

*Section III.—Visit to the principal Polytechnics.*

1. The Regent Street Polytechnic is the pioneer institute for technical education, and has served as a model for the others. Its founder, Mr. Quintin Hogg, at first intended it to be a refuge for neglected children. In 1865 he opened for them a night shelter with a school. His work grew, and was transferred to a new locality, where it became a house of industry, with classes in the evenings and on Sundays. In 1873 the establishment was opened in Hanover Street, with forty-eight pupils and half a dozen classes, to meet the intellectual and physical needs of the boys. Next, the school was moved to a building in Long Acre, with room for 450 pupils, and means were adopted for the intellectual and moral improvement of the unfortunate children for their social advancement and for rational and wholesome amusement. A library of 1,300 volumes was collected. Seven years later this place in its turn proved to be not large enough, and Mr. Hogg bought the old Polytechnic for £50,000, and spent £100,000 on improvements and enlargements. Soon it became necessary to acquire adjoining properties, and to occupy other buildings in the neighbourhood. In its new quarters it rapidly developed in a new direction, and became really a great technical school combined with a great society for recreation and pleasure. It is now the typical example of the great institutions in London that are known by the name of polytechnics, each of which is a technical school and a kind of popular university, and at the same time the home of a large democratic association of a philanthropic character—sometimes even of a religious character, and including a number of clubs—of amusement or recreation, or of science or literature. Such institutions have upon their rolls both members and pupils; the members pay their subscriptions and enjoy all the moral and material advantages of the association, and the pupils pay fees for attending the classes. The members are admitted to classes at fees lower by 25 per cent. than those paid by mere pupils. The Regent Street Polytechnic, in addition to its central premises, occupies other buildings nearly as large in the immediate neighbourhood; and, apart from these, it owns extensive recreation-grounds, and places for boating and other amusements, and even sea-side villas in three different localities.

(a.) For scientific and trade instruction there are 500 classes a week, with an attendance of 11,000 pupils, meeting generally in the evening. Some of the classes are devoted to trades and manufactures, in about twenty different branches. There are also commercial and general classes in arithmetic, book-keeping, French, German, Latin, Greek, commercial history and geography, mathematics, English, penmanship, Italian, shorthand, finger-speech (deaf-mute alphabet, &c.), and gymnastics. There are classes for preparation for university examinations, classes to prepare for public offices, excise, army cadetships, places in the British Museum, for the navy, police, Justice, Customs, telegraphs, &c. There is a school of photography, a school of art and design, a school of music and elocution. There are scientific classes, attended principally by apprentices and artisans. There are special classes for women: in care of the sick and wounded, dressmaking and cutting-out, cooking, laundry-work, &c. The women all pay fees, from 5s. to 8s. per class per session, and they have a gymnasium and nine lawn-tennis courts, and, at a certain hour every day the swimming-bath is reserved for them. There is also a day-school of 850 pupils, paying about £6 a year each, and including in its course commercial and technical instruction, and in addition there are day-classes for pupils between eleven and seventeen, of a more definitely technical character.

(b.) The social operations are no less important, not only on account of their extensive range, but also because they constitute an attraction without which it would have been much more difficult to interest the working-people in the technical instruction offered to them. When this institution took up its abode in the old Polytechnic, there were at most 8,000 pupils attending evening classes in London; now there are 3,000 every night at this school alone. The society was formerly called "The Young Men's Christian Association," and this is still its official designation, which shows that it has not laid aside its religious character. In order that it may continue to be a young people's club, it limits the age of admission (for members as distinguished from pupils), the minimum being sixteen years and the maximum twenty-five. The subscription is 10s. 6d. for young men, and 5s. for young women.

All members have the use of the gymnasium (the finest in London), the swimming bath (which in winter is converted into a reading-room), the library, and the recreation-grounds. The library contains 6,000 volumes, and there are small technical libraries for the several classes. There is a refreshment-room and a buffet for tea and supper, and accommodation for chess and draughts. The society has a recreation-ground of twenty-seven acres at Wimbledon, and another of twelve acres at Pinner, and others again at Kensal Rise and at Paddington. Many special societies are formed among the members, e.g.: a discussion class; a mock parliament; a reading circle; an athletic club (of 500 members paying a 5s. subscription) divided into sections for cricket, football, swimming, boating, and lawn tennis; a chess club; a military society; a gymnastic society; a boxing club; a roller-skating club; two circles of tourists and excursionists; a bicycle club; a society for physical development; and three volunteer corps. There are French and German clubs for foreigners who speak French and German and for members who wish to learn either language. Some of the operations of the association are partly social and partly religious, and include open-air preaching and tract distributing, lantern lectures and concerts, a temperance society, and a Sunday choral society. The "Old Quintinian Society" consists of old pupils of the day-school of the Institute. A monthly journal, the *Polytechnic Magazine*, is published.

On Sundays, and also on other days, there are religious services and bible-classes. On Saturday nights there are public promenade concerts in the Queen's Hall, members being admitted at reduced prices. The railway companies grant tickets at reduced prices to members, and many excursion trips are organized. In December, 1895, tours were arranged as follows: (1) Paris, Genoa, Pisa, and Rome; (2) Paris, Pisa, Rome, Florence, Venice; (3) Paris, Lucerne, and Italian Lakes; (4) Christmas at Paris; (5) Holland and Belgium; (6) Naples, Malta, Athens, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, &c. A month's tour costs only £26. Excursions to Norway, to Switzerland, to