

SWEDEN.

In 1684 Charles XI. ordained that no one should be admitted to the rite of confirmation (which was necessary to marriage) until he could satisfy the pastor of his ability to read. So effectually has this regulation worked, that it is said that not one in 1,000 cannot read.

In the year 1684 a law was passed to allow half of the amounts levied as a poll-tax to be applied to the support of the National Schools. Where this amount, about sixpence sterling for every man and threepence for every woman, was insufficient, the parish was required to make up the deficit. The laws as to compulsory attendance and penalties incurred by disobedience are almost precisely similar to those in Norway.

Since the year 1863, half the expense has been born by the parish and half by the State.

Children are sent to school at seven years old, and continue to attend till fifteen. Education is compulsory on all classes. If the parents or guardians oppose the children being sent to school, the master, after giving due notice, can take the children from under his care, but the parent will legally be compelled to pay for the education of his children.

The education is denominational, and the schools are under the inspection of the bishops or the chapter. Luther's First Catechism is learnt by heart, and morning and evening prayers are read daily; clergymen are requested to see this rule enforced.

Mr West reports as follows on the religious question :—

"The instruction given in the schools ought to have for its main object the mental development of the children, who should be made to understand what they read on religious subjects before they take their first communion; such instruction should be based on Luther's First Catechism, which ought to be learnt by heart, but which ought, in the first instance, to be fully explained to the children. Morning and evening prayers are to be read daily in school. The clergyman should pay attention to see this rule enforced.

"In 1840 a committee was appointed to inquire into the religious instruction given in schools, and the committee proposed that the religious instruction should be intrusted to the clergy; the proposal, however, was rejected, although the teachers, who are very ill paid, cannot be expected to possess the requisite knowledge for such instruction. It was contended, on the other hand, that the clergy had not leisure to attend and teach in the schools, having their parish duties to attend, which occupied them, besides having to prepare the young for their first communion. The King, therefore, withheld his consent to the proposal. Many objections which were then raised against this proposal are no longer in existence, on account of the new parish law, by which the 'Communal Styrelse,' or municipality, has now to take upon itself some of the duties which formerly devolved upon the clergyman; for example, the collecting rents on church property and handing them to the clergyman, and letting church lands not occupied by the clergyman; this and other changes effected by the new law give more time to the clergyman, so as to enable him, at least for two hours in every week, to attend and instruct the children in Luther's Catechism."

NORWAY.

By the law of 16th May, 1860, education in elementary subjects is obligatory on all from the eighth year of age till the children's confirmation, about the fourteenth or fifteenth year, until which time they must not leave unless with the sanction of the school commission. If parents, after being remonstrated with, allow the children to absent themselves from school without satisfactory reason, a fine of from 24s. to five silver dollars may be imposed upon them by the school commission. Manufacturers and other employers are bound, under the same penalties, to allow the children the proper time for attendance at school. If parents conduct themselves so as to exercise a detrimental effect on the moral character of the children, the latter may be taken from them and placed under the care of more conscientious persons; and the expenses caused by this may be reclaimed by the guardians of the poor from the culpable parents. If a young person of sixteen, who has been neglected, refuses to submit to the means provided for his or her instruction, the commission may use compulsory measures, extending to imprisonment in any penal establishment.

In cases of poverty, the school fees are paid from the school fund of the district.

The education is denominational; and if children have left before confirmation, and the parents do not take care that their religious knowledge does not decrease, they may, on demand of the clergyman, be sent to school again.

The school-fund arises from fees, gifts, fines, grants from the school community, and out of the public moneys.

DENMARK.

Attendance at school is obligatory between the ages of seven and fourteen.

Admission is free.

The state of education is said to be very satisfactory.

ITALY.

The fundamental law by which primary education in Italy is now regulated was passed in 1859 by the first Parliament of Upper Italy. A supplementary enactment, of 10th January, 1865, makes the institutions of primary schools obligatory on all the communes of the kingdom,