

danger is not lessened in the present age. A CRITIC.

*To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.*

GENTLEMEN,  
A MINUTE Critic in your last number, when speaking of the costume of the Irish Chieftain in delivering the Prologue, wishes to be informed how he disposed of his half boots and saffron sleeves, as his legs and arms were bare. All that need be said in reply, is, that the short boots edged with fur, came scarcely above his ancles, and his legs were bare; and that the saffron sleeves were tucked above his elbows, so that his arms (or at least his fore-arms, it the critic be an anatomist) were also bare. In short the Irish Chieftain was represented, like most of his countrymen at that time, and ever since that time, as being (proh pudor!) without shirt or stockings. Will this explanation serve to satisfy this critic animalcule, who is only known by the initials of his name S. N.?

There is a sort of spume or froth,  
Which hangs on plants of summer growth;  
The froth without, so light and thin,  
Hides a poor nameless fly within;  
You've hit this critic to a tittle;  
'Tis nothing else than Cuckoo Spittle.

I AM YOUR'S, &c. X.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

#### CALCULATIONS OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

THE difference in weights and measures, and the different denominations of them are frequently perplexing in the calculations of commerce. They also render it more difficult to compute the relative prices of grain in different countries. One use of a *magazine*, is to lay up, as in a store-house for future reference, such memorandums as are liable otherwise to escape the memory. Accept then the following calculations to show the relative proportions between the measures of England, and the weights of Ireland, by which grain is sold, in the former country by measure, and in the latter by weight.

A quarter is 8 bushels of Winchester measure. An English quarter of good wheat may be taken, at an average at  $32\frac{1}{2}$  stones of 14 lbs.; of

barley at 28 stones, and of oats at  $21\frac{1}{2}$ . The Irish barrel of wheat is 20 stones, or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cwt.; of barley 16 stones, or 2 cwt. and of oats 14 stones, or  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cwt. Thus a calculation may be easily made, by reducing the weights of the one country to the measures of the other. A READER.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

#### LETTER ON MR. LANCASTER'S IMPROVED METHOD OF TEACHING

*We cheerfully embrace the views of the Committee and Teachers of the Belfast Sunday School, in giving further publicity to the following valuable Letter on the much improved plan of Education so successfully practised by J. Lancaster. The Letter is in reply to one written by a Member of the above Institution to his friend in London, requesting a general outline of the system, discipline, books, slates, &c. used, and the yearly salary requisite to bring one of Mr. Lancaster's finished Pupils to conduct a School in this country on his plan.*

"42, Bedford Row, London July 28, 1810.

"DEAR SIR,

"BY appointment I was yesterday favoured with half an hour of Mr. Lancaster's time, which is equally valuable and constantly occupied, especially during the short period which he spends in London. In answer to the question respecting remuneration to one of his pupils to establish a school, he observed that eighty or one hundred pounds a year is common, but that he could say nothing till you informed him, by letter (the only mode in which he wishes to communicate any information on this subject) what is the extent of the proposed school, what scale it would be established on, the nature and extent of the building, number of pupils, &c. In a word, a summary statement of what you want, and what you think of attempting to establish. His opinion generally is that you ought to proceed on a grand scale, and not attempt the adoption of his plan in a contracted manner, which could not be advantageous to any party; that you ought to endeavour to obtain the unqualified approbation of all the leading characters in the place, insure the attendance of the great mass of the population, and proceed on such a liberal principle that you must eventually succeed.

"You request a minute description of the mode of teaching, books, benches, slates, &c. used. These things require in general a month or

six weeks to learn, and were I capable of describing every thing, which would fill a small volume, it would be still impossible for you to reduce it to practice. There is then only this alternative, either to send a person properly qualified to acquire a practical knowledge of the system in the school in London, or to procure a pupil to instruct persons in Belfast. The system is so connected that you can no more use any of its parts, separately, than a wheel without an axle. I shall endeavour, however, to give a slight idea of it.

“First, Whenever a child acquires a perfect knowledge of any one letter, he is placed in a class containing from five to twenty (according to the size of the school) and seated at a bench about two feet high, this bench is six, nine or more feet long, and about three feet broad, around it is a ledge half an inch higher than the surface, and this forms a hollow table which is covered with sand about one-fourth inch deep; on this sand the pupil makes the figure of the letter which he has just learned, and this is repeated several times, till he has attained such a knowledge of its real figure, and command of hand to sketch it with his finger, as are deemed sufficient. At this bench the scholars sit in one position, and obey the directions of the teaching boy, like soldiers at drill; whenever they have all made their letters—for instance *n*, the teacher or commanding officer of the bench draws a board over the lettered sand, and thus renders it perfectly smooth for the pupils to repeat the same regular operation; first placing their fingers on the ledge as a preparatory position, and then proceeding to make the same character; those who are very young, or very awkward, and cannot, after repeated directions, make any passable character, are placed together, and the more expert ones advanced to another class. When they have thus acquired adroitness in making one character, they are next placed to combine it with a vowel to form a syllable, and in this department they stand in a circular form before a sheet of their spelling book, pasted on a board, and suspended against

the wall; the teaching boy makes every one pronounce the letters or syllables in rotation, to which he points with a round ruler, and he who pronounces all the syllables across five perpendicular columns, is placed at the head of the class; those who fail are repeatedly directed, and what is more, their attention is kept engaged. In this manner the pupil advances from a knowledge of each letter, either in writing or spelling, till he goes through the alphabet, and is perfectly able to write all the characters, and combine them into short syllables. Arithmetic is next introduced, and the pupil advances in reading, writing, and counting at the same time, and in a year is generally able to read, write and comprehend the five common rules of arithmetic in a passable manner. All the teaching boys, who have just learned the part they are appointed to teach the others, have words of command to their attentive pupils, which would require some time to learn or become acquainted with; they have also a series of badges, medals of merit, &c. all of which are necessary to the machinery of the school. The slates are common, and vary in size, from two and a half inches broad, and five long, to nine inches broad, and fifteen long, according to the age and progress of the pupil. As to the spelling-book and arithmetic, they most assuredly could not be of any service to you, nor would they be intelligible, unless you had seen them used. The spelling book is printed on one side of cap paper, and pasted on boards; the arithmetic is done in the same manner, but on larger paper. One young man directs the free school in St. George's Fields, containing upwards of one thousand pupils, all very young, the house is low, built in the shed manner, and heated by flues under the floor; a cheaper and better mode would be by heated air conveyed in an iron tube from a kitchen fire.

“These are the principal circumstances which I can communicate to you, but they do not embrace any thing sufficient to be useful for your views. All the boys have their hats or caps hanging behind their backs

suspended with a cord or ribbon; the teaching boys wear badges, and all remain, in general, very fixed in their respective stations; order and harmony are every where apparent; there is no noise or bustle, no amusements, idling or any other mode of *mispendidg* the time. The children enter the school at eight, and continue till eleven in the morning, and again at one in the afternoon, and continue till four, thus occupying six hours every day, and changing their studies so often that the variety gives a taste for every new branch, and rather delights, than fatigues the scholar. I cannot indeed inform you of all the advantages attending this admirable system of teaching, but I may mention some things which are peculiar to it. In the first place, all the children necessarily, and without any compulsion (I might say voluntarily) acquire habits of strict attention, which cannot be acquired in any other school, not even by the deaf and dumb pupils of *Sacard*, or the blind ones of *Houli*; in the next place, those of order, regularity, decorum, uniformity of action, self command, and great facility of manual execution are attained to a degree of perfection, not at present generally believed possible. Emulation is excited without envy or jealousy, a spirit of industry without any reluctant murmurings, all violent and irascible passions are nearly unknown, and sentiments of mutual forbearance are insensibly acquired, with just notions of truth, moral obligation, and practical justice. There is no lying or dissimulation; no artifices to evade the eye of the master, skip a lesson, or pilfer toys from school fellows; the hoarse voice, and stern looks of the master never inspire fear or revenge; for the age and size of the teacher are generally the same as the scholar, and his only superiority is that of being more adroit in forming a letter, or quick in pronouncing a syllable. When this mechanical labour is completed, an excellent selection of moral lessons are then read, and comprehended by all the pupils, and they are made fully sensible of those obligations, and relative social duties which cannot fail to

be useful to them during the remainder of their lives. Upon the whole, the admirable moral habits which they must acquire, independent of the just principles which they at the same time imbibe, are alone sufficient to give this system of education a precedence to any other which has yet been devised. To civilization...to the community, it must eventually be productive of incalculable advantages; for the great mass of mankind must ever be more influenced by habit than abstract principles, and their virtues and vices much more dependent on the former than on their reason, or even their passions. Happy would it be for Ireland if a Lancastrian School were established in every village; the present love of the marvellous and extravagant would be converted into a love of order and practical utility, and the standard of merit would then be, not in the greatest deviation from all rules, but in the closest adherence to regularity and consistency. There are many other direct advantages which must attend the plan you propose undertaking, and I sincerely hope you will persevere in carrying it into effect. But it appears to me impracticable or impolitic to confine it to Sunday Schools only. I agree with Mr. Lancaster in thinking that almost every respectable man in Belfast would subscribe to defray the expenses of a general and public Free School,\* and that the town is sufficiently populous and wealthy for the institution. If proposed, it could scarcely meet any opposition; although it is necessary to be prepared to combat every sordid passion, prejudice, caprice, and ignorant objection which might arise. The thing is laudable, and every laudable attempt, even if unsuccessful, may contribute to the diffusion of know-

\* The Managers of the Belfast Sunday School, we are pleased to notice, from the Annual Statement, just laid before the public, have entered fully into the spirit of this letter, and while the more advanced in years, whose time is occupied on week days, are instructed on Sundays, their plan will also extend to a General Day School. We hope this undertaking will meet with liberal support.

The Collectors appointed for the present year are *Luke Telling*, *James M'Adam*, *David Biggar*, *Thomas M'Caob*, who will receive Donations, or Subscriptions, to complete the building which has been commenced for this Institution.

ledge and the dispersion of prejudice. Inquiry and investigation are advances towards improvement....are steps which lead to the temple of truth.

“ Let me add, however, that should you make an effort to establish a school on friend Lancaster or Bell’s plan, you must address Mr. Lancaster by letter, and directly, and he will give you a pretty accurate idea of the necessary expence of every thing except the building, which must be estimated by yourselves. A spelling-book and book of arithmetic will serve three or four years, and one thousand scholars each year, so that the expence of books is extremely small. Spelling-books six shillings, dictating do. two or four shillings, arithmetic ten shillings, &c. Should you, however, wish for these books, in order to form your own opinion of them, you can let me know by return of post, and your letter will reach me in time to send them with the first vessel which sails hence to Belfast. Or if you think I can communicate to you any more particulars by which you could profit, I shall attend Lancaster’s school from three till four every day, the time allotted to visitors, until that I am perfectly acquainted with the mechanism of his system, and then write you a more detailed account of it. Convinced as I am of the great blessing of instruction to the poor, I shall most willingly contribute as far as in my power to facilitate your benevolent views, in communicating such information to the neglected or indigent youth, and procure you every information on the subject which can be communicated by letter.

I AM YOUR’S, &c.  
J.A.B.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

SIXTH REPORT FROM THE COMMISSIONERS OF  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IN IRELAND  
To his Grace Charles Duke of Richmond and Lennox, &c. Lord Lieutenant General, and General Governor of Ireland.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE.

WE, the undersigned, commissioners, appointed for inquiring into the several funds and revenues grant-

ed for the purposes of education, and into the state and condition of all schools in Ireland upon public or charitable foundations, proceed to lay before your grace our report upon the hospital and free school of King Charles the II<sup>d</sup>, commonly called the Blue-Coat Hospital.

The hospital and free school of Charles the second in Dublin was founded by a charter of the 23<sup>d</sup> year of his reign.

The mayor, sheriffs, commons, and citizens of Dublin, represented by petition, that many charitable persons were desirous to contribute towards the erecting of an hospital for maintaining aged and poor people, and a free school for the education of youth; whereupon his majesty was pleased to grant to the mayor, sheriffs, commons, and citizens of Dublin, his royal charter of incorporation, constituting them and their successors for ever governors of such hospital and free school, and giving them a piece of ground on Oxmantown Green, upon which they had already begun to erect a building for the purpose.

It has not appeared to us that at any time an establishment was made for the reception and maintenance of aged reduced people; but we have reason to think, that from the beginning a plan of useful education was formed which has continued to the present time. No further royal grant appears to have been made to the funds of this institution.

The establishment in its present state is for 130 boys; they are maintained, clothed, well instructed in the holy scripture, and in the principles of the protestant religion, in English, Euclid, Navigation, and the various branches of practical mathematics, in which some boys now in the school have made a proficiency uncommon for their years; this is much to the honour of their present master, who was educated in this institution. The boys are admitted at the age of 8, and apprenticed at the age of 14 years, some to trades, some to the sea service, with a fee of five pounds for each.

For 12 years ended 25 December 1808, the returns made to us give an average income of about