry'. They systematised an education which preserved class distinctions, counteracted discontent and focussed some attention on public safety and property rights. The London Ragged School Union concurred with the opinion of Mr. Benjamin Rolch, in an original paper contributed to its Magazine, that it was an education in which would eventually

give a death blow to Chartism and trades' unions, and secure to the country a more happy and far more contented people

and bring 'much safety to the public'.²⁷

B. The Themes of the Ragged School Education.

A close examination of the detailed accounts of the ragged schools shows that virtually nothing was spent on books for the children. The Bibles they used were frequently donated by well-wishers, the congregations of churches, Sunday school teachers and others interested in this form of education. Where they had to be purchased they could be obtained at a reduced price from the British and Foreign Bible Society, or through one of the Ragged School Unions. The readers, too, were similarly procured. The situation in the ragged schools was a reflection of the larger position prevailing in the British and National schools. There was a general reluctance to expend money on school books and equipment up to 1851 and it is estimated that no more than sixpence per child per annum was spent in the schools.²⁸ It was much less in ragged schools, though there is no way of estimating what a national figure might be. The entry in the Minute Book at Huddersfield, bidding the master, Mr. Higginbotham, to 'procure in Manchester the books and school materials required' is a lone and startling ex-

27. The Ragged School Union Magazine, 1849, p.184.

28. J.M.Goldstrom, op.cit., pp.131-145.

ception.²⁹ Magazines like 'The British Workman' and 'The Band of Hope' were very common gifts and, along with the myriad of pamphlets issued by the Religious Tract Society, were no doubt part of the staple educational diet of the children. The only other journal to appear with the same frequency in schools was the London Union's Children's Magazine, which had a national distribution.

This magazine was important because it expressed the educational philosophy of the London Union. It was widely distributed and written for the children to have in schools. Most of its contents were designed for further amplification and stress by the teachers, though its language was suitable for those who could read a basic vocabulary of ordinary words, seldom having more than three syllables. It offers some opportunity of looking at material, other than the Bible, which was common in the schools and particularly aimed at the ragged children. The earlier issues set a pattern which remained throughout its history and are significant for this reason.

The magazine covered three areas of information: the religious, the moral and the secular.

1. A Religious Theme.

The religious ideas were expressed in three ways. Often a simple Bible story was retold, as in the Cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 23).³⁰ Its telling provided numerous opportunities for the evangelist. Just as David loved Absalom despite his wickedness, so

God of His great mercy loves you, although by nature you are in rebellion against your Heavenly Father . . . Boys, you are pretty safe when you have the Bible to show you where to go and God's Spirit to light up your dark hearts . . . Pray that you might live in God as David did.³¹

Occasionally the story was told in verse, as in David and Abishai, with a moral unflinching drawn in the final stanza.

29. Huddersfield Ragged School Minute Book, 1862, Nov.25th.

30. The Ragged School Children's Magazine, April, 1851.

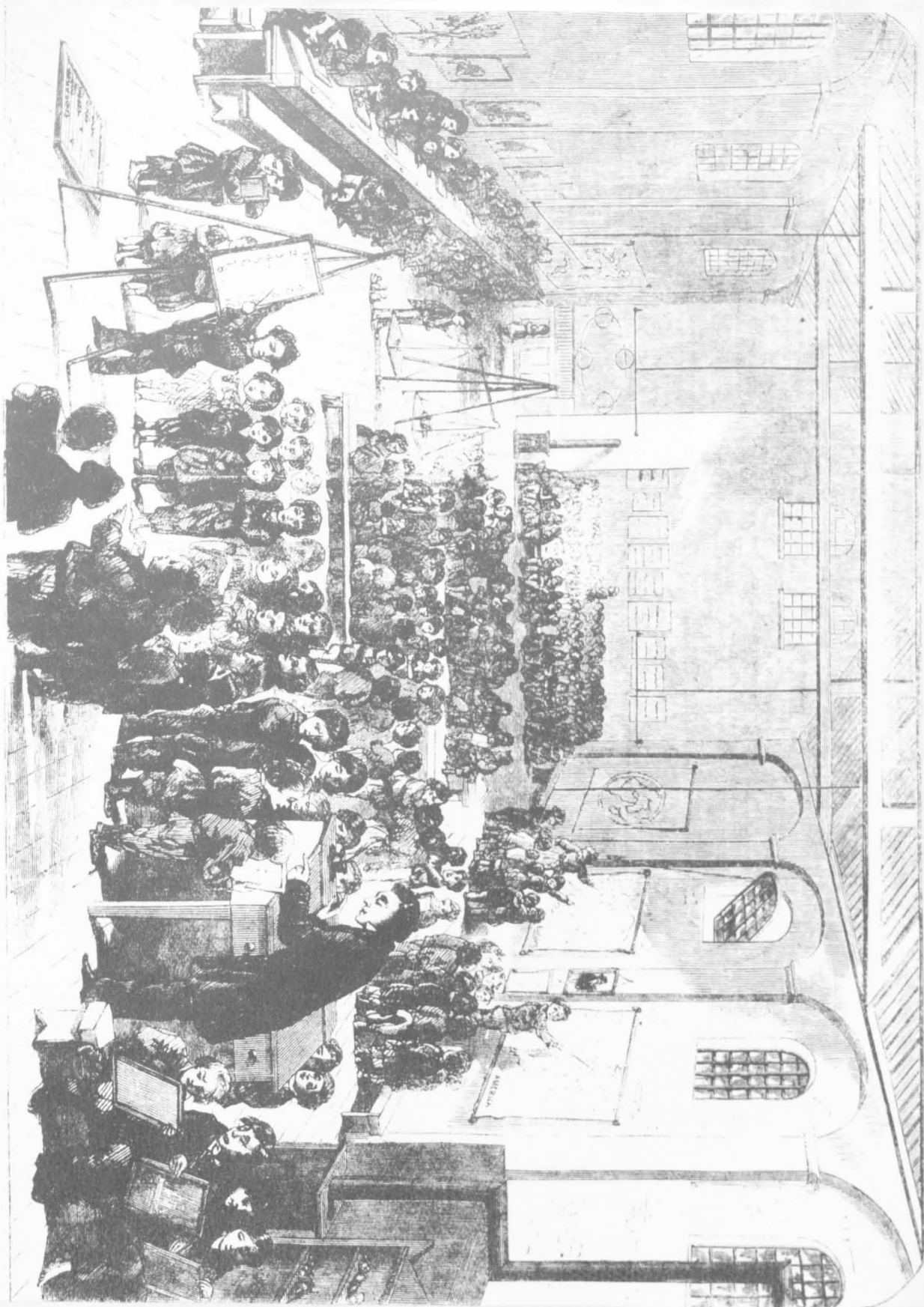
31. Ibid., April, 1831.

THE RAGGED SCHOOL,
GEORGE YARD, ST. JUDE'S,
WHITECHAPEL.

Source:

London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Public Library.

BOARD-SCHOOL, GEORGE VALE, ST. JOHN'S, WHITEHAVEN.



Thus the glittering sword of justice
 Waves before the sinner's face.
 Then the ever-blest Immanuel
 Pleads the guilty sinner's case.³²

This kind of illegitimate allegorical exegesis of the Old Testament - and, curiously, the stories were seldom from the New Testament - was a characteristic of nineteenth century evangelical theology. Historical, legal, poetic, apocalyptic and prophetic writings in the Bible were all interpreted by reference to a small group of Christian doctrines.

The second way of presenting some elementary theology to the children was direct preaching attached to simple - and usually sentimental - stories. In 'The Boy Happy in His Misery' a ragged schoolboy is sick and hungry in a cold attic. The generous gentleman who finds him learns that his mother is dead and his father a worthless drunkard. The conversation between the two forms the substance of the piece. The boy tells the gentleman that he has learned that 'God would shut out of heaven all those who thief' and that he is not lonely. 'I just lie here and think about God who is so good'.³³ The children are asked to learn from this 'affecting story' that 'those who have got no friend on earth may find a friend in Jesus'.³⁴ Again, the use of verse occurs and many poems tell of the love of Jesus for children. In 'The Child Coming to Jesus', a little girl faces the taunts of her family and friends without losing her faith.

Yes, though all the world hath chid me,
 Father, mother, sister, friend,
 Jesus never will forbid me -
 Jesus loves me to the end.³⁵

The situations in the stories are such as to be within the direct experience or knowledge of the children. They involve orphaned children, children who are ill-treated, hungry, tempted, in rags, children who steal, frighten horses, break windows, tell lies, swear and refuse to listen to their tea-

32. The Ragged School Children's Magazine, November, 1851.

33. Ibid., January, 1851.

34. Ibid., January, 1851.

35. Ibid., July, 1851.

cher or go to church. In this the Union was faithful to the precept it urged upon its teachers, that the children must understand and not learn by rote.³⁶ It attempted to employ what little the children could bring in terms of background, though unfortunately it found it possible to use it only in a negative and prohibitive way. The theme of Sabbath-breaking was a particularly significant one here. It, and the corpus of soteriological teaching, formed the most significant part of the religious instruction. In 'How Do You Spend Your Sabbaths?' John, who has lived through seven hundred Sabbaths 'very kindly given him by God to read the Bible and learn the way to heaven', had 'broken and wasted every one of them'. Thus he has 'bad companions, bad habits, a bad heart, an ignorant mind'. He is 'carrying all these to the judgment seat of God'.³⁷

Those who abuse God's presents here, and die without the Saviour, will not be allowed to go to Heaven, to enjoy the long sweet Sabbath there.³⁸

Thirdly, the child's death-bed scene was regarded as a potent instrument to bring some reflection on religious matters. In 'Two Great Questions' Mary, who has found out that 'she must die alone' and that 'at the judgment seat she must also stand alone before God', asks the readers to answer two questions. 'Have I got Jesus? If I die tonight, where shall I go?'³⁹ In 'The Dying Boy's Request' the children eavesdrop on young Edward and his father.

He lies in the last hour of life; the struggle with the King of Terrors has commenced. Looking up to his father, he says:

'Papa, must I die?'

'Yes, my dear boy, I fear you must', replies the heartbroken parent.

'Papa, won't you go into the grave with me?'

'I can't, my child.'

36. C.F.Cornwallis, *op.cit.*, p.119.

37. *The Ragged School Children's Magazine*, December, 1850.

38. *Ibid.*, December, 1850.

39. *Ibid.*, December, 1851.

'But, papa, I don't like to go there alone. It looks so dark.'

'Don't be afraid, my son. Jesus, the Friend of sinners, will go with you, if you ask Him.' 40

After prayer Edward asserts that he is no longer afraid, for Jesus is with him. After death

the suffering boy was changed into the bright seraph, floating on silvery wings in the sweet atmosphere of heaven.⁴¹

The writer concluded: 'Children, would you die as died little Edward?'⁴²

Besides these stories, verses which appeared regularly reminded the children of their possibly imminent deaths.

And when I come to die,
Let me, in faith and love,
'Jesus, receive my spirit', cry,
'To dwell with Thee above.' 43

A further element appears in this genre. Not only is preparation urged, but the effects of death upon others are emphasised. The stories dispense with parents, brothers and sisters, friends, even pets, to effect a conversion.

Oh, speak to little Catherine
When I am dead, and say
Emma's last words to her were these:
'Seek God without delay!'
A dying bed is not the place
To seek to learn the God of grace. 44

Victorian authors (and particularly authoresses) were enamoured with the situation of the dying child. Its possibilities were ruthlessly explored. The ragged children were saved the horrors and terrifying descriptions of what were thought to be the physical realities attending death. The stereotype they became accustomed to was of the good little boy or girl who, realising the imminence of death, assures all around that he has no fear and then 'smiles', singing a favourite hymn or reciting appropriate

40. The Ragged School Children's Magazine, November, 1851.

41. Ibid., November, 1851.

42. Ibid., November, 1851.

43. Ibid., July, 1851.

44. Ibid., May, 1851.

texts. All remain clear-minded and in good heart to the end. The authors of these tales in the magazine shunned the excesses which their contemporaries enjoyed and used the situation to reinforce the religious understanding of death. In this sort of story, most of all it is clear that what was written for the children reflected adult tastes of the time.

II. A Moral Theme.

The moral information conveyed to the children was often based upon Bible stories and, to that degree, this section overlaps with the preceding one. There were, however, two other modes of expressing this theme. The fiction in the Magazine was clearly reformatory and expounded those virtues which the children were to cultivate and the vices they were to avoid.

Be punctual. Come in time. Come clean. Be quiet and orderly in your behaviour, steady and diligent. Try to improve in learning. Be respectful to your parents; kind and friendly to one another. Let no filthy talk, no low language of any sort, be used; no lying. And let there be among you no quarrelling encouraged - no fighting - no spite - no envy - no malice.⁴⁵

The didacticism was more frequently attached to a fictitious tale or incident, but remained equally clear and very obtrusive. From the stories the children learned that they must always make an effort - 'in climbing the ladder of wisdom the first step is "try" '(46); they must be meek - 'give soft answers to rough questions and try to get your friends and neighbours to do the same' (47); they must try to be cheerful and look on the bright side - 'hardly is there a wiser maxim in the world than: "Make the best of it" '.⁴⁸ They were urged to keep their tempers(49), guard their tongues(50), attend school regularly(51), and have clean hands always.⁵²

45. The Ragged School Children's Magazine, September, 1851.

46. Ibid., August, 1851.

47. Ibid., May, 1851.

48. Ibid., October, 1850.

49. Ibid., October, 1850.

50. Ibid., March, 1851.

51. Ibid., October, 1850.

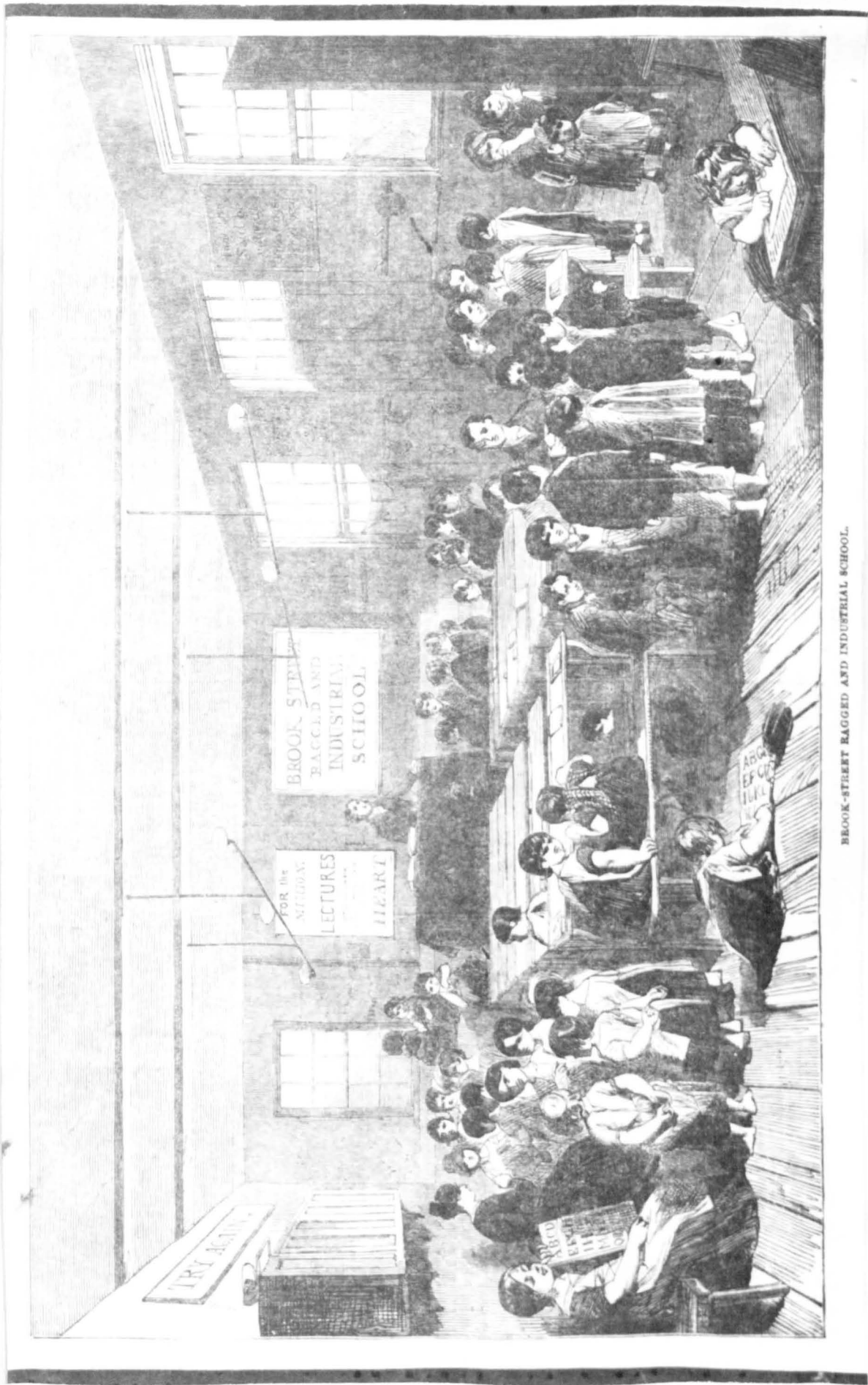
52. Ibid., September, 1851.

BROOK STREET RAGGED AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL,
HENRY STREET,
HAMPSTEAD ROAD.

Source:

The Illustrated London News,
December 17th, 1853.

County Hall, London.



BROOK-STREET RAGGED AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

It would miss the point of what the writers of the pieces were attempting to satirise them too sharply. Whatever literary defects they had, they understood precisely what they were doing and saw more clearly than those outside the Movement the condition and needs of their youthful audience. Besides, the quality of writing was limited by confinement to a basic vocabulary, the undesirability of complex grammatical constructions and stringent restrictions on the number of words permitted in each issue. A heavy moral earnestness of tone characterised the wider adult literary scene, contemporary juvenile fiction and most of the books sacred and secular used in the schools of the nation. And for the most part they had as little literary merit as the efforts published in the 'Ragged School Children's Magazine'.

It was a commonplace practice of the day to teach moral education from the lives of famous men and women or the habits of animals and insects. Emperor Vespasian was given to the children as the example of daily self-examination.⁵³ From Epaminondas, the city scavenger of Thebes, they were asked to learn that

there is no labour, however humble, that we can be called upon to perform which is not in our own power to render noble by doing it well.⁵⁴

The story of the tame pet fawn was used to urge the children 'never trust too much in yourselves, but be ever ready to take good advice'.⁵⁵ Yet with these examples the writers touched on an aspect of education which other material developed more fully. It was the world of industry and domestic service where the children would be required to fit into certain patterns and reflect social conventions. The inherent conservatism of the London Union gave it more than a passing interest in problems of social order. Its maintenance meant the inculcation of certain political and economic doctrines in those groups most prone to riot and dissatisfaction.

53. The Ragged School Children's Magazine, March, 1851.

54. Ibid., November, 1851.

55. Ibid., November, 1851.

The children were dissuaded from the pursuit of wealth and asked to reflect on those gifts for which they could be thankful.

Money does not make light hearts. There is Squire Jones; he is rich, but I never heard him sing a hymn in his life. His cheek is paler than mine and his arm is thinner . . . I am not so poor either. This fine spring morning I feel quite rich. The beautiful flowers are mine . . . All these robins and thrushes and larks are mine . . . and I always get a crust of bread somehow. This is the right way to look at things. I shall think less about the things I have not got and more about those I have got . . . If I get the knowledge of Christ I shall be richer than many a man who owns thousands of pounds.⁵⁶

The stories written for them showed that it was very difficult to obtain work. Johnny, in 'Looking for a Place', is constantly refused. 'The book stores, and dry goods stores and groceries have plenty of boys already'.⁵⁷ The most suitable preparation for work was careful attendance to the lessons of the ragged school and acceptance of the habits learned there. The poor lad in 'A Boy's Best Recommendation' obtains his post when it is learned by his master that he reads his Bible daily.⁵⁸ Having found work, the appropriate attitudes are diligence and industry. Many pieces castigate those who 'do not know what it is to be industrious for a whole day'(⁵⁹); who do not realise that 'there is no bread for idlers'(⁶⁰); who will not work as hard as they are able and do not 'strive to be manly, active, diligent and industrious'.⁶¹ In the Ragged Ballad, 'Sir Richard Whittington', much of the fundamental thinking of the Movement appears.

I have no cat to sell for gold
And, if I had, who'd buy?
But I have hands that want to work.
O do but let them try!

I hear the bells ring 'Turn again';
I would no idler be,
But earn my bread with merry heart
By honest industry.

56. The Ragged School Children's Magazine, May, 1851.

57. Ibid., October, 1851.

58. Ibid., November, 1850.

59. Ibid., November, 1850.

60. Ibid., February, 1851.

61. Ibid., September, 1850.

And I would 'turn' from sin and shame,
Content to bear awhile
With poverty, if that's my lot,
Rich in my Father's smile.

I do not covet wealth or fame.
This is the prize for me,
An honest calling with content,
Food, clothes and liberty. 62

III. A Secular Theme.

The secular information offered in the magazines was strictly subservient to the religious and moral framework of ragged education. The Movement had not been able to resist the growing demand for larger place for secular subjects. But where it acceded to this pressure, it selected carefully and used partially the merest gobbets. In the History of the Kings of England, a continuing series, the story of Alfred the Great is used as a moral example.

Now all of these things Alfred was enabled to achieve because,
when a boy, he preferred being industrious to being idle. 63

Occasionally the writers used verse. After a review of the accomplishments of Henry I, one part of this series concluded:

But though his acquirements and talents were such,
He died of a surfeit from eating too much.

MORAL

In Henry's sad end, we this lesson may read,
Great powers without prudence to mischief will lead. 64

The geography which appeared was confined to countries to which the children might emigrate - Australia, Canada and the U.S.A. - with a little further information occurring in stories of missionary endeavour in Africa or the South Seas. The natural history comprised information about the habits of wild animals and birds which were used to point the inevitable moral. The elephant sets us an example of obedience to those placed over us, and we

62. The Ragged School Children's Magazine, January, 1851.

63. Ibid., December, 1851.

64. Ibid., October, 1851.

should also learn from him to be kind to our fellow creatures, remembering that the same merciful God has made us all.⁶⁵

Tigers and albatrosses give other equally useful lessons to the children. Most surprising of all was the attempt to convey some scientific knowledge. The 'Easy Lessons in Science' series was one of the most interesting for the children, one would guess, for it had simple everyday experiments which could be performed in school without any apparatus. They were told of the properties of matter and of the laws deriving from them. The moralising was more subdued, probably for lack of suitable opportunity, though still present. After four pages of elementary observations and experiments using stones, all that the writer in the third lesson of the series can say is:

When we think of all these things, we cannot help saying what a very great Being God must be. ⁶⁶

The tone of the material offered to the children in the schools was one of high seriousness which fitted well the religio-ethical precepts continually commended. The content was characterised by those concerns which the adults felt important for ragged children. There were no concessions to whimsy, fantasy and imagination, and fairy tales were not thought to be generally respectable or suitable for Victorian children until the works of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear. Reading was not for pleasure but for profit. In all the moral tales there is little understanding of children and an inability to perceive that many of the faults of the pupils were due to the effects of age and background. Throughout the children were made aware of the sort of station which would be theirs if they were industrious. Once gained, a post would not be lost if the children were thankful, obedient and deserving. The conservatism within the movement obscured to a large extent many of the realities of the economic condition of its children. Religious concerns masked many of the social problems and interpreted failure and degradation in terms of the

65. The Ragged School Children's Magazine, September, 1850.

66. Ibid., November, 1850.

working of retributive justice. The total effect of this sort of reading matter cannot be judged by quantitative measures. However, one estimates that it was very great, given the two facts of the scarcity of school books of any variety to balance religio-ethical emphases and the excessive reliance which untrained and often ignorant teachers would place on the literature for the children. Matthew Arnold's remark, 'mutato mutandis', applies to the ragged pupil.

It is not enough remembered in how many cases his reading book forms the whole literature, except his Bible, of the child attending a primary school.⁶⁷

C. The Methods of the Ragged School Education.

The initial success of the schools in attracting children was largely due to the food, shelter, warmth and clothing which was given. It was realised that 'children must be fed if they are to be brought under the influence of instruction'.⁶⁸ Newcastle Ragged School even discovered that 'a more ample allowance of food was required to secure regularity of attendance'.⁶⁹ The alternative conditions which they would otherwise have suffered explain the acquiescence of the pupils in archaic methods of instruction by well-meaning but academically untrained teachers. This needs stating because the Unions took rather too much pride in the voluntary status of their children, a fact which was supposed to indicate that pupils came to the schools because they enjoyed what was taught. In fact, early in the history of the movement it was evident that methods of teaching needed consideration. Mrs. Cornwallis castigated those who saw 'Christianity as a system of dogmata to be learned by rote'.⁷⁰ The clergy were particularly at fault because they were generally unable to 'adapt their instruction to

67. M. Arnold, Reports on Elementary Schools, Report of 1860, p.81.

68. Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, p.7.

69. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Annual Report, 1848, p.4.

the capacity and situation of their learners'. She asked them: 'Who is ever influenced by what he does not understand?'⁷¹ She warned the teachers against their over-lengthy and boring lessons.

Learning to read, write and cost accounts are wearying to the attention . . . and can scarcely be kept up for half an hour at a time . . . If we wish our pupils to improve we must suit the length and nature of their lessons to their mental state, taking care at all times never to press learning on so as to induce weariness, and by pauses and good-humoured conversations with them to make the period of study pleasant.⁷²

Mary Carpenter, striving to learn how the Bible could be 'communicated as really to engage the affections' of the ragged children, suggested changing the substance of the initial reading lessons and using imagination in story telling. She felt that, where 'the Scriptures are made an ordinary reading lesson', familiarity

without attaching any interesting meaning to the sense deadens the heart to the holy truths contained within them and is a great hindrance . . . ⁷³

Urging that the Scriptures be related to the children so as to 'excite their interest and create a firm belief in reality', she recommended using prints, drawings, models and 'encouraging them to ask questions, and express in their own words their impressions'.⁷⁴

The London Union published in its magazine recommendations on teaching and argued various methods. It was anxious to consider ideas from those actually engaged in teaching the poor and paid considerable attention to the methods used in pauper schools. The October edition of the Ragged School Union Magazine of 1849 contained a sustained analysis of the content and methods of teaching appropriate to the labouring classes. It is important for three reasons. Coming in a period of rapid growth, it offered guidance for future patterns, it carried the tacit approval of the London

70. C.F.Cornwallis, op.cit., p.110.

71. Ibid., p.123.

72. Ibid., pp.106-7.

73. M.Carpenter, Reformatory Schools for Children, 1851, p.92.

74. Ibid., pp.96-97.

Union and it was inevitably understood as the 'London pattern' by those schools outside the metropolis. It complained of the use to which reading was put, calling it 'one of the vices of the present system'.

Instead of leaving history, geography and moral tales to be the amusement of leisure hours in after life, they are allowed to take the place . . . of those elementary principles involved in the everyday manual occupations of the labouring classes; which, if learned by heart from books in infancy, would wonderfully assist the working man . . . 75

However, the best theorists of the day were against this. Mary Carpenter held that secular knowledge aided the moral, religious and industrial purposes of ragged schools.⁷⁶ James Kay felt that such subjects helped pupils to form their taste 'upon a correct model' and rendered them less likely to be misled by frivolous, dangerous and licentious books or be 'carried away by the current of popular prejudices and passions'.⁷⁷

It further complained of the attempts to teach children 'a superior hand', for this begat numerous frauds and forgeries. It was preferable for a girl to copy out 'useful recipes for cleaning furniture against the period when she will go to service' and for a boy to learn trigonometry to 'facilitate all his operations at the bench afterwards'.⁷⁸ Hamilton, however, warned against too strict an adherence to the economic object of education for the poor.

Bring them up, it is said, for what they are to be. Teach them the parts they are to perform. . . . Leave out of your consideration for a while every idea of earthy circumstance, condition, lot Draw out the soul. . . . Enthroned the conscience. Eternity must be your mark.⁷⁹

Although rote learning was constantly condemned, its continued practice must be assumed from the frequency of these condemnations and the prominence given to them in the literature of the movement. Illustrations of the

75. Ragged School Union Magazine, October 1849, p.183.

76. M.Carpenter, op.cit., p.104.

77. J.P.Kay, The Training of Pauper Children, 1839, pp.32-33.

78. Ragged School Union Magazine, October 1849, p.184.

79. R.W.Hamilton, op.cit., pp.70-71.

time show that some schools adopted monitorial methods(80); and account books of individual schools record the amounts paid to the monitors.⁸¹ Where these methods were common, much learning was inevitably parrot fashion. Most agreed with the theoretical position of James Kay that

by a skilfully devised system of interrogation, the master discovers the limit of the child's knowledge . . . he leads it by a carefully planned succession of questions . . . to infer the truth and, having made the attainment of this knowledge an act of pleasurable mental exercise, he not only renders the pursuit of knowledge an act of pleasurable mental exercise, he not only renders the pursuit of knowledge agreeable, but gives it a stronger hold on the memory. Since (nothing is) learned by mere rote . . . everything that is learned must be understood. ⁸²

However, in practice the teachers did not possess the skill to work in this way, the classes were too large to enable it to be a very effective means, the examples of British and National schools militated against it and the teachers' own experiences in school as children could not be erased from the memory.

The reports, minute books and logs of the individual ragged schools are silent on the matter of the methods to be adopted by their teachers.⁸³ The voluntary personnel of the Sunday Ragged Schools and the weekday evening schools had no means of learning methodology save by watching others, reflecting on their own schooldays and making what they could of the articles published in the Ragged School Union Magazines. The salaried teachers in the day schools had received little formal training and no qualifications, having simply worked as assistants to a master before undertaking the work. The only matter affecting methodology which the schools concerned themselves with in their printed records was discipline. It was a tradition within

80. E.g. The Ragged School, George Yard, St. Jude's, Whitechapel. Illustration facing p.
81. E.g. Huddersfield Ragged School, Treasurers Book. Entries for 1864, 1865 and 1866 show that in those years expenditure on monitors was £2.4s.0d., £1.12s.0d. and 6s.6d. p.a. respectively.
82. Poor Law Commissioners Reports on the Training of Pauper Children, 1841, p.43.
83. General remarks like that in the Report of 1859, Bradford Ragged School, p.7, 'the best methods are employed not only to improve the understanding but to purify the heart' do not add anything.

the Movement that kindness and love would attempt to do what corporal punishment and harshness had failed to do for the children. At Bradford the children were to be 'trained to habits of cleanliness, order and virtue . . . by kind treatment'(84); St. James's Back Ragged School, Bristol, forbade all corporal punishment

or holding up to public shame or ridicule . . . discipline must be maintained by the Master's own firmness, order and kindness. 85

They were typical. Occasionally the reports stated the satisfaction of the Committee with the teachers' manner of conducting the school according to these principles. The Master and Mistress at York had on 'many occasions' had their patience 'singularly tried and their humane sympathies called forth and they have repeatedly shown discretion'.⁸⁶ At the death of the Master at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, whose 'ardent desire was to promote the best interests of those under his care', it was

pleasing to observe the attachment which has sprung up between himself and several of his pupils, who at his decease appeared deeply sensible of the loss they had sustained.⁸⁷

Mary Carpenter advised the schools against adopting 'punishments of a degrading or revengeful nature', preferring those 'which the Heavenly Father has adopted in the treatment of His children'.⁸⁸ This meant that the reward or punishment of a child must be a natural consequence of his action. Mrs. Cornwallis was in full agreement. Pointing out that God makes our sins our own scourge, she asked that children be allowed to suffer the effect of their wrongdoing,

but blows are no necessary consequence of any action of theirs, and therefore give no moral lesson. If a child tells a lie, to disbelieve him afterwards when he is anxious that his assertion should be credited, is a proper punishment.⁸⁹

84. Bradford Ragged School, Proposed Rules, 1854, No.1.

85. St.James's Back Ragged School, Bristol, Annual Report, 1848, p.3.

86. York Ragged School Annual Report, 1849, p.6.

87. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Ragged School Annual Report, 1848, p.5.

88. M.Carpenter, op.cit., pp.85-86.

89. C.F.Cornwallis, op.cit., p.121.

Neither acknowledged her debt to Rousseau.

The extent to which the precepts recommended by the rules of the schools and the theorists were implemented is impossible to determine. Occasionally a school report describes a method of working which seemed worth noting. Liverpool Ragged School 'thought it safest to forego the use of corporal punishment altogether'.⁹⁰ Instead,

we excite to good conduct by the stimulus of approbation. We contrive to create little posts of trusts, which we confer on those children that deserve them. Besides the monitorships, there are the offices of 'assistant to the cook', 'keeper of the kitchen staircase', 'guardian of the cap room', 'superintendent of the washing room', 'porter of the door', 'foreman of the printing press', and so forth.⁹¹

The fact that the schools were 'open to view' by subscribers and members of the Committee at almost any hour must have prevented too great a divergence from the basic philosophy of the movement. One would guess that in some of the larger boarding schools, particularly those which became Certified Industrial Ragged Schools, the philosophy of kindness and love came under some strain. However, there is scant evidence for this and, in the nature of the case, this is what one would expect.

⁹⁰ Soho Street Ragged School, Liverpool, Annual Report, 1849, p.23.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.23.

CHAPTER 11

A CASE STUDY OF THE RAGGED INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL:

STOCKPORT RAGGED AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, 1854 - 1880

A case study of a particular school is valuable in providing firm evidence for the more generalised points in the preceding Section. It enables the effects of national and local politics to be observed with some detail over a long period. It helps comparisons with other schools to be more effectively made and demonstrates the changing relationship of an institution to the founder movement. Something of the role of the school in the local community can be seen and the measure of the success of its former pupils estimated.

The Stockport Ragged and Industrial School had achieved a national reputation by 1878 as one of the foremost industrial schools in the country. The inspectors of the time, Major Inglis, William Rogers and Sydney Turner, all commended it as an exemplary institution. It figured at or about the top of the unofficial league for cost effectiveness and received children from School Boards throughout the country. Its managing committee frequently sent memoranda to the Government and it became one of the leaders among industrial schools in working to secure Parliamentary legislation to further its role. The history of this school demonstrates the changes which occurred in the ragged schools after certification and registration under the Industrial Schools Act; the diminishing concern with the religious education of the children; the involvement in local and national politics; the reinterpretation of a philosophy of total voluntarism to allow for increasing state aid; the raising of the standard of secular education prompted by the work of the School Boards; the widening of industrial opportunities; and a total segregation of the sexes.

The concentration of attention on the ragged schools in London has resulted in a neglect of this topic, for the ragged industrial school did not succeed there. In the initial surge of enthusiasm the London schools attempted to set up industrial classes and by 1858 these were established in half the schools.¹ However, in terms of the numbers receiving industrial training, this amounted to 3,224 children who had only an hour or two a day. This was out of a total of 21,142 children attending the ragged schools. And it should be noted that most of the training given was in needlecraft and knitting, with a smaller proportion of laundry work, and only suitable for girls. By 1861 the London Union had 146 day schools and of these only three industrial schools and four industrial classes were aided.² In 1868 it noted that girls comprised well over 90% of the children in industrial classes, their work consisting of domestic duties and elementary needlecraft.³ Investigations, made by the Committee of the London Union among its local committees to find why so few industrial classes and schools had been established, gathered a variety of reasons.⁴ The major ones were clearly financial; there was insufficient money to convert existing rooms into suitable industrial premises; expensive machinery (e.g. printing press) was required; the expense of waste when teaching the children was prohibitive. Others were economic:

It is difficult to discover anything that . . . a class can make which will find a ready sale, and yet not interfere with the labour market, or injure the honest workman.⁵

Finally, the schools observed that many of their children were too young to do industrial work, others who came had already worked a shift in local factories and that regular teachers with the necessary technical skills could not be obtained. The situation outside London was different. Most of

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1. London Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1855, pp.8-9.
 2. Select Committee, 1861, Q369.
 3. London Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1868, p.10.
 4. London Ragged School Union Magazine, 1855, p.173.
 5. London Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1853, p.11.

the major towns and cities had at least one ragged industrial school, some more. Whereas the London Ragged School Union refused a national role and overestimated both the resources of charity and the purposes of philanthropy, the larger provincial schools, after an initial reluctance, showed a willingness to consider how a policy of voluntarism could be married to state aid.

The first step in the founding of the Stockport Ragged and Industrial School was made in 1848, when a meeting of Sunday school teachers in the town

had their attention drawn to the number of absentees from their various schools for want of proper clothing.⁶

They decided to organise a Sunday school in Bridgefield, 'at that time one of the poorest districts in the town'.⁷ Its Superintendent was Robert Parkin. He not only taught at the school all day and in the evening on Sunday, but returned on the week-day evenings to teach the children reading, writing, arithmetic, drawing and sewing.

It was the narration of the good effect by Robert Parkin's instrumentality that prepared the public of Stockport for the establishment of the Day Ragged School.⁸

The problem encountered during the week was totally beyond the resources of one man. At the annual Sunday school meeting in 1854 the teachers discussed a proposal to institute a day ragged school. They were opposed to reliance on voluntary help for staffing. The difficulties encountered by the large number of ragged schools in the previous 10 years were noted. Yet they were unsure of the financial help which would be forthcoming, until prompted into action by the offer of half the first year's salary for a teacher from Mr. R.S. Burn, who was later to be the first treasurer of the new school. The Stockport Ragged Day School started in premises next to the Sunday school in Bridgefield in 1854 with four children. Within the year it had 26 children on its register, though the average attendance was 18.

6. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1869, p.5.

7. Ibid., 1869, p.5.

8. Ibid., 1869, p.6.

One child in the first year was accepted into the school dormitory.⁹

The aim of the school

is not sectarian, rather are its designs political; but its purposes are purely benevolent and with a view to elevate from vice to virtue; to shield the destitute, the mendicant and neglected children of our population; to educate and protect our necessitous juvenile outcasts. It has further in view to make provision (as its means are enlarged) for the reformation of juvenile offenders and to offer that guardianship to criminal juveniles as may save from ruin.¹⁰

It retained this objective, though social changes and political decisions meant its reinterpretation in the ensuing years and affected its means of achieving it. In practice, this declared object of the school was too wide as a basis of selection for its pupils. The committee received 'numerous applications exclusively on the plea of poverty' and reminded itself that it was to admit only those children intermediate between paupers and criminals.¹¹

Your committee have not lost sight of the fact that it is properly their province to admit only vagrant, destitute and disorderly children.¹²

In fact, during the first few years the school did allow children to enter when it thought that there was some prospect of their dire poverty being only a temporary condition. Each year from 1856-1859 a small number of children was removed 'on account of the improvement in their circumstances'.¹³ A committee could always argue that poverty induced conditions which encouraged criminality. Stockport was no exception in finding it difficult to determine who were the proper recipients of their school's charity - though, as the children were fed and largely clothed from the beginning, there was rather more pressure on it from the 'honest and labouring poor' than on other schools which did not make similar provision. It was unusual among early

9. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1865, p.5.

10. Ibid., 1855, p.3.

11. Ibid., 1858, p.3.

12. Ibid., 1858, p.3.

13. Ibid., 1856, p.5; 1857, p.3; 1858, p.5; 1859, p.4. (In 1856 it was two; in 1857 it was two; in 1858 it was three; and in 1859 it was four.)

FRONT COVER OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1862 OF
THE STOCKPORT RAGGED AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

Source:

Stockport Public Library.

THE EIGHTH
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Stockport Ragged & Industrial School.



STOCKPORT

PRINTED AT THE RAGGED AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, TOWN END HOUSE

1862.

ragged schools in refusing to extend its charity to the children of seasonal workers and casual labourers who were passing through Stockport. It had a test case in 1856, when the daughter of an Irish labourer, 'whose father was going to the harvest', was refused admission, 'as it would lay open the Institution to innumerable applications of the same kind'.¹⁴ These admissions caused difficulties, for all schools agreed that the children did not remain long enough to benefit from the education given, yet they were among the wildest and most unruly. In common with other schools, Stockport decided not to educate children whose parents could afford to pay fees. Again, the committee was faced with difficult border-line decisions, particularly with children whose parents were in the casual labour pool. In its first year it did admit those whose relatives could occasionally offer a payment. Its flexibility here is interesting and is typical of the majority of schools. However, it was soon evident that this was an abuse of the charity and after investigating the case of Thomas Pickering, 'whose relatives could pay something for his being in the school', the committee recorded:

It is also to be further understood that no child be admitted where a payment can be made.¹⁵

The responsibility for ascertaining the economic resources of the family was upon the Master of the school, whose 'strict enquiries' were to be conveyed to the committee members. They would make their decision on its basis and, if necessary, interview children themselves.¹⁶ The Minute Books of the school for the first three years show the importance of the problem of admissions for the committee. They also show how thorough the investigations of the first and most distinguished master of the school, Thomas Jackson, were. Even the tart summaries of the secretary put flesh on the end-

14. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Minutes of the General Committee, July 2nd, 1856.
15. Ibid., June 25th, 1855.
16. Ibid., January 5th, 1857.

less stream of figures and statistical tables issued by the larger schools.

Thomas West, aged 9, admitted. His father is in Knutsford Gaol. He was brought before the magistrate for felony and entered the school. He is known as 'Gallows Tom' and previous to his admission by the Committee had broken his arm being too venturesome in the swing.¹⁷

Robert McKinley, aged 8, admitted. He had been in jail for felony and whipped.¹⁸

Children of six and seven years were placed in the school, though, in his Report to the Committee in 1858, Mr. Jackson suggested 'that no more children under nine be admitted at present as it interferes with discipline'.¹⁹

In 1857 the average weekly attendance at the school was 26 children. ²⁰ Already the premises in Wellington Street were 'far too small' and 'miserably deficient in sleeping accommodation'.²¹ It was a situation typical of most schools in their early years. As with many other schools, the subscriptions at Stockport increased following its foundation and the committee could contemplate hiring new rooms. A first move to more spacious housing was effected quite easily by a majority of schools. However, subsequent changes of a larger school into more permanent premises with good facilities always proved difficult. A ceiling in the amount of subscriptions was invariably reached, special building funds dragged on, and managers awaited - usually in vain - the benefactor who would solve their financial difficulties. It was in these circumstances that schools considered certification. The first move of the Stockport Ragged School was in 1856 to 'a large and commodious house' which was secured for a rent of £20 p.a.²² It was in Higher Hillgate and is one of the few exceptions to the rule that the ragged schools were situated in the poorest districts of a town among its worst slums. Higher Hillgate was a middle-class area of superior

17. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Minutes of the General Committee, May 5th, 1856.

18. Ibid., October 6th, 1856.

19. Ibid., January 4th, 1858.

20. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1856, p.5.

21. Ibid., 1856, p.8.

22. Ibid., 1856, p.7.

housing. Curiously, this worked to the advantage of the school for, although neighbours in the immediate vicinity of the school were unhappy at its location, it attracted a large number of subscribers from the area and maintained a consistently high level of subscriptions, donations and gifts in kind while it remained there. The interest of the ladies was particularly aroused and it was upon them that the burden of collecting the majority of subscriptions fell. They even undertook to collect not only from their own group of supporters but completed the lists of the male members of the committee. It was entirely due to their efforts that the Treasurer could meet the deficiency in income caused by changes in government grants.²³

In 1856 a Minute of the Committee of Council enabled committees to receive half of the master's salary and £2.10s0d. p.a. for each child in the school who was fed. Stockport fulfilled the condition imposed - that the 'locus parentis' was vacant or worse than vacant and that the children were either criminal or likely to become so. (It was a condition designed to prevent aid going to the children of the labouring poor who could pay fees.) The purpose behind the Minute was the encouragement of day industrial schools on whose behalf the London Union had petitioned the Government in 1855. However, the conditions were such that only a handful of London schools received a grant.²⁴ The changes brought about by the Industrial Schools Act and the Minute of the Committee of Council, December, 1857, precipitated a crisis at Stockport. The salary allowance and the capitation grants were withdrawn and 5s.0d. per head substituted, as against a possible £5 - later £7.10s0d. - for each child committed under a magistrate's order. Its Secretary stated:

This Minute will effect a reduction in the annual income of the school of upwards of £120, unless the Managers have the School certified under the Industrial Schools Act.²⁵

As the income for that year was £355, the dimensions of the financial problem

23. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1861, p.4.

24. London Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1857, pp.10-11.

25. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1859, p.7.

were grave.²⁶ The Minute Book for 1858 shows that the discussions of the managers were of a very practical nature. The reserve with which they regarded the problems of certification indicated a thinking less worried with the principles of state aid or its effects than with the doubts about their ability to bring the school up to the required standards. Coupled with this was the frustrating problem of their inability to detain children. They noted that the magistrates had the powers to send children charged with vagrancy to an industrial school and also to compel parents to contribute to their upkeep. In a letter to the Stockport Bench they asked if the magistrates would be willing to commit children to the care of the school if it was certified under the Industrial Schools Act. The reply was not encouraging and simply stated that each case would be considered on its merits.²⁷ The committee decided not to seek certification in view of the difficulties, expense, present inconvenience and the future uncertainties about admissions. It became more dependent on voluntary contributions which, it observed wryly, had 'been very inadequate to its support' and pleaded with 'the generous public' not to let this school 'languish for want of funds' but 'by prompt, seasonable and liberal aid to save it'.²⁸

This situation prompted reflections on the charity of the townsfolk and the committee came to the conclusion that

the discontinuance altogether of indiscriminate almsgiving will soon be found sufficient to correct the begging system which is still so common - and would suggest whether misdirected benevolence is not productive of far greater evils than those which it is intended to remove.²⁹

The master of the school had the previous year followed up the cases of children who had been withdrawn to beg. He found that most of them earned between one shilling and one and sixpence a day and that they were 'the main support of their parents who do little or nothing for their own

26. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1857, Treasurer's Account., p.3.

27. Ibid., 1859, p.7.

28. Ibid., 1859, p.8. 1859, p.8.

29. Ibid., 1858, p.4.

maintenance'.³⁰ The 'most earnest protest' was continued by the managers and found an echo in the views of the majority of management committees in London and the provinces.³¹ They felt that the tragedy was that nine out of 10 beggars were imposters and that

the real poor who have broken down through age or infirmity don't partake of public charity but suffer in obscurity.³²

The problem of charity was heightened for the Stockport school by the Lancashire Cotton Famine, though it is arguable that its role at this time demonstrates a potential which secured its future. Of immediate concern to the managers was the possible future of the institution. They noted the 'circumstances of unusual gloom' and commented:

The paralysis of the staple industry of the district . . . has produced a deep and widespread destitution among the working classes and has considerably diminished the means and resources of the trading and commercial classes.³³

The need for a ragged industrial school became even more necessary at this time yet it looked at first as if the means to operate it would be severely curtailed.

The prevalence of intense and unparalleled distress among the cotton operatives naturally increased vagrancy . . . The number of children always bordering on crime was augmented by the want of employment. The children of many destitute families, unfed and unclad, were in danger of falling into bad habits if not into crime.³⁴

Yet the committee feared that, because 'the times are bad and money scarce', the school would be 'crippled'.³⁵ It launched a special relief fund to support the extension of activities and increased admissions from 32 in 1862 to 102 in 1863, giving the school a peak of 157 pupils.³⁶ It had originally been planned to take the members up to 50 'during the period of

30. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1858, p.4.

31. Ibid., 1860, p.5.

32. Ibid., 1861, p.5.

33. Ibid., 1862, p.3.

34. Ibid., 1863, p.3.

35. Ibid., 1862, p.3.

36. Ibid., 1862, p.4; 1863, p.5.

distress', for Mr. Sidebottom, a member of the management committee, 'guaranteed the cost of 14 scholars'.³⁷ But the response to the relief fund, which totalled £214 in 1863, was so generous that the War Office was approached and gave permission for the use of the local barracks as a temporary ragged school. This larger building offered more scope to the committee and they retained it during 1864 and, 'in view of the probable distress of the coming winter', into 1865.³⁸

The financial anxieties of the managers are the main features of the reports and minutes during the period 1861-1865. They were only too aware of their reliance on money which could not be guaranteed from one year to the next. The increase in income for 1863 - from £344 in 1862 to £638 - was the result of single donations to the relief fund.³⁹ In 1862 a further Minute of the Committee of Council, withdrawing the existing reduced grant, came into operation and the managers observed: 'For the future, the school will have to depend entirely on the voluntary contributions of its friends'.⁴⁰ It tried to encourage a system of personal sponsorship by benefactors who would promise to maintain a child in the school.⁴¹ Mill owners were approached but refused to allow collecting boxes in their mills. Their co-operation could hardly have been expected for, only shortly before, they made the accusation

that when work abounds and opportunities for industrious, remunerative employment are presented on every side, the children within its walls (the school's) are kept back from taking their part in the several branches of manufacturing labour.⁴²

In desperation the managers decided to attempt to interest 'a portion of the community of Stockport which has not hitherto taken any decided part in the

37. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1862, p.4.

38. Ibid., 1864, p.9.

39. Ibid., 1863, p.7 and Treasurer's Account.

40. Ibid., 1863, p.5.

41. Ibid., 1863, p.7.

42. Ibid., 1860, p.6.

FRONT COVER OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1883 OF THE
STOCKPORT RAGGED AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

Source:

Stockport Public Library.

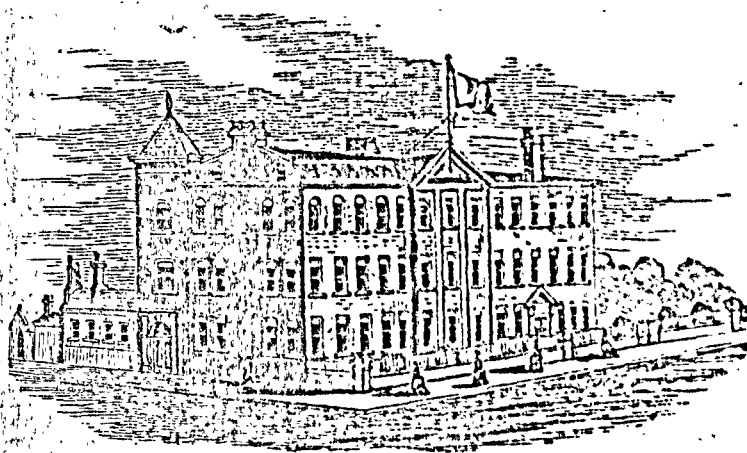
John H. H. H.

STOCKPORT

RAGGED AND

Certified Industrial Schools.

HIGHER HILLGATE, AND 58, CHURCHGATE.



Established June, 1854.

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DEC. 31st. 1883.

STOCKPORT.

PRINTED IN THE INSTITUTION, HIGHER HILLGATE.

1884.

interests of the Institution'. They refer to the working classes.⁴³ Men from the principal mills met the managers and discussed a plan which would enable one child each to be supported for a year by the contribution of each mill. These measures, even if successful, would have affected the finances of the school in minor ways and were as unreliable as yearly subscriptions. Finally the committee considered the only other alternative major financial source - government aid. But the old arguments had not lost their force with the passage of time.

They fear that the premises of Townsend House could not be adapted to the requirements of the Act without a considerable outlay of money. If more suitable premises could be found . . . the usefulness of the Ragged School would be greatly increased.⁴⁴

It was a situation common to many schools as they tried to secure better conditions for their children, increase numbers and establish a firm financial foundation for future operations. Its resolution in this particular case was remarkably uncommon. In 1865 Lady McDougal offered the committee the school's house and land 'on advantageous terms' and the Marquis of Westminster donated £500.⁴⁵ It was the more welcome because subscriptions had begun to fall off slightly and the committee had been fearful 'that the prospects for the coming year are not satisfactory and anticipations of trade are not brilliant for in many departments of commercial and social economy general doubt and uncertainty prevail'.⁴⁶

The managers notified the subscribers in 1865 that they intended to certify the school under the provisions of the Industrial Schools Act. This was done in 1866, after the visit of the Rev. Sydney Turner, H.M. Inspector of Industrial Schools. The contrast between the thinking of the managers at Stockport and those of the London Ragged School Union was a crucial one in attitude to Government aid. The Industrial Schools Act's conditions were regarded at the time as stringent. In London they were taken to con-

⁴³. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1864, p.6.

⁴⁴. Ibid., 1864, p.8.

⁴⁵. Ibid., 1865, p.9.

⁴⁶. Ibid., 1864, p.9.

firm the value of the Union's policy of independence and member schools who were tempted to consider certification were warned that the grant was found to alter materially the character and operations of the establishment and sometimes to destroy altogether its Ragged School character.⁴⁷

In Stockport they were seen as an opportunity for a wider usefulness once the barriers to operation could be overcome. The provinces generally adopted this point of view. It would be an oversimplification to characterise the difference as one of intransigent theory versus practical realism. However, the numbers of ragged schools in the provinces prepared to accept certification under the Act stands in sharp contrast to the numbers within the London Union able to do so. The role of Lord Shaftesbury in inducing the London Union to adhere to the principle of extreme voluntarism was a major one. His policy was based on a theology which was not shared by many provincial committees and a political view with which many could not concur.

The new building at Stockport was 'an adjunct to the old one'. It comprised:

. . . a cellar kitchen and offices, a dining hall and two work rooms, also a school room containing a recess for a gallery and an attic for dormitories. In all the rooms attention has been paid to light and ventilation.⁴⁸

This, the 'Westminster wing', was added to the south side of Townsend House. A further £200, needed to furnish the wing and make the necessary fittings, was given by the Marquis. His total gift to the school amounted to £1,340 when he later made possible the conversion of a cottage in the grounds to dormitory accommodation.⁴⁹ His charity became a temporary embarrassment to the committee as they were unable to use it all on the school's behalf. Their immediate problems solved, they had a balance of £250 from his gifts. This they invested on behalf of the school in 5% India Stock as an Endowment Fund.⁵⁰ In the following year the financial problems began to creep back.

47. The London Ragged School Union Annual Report, 1859, p.9.

48. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1865, p.9.

49. Ibid., 1867, p.9.

50. Ibid., 1863, p.6.

In January of 1869 the school had five cases of scarlet fever among the children, which it was feared would spread throughout the school. Even in the enlarged premises it was not possible to isolate the children properly and 'a hospital is much needed'.⁵¹ Further sleeping accommodation was required

but the great stagnation in trade at the present time has prevented the Committee making that appeal.⁵²

However, the difficulties facing the supporters of the school were not of a nature to threaten its continuing existence, as previously. Secure with a government grant, which provided nearly two-thirds of its income, and in the knowledge that subscriptions annually averaged about £350, the managers dealt with the smaller problems of their own school and began to concern themselves with fundamental problems of national education.

The number of children in the school in 1872 was 107. Apart from the dramatic increase in admissions during the cotton famine, the school once established provided for a group of children averaging about 50 in the years 1857 - 1869. Certification and the gifts made by the Marquis of Westminster enabled it to increase numbers. In its final year as a mixed school it had 199 children on roll. (Vide Table 26 p. 83) The managers were aware that the local trading position affected their numbers. The school's growth fell below the level predicted in 1859 and two reasons were given.

The one has been the plentiful supply of work and the other has been the plentiful supply of false and ruinous charity. Those who would work could work, and those who would not work have devoted their energies to begging and have done it most successfully.⁵³

The economic prosperity of the area made it doubly difficult to get the particular group of children they wanted. The school could easily be filled with the children of 'merely destitute persons', rather than those on the borders of crime.

51. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1869, p.7.
52. Ibid., 1869, p.7.
53. Ibid., 1860, p.5.

TABLE 26 Stockport Ragged and Industrial School. Statistics Relating to the Annual Admissions, Average Weekly Attendance and Total Numbers of Children on the School's Books, Compiled from the Annual Reports 1855 - 1879

| | <u>Average</u> <u>Weekly</u> <u>Attendance</u> | <u>On</u> <u>the</u> <u>Books</u> | <u>Admissions</u> <u>during the</u> <u>Year</u> | <u>Boys</u> | <u>Girls</u> |
|------|--|---|---|-------------|--------------|
| 1855 | 26 | | 20 | | |
| 1856 | 24 | | 21 | | |
| 1857 | 26 | 44 | 17 | | |
| 1858 | 37 | 42 | 34 | 22 | 12 |
| 1859 | 39 | 45 | 19 | 15 | 4 |
| 1860 | | 58 | 18 | | |
| 1861 | 28 | 53 | 29 | | |
| 1862 | | 55 | 32 | | |
| 1863 | | 157 | 102 | | |

On the Admitted during the Year from 1st Oct.
Books,
30th Sept.

| | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|----|----|----|
| 1864 | 92 | 15 | 14 | 1 |
| 1865 | 44 | 29 | 23 | 6 |
| 1866 | 44 | 18 | 16 | 2 |
| 1867 | 43 | 30 | 23 | 7 |
| 1868 | 45 | 28 | 17 | 11 |
| 1869 | 57 | 44 | 18 | 26 |
| 1871 ⁺ | 90 | 49 | 31 | 18 |
| 1872 | 107 | 19 | 15 | 4 |
| 1873 | 122 | 19 | 15 | 4 |
| 1874 | 137 | 26 | 19 | 7 |
| 1875 | 156 | 26 | 19 | 7 |
| 1876 ⁺⁺ | 160 | 45 | 45 | 0 |
| 1877 | 160 | 37 | 28 | 9 |
| 1878 | 199 | 33 | 30 | 3 |
| 1879 | 165 | 22 | 22 | 0 |

⁺ The Managers published no school report for 1870. A change in the accounting procedures of the Treasurer rendered it superfluous.

⁺⁺ In this year a new school for the girls was provided.

the beggars and young thieves cannot be induced to come in large numbers. Their parents find it more profitable to send the children to beg.⁵⁴

After registration under the Industrial Schools Act the school was protected from the fluctuating fortunes of the cotton mills and the arbitrary whims of the parents of the children. A child found begging, living a vagrant life, one who kept the company of reputed thieves, or one whose parents could not control him, could be ordered to be detained in the school until, if necessary, his sixteenth birthday. Parents could also be compelled to contribute to the maintenance of a child in the school.

The parents of the children attending the Stockport Ragged School lived in districts where it was the practice that 'many children are sent to work at an early age and thus deprived of proper instruction'.⁵⁵ The mill owners exerted pressure on parents to send their children to work and criticised the school for its 'interference with factory labour'.⁵⁶ Early reports and minute books have numerous cases. The most famous was that of 'the wild street Arab' who supported himself and his parents by becoming a proficient performer of summersets and tumbling in wheel chase beside the Buxton coaches during the summer months, and a servant of all work to Penny Theatres in the winter.⁵⁷

He became a soldier after his education in the school and returned to thank the managers for the new opportunities he now had.⁵⁸ The evidence points to the casual nature of the work of the fathers of the children. Entries like 'J.B.'s father, a labourer, is out of work'; 'G.S. - his father, who is a tailor, is often out of work' (59) are common. Where work was obtained the condition of the family was precarious. For example:

54. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1861, p.5.

55. Ibid., 1855, p.5.

56. Ibid., 1855, p.5.

57. Ibid., 1855, p.6.

58. Ibid., 1864, p.7.

59. Ibid., 1857, p.5.

The father had great difficulty in obtaining employment . . . but at last succeeded. His earnings only came to about 4s. per week for the whole family, being four in number with the prospect of an addition. The family have subsisted in great poverty; they pay 9d. per week for the room they occupy and live upon bread made from shudes, or pigmeal, which they bake in cakes upon the hob of the fireplace. They sleep on a little straw on the floor and in the clothes they wear during the day; they sit upon bricks and have a three-legged stool for a table. 60

The schools were concerned about the parents of the children for two reasons. Most regarded it as a natural extension of their work in the classroom to attempt to reform the parents. Initially, much of the home mission work depended on the enthusiasm of the committee of an institution or their supporters, or its attachment to a gospel hall. With the expansion of the schools in the 1850's and 1860's, emphasis was placed upon clothing clubs, bazaars, socials, sewing classes, libraries, Dorcas groups and adult Sunday and evening classes. Secondly, they wished to ensure that only a particular group of children received their charity. The efforts of the school were often disappointed. The case of the father who took his children round the public houses 'to dance and make antics', and for whom the Stockport committee found work, was typical. 'He has been too long accustomed to vagrant habits to settle down to continuous employment'.⁶¹ In 1861, worried by the high proportion of parents of the children 'who travel from place to place, living upon the careless benevolence of the community', and anxious about the social character of these people, the committee drew up figures to indicate more clearly the group they were serving.⁶² They were unable to give information relating to all their pupils, since the foundation of the school, but a majority was covered in the following Table.⁶³ There is no reason to suppose that the social position of the parents rose during the period to 1830. The instability of the marriage, or the death of one partner in it, clearly had social and moral effects upon the children. This was recognised by the school and they claimed that the

60. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1855, pp.6-7.

61. Ibid., 1866, p.6.

62. Ibid., 1861, pp.3-4.

63. Ibid., 1861, p.4.

TABLE 27 Positions of the Parents of the Children who Attended
Stockport Ragged School 1854 - 1861

- 29 Mothers were charwomen.
- 10 Children had both parents dead.
- 29 Parents were professedly factory workers but many of them were drunkards and profligates.
- 20 Parents were professed beggars.
- 16 Parents had no fixed employment.
- 3 Parents were pedlars.
- 1 Parent was a prostitute.
- 2 Parents were soldiers.
- 1 Parent was in jail.
- 1 Parent had been transported.
- 1 Parent had absconded.

6. The internal life of Stockport Ragged School. Other, less systematic, observations, for example, in the afternoon, have shown that the school is a place where the most prominent characteristics of the children have been observed.

1. Control - steals from the school. Will not go to school - does not attend.

2. Addition - keeping a book of stolen property. The school is a place where the children are taught to steal.

3. The school is a place where the children are taught to steal.

4. The school is a place where the children are taught to steal.

5. The school is a place where the children are taught to steal.

6. The school is a place where the children are taught to steal.

7. The school is a place where the children are taught to steal.

8. The school is a place where the children are taught to steal.

TABLE 28. Statistics Regarding the Parents of the Children in the Stockport Ragged and Industrial School 1864 - 1878

65

| | <u>Without Either Parent</u> | <u>Fatherless</u> | <u>Motherless</u> | <u>Both Parents Living</u> |
|------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1864 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 5 |
| 1865 | 4 | 16 | 3 | 6 |
| 1866 | 1 | 17 | - | - |
| 1867 | 3 | 12 | 5 | 9 |
| 1868 | 2 | 15 | 2 | 9 |
| 1869 | 10 | 19 | 4 | 11 |
| 1871 | 6 | 21 | 10 | 12 |
| 1872 | 3 | - | 4 | 9 |
| 1873 | 31 | 23 | 37 | 44 |
| 1874 | 21 | 48 | 29 | 39 |
| 1875 | 28 | 51 | 37 | 40 |
| 1876 | 47 | 52 | 36 | 24 |
| 1877 | 38 | 55 | 38 | 29 |
| 1878 | 58 | 63 | 39 | 39 |

65. Compiled from the Annual Reports of Stockport Ragged and Industrial School, 1864 - 1878. Other, less systematically collected evidence is available as, for example, in the Annual Report of 1867, p.7. The managers observed that 'the material to be operated upon is not always of the most promising character'. They then quoted cases from the Admission Book for that year.

'Case No.1. Beyond control - steals fruit from gardens - will not work - will not go to school - sleeps in the streets at night.

No.2. Family maintained by keeping a house for the reception of stolen property. Boy charged with felony three times.

No.3. Will not attend school - steals anything he can lay his hands on.

No.4. Illegitimate - mother in gaol.

No.5. Companion of thieves.

No.6. Father drunk, mother crafty and deceitful.

No.7. Mother lives in a brothel - been before the magistrates for felony.

No.8. Lazy, insubordinate, unmanageable.'

earlier they received a child the more likely they were to succeed in helping him. 'It is difficult to reclaim children when the early developed vicious propensities have been long unrestrained by parental influence'.⁶⁴ The extent of this problem can be gauged by referring to the proportion of children without either or both parents. It was always high and stood at four-fifths of the total number on roll in 1878.

The school hoped that its educational instruction, the industrial labour and the discipline of the house would effect an improvement in the habits and standards of their children. From the outset industrial pursuits were important. In the first year the children were required to sort peas and make paper bags.⁶⁶ By 1856 there were added 'making canvas bags, folding books' and mending clogs.⁶⁷ The usual problems of the industrial class appeared. Firstly, the work 'does not employ the boys all of the time allotted to them'.⁶⁸ Secondly, the managers began to justify the nature of the activities: 'The work must be simple and easy to be done'.⁶⁹ The Treasurer's account showed that in these initial stages no financial advantage accrued to the school from the work. In 1859, however, the 'work done by the children' totalled £32.18s.11½d.⁷⁰ The uncertainties of this work are illustrated by the managers' remarks in 1862. During that year the children's work had not been 'so much as in former years, owing to the depressed condition of trade'.⁷¹ The figures available for this work are not separated from the earnings which those children who went to work in the mills and returned to lodge made. The size of the contribution can be seen from Table . Precise figures indicating the numbers of children us-

64. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1867, p.6.

66. Ibid., 1855, p.3.

67. Ibid., 1856, p.6.

68. Ibid., 1856, p.6.

69. Ibid., 1856, p.6.

70. Ibid., 1859, p.14.

71. Ibid., 1862, p.5.

TABLE 20. Payment to the School for Work Done by the Children
Compiled from Annual Reports 1857 - 1880

| | £. | s. | d. |
|------|-----|----|-----|
| 1857 | 3 | 14 | 2 |
| 1859 | 32 | 18 | 11½ |
| 1860 | 56 | 0 | 0 |
| 1861 | 4 | 8 | 3 |
| 1864 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| 1865 | 13 | 5 | 0 |
| 1866 | 12 | 2 | 1 |
| 1867 | 14 | 2 | 0 |
| 1868 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| 1869 | 21 | 11 | 0 |
| 1871 | 55 | 0 | 0 |
| 1872 | 58 | 0 | 0 |
| 1873 | 83 | 0 | 0 |
| 1874 | 125 | 0 | 0 |
| 1875 | 203 | 0 | 0 |
| 1876 | 321 | 0 | 0 |
| 1877 | 442 | 0 | 0 |
| 1878 | 573 | 0 | 0 |
| 1879 | 560 | 0 | 0 |
| 1880 | 455 | 0 | 0 |

ing the school as a dormitory refuge are not given. However, the larger part of the earnings are undoubtedly attributable to the children working away from the school, especially after 1869. Until 1869 the management stated that the school received no income from the industrial work. 'The Department has brought but little money to the funds - the proceeds have been spent on purchasing a stock of type'.⁷² However, the theory behind the industrial class was not economic - 'the principal object of this branch of the operation is not financial profit'.⁷³ Along with all other industrial ragged schools, the committee of Stockport School affirmed:

We do not profess to teach them skilled labour, but merely habits of industry, to eradicate their roving propensities, and lead them to esteem labour as an honour and a blessing and the only means by which they can attain respectability. The girls are taught to sew and knit, and they are also instructed in household duties, so as to qualify them for domestic service.⁷⁴

At first the industrial classes usually took place in the afternoon. The time-table of 1856 allocates three and a quarter hours.⁷⁵ With increasing numbers of children resident in the school the time-table was extended into the evenings until the middle '70's, when evening recreation was permitted.⁷⁶ The industrial department was put on a secure footing with the purchase of a printing press and type for £43 in 1858.⁷⁷ Although cobbling and tailoring grew slightly, printing was the school's main activity and showed a small but consistent profit. Stockport School showed the value of printing within the limits of the industrial curriculum of the second half of the nineteenth century. Most other schools were prevented from establishing similar work by the heavy initial outlay and expensive running costs. At the inspection of 1878 Major Inglis commented:

I am particularly pleased with the system of industrial training, which is about the best I have seen anywhere. In addition to

72. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1862, p.5.

73. Ibid., 1862, p.5.

74. Ibid., 1856, p.6.

75. Ibid., 1856, p.18.

76. Cf. the time-tables in the Annual Reports of 1873 and 1877.

77. Ibid., 1958, Treasurer's Account.

the boys employed in the premises, about 80 are employed in the town, getting practical instruction in trades of various sorts.⁷⁸

The instruction given in the school was basic. Particular attention was given to

reading, writing and arithmetic, and the fullest efforts have been made that the children may be well grounded in them; as few comparatively remain long enough in the school to advance beyond the rudimental parts of education.⁷⁹

Thomas Jackson, the Master, had to ensure that the schooling was 'most judiciously adapted to the age and ability of the scholars', the effect of which was 'gradual and certain improvement'.⁸⁰ Children admitted to the school were 'mostly ignorant of the first principles of education and many do not know the letters of the alphabet'.⁸¹ The problems this presented to the teachers were difficult. The schools admitted the educational ones and published figures giving the level of attainment of children first entering the school. This had a propaganda value, did represent a genuine difficulty and formed a useful contrast to the tables relating to children who left the school having obtained satisfactory positions. In 1864 the school started to give statistics, though it changed their form in 1873.

Although the majority of children entering the school were able to do very little, there was a perceptible increase in their level of attainment at admission in the period 1873 - 1879. The school was clearly getting some children who had had a preliminary education in Board schools.

The first master of the school, Thomas Jackson, remained until 1869, when he left to take up an appointment at a Boys' Refuge in Kent. There were 94 applications for the vacancy, which had a salary of £30 p.a. Mr. David Ross, Master of Bute Certified Industrial School, Scotland, was appointed, with his sister, Mrs. Allan, as Matron.⁸² It was a difficult

78. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1878, p.7.

79. Ibid., 1858, p.4.

80. Ibid., 1859, p.3.

81. Ibid., 1862, p.4.

82. Ibid., 1869, p.6.

TABLE 30 Part I. The Level of Attainment of Children Admitted to the
Stockport Ragged and Industrial School 1864 - 1878
In Two Parts, Compiled from the Annual Reports
1864 - 1878

| | <u>Could Read and Write</u> | <u>Could Read Imperfectly</u> | <u>Could Not Tell Letters</u> |
|------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1864 | 1 | 2 | 12 |
| 1865 | 1 | 4 | 24 |
| 1866 | 0 | 1 | 17 |
| 1867 | 0 | 2 | 27 |
| 1868 | 2 | 1 | 25 |
| 1869 | 1 | 5 | 33 |
| 1871 | 2 | 2 | 45 |
| 1872 | 2 | 2 | 12 |

Part II.

| | <u>1873</u> | | <u>1874</u> | | <u>1875</u> | | <u>1876</u> | | <u>1877</u> | | <u>1878</u> | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|----|
| | B. | G. | B. | G. | B. | G. | B. | G. | B. | G. | B. | G. |
| Unable to Read | 59 | 20 | 62 | 23 | 65 | 30 | 76 | 18 | 75 | 13 | 95 | 14 |
| Could Read a Little | 28 | 23 | 25 | 20 | 33 | 15 | 40 | 12 | 39 | 18 | 49 | 18 |
| Could Read Fluently | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 12 | 3 | 20 | 3 |
| Unable to Write | 82 | 42 | 84 | 42 | 92 | 45 | 106 | 25 | 102 | 25 | 122 | 26 |
| Could Write a Little | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 12 | 6 | 15 | 5 | 25 | 5 |
| Could Write Pretty Well | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 17 | 4 |
| Could do Nothing in Arithmetic | 84 | 43 | 86 | 44 | 98 | 46 | 115 | 27 | 103 | 23 | 128 | 29 |
| Could do a Little in Arithmetic | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 11 | 7 | 16 | 6 | 26 | 6 |
| Proficient in Elementary Rules | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 0 |

choice, as the committee was embarrassed by the 'many testimonials of a high order of merit'.⁸³ In 1873 Mr. Ross left to go to the governorship of Barnes Home, Heaton Mersey. His was not a settled time within the school. The Inspector had complained that 'the standard of instruction is not at present very high' and the committee was anxious about the education generally.⁸⁴ From the 60 applicants for the Mastership Mr. G. Williams, a teacher in the Akbar Training Ship, was selected. After a few months he resigned, following differences with the committee regarding the organisation of the school, and Mr. J.W. Shaw, of the Everton School, Liverpool, replaced him.⁸⁵ He, in turn, resigned in the next year, being quite unable to accept the role of Master which the committee envisaged. Mr. Reith, of Kelso Industrial School, was appointed, only to leave a year later in order to accept a post in Dr. Guthrie's Ragged Industrial School in Edinburgh.⁸⁶ Mr. Williams, of the Feltham Industrial School, was appointed in 1875 and the school had a more settled phase. Throughout this period, from 1869 to 1876, the staff changes affected the work of the classroom. The basic problem was a shortage of staff. When the Chief Inspector, the Rev. Sidney Turner, stated that 'more teaching assistance is required for so large a number', there were 107 children on the school register, taught by the Master and four assistants.⁸⁷ The teaching duties of the Master were only a small part of his office. He was responsible for the whole organisation of the institution - the feeding, clothing and boarding of the children, the committee work and the placement of the children in employment. Thus the school had, in effect, four teachers. The very unfavourable report of 1875 resulted in a meeting between committee members and the Inspector. His view was that 'the education is not so far advanced as I had hoped to find' and he itemised the points which he regarded as 'defective'.⁸⁸

83. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1869, p.6.

84. Ibid., 1871, p.6.

85. Ibid., 1873, p.8.

86. Ibid., 1874, p.4.

87. Ibid., 1872, p.8.

88. Ibid., 1875, p.8.

The committee resolved that, before going out to work from the school, the children must pass an examination.

This is to gain for the children greater educational advantage so that when discharged from the school they may take their place among others who have been educated in day schools.⁸⁹

The seriousness with which this was treated can be seen from the fact that children were withdrawn from their employment or else only permitted to attend as 'half-timers'.

The staff changes and concern at educational levels illustrate the emergence of the school as an institution beginning to establish itself as one of the leaders of the 86 non-Roman Catholic certified industrial schools in the country. Its staff came from well-known schools or else left for promotion to such schools. The committee observed:

It is a singular fact that the Superintendents of all the Manchester Industrial Schools were formerly connected with our Institution.⁹⁰

It is even more interesting to observe the ease with which teachers in the Scottish and English schools interchanged. It confirms the similarity between the Scottish ragged schools and the English certified industrial schools. From the 1860's to 1880 they grew closer in practice and ideals. During the difficult period 1869 - 1875, when the committee could not find a suitable replacement for Mr. Jackson, it was unwilling to suffer a lowering of standards and was always anxious to allay criticisms from outside.

The precise nature of the work undertaken by children who lived at the school, but worked in the town during the day, is not given until 1879, when the Report gave both the type of occupations and the numbers of children em-

89. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1875, p.8.

90. Ibid., 1882, p.9.

ployed within each.91

| <u>Occupations</u> | <u>Number of Boys Employed</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tailors | 14 |
| Shoemakers | 10 |
| Printers | 9 |
| Paper Hat Makers | 6 |
| Engine Boys | 2 |
| Bakers and Cooks | 2 |
| House Boys | 4 |
| Knitters and Darners | 6 |
| Laundry Boys | 10 |
| Errand Boys | 10 |
| Carpenters | 4 |
| Mechanics | 2 |
| Office Boys | 2 |
| Gardeners | 4 |
| Cotton Mill Hands | 2 |
| Hatters | 25 |
| Bronzers | 4 |
| Ironmongers | 2 |
| Saddlers | 1 |
| Cleaners | 10 |
| Working full time in school | 16 |

91. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1879, p.23. That this is a fair picture of the sorts of employment actually gained by the children on their discharge may be seen by comparing the data on p. with the following list. This gives the occupations undertaken by the 30 boys who left the school in 1878.

| <u>Occupations</u> | <u>Number of Boys Employed</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mill Hands | 2 |
| Carpenters | 6 |
| Clerks | 2 |
| Cloggers | 1 |
| Royal Navy | 2 |
| Hatters | 7 |
| Shoemakers | 3 |
| Painters | 1 |
| Bakers | 1 |
| Iron Turners | 1 |
| Printers | 1 |
| Bricklayers | 1 |
| Tailors | 1 |
| Miners | 1 |

Of the Boys discharged in 1873:

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Have fallen into crime | 1 |
| Doubtful | 1 |
| Are doing well | 28 |

(Annual Report, 1879, p.23)

The committee described the work of the boys living in the school but working in the town as 'preparing for the occupations in which they are likely to be engaged when the time of their detention expires'. (Annual Report, 1873, p.6)

The casual nature of employments like office, errand and laundry boys, gardeners, bakers, cooks and cleaners is obvious. Many of the occupations offered nothing once a certain age was attained and are part of the juvenile employment market only. Few of the children from the school were able to obtain permanent employment with some security or learn a skill which would keep them out of the pool of unemployment at certain times of the year. The failure of the school here was disguised both from itself and from the community by the fact that it would be a matter of between five to 10 years before many of their pupils would have to face the economic realities of their position within the juvenile pool. Thus it was that the school, in its attempts to estimate its success, argued in 1860 that

the statistics prove the encouraging fact that nearly seventy-five per cent of those who have passed through the school have, by its means, been snatched from the deepest degradation and made useful members of society.⁹²

In 1866 it was calculated that 'above two thirds will be a fair estimate of the numbers benefited by the instrumentality of the Ragged School'.⁹³

No evidence is available of the long-term effects of the work of the school. There are a few pointers only. In 1866 the School Report noted that some of its former pupils were 'even in responsible situations⁽⁹⁴⁾ and the occasional individual success is evident in the school records. For example:

Mr. J. Hunt, architectural draughtsman, engaged Robert Smedley to teach him the business.⁹⁵

Matthew Fowden, Esq., of Altrincham, made a gift of the Indenture of Apprenticeship of John Axon.⁹⁶

The case of Frank Lyons was a sad one. An old scholar of the school:

92. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1860, p.4. The managers figures were thus: of the 104 children known to have left since the foundation of the school, 71 are 'known to be doing well', 14 had 'left the town' and 17 had 'returned to their old haunts and habits', one had died.

93. Ibid., 1866, p.9.

94. Ibid., 1866, p.9.

95. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Minute Book, February 1856.

96. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1865, p.11.

he has been for the last three years a pupil teacher in one of the most flourishing day schools in the town. The examinations requisite to test his fitness for this situation were passed most creditably and this promising youth bids fair to become that rare and most useful character, an earnest Christian School-master.⁹⁷

In 1866, aged 20, he died 'of consumption'.⁹⁸ Despite the fact that the committee demurred from laying

the results before their subscribers, as in many cases it would hinder the good work going on and be hurtful to those who have experienced the benefits of the Institution (99),

the educational work of the school remained only basic. It enabled its children to take only those positions which offered very little prospect of either permanence or advancement. The school would argue that it had effected a moral reformation, rescuing its children from vagrancy, crime and corruption: that it had habituated them to industry and eradicated vices that had taken root within them. Objective evidence for this is not available. Whatever the subsequent economic fate of the children, it must not be taken as a sign of the failure of the school. One wonders, however, whether in situations of economic flux, involving a considerable pool of casual labour and frequent unemployment, the moral teaching, the behaviour patterns and the habituation to routine work of the school sustained the labourer and kept him from vagrancy, petty crime and the like. The school did no systematic or detailed follow-up work on its children after the first year of leaving. The favourable remarks in the Reports are largely impressions and opinions rather than fact. Yet the truth can be in accord with opinion.

The complete figures regarding the removal of children from the school underline the difficulties which faced the schools. A small minority of children, kept away to beg, particularly worried the managers, for it was just these children whom they saw as the proper recipients of their charity.

97. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1864, p.7.

98. Ibid., 1866, p.8.

99. Ibid., 1866, p.7.

They felt a concern for those who remained for only a short time until they or their parents - probably itinerant beggars - left the town. Some children were misplaced in the school and, when the circumstances of their parents became known or improved, were usually withdrawn. There was transference to other schools, day industrial and reformatory, as well as the workhouse. A comparison of the numbers going to work after 1864 with the numbers admitted (vide Table) shows the tendency for children to remain in the school for a longer period than initially. This was due to the orders of magistrates in specific cases. They had the option of placing children in the care of the school up to 16 years.

The Education Act prompted the managers at Stockport to consider their role afresh. They had noted the feeling locally - and it was only a reflection of the national opinion - that the education placed within the reach of all would lessen the numbers of children inclining to vagrancy and crime. Their view was:

Eventually it may have this effect, but it will be the work of years. The control of the School Boards over children extends to twenty-seven and a half hours a week. In Industrial Schools perfect control over the children is obtained whilst at the same time they are withdrawn from the evil home influence.¹⁰⁰

They quickly published to their supporters the Chief Inspector's opinion that, so far, School Boards had been ineffective in reducing the numbers of the 'neglected and disorderly Arab class of children'. He had said:

I am led unwillingly to the conclusion that they cannot be reached by the powers and provisions of the Education Act as it now stands or by the purely instructional machinery which it recognises.¹⁰¹

Their sensitivity to the issue was prompted by two factors. Firstly, they appreciated that local support would dwindle rapidly if it was thought that the school was superfluous. It is true that it received the larger proportion of its income from Government grants: however, the subscriptions were valuable and equally so was the good will of the community. This good will expressed itself in gifts and treats for the children and had been a

100. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1873, p.6.

101. Ibid., 1874, p.6.

1857-1878

[illegible]

continuing factor in the history of the school.¹⁰² Secondly, it viewed with alarm the Government Minute which reduced from five to three shillings per week the grant made towards children under 10 years committed to the school by a magistrate, and set the same amount for children of 15 or over who had been in the school for four years.¹⁰³ It asked the Government to reconsider the Minute and got a reply from the Secretary of State, Mr. Bruce. He pointed out that schools which conferred a local benefit could fairly be assisted by local support and intimated that any deficiency in the school's income could be made up by the School Board.¹⁰⁴ It is clear from the Report of 1871 that the managers had already ascertained that the School Board could grant aid for their school. They were attempting to strengthen their hand before making an application to it.

Apart from the possible financial repercussions of the Education Act on their own school, the managers were disappointed that a system of Day Feeding Schools had not be established on a national scale. They held:

There are many cases in which children are not eligible for admission to our Institution nor would it be desirable to remove them from parental control, but in consequence of poverty or neglect these children do not receive adequate nourishment.¹⁰⁵

They probably had the success of Scottish Day Feeding Schools in mind. It was a suggestion which had been in the air within the Ragged School

102. Reports indicate the nature of these gifts. Thus
 Gift of Mr. J. Hompson. Ropes for swings and pole. (1858)
 " " Mr. Sidebothan, Jnr. The monthly numbers of 14 different magazines. (1864)
 " " Major Wilkinson and officer of the Voluntary Rifle Corps. Fifty suits of clothing. (1869).
 " " Mr. George Ball. A football. (1869)
 " " Mr. C. Wilson. Seven hundred cabbage and 200 cauliflower plants. (1872)
 " " Various anonymous persons. Toys for sick children, books for the master's room, a quantity of rhubarb, felt cuttings for boys' braces. (1872)
 " " Various supporters. Skipping ropes, 200 oranges, 50 hats for the girls. (1873)
 " " Various supporters. Money to the value of £62 to defray cost of musical instruments to form a brass band. (1876)

103. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1872, p.6.

104. Ibid., 1872, p.7.

105. Ibid., 1871, p.6.

Movement since its earliest days. In view of the thinking behind the Education Act, it was a non-starter and was too late anyway.

The financial problems of the school had eased after certification but had not disappeared. Firstly, overcrowding created continuing pressure on its resources. An attempt to skirt the difficulty in the dormitories by introducing a system of ventilation devised by a member of the committee proved abortive and a school room in Brentnall Street was converted to provide sleeping accommodation for 31 children.¹⁰⁶ A permanent solution could only be found in a reduction in numbers of children or in enlarged premises. The former was against the philosophy of the schools, so a new building was added to the existing school. It comprised

a wash house and laundry fitted with washing and sleeping troughs, drying horses, etc; a bath to hold forty boys; new cooking kitchens with two jacketed steam boilers for soup; potato steamer and complete kitchen range; a scullery with the requisite conveniences; a dining hall to accommodate 150 children; school room for the same number; two large dormitories for boys; a master's office overlooking the playground and workshop; boys' lavatory, also girls' lavatory and closets; store room for clothes and assistant's bedroom. The steam boiler cooks the children's food, supplies the wash-house and bath with hot water and heats the clothes store room, master's office and assistant's bedroom.¹⁰⁷

It was opened in 1872. A substantial grant of £600 towards its cost was given by the country magistrates on the condition that the school would normally accept up to 50 of the children sent by them.¹⁰⁸ An attempt to obtain a grant of £200 to defray the expense of the extension from the Stockport School Board was made in 1872. The committee argued that

as the benefit of decreased taxation from lessened criminality was experienced by the whole community, it was just that a small portion of the money required should be rateably defrayed by all who reaped the benefit accruing from the establishment of the school.¹⁰⁹

The Board was sympathetic but did not feel able to finance projects beyond

106. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1868, p.4.

107. Ibid., 1872, p.6.

108. Ibid., 1872, p.6. The figure suggested by the school as appropriate in its initial negotiations was 25 children.

109. Ibid., 1872, p.6.

its own field of operations. Nor could it grant the request from the school for 2s0d. per week for children over 10 years and 1s0d. for those under, which arose from the school's correspondence with the Secretary of State over the reduction of grants. The managers believed that it was the policy of the Government in its Minutes and of the School Boards in their interpretation of their role to check the establishment of Industrial Schools except where founded by the Boards themselves.

Secondly, the problem of local rates and taxes threatened to erode what could be spent on the school and its children. Stockport had not exercised its option to rate the school and had saved it considerable expense over the years - particularly in view of the locality in which the school was situated. A Bill before Parliament proposed to make the rating of schools compulsory and brought a strong protest from the committee, which sent its views in a 'Memorial' to the Government. In fact, the Bill was subsequently withdrawn.¹¹⁰ The committee also felt strongly about the injustice, as they saw it, of the

managers of the school (being) called upon to pay their quota of the local taxes for the privilege of being allowed to rescue the wild Arabs of the streets from degradation, misery and ruin.¹¹¹

At this time the school was taking in children sent to it by other School Boards who made 'grants in aid from local taxes' to the Treasurer for their upkeep. It was a measure of the success of the school in establishing itself as a low cost and efficient institution that this occurred. The committee complained that though 'the authorities in London and elsewhere consider the work of the school important' enough to give assistance from local funds, 'not a farthing is received from this source' in Stockport.¹¹² The amounts given were substantial. The London School Board paid the school £69.3s4d. for 12 boys admitted in 1877 and £148.14s10d. for 34 in 1878.¹¹³ And the school received admissions from Boards in Liverpool, Manchester, Hud-

110. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1874, p.7.

111. Ibid., 1876, p.7.

112. Ibid., 1876, p.7.

113. Ibid., 1877, p.3; 1878, p.11.

TABLE 32. Total Income Per Annum of Stockport Ragged and Industrial School with Amounts derived from Government Grants, Subscriptions, the Children's Work and Parental Contributions 1855 - 78. Compiled from the Annual Reports 1855 - 78

| | <u>Total Income</u> | | | <u>Subscriptions</u> | | | <u>Government Grants</u> | | | <u>Parental Contributions</u> | | |
|------|---------------------|-----|----|----------------------|----|----|--------------------------|-----|----|-------------------------------|-----|----|
| | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. |
| 1855 | 112 | 4. | 3½ | | | | | | | | | |
| 1856 | 214 | 2. | 9 | | | | | | | | | |
| 1857 | 355 | 6. | 2½ | 181 | | | 105 | | | | | |
| 1858 | 420 | 5. | 5½ | 149 | | | 143 | | | | | |
| 1859 | 437 | 16. | 5 | 191 | | | 144 | | | | | |
| 1860 | 434 | | | 241 | | | 21 | 1. | 5 | 6 | | |
| 1861 | 355 | | | 247 | | | 35 | | | | | |
| 1862 | 344 | | | 257 | | | 36 | | | | | |
| 1863 | 638 | | | 234 | | | 73 | | | 40 | | |
| 1864 | 619 | | | 360 | | | | | | 6 | 11. | 6 |
| 1865 | 486 | | | 255 | | | | | | 15 | 2. | 3 |
| 1866 | 423 | | | 310 | | | | | | 13 | 17. | |
| 1867 | 604 | | | 291 | | | 95 | 18. | 3 | 29 | 9. | 6 |
| 1868 | 796 | | | 352 | | | 344 | | | 6 | | |
| 1869 | 994 | | | 306 | | | 560 | | | 5 | 9. | 6 |
| 1871 | 1309 | | | 298 | | | 931 | | | | | |
| 1872 | 1891 | | | 340 | | | 1428 | | | | | |
| 1873 | 1988 | | | 376 | | | 1483 | | | | | |
| 1874 | 2214 | | | 374 | | | 1636 | | | | | |
| 1875 | 2607 | | | 597 | | | 1700 | | | | | |
| 1876 | 2592 | | | 363 | | | 1732 | | | | | |
| 1877 | 3255 | | | 321 | | | 1981 | | | | | |
| 1878 | 2818 | | | 354 | | | 1783 | | | | | |

dersfield, Macclesfield and Altrincham with the appropriate payments. The majority of the children nevertheless came from Stockport itself. Table gives details of the income of the school, illustrating the amount of Government grant, the subscription level, what was received for the children's work and parental contributions for the maintenance of the pupils.

In 1876 the Secretary of State stated: 'The school's income is chiefly derived from the grants of government taxes, supplemented by gifts of the benevolent'.¹¹⁴ The figures show the narrowness of the margin between subscriptions and income in the first 10 years of its existence. They display the level of £300 - £350, which remained all that could normally be relied upon from the subscriptions. The finances of other schools show a similar ceiling.¹¹⁵ They show very clearly that the school became increasingly dependent upon the Government grant for its children. It was eventually the single largest unit of income. Once the school had achieved certification through the benefactions of the Marquis of Westminster, its continued existence was assured. Its financial problems lay in financing the developments it desired. There was a good deal of comment concerning the parental contributions as a matter of principle in the ragged schools but the Treasurer's accounts show that the money collected from this source was virtually negligible. The discrepancy between the sum of the subscriptions and Government grants, and the total income, was covered by a series of smaller contributions under the headings of Donations, Work Done by the Children, Interest on Deposits and Legacies, Money Brought Forward from the Previous Year and Special Events.¹¹⁶

114. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1876, p.7.

115. For example, at Leeds Ragged and Industrial School the subscriptions for 1861, 1863 and 1864 were:

| 1861 | 1863 | 1864 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| £319. 19s. 6d. | £312. 6s. 11d. | £321. 18s. 0d. |

(Annual Reports 1861, 1863, 1864)

115. Reports indicate the nature of these events. Thus
Gift of £34, 'The Proceeds of the Oratorio sung by the Choral Society'.
(1859)
Gift of £25, 'The Proceeds of the Cricket Match, Stockport v. Manchester'.
(1859)

Stockport Ragged and Industrial School had always been sensitive to the feelings in the community regarding its work. It had responded to criticism from mill-owners, local magistrates and the tradesmen who employed its children, as well as Inspectors and parents. It illustrated the principle that much of the success of a school depended on the strength of local support. The managers were always quick to act to prevent rumour which could harm their reputation. A variety of small incidents shows them as careful in their detailed routine work as in their attempts to speak at national level on matters of educational policy. In 1881 they moved rapidly to quash the charge of inadequate dietary provision - or the 'No Meat Cry', as it was called. The Gravesend School Board had obtained copies of the Annual Report which gave the 'School Diet'. It observed that the main meal on three days of the week was one pint of pea soup with four ozs. bread (Wednesdays and Fridays) and one pint of potato hash and four ozs. bread (Tuesdays). It understood this to mean that the boys received no meat on these days. Contacting the editor of their local newspaper, it urged 'an expose of the cruelties practised in reform establishments', and arranged to send a deputation to Stockport.¹¹⁷ The 'School Diet' had appeared in the annual reports unchanged since 1871.¹¹⁸ The Stockport Board was disturbed, for they had a child from the School Board at Gravesend in the school. A substantiated charge could result in fewer applications to the school from this and other Boards for the admission of their children. It asserted that the Table was out of date and that in fact each child received in his

117. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1881, p.8.

118. Ibid., 1871, p.13, gives the 'diet':

Breakfast at 8.15

One Pint of Coffee and 8 ozs of Bread

Dinner at 1

4 ozs. of roast beef, $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. of potatoes & 4 ozs. bread (Sun. & Th.)

1 pt. pea soup & 8 ozs. bread (Wed. & Fr.)

1 pt. potato hash, 4 ozs. beef, 4 ozs. bread (Tues.)

Rice milk or milk, and bread (Sat. & Mon.)

Supper at 6.

1 pt. milk porridge & 4 ozs. of bread (Tues., Wed., Th., Fr.)

1 pt. tea & 8 ozs. bread (Mon., Sat.)

1 pt. tea & 8 ozs. bread with butter (Sun.)

hash or soup a quarter of a pound of meat a day.

This is a minimum quantity, but practically the boys are not stinted. They get as much as they can eat, some having twice the quantity named.¹¹⁹

It was further pointed out that the Dietary Table was under the supervision of the Inspector, who had approved it.¹²⁰ The matter was only clinched in favour of the school when the pupil from the Gravesend School Board was questioned by members of that Board.

In the early spring of 1878 the managers faced local criticism which threatened to damage their reputation. James Bancroft, a prominent business man in Stockport, wrote to the Inspector of Industrial Schools, Major Inglis, a series of letters. In them he made 42 charges against the managers of the school. They ranged from providing only the worst food for the children, ill-treating and inadequately clothing them, to allowing them to be dirty, ill-educated and physically weakened. The committee considered all the charges in detail, took evidence from the children, parents and staff. It found it necessary to take only two actions. Mr. Williams, the master, was reprimanded 'for indiscriminately punishing the boys who wet their beds' and told to regard the matter as under the jurisdiction of the medical officer. The House Committee was instructed 'to provide night

119. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1881, p.8.

120. It is interesting to note that in 1871 (Annual Report, p.9) the Inspector had reported 'I thought them (the children) looking rather pallid. I think a little more meat might be introduced into the diet'. A new menu for the children followed this criticism. It had an effect on the finances of the school, for in 1873 (Annual Report, p.10) the committee noted that more money was being spent on food for the children. Although they were not recorded in the 'Dietary Table', improvements continued to take place in the quality of the children's meals. In 1879 (Annual Report, p.7) is found the following comment: 'On making an examination of the increased cost, it was found by the committee to arise from a more generous diet having been given to the children, at the suggestion of H.M. Inspector'. As the Inspector's reports after 1871 had not mentioned the diet, this must refer back to 1871.

121. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1881, p.8.

122. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1881, p.8.

123. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1881, p.8.

124. Ibid., 1879, p.7.

shirts for all of the boys at once'.121.

The managers acted immediately when there was a fire risk from an up-right boiler.

The flue had become so overheated as to be highly dangerous. Boards and beams of the room above were charred. The main dormitories are over this room.122

But they let the health danger from their inadequate toilet arrangements drag on for years. Eventually, in desperation, their medical officer refused to take responsibility for the well-being of the children until improvements were made.123

A new phase in the history of the school occurred in 1877, when it was decided to form a separate industrial school for the girls. Since 1875 the Inspectors had been urging the managers to think in this direction. The committee reported to its supporters that it thought that 'mixed schools would not be permitted much longer by the Government'.124 The school had stopped admitting girls in 1876 and in 1877 opened 58 Churchgate, Stockport, as an Industrial School for them. It was a house which had been obtained on a lease of eight years. Miss Stewart, Matron of the Industrial School at Arelsford, was appointed Supervisor.125 Table I, p.20, shows that the girls were always fewer in number than the boys in the school, but formed a sufficiently large group to make separate provision economically possible. Stockport was later than many towns in providing a separate Girls' Industrial Institution. Many of the ragged industrial schools opened one in the period 1860 - 1870.

Towards the end of the decade 1870 - 1880 the committee was in a better position to see whether the Board Schools were in fact affecting its work. It felt assured of the value and significance of its continuing role and

121. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Minute Book, 1872, February - March

122. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1877, p.7.

123. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Minute Book, 1879, June.

124. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1875, p.8.

125. Ibid., 1877, p.6.

gleefully observed:

The School Boards, which were to have exercised such a regenerative influence, have found out that Industrial Schools are absolutely necessary for the more complete carrying on of their work . . . Judging from the numerous applications from School Boards in different parts of England for the admission of children to our own school, they must now be the principal agents in filling such schools.¹²⁶

It was far more worried at the misconception of magistrates about its work and the effect of the Boards.

The magistrates appear to have embraced the theory that the Industrial Schools must speedily be closed. They have returned to the old plans for the repression of crime. Children brought before them are dismissed with the admonition 'to do better in future' and the parents also receive a strict caution to take better care of the delinquent. The birch rod was also tried and, in extreme cases, imprisonment. The committee would respectfully suggest to those in authority that, when the surroundings of the children are bad and the temptations to crime great, it would be far better to send them to an industrial school at an earlier period.¹²⁷

It felt that the magistrates were ignoring the contribution of the schools in the reformation of the young and attributing it 'to the admirable working of the School Boards'.¹²⁸ It was an impossible argument as there was no evidence offered. The committee, however, felt hurt by the lack of recognition of their school and that they stood too much in the shadow of the Boards. It proved to be only a passing anxiety as in the next decade it was able to co-operate rather more than in the past with the Stockport Board. This Board had come to terms with its problems and could look beyond its own immediate sphere of operations and its financial difficulties.

126. Stockport Ragged and Industrial School Annual Report, 1879, p.7.

127. Ibid., 1881, p.5.

128. Ibid., 1881, p.5.

CONCLUSION.

We have devised and organised a system of prevention by which to stop crime while it is in the seed, and sin before it has broken into flower and desolated society.

Lord Shaftesbury.

Father has told me about our Saviour what was nailed to a cross to suffer for such poor people as we is. Father has told us, too, about His giving a great many poor people a penny loaf and a bit of fish each, which proves Him to have been a very kind gentleman.

A Coster Girl to Henry Mayhew.

The Ragged School Movement emerges in this study as an element in the strategy of the Victorian churches to meet the crisis precipitated by the pagan urban poor. Its roots were firmly in the Sunday school system, though the organisation and management of the ragged schools reflect the influence of Sheriff Watson and his network of Scottish industrial schools. From the increasing concern of anonymous individuals with the plight of the destitute children in the towns, and local attempts to meet some of their moral, spiritual and physical needs, sprang small groups. Usually attached to mission halls or churches at first, these groups were often able to obtain sufficient support to expand their activities and offer services which partially relieved some of the worst necessities of a portion of the poorest children. The linking of the name of John Pounds with this Movement was fortuitous and, in many respects, his methods and approaches were atypical of its schools. He was in no sense the originator or founder of the ragged system.

The Ragged School Unions of London, Liverpool and Manchester sprang to maturity quickly, taking over existing establishments and developing new ones. The decision of the London Union to withdraw from a national co-ordinating role resulted in fundamental differences of philosophy growing up in the country and make it something of an oversimplification to speak of the Ragged School Movement tout court. The basic one was in the attitudes taken to Government help and supervision. Provincial schools proved to be less intransigent than metropolitan ones and saw new opportunities in many Government proposals.

The description of the schools in action shows that the difficulties in their establishment were common. Financial resources, obtained by annual subscription and donation, were insufficient to meet the problems faced by the schools. They were uncertain and fluctuated in times of economic distress and personal misfortune. Those schools able to meet the stringent requirements for government grant aid, and those few which received very large benefactions from wealthy supporters, were relieved of the worst problems. Their survival ensured they could improve the quality of the provision made for the children. The general picture from the majority of schools is of a 'hand to mouth' existence, once the financial plateau was reached. Financial restrictions prevented many Sunday and week-evening ragged schools from making the transition to full day schools. Suitable premises and full time paid teachers were beyond the resources of these groups. Although the Movement confessed that it was prepared to act, using whatever was at hand to begin its work, this admission cannot disguise the twin problems

of the inadequacy of the buildings used nor the insufficiency of the supply of voluntary teachers.

The pressure on the schools from the poor was intense and confirmed throughout their existence their basic theoretical tenet - that the schools for the poorest should be free. This was their major contribution to English educational thinking though, of course, they were not unique in promulgating the idea. The experience of the ragged schools further emphasised the importance of the environmental position in education. Located in the poorest slum areas, they quickly realised that their effectiveness with the children was related to their effectiveness with the parents. Many agencies associated with the schools developed to assist the parents to remedy some of the worst faults of their situations. What the school could not know was that there was no way out of the pool of casual labour for the parents, and that their children were condemned to enter it when of age. A basic economic problem arising from the effects of the industrial revolution was masked by a socio-moral philosophy.

The curriculum of the ragged school was geared to the religious and moral education of the children and was, at its foundation, Biblical. It proved impossible to liberate Christian teaching from its ecclesiastical ballast and what went on in many of the schools seems to have been a prolonged exercise in Protestant dogmatics. Evangelical education proved to be doctrinaire and conservative. Nevertheless,

it offered the skills of reading, writing and elementary computation to groups who would have had no opportunity to gain them outside these schools.

The educational work of the Ragged School Movement was, within a national context, necessary 'ambulance work'. In the thirty year period of its significance, 1844 - 1874, it attempted to provide for children for whom no suitable school places existed. It could only be a temporary work, waiting upon some rapprochement which would enable a national system of education to be devised which would carry support from the interested political factions. The establishment of the School Boards heralded the end of its educational activities. The Movement was not treated kindly by the Government, though its own hostile attitudes and extreme sensitivity in the metropolitan area to suspected interference were partly responsible for this. The Newcastle Commission, in particular, was partial and inaccurate about it.

There are large gaps in the statistical evidence relating to the number of ragged schools of the various kinds and the teachers and children who worked in them. The locations of the schools are often uncertain and what evidence is available seldom covers a complete period which would enable all of the changes to be itemised. Further local studies will increase the knowledge about these schools and supplement the preliminary list of foundations offered in this study. However, there is sufficient information to draw the major

contours of the history of the Movement.

Those respects in which the Ragged School Movement may be held to have been a failure were part of the larger failure of the Victorian churches to capture the poor. The tactic which the churches relied on, that of creating a Christian social climate which would by 'osmosis' influence the lives of the lowest classes, did not work. It hoped to achieve an ideological conquest of the middle classes and to foster the conviction that this group could reconcile divided^d classes. Thomas Arnold was sure that if men of privilege who possessed social, economic and political power could be persuaded to accept an ethic of service and help the poor as their duty, the whole nation would be 'Christianised'.¹ Although moderate men supported him, Tractarians and Evangelicals dismissed his social ethics along with the Pelagian theology which they found so distasteful. There remained a fundamental asymmetry in the Ragged Movement between what was required by the logic of its theology and what was formulated on the basis of its experience. On the one hand, the evangelical brand of Calvinism professed a determinism which was thoroughgoing and logical to the point of inhumanity. On the other hand, the knowledge of the poor which the Movement gained led it to act as if the plight of this class could not be the result of inevitable necessity. Many economists, and certainly the

1. T. Arnold, Thirteen Letters on Our Social Conditions, 1832, p.33.

new Poor Law of 1832, viewed the destitute as 'the principal authors of their own poverty'.² It was an important insight of the Ragged School Movement that, in spite of its conservative position, it confirmed a radical social viewpoint.

The effort of the Movement to make permanent what, by their very nature, could only be part of a transient phase in education, is sad. Those few ragged schools which could continue in the era of the School Boards changed beyond all recognition from the earlier models. The attempt to emphasise mission work and social services led to some further usefulness on the part of the London Union but it never achieved anything like its former glory. Its end was to contract to a small charitable organisation for physically and mentally handicapped children which works on sluggishly in limp tedium and joylessness.

After the failures and successes have been assessed and the shape of the Movement delineated, the impression remaining from the study is of the human dimensions of the ragged schools; the thousands of half-starved, near-naked children living in wretched hovels who attended; the miserable social and economic plight of the majority of their parents - where they had any; the heroic efforts made by organisers and management committees in the face of appalling problems; the devotion and sincerity of many of the teachers. The majority of them are anonymous and names, where known, have passed into obscurity. However,

2. T.R. Malthus, Essay on Population, 1914 edition, Vol. 2, p.278. He also wrote, Ibid., p.175: 'If (the poor) obey their passions in opposition to their reason, or be not industrious and frugal ... they must suffer the natural evils which Providence has prepared for those who disobey its repeated admonitions'.

one of the important lessons learned by the Victorian church was that the poor understood the meaning of sacrificial love. A host of slum priests and ministers, like Lowder, Goulden, Mackonachie, Stanton and Talbot, as well as the unknown volunteers in the ragged schools, proved this.

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