

“St. Elfin’s New Schools, Warrington

These Schools (so called from being erected near to an ancient well of St Elfin, which gives its name to the adjoining parish church) form a noble pile of buildings, covering a great space of ground, and have cost in their erection nearly £30,000. With all the outward appearance of one large collegiate institution, they comprise two separate and totally independent establishments. One of them is for the Education of Clergymen’s Daughters, on a plan somewhat similar to those which have been founded at Marlborough and Rossall for clergymen’s sons. The other School is for the training of Schoolmistresses. Extensive gardens and walks around the building, with a small private park, called “St. Elfin’s Park,” to which the inmates of this institution have free access at all times. In part of the grounds there is a neat and convenient separate building (which we shall engrave next week), to be used as an infirmary in case of need.

It is impossible to overrate the public utility of such institutions as these, whether they are regarded as rendering aid to the clergy in the education of their daughters, or as assisting in the work, which may be considered the greatest national undertaking of the age, viz., providing a really sound and good education for the rising generation, and training the young, whilst they can be trained, in moral habits. We rejoice to see two such institutions standing side by side in a district of the country where both are so much needed.

As regards the Clergy School, we are informed that the managers of it are anxious to divest it as much as possible of an eleemosynary character. Of all professional men, few, if any deserve to have their children cared for more than the working clergy; and little has as yet been done for their daughters, except at St John’s-wood, London; at Brighton, and at Casterton, where schools have been established of a kind which benefits only orphans, or the daughters who are compelled to seek charitable assistance.

The Training School, though contiguous to the Clergy School, is entirely distinct from it in all its educational and domestic arrangements. It is governed by another society than that which founded the Clergy School, viz., the Diocesan Board of Education. The only connexion between these institutions seems to be that they are under the superintendence of one clerical Principal, whose residence forms a part of the buildings. This Training School is largely assisted by the Privy Council Committee of Education; and its plan of operation is precisely similar to that which is pursued at Whitelands, the Metropolitan Institution for Training Mistresses, established by the National Society. Accommodation is provided in this school for a large number of students, with their teachers and the requisite servants; also for a limited number of pupil teachers. The provision made for the education and training of these young persons is very complete; whilst the domestic arrangements for their board and lodging provide ample comfort.

Adjoining to the Training School, and apparently forming one wing of the same building, is a very complete set of model and practicing schools, in which the students who are in training as teachers practice the art of teaching. The rooms in which the children of the poorer classes are here instructed, seem to be in every respect suitable to the purposes for which they have been erected; and the spacious playground, with circular swings; and the little flower-gardens, which the pupils evidently take a pride in keeping neat and full of flowers, give this part of the institution a peculiarly interesting character.