

*

UMASS/AMHERST

*



312066 0277 9936 6



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2009 with funding from
Boston Library Consortium Member Libraries

THE HISTORY OF
THE CITY OF
NEW YORK
FROM 1624 TO 1898

FOURTH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF EDUCATION,

TOGETHER WITH THE

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

Boston:
DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS.

.....
1841.

10.00000000
16.00000000
00.0000
0.000000

379.74

M 38~

1840

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The Board of Education of this Commonwealth, in discharge of the duty required of them by law, submit this their Annual Report.

THE great interests of Education towards which their attention is directed, are not of such a nature as to admit, except under extraordinary circumstances, of marked and sudden changes. The lapse of a single year hardly allows us to expect such a progress as can be distinctly demonstrated in the general condition of the Education of our youth, without examination of the particulars of that condition ; and it is a just cause of congratulation if upon such examination, we may be sure that we are making progress, for the immensity of the results aimed at, will amply justify long continued and patient effort, cheered with the prospect of ultimate success. The Board have the satisfaction of reporting that they cannot doubt that the cause of Education has materially advanced during the past year.

The intention of the Legislature to provide for the special education of candidates for the profession of teaching, has been, to a considerable extent, carried into effect. There are now three Normal Schools in operation, under the auspices of the Commonwealth, one located at Lexington, another at Barre, and the third at Bridgewater ; the first, under the care of Cyrus Peirce, Esq. ; the second, under that of Rev. Samuel P. Newman, and the last, of Col. Nicholas Tillinghast. In the utility

and success of Normal Schools, all who have been acquainted with the course of these institutions, feel an increased confidence.

In these schools, the mode of instruction is skilfully adapted to discipline the faculties of the pupils, to communicate information, and teach them how best to perform the same offices for others. Females only are admitted at Lexington, and none for a term less than one year. Both sexes are taught at Bridgewater and Barre, and received for shorter periods. On this account, there are fewer pupils at the Normal School at Lexington, which commenced on the 3d day of July, 1839. The number of pupils was at first but small, but it has been constantly, though very gradually increasing. August 11, 1840, the first Academic year closed with twenty-five pupils. The term which has just ended, was closed on the 22d of December last, with thirty-four pupils. And the number for the present term, which commenced on the 6th of January inst., will not probably vary materially from the last, though it is somewhat larger, and will probably be further increased. This school has been in operation about eighteen months. The interest and devotion to the purpose for which the institution was established, have been very gratifying during the whole period, and at no time more so than at present. The progress of the pupils generally in those branches of knowledge required to be taught in our schools, has been in the highest degree flattering, and the clearness and exactness of their information will be of great advantage to them in their professional duties hereafter. In the principles and practice of the art of teaching also, they have made quite as rapid proficiency, as any judicious friend of the system could have anticipated. The model or experimental school connected with this institution, sustains a high reputation among the people of the vicinity, and has proved to be of essential service in familiarizing the intended teachers with the practical working of the lessons of the Normal School.

Several pupils of this institution have been employed as teachers, since completing their studies there. Their success

has been for the most part remarkable, and acknowledged to be such by all who have had opportunities of observing their schools.

The experiment of a special education for the business of teaching, if that can be called an experiment which has been approved by an extensive experience of more than half a century, is satisfactory, so far as its results can yet be judged of, at Lexington ; and this school being the oldest of the three established in the Commonwealth, its history is on that account the more important, and has deserved a more particular examination.

The Normal School at Barre, commenced in September, 1839, and has continued for four terms. The average number of pupils during the whole period, has been a little more than forty. During the last term there were forty-seven ; twenty-six males, and twenty-one females. Of the whole number who have attended thus far, about half have attended for a single term only ; most of the remainder have continued for two terms.

The scholars who have left this school, have sustained a high reputation in their profession as teachers. They appear to be decidedly better qualified for their task, both by their thorough acquaintance with the elementary branches of learning and their familiarity with the principles and practice of the art of teaching, than the majority of those generally employed in the care of schools. Several of them have been eminently successful, and, on the whole, the experiment at Barre has thus far, to say the least, fully met the reasonable expectations of its friends.

The Normal School at Bridgewater, commenced on the 10th of September, 1840, and has just entered on its second term. The school opened with twenty-eight pupils, of whom twenty-one were females. At the present term, there are thirty-five scholars, of whom twenty-six are females. The condition of this school is excellent, and there is no reason to doubt that it will be equally efficient with the others in the preparation of

teachers to improve and reform the whole common school education of the Commonwealth.

The Board have reason to be fully satisfied with the manner in which Messrs. Peirce, Newman and Tillinghast have discharged their arduous and important duties. They have devoted themselves with indefatigable zeal to the work, and were happily fitted to carry it on in the most eligible course.

The publication of the School Library has been continued, and the volumes deserve high commendation. The great State of New York, with a policy no less wise than generous, has appropriated fifty-five thousand dollars a year, to furnish every school district in that State with a library. The same sum is to be added from local taxes, and this appropriation is to continue for five years.

The suggestions of the Secretary's Annual Report herewith communicated, are recommended to the serious attention of the members of the Legislature.

JOHN DAVIS,
GEO. HULL,
GEO. PUTNAM,
R. RANTOUL, JR.,
CHARLES HUDSON,
WM. G. BATES,
JOHN W. JAMES.

Boston, Jan. 20. 1841.

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN :—

In this, my Fourth Annual Report, I respectfully submit to you such further information respecting the condition of the schools and the means of Popular Education, in the State, as the labors of another year have enabled me to obtain.

My usual routine of duties has included an extensive correspondence, in relation to the schools, an attendance upon County Common-School Conventions, and the preparation of the Annual Abstract of the School Returns. I have also performed, according to the best of my ability, such additional services as the Board has requested, although not enumerated among my legal or official duties.

The County Conventions, with three or four gratifying exceptions, have not been numerously attended. This result, it is believed, is principally attributable to the fact, that they were held in the months of August, September and October last, during the prevalence of an unprecedented political excitement. Such limited attendance on the Conventions is a subject of regret, because, on a broad survey of the State, it is already perceptible that the schools have profited most and are doing best, in those towns, whose parents, teachers and school committees have most regularly attended them. The explanation of this fact is obvious. The discussions and proceedings of the Conventions, elicit and communicate new views and ideas on the subject of education, and inspire the members with a more generous ardor in this noble cause. On returning home, therefore, they enter upon the work of improvement with increased zeal, and turn their knowledge to practical account for the benefit of the schools.

While, however, I have had occasion to regret the limited attendance on the Conventions, it has been a source of great gratification to find, that notwithstanding the height to which the voice of party contest arose, outside of the walls where we met, not a whisper, nor a breath of it, was heard within them. Devoting my whole time

and strength to the furtherance of this one object, and rigidly abstaining from all public action, respecting the controverted topics of the day, it has afforded me unmingled satisfaction to perceive, that this course of conduct is in unison with the common sentiments of our community; and that, as it were, by tacit and almost unanimous consent, the grand and enduring interests of education are held to belong to all mankind, and not to be restricted to any portion or party of them. It is a cause which enlists its advocates and champions alike, from ranks, which on other subjects, are arrayed in hostile attitudes against each other; and it seems now, at least to a very great extent, to have become an axiom in the public mind, that the diffusion of useful knowledge, the increase of intellectual energy, the habit of impartial investigation, and a higher moral purity and purpose, will assuredly, in the end, promote whatever is right and diminish whatever is wrong, in the views of all the parties into which our society is unhappily divided. As, from the very nature and constitution of the human mind, and of the world in which it is placed, error and wrong can be permanently serviceable to no one, it becomes the interest as well as the duty of all, to establish and encourage whatever is true in principle and right in conduct; and where fundamental differences prevail, as to what is true and right, it should be the object of all to labor unitedly in training up more able, more impartial and purer minds, which may have the light to discern and the wisdom to adopt higher views, both in theory and practice, than were possessed by their doubting, or contending predecessors. Had it not been for the vehemence of contention, out of our Conventions, we should not have tested, so fully, the strength of the principles which have produced harmony within them.

In the Report of last year, I felt warranted in assuring the Board, that, in addition to certain visible and palpable improvements, capable of being specifically enumerated, there were causes silently at work, from which results still more desirable, would soon be developed. As far as such results can be reduced to figures, and presented in statistical tables, the last Abstract abundantly realizes the anticipation.

In 1838, the amount of money raised by taxes for the support of

schools, including only the wages of teachers, board, }
and fuel, was } \$447,809 96.

In 1839, the amount raised for the same purpose was \$477,221 24.

Here is an increase in the appropriations, amounting, in round numbers, to \$30,000, in a single year. But the *real* increase last year, in the expenditure for teachers' wages, board and fuel, must have considerably exceeded the apparent. It had been a very prevalent custom, in the State, for districts to abstract a portion of the money raised for wages, board and fuel, and to appropriate it for schoolhouse repairs, and other incidental expenses. Although, to some extent, this may have been done, during the last year, yet I have reason to believe, that a practice so illegal and reprehensible as this, is now mainly abolished. No stronger evidence of an increasing interest in our schools can be adduced, than this substantial advance in the amount of appropriations for their support ; nor can any act be more creditable to our citizens than these voluntary levies for the cause of education.

Another point of comparison, not less gratifying, consists in the average length of the schools. For the school year of 1837, their average length was six months and twenty-five days ; for that, ending May 1, 1839, it was seven months and four days, and for that ending May 1st, 1840, seven months and ten days, exhibiting an average increase, in three years, of almost a fortnight, in the length of about three thousand schools, i. e. nearly fifteen hundred months, or a hundred and twenty-five years in the whole.

Again, the prospects of that meritorious class of persons engaged in teaching our schools, are decidedly improving. In 1837, the average wages per month, including board, paid to male teachers was \$25 44. Last year, it was \$33 08, being an increase in three years, of \$7 64 per month. In 1837, the average wages, inclusive of board, paid to females, was \$11 38. Last year, it was \$12 75, being an increase, for the same time, of \$1 37 per month. The school year 1839-40, when compared with that of 1838-9, also exhibits a very decided advance in respect to the wages both of males and females, notwithstanding that the first mentioned was a year, when other departments of business were discharging hundreds from employment, and compelling them to seek elsewhere for

occupation and subsistence. From the nature of the case, however, we are forbidden to anticipate equal advances, either in regard to the amount of wages, or the length of the schools, in coming years, because a proportional increase every year, would lead to a rate of wages indefinitely high, and to the impossible result of more than twelve months' schooling in a year.

There are other points of improvement, for which the tables in the Abstract furnish no measure or index, but which are not of inferior importance. The visitation of the schools by the school committees was at least twice, if not three times greater, last year, than in any previous year since 1827, when the law creating them was enacted ; and these visitations confer upon the schools unnumbered benefits. Visits by parents, also, were very much increased, compared with any former year. In regard to parental visits, however, there has been a great difference between different districts ; some schools having received the full advantages of such visits, while others have been left to plod on their slow and weary way, unanimated by them.

More schoolhouses have been erected within the State, during the last year, than for the ten years preceding 1838 ; and, generally speaking, they are of a description vastly superior to those formerly built. Boston, Lowell, Charlestown, Roxbury, have erected splendid edifices, at once demonstrating the liberality of their citizens, and foretokening the benefits to be enjoyed by their children. Within the last eight months, the town of Plymouth has erected six new schoolhouses, and repaired three old ones.

These and similar improvements, in the administration of the system, though they may elude statistical tables, cannot have been made without the happiest influences, both intellectual and moral, upon the schools. A pupil may understand the lessons he reads better than before ; he may acquire knowledge in such a way that it will stay by him during life, instead of evaporating just as fast as his recitations proceed ; he may be stimulated to double his exertions, and thereby to increase both his attainments and his ability ; he may be led to act from higher motives, and to look upon all the great duties of life with a clearer vision, and yet there may be no scales, in which all these improvements can be weighed, at the close of the school term. It is the steady accumulation of these elements, during the

years of pupillage, which leads to the formation of a lofty character in adult life. When, therefore, we see that favoring influences are at work, we cannot be sceptical as to their results. We do not doubt the influences of one fertilizing shower, or of one day of genial sunshine upon our grain-fields or our orchards, though we cannot measure the increase of size in a single kernel of the grain, nor apply any subtle test to show how much the fruit has gained in the richness of its flavor.

In regard to the current year, I have reason to believe that the improvement of the schools, in the more appropriate selection of studies, in the thoroughness of the instruction given, and in that exercise of mind that gives strength as well as knowledge, will greatly exceed that of any previous year. The grand truths, that the object of instruction and training is not so much to enable a child to narrate the great things which others have done, as to cultivate the judgment and discretion by which, in similar circumstances, he could do the same things himself; not so much to commit to memory the contents of a book, as to acquire, in some good degree, the knowledge and the ability, by which the book itself was produced, and from which, if the book were lost, he could reproduce it; that study and recitations are of little consequence, except as they lead to habits of investigation, and of a clear statement of things known; and that external actions are nothing in comparison with the motives from which they emanate;—these reforming and revolutionizing truths are every day penetrating deeper and deeper into the minds of those who are superintending the education of our youth.

SCHOOL ABSTRACTS.

The event most interesting, and bearing most directly upon the welfare of the schools, which has occurred within the last year, is the publication of the Annual Abstract of the School Returns for the school year, 1839-40, enriched, as it is, with selections from the school committees' reports. In relation to this volume, I have the declarations of many gentlemen, well qualified to judge, that they are unacquainted with any document, in any language, which would be so serviceable to our schools, as this; or one, which hereafter, will possess a greater historical interest. The document

is large,—larger than I intended it should be,—but as the printing of the work went on simultaneously with the making of the selections for it, it was impossible to foresee at the beginning, what those selections would amount to at the close ; and when that amount was ascertained, it was necessarily too late for any abridgement. But there was an overruling consideration belonging to the subject, viz : that the volume could not have been materially reduced in size, without being greatly diminished in value. It is also an important fact, that, as we have now ascertained the real condition of our schools, their errors, and their defects, the necessity of preparing another so voluminous a document, is superseded for the future.

Very exaggerated statements having gone abroad, last year, respecting the expense of clerk hire in the department of the Secretary of State, on account of assistance rendered, in preparing the Abstract of 1838-9, (a much smaller volume than the present,) I made an arrangement this year, with Mr. Bigelow, the Secretary, by which this portion of the work, and all expense for stationery in executing it, should be separated from the other expenses of his office, in order to show what was justly chargeable under this head. The result is, that the whole cost, both of clerk hire and stationery, is one hundred and fifty dollars only.

By the law of 1838, the Secretary of the Board of Education is required, annually, to visit each county in the State, “to collect information of the condition of the public schools, of the fulfilment of the duties of their office by all members of the school committees, and of the circumstances of the several school districts in regard to all the subjects of teachers, pupils, books, apparatus and methods of education.” Another law of the same year, requires school committees “annually to make a detailed report of the condition of the several public schools in their respective towns, designating particular improvements in the methods or means of education, and stating such facts or suggestions in relation thereto, as, in their opinion, will best promote the interests and increase the usefulness of said schools,” and to transmit a copy of said reports to the department of State. These enactments, in connection with the publication, in the Annual Abstracts, of selections from those reports, constitute an era in the history of the Common Schools of Massachusetts. In no other State or country, so far as I am aware, is a train of measures pursued, so

simple yet so effective, for diffusing information in regard to the schools, as we have now been pursuing in this Commonwealth for the last three years. In the first place, an agent is sent into each county in the State, to make a diligent and laborious tour of exploration. The results of his survey are then communicated to the Legislature, and by them are sent to every town, to every school committee, and to every school district. If these communications contain any general principles or suggestions, which are deemed worthy of consideration, the school committees and friends of education in the respective towns, explain their relevancy, and urge upon their fellow-citizens the adoption of practical measures to carry out the improvements suggested. The town school committees then make a "detailed" report, respecting the condition of the schools in their own town, for the double purpose of informing their fellow-townsmen, what that condition may be, and of transmitting that information to a common centre, where all their reports are collected. The first object,—that of informing their fellow-townsmen,—is accomplished, either by the reading of the report in open town meeting, or by printing it for general distribution among the inhabitants; and, in either case, by filing the original in the office of the town-clerk, where it will be always open for reference. After copies of all the reports have been collected in one place, they are carefully examined; whatever is merely of a local and private character is omitted, because it still remains in the archives of the town whence it came, for the use of the inhabitants; but whatever is of general and permanent utility, is embodied in the Annual Abstract. And here the scattered rays of light, converged to a focus, become a sun. The Abstract is then distributed throughout the Commonwealth, and thus each town and each school committee, in return for its own contributions, receives back the facts, views, suggestions, experience, reasonings, conclusions, of all the others in the State. Knowledge which was local, becomes universal. Experiments which have failed, are not repeated. New methods and arrangements, which are found to work well, are adopted, at once, and without the delay or the expense of a first discovery. A coincidence of testimony, as to supposed improvements or deficiencies, inspires confidence, and renders it easier to introduce a good practice in pursuance of a good theory, or to abolish evils, that

plead ancient usage for their continuance. Each committee-man and teacher looks upon himself, not as an isolated and solitary individual, toiling in an unknown and narrow sphere, but as a member of a great company, working for a common end ;—and this consciousness tends to invigorate each with the strength of all. Towns, too, which heretofore have been most indifferent to the cause, are aroused by the sight of what others are doing ; and are stimulated to exertion, if not by the noble desire of excellence, yet at least, by the shame of conspicuous inferiority.

In various respects, the two last Abstracts are invaluable documents. Not only are facts of the greatest importance brought to light, but they come with an authority that cannot be gainsaid nor questioned. A host of witnesses, of the greatest intelligence and respectability, without motive for exaggeration or opportunity for concert,—witnesses, residing respectively in all parts of the State, and whose collective knowledge, therefore, embraces the condition of all the schools within it, offer, in these volumes, their well-considered testimony respecting one of the most important of all our institutions.

Although, therefore, the first report which I submitted to the Board, was mainly occupied with an exposition of the topics discussed in these two documents, yet the basis of facts was then so comparatively limited, and the weight of authority in support of them was so disproportionate to that which now exists, that I feel justified in going, substantially, over the same ground again,—hoping with these new materials to give greater clearness and expansion to the views there presented. Without the arrogance of supposing that I can prepare any thing so pertinent and judicious as many of the committees' reports are, yet it is obvious that some views will be presented to one who occupies a central eminence, which would be inevitably hidden from those whose position, though it gives them an opportunity for a clearer and closer inspection within a limited sphere, still shuts them out from a comprehensive survey of the entire field of operations. This is my apology for attempting in this report, a presentation of the topics, which have already been treated of by the committees, in so able and admirable a manner.

It would seem desirable to exhibit some general outline of the objects proposed, and the principles observed in the preparation of the two last Abstracts, before commenting in detail on the various sub-

jects they discuss. For this purpose, I must refer the Board to the short reports prefixed to them, as the explanations there given, are as brief and apposite, as any thing I could now prepare.

PRINCIPLES ON WHICH SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED IN MASSACHUSETTS, SINCE 1647.

On inspecting the laws of the Commonwealth, which provide for public instruction, two grand features stand conspicuously forth, viz : that the benefits of a Common-School education shall be brought within the reach of every child in the State, however poor ; and that the property of the State shall support a system of schools adequate to confer this universal education. These provisions are fundamental and organic. They have been in existence from the very infancy of the colony,—a period of about two centuries,—during all which time, the statute book furnishes no instance of their repeal or modification. The mode of administration has been changed, but not the original basis of the system. The principles have reigned supreme, throughout, that the property of the citizens, whether it represented children or not, should support the schools ; and that all children, whether they represented property or not, should possess the means of education.

In regard to the mode of administration, it was not until the year 1789 that the present district system had any legal existence. Between 1768 and 1789, “precincts” or parishes, (which were then territorial,) were allowed to maintain schools, by a tax upon the parishioners ; but, previous to 1768, the schools were sustained by towns acting in their municipal capacity. The law of 1789 recites that “whereas, by means of the dispersed situation” of the inhabitants of some towns, “the children and youth cannot be collected in any one place for their instruction,” it had become expedient to divide the territory of the towns into separate districts ; and it then proceeds to empower towns “to determine and define the limits of school districts.” The great majority of the towns in the State have since exercised the power which this law conferred, by a geographical division of their respective territories, into school districts ; so that now, with but three hundred and seven towns in the State, we probably have not less than twenty-five hundred school districts.

Several towns still manage the schools in their corporate capacity, and in some districts there are two or more schools. The number of public schools in the State last year, was 3,072.

Whatever advantages may be realized, or evils averted, by this change from the town to the district system, it is certain that the latter has been carried to a most injurious extent. The following is a tabular view of the winter schools, for the winter of 1839-40, classified according to the number of the scholars belonging to them respectively. It includes 2708 schools only, there being, in regard to the others, some imperfection in the returns, which renders their classification impracticable :

Schools not exceeding 10 scholars,	.	.	.	14
From 10 to 20	"	.	.	194
" 20 to 30	"	.	.	426
" 30 to 40	"	.	.	562
" 40 to 50	"	.	.	479
" 50 to 60	"	.	.	376
" 60 to 70	"	.	.	251
" 70 to 80	"	.	.	153
" 80 to 90	"	.	.	80
" 90 to 100	"	.	.	43
" 100 to 200	"	.	.	110
" 200 to 500	"	.	.	18
Over 500	.	.	.	2

The winter schools contained, in the whole, 149,222 scholars ; while the summer schools, for the same school year, contained only 124,345, which is one-sixth less than the winter ; and therefore, on an average, the summer schools must have been one-sixth smaller than the winter, as represented in the above table.

Another view of the subject establishes the same result, in regard to the too minute subdivision of our territory into school districts. The number of square miles in the area of Massachusetts is 7,500, which is less, on an average, than two and a half square miles to a school. Now, if a schoolhouse is situated in the centre of a territory of four square miles, (that is, two miles square,) none, or but few of the scholars,—such only as live in the corners of the square,—would be obliged to travel more than one mile to the

school. Were the State, therefore, divided into sections, each of which should contain four square miles, it would require, to dot its surface all over, less than nineteen hundred schoolhouses, which, in parallel rows, in either direction, would not be more than two miles apart ;—or, which is the same thing, each schoolhouse would have four other schoolhouses within two miles of it. Nineteen hundred luminous points, each one shedding its beams through a radius of a little more than one mile, would cover the whole surface of the State with a flood of light. Instead of nineteen hundred, however, we have more than three thousand schools ; but the light which they dispense is in the inverse ratio of their number, for the aliment that feeds their flame is divided into portions so scanty, that many of them emit only a feeble and flickering ray. The mountainous or sandy and uninhabited portions of the State, where no schoolhouse is wanted, would be a fair offset for the cities and more populous places, where they must be more numerous, (the valuation statistics showing that more than one quarter of the entire surface of the State is unimproved, or unimprovable land ;)—making, therefore, all due allowance on this account, it is obvious that the *number* of schoolhouses in the State is fifty per cent. greater than it needs to be, to accommodate all the children within it, so far as extent of territory or distance of travel to school is concerned.

Various causes have conspired to produce this result,—some of them pardonable, some censurable, all most unfortunate. In laying off the town into districts, the committee appointed for the purpose would be solicited to make the districts small, in order to supersede the necessity of sending far to school ; so that in the original survey and location, the chances would preponderate in favor of too minute a subdivision.

During the fifty years, since the enactment of the law, authorizing this geographical division of the towns into districts, very many cases have occurred, where, on account of the laying out of new roads, or the opening of new places of business, the population has shifted, and a portion of territory which once contained inhabitants enough for a school, has been reduced to a small number of people, while the school and the limits of the school district have remained as they were, though the facts which justified their establishment have ceased to exist. On the other hand, where a dis-

trict, which originally contained only children enough for a single school, has, by an accession to its population, outgrown the dimensions of the schoolhouse, the general course has been to divide the territory of the district, and establish two schools in two school-houses, instead of preserving the integrity of the district, and separating the children into older and younger classes, for different apartments in the same house.

Another cause of the dismemberment of districts cannot be too severely censured. Where local or neighborhood quarrels have arisen, from any cause, amongst the inhabitants of a school district, they have often resulted in a division of its territory. In the administration and management of a school, many points are presented concerning which even judicious and well-disposed men may honestly differ ; but when hostile parties are arrayed against each other, and a contentious spirit prevails, every passing day furnishes occasions for dissension. The district being thrown into a state of civil warfare, one of the most obvious means for a separation of the combatants and the restoration of peace, is a division of the battle-field. When the passions of men are excited, their highest privileges are readily sacrificed, and this melancholy truth is not without many illustrations. Cases have occurred, where those inhabitants of a district, who contested the location of a schoolhouse in a given spot, on account of its alleged distance from their homes, have prosecuted hostilities to a division of the territory, and have then erected a new house within a stone's throw of the very spot, whose remoteness from their own residences was before deemed an intolerable grievance. The more ignorant the people of a district are, and the more need they consequently have of the benefits of a school, the more likely are they to do themselves this wrong. But the consequences are fatal. The power of the district is annihilated. Suppose a district to have \$90 to be expended for the wages and board of a teacher, and for fuel, during the winter school. If his wages are \$20 a month, his board \$8, and the fuel \$2, for the same time, then the sum of \$90 will sustain the school *three* months. But if a contention among the inhabitants results in a division of the district, the share of each part is reduced to \$45, instead of \$90. This sum, at the same rates, (even after the expense of erecting another school-house has been incurred,) will sustain a school only a month and a

half, instead of three months. But the last six weeks of a three months' school, under a good teacher, is worth more than double the first six, so that the value of the divided fund is reduced to less than a fourth part of that of the undivided. Both parties, conqueror and conquered, are alike defeated ; for the prize of the contest turns to a shadow the moment it is won.

Other consequences of this evil are, that it leads to the erection of contracted, inadequate schoolhouses ; it stands in the way of all outlays for necessary repairs, and of all appropriations for the purchase of furniture, apparatus, libraries, &c., and it gives a new lease of existence to all old schoolhouses, however dilapidated or miserable ; for notwithstanding their acknowledged inconvenience, discomfort and unhealthfulness, the answer, that the district is small and poor silences all arguments in favor of a reform. Small districts, too, naturally desiring to prolong their schools disproportionately to the money they draw, are under a constant temptation to employ cheap teachers ; and although it is not a universal truth, yet it is a very general one, that a *cheap* and an *incompetent* teacher are synonymous terms. Good teachers can do better elsewhere, so that the districts, which have thus crippled and enervated themselves, must, from the necessity of the case, be content with an inferior grade of teachers, not one year only, but year after year, and during the whole stage of their children's education. Straitened and impoverished in this way, some districts have been driven to the expedient of wholly omitting the school for a year, and then of expending the allowance of two years, at once. The blessed office of the peace-maker is never more worthily exercised than in restoring a contentious school district to harmony.

Another consideration pertaining to this subject is, that there is a limit downwards as well as upwards, in regard to the number of scholars, most eligible for a school. No teacher can do justice to an ordinary district school, of more than fifty scholars, especially if they are advanced ones. If he has more, he cannot keep them occupied, nor has he time for the necessary oral instruction of the classes. Hence the law of March 19, 1839, required that a female assistant should be employed in every town or district school in the State, which contained fifty scholars on an average, unless the town or dis-

strict should, at a meeting regularly called for the purpose, vote to dispense with the same. But the number of scholars may be too small as well as too great. In most branches, a large class is not only taught as easily, but more efficiently than a small one. Numbers are a natural stimulus to all the social faculties, and hence they incite to greater exertions. As the number of inquisitive learners is increased, more questions will be asked in regard to the lessons, and thus the subject will be presented in a greater variety of lights. All experienced teachers must have observed, that a bright scholar will suggest doubts or difficulties, which not only would never have occurred to a learned man, but would be less likely to occur to him, just in proportion to the extent of his learning. Hence the advantage of numbers in a school ; and if fifty be regarded as the maximum, probably forty would be, as the minimum for a Common School ; but we have more than twelve hundred below this number. The natural consequences, of very small districts, are poverty in the purse that supports, and in the spirit which animates them ; and when these disastrous and blighting effects do not follow, it is only because the powerful tendency to such a result is counteracted by a few energetic and indefatigable men, who supply a vigor of will which sustains the activity of the system, in defiance of its natural infirmities. In fine, it is obvious, that all the strength, which comes from the union and concert of numbers is lost, when a town commits the grand error of pulverizing its territory and leaving each atom to its own resources.

Since the law of 1789, it has been optional with the towns, either to create districts and to devolve the main part of the administration of the schools upon them, or to carry on the system itself, in its corporate capacity. In a great majority of cases, the former mode has been adopted and now prevails ; nor is it probable that it will be, hereafter, to any great extent, abandoned in favor of the latter. Yet it is an undeniable fact, that the schools are best conducted when they are managed by the town and not by districts. Under the town system, all the interested as well as the benevolent tendencies favor improvement. Each section of the town will contend for a good schoolhouse, because the town, and not the district, is to bear the expense of building it. A good schoolhouse in one section, will supply an argument, on the ground of equality, for good houses in all the others. For the same reason, each will demand all suitable and

timely repairs, competent teachers, equal supervision, and all the other constituents of prosperity in a school. These are obvious causes for the incontestible fact, that the town system of administration produces the best schools ; and it is a fact which ought to be understood, for although the towns in this Commonwealth may not be induced to break up the prevalent system, and return to the former, yet the natural tendencies of the two systems ought to be known in those States which are just entering upon a plan of public instruction, and, having no ancient usages to change, can begin with the best.

What then is the remedy for this undue multiplication of school districts ? I answer, the remedy must depend upon the circumstances of each case. Where there are now two or three school districts, in a section of country not exceeding four or five square miles in area, (equal to two, or a little more than two, miles square ;) or when the extreme settled parts of a section of any size, are but about one mile, or one mile and a half, from the centre of its population, the remedy is the consolidation of the districts into one, and the separation of the older from the younger scholars. If the number of children is sufficiently large, three divisions are better than two,—the first to contain the scholars below six or seven years of age, the second, those between that age and eleven, twelve, or thirteen, according to circumstances, and the third, all above. Where this has already been done, the advantages are so apparent, that no consideration could induce the united districts to revert to the old system, by a separation. Where all the small children belonging to two or three schools are brought together, the number of those of similar ages and attainments is two or three times as great. Instead of calling up the children singly, to teach them the alphabet, or to read in simple lessons, and devoting but two or three minutes to each one, as is commonly done,—all, in the same stage of advancement, may be classed together ; and thus the time, so much of which is wasted in coming and going, and in beginning and ending the lessons, and all of which is substantially lost by being broken into fragments, becomes sufficient, when its scattered portions are united, for a thorough recitation, with the necessary accompaniment of oral explanations. This course would promote two great purposes, economy in time, and efficiency of instruction, and would

thereby immeasurably increase both the quantity and the quality of the education which the same amount of money could be made to yield.

Another remedy, wherever applicable, is still more advantageous; and when circumstances will permit, it should always supersede the former. It consists in the establishment of

UNION SCHOOLS.

The ruinous consequences of creating small districts, having been communicated to the Board and to the Legislature, in January, 1838, led to the enactment of the law of April 25, 1838, respecting Union Schools. A more remedial and salutary law, in regard to this evil, could not have been devised. It authorizes "any two or more contiguous school districts, in this Commonwealth, to associate together and form a Union District, for the purpose of maintaining a Union School, to be kept for the benefit of the older children of such associated districts, if the inhabitants of each of such districts shall, at legal meetings called for that purpose, agree to form such union, by a vote of two thirds of the legal voters thereof;" and it gives to such Union District the powers of a body corporate.

The union system is applicable to all places, where the distance from the extremes to the centre of population is too great for the younger children to go daily to school, but not too great for the older. In such cases, there should be separate houses, two, three, or more, where the smaller children can be taught by females, while the larger ones should be accommodated at or near the centre of the territory. Ordinarily, the existing schoolhouses and the territorial limits of the districts, as now laid out, will answer the first purpose, while for the Union School some further provision will be necessary. The advantages of the Union School may be briefly stated under the following heads:—1. Economy of the plan. 2. Management and Discipline.

1. **ECONOMY OF THE PLAN.** In the first place, the plan of Union Districts commends itself, on the score of economy, to every man, who desires to make a given amount of money accomplish more good; or to derive an equal amount of good from less money. In my Report on Schoolhouses, pp. 30, 31, it is arithmetically proved, that,

where four districts can be united for this purpose, a given sum of money, which now sustains four summer schools, taught by females, and four winter schools taught by males, only four months each, would, under the proposed arrangement, maintain the four summer schools, six months each, and a winter school, eight months, instead of four, would give the master \$35 a month instead of \$25, and would still leave in the treasury, an unexpended balance of \$20. The demonstration, as to the economy of the plan, being there wrought out, and open to the inspection of any one who will examine it, I leave this topic, with a single statement, illustrative of the necessity of adopting some immediate and efficient remedy. In my circuit, last autumn, through a part of the State which I had not visited before, I saw six schoolhouses all situated on the same road, the extreme ones of which were but a mile and a half apart, and of course only three-fourths of a mile from a central point. In these, the uniform practice had been to employ six females in summer, and six males in winter. And thus, as it regards the winter schools, the wages and board of six men had been paid, and fuel for six fires provided, when one male principal, who might have received, and been worthy of the most liberal salary,—with suitable female assistants, if necessary,—might have accomplished ten times the good, at a greatly reduced expense. All this was acknowledged as soon as pointed out, and assurances of a change gratefully given. How great would be the gain, if the spirit of economy, which is often so active at the town meeting when the money for schools is granted, could be transferred to its expenditure, by a wiser mode of appropriation.

2. **MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE.** A more trying situation to a person of judgment and good feelings cannot well be conceived, than that of having the sole charge of a school of sixty, seventy or eighty scholars, of all ages, where he is equally exposed to censure for the indulgences that endanger good order, and for the discipline that enforces it. One of the inquiries contained in the circular letter to the school committees, in 1838, was respecting the ages of the children attending our public schools. By the answers it appeared, that in very many places the schools were attended by scholars of all ages, between four years and twenty ; and, in some places, by

those between two years and a half and twenty-five ;—and thus the general regulations of the school, as to order, stillness and the observance of a code of fixed laws, were the same, for infants but just out of their cradles, and for men who had been enrolled seven years in the militia. Now, nothing can be more obvious, than that the kind of government, appropriate and even indispensable, for one portion of these scholars, was flagrantly unsuitable for the other. The larger scholars, with a liberal recess, can keep their seats and apply their minds for three consecutive hours. But to make small children sit, both dumb and motionless, for three successive hours, with the exception of a brief recess and two short lessons, is an infraction of every law which the Creator has impressed upon both body and mind. There is but one motive by which this violence to every prompting of nature can be committed, and that is an overwhelming, stupefying sense of fear. If the world were offered to these children, as a reward for this prolonged silence and inaction, they would spurn it ; the deep instinct of self-preservation alone, is sufficient for the purpose. The irreparable injury of making a child sit straight, and silent, and motionless, for three continuous hours, with only two or three brief respites, cannot be conceived. Its effect upon the body is to inflict severe pain, to impair health, to check the free circulations in the system,—all which leads to dwarfishness ;—and to misdirect the action of the vital organs, which leads to deformity. In regard to the intellect, it suppresses the activity of every faculty, and as it is a universal law, in regard to them all, that they acquire strength by exercise and lose tone and vigor by inaction, the inevitable consequence is, both to diminish the number of things they will be competent to do, and to disable them from doing this limited number so well as they otherwise might. In regard to the temper and morals, the results are still more deplorable. To command a child, whose mind is furnished with no occupation, to sit for a long time, silent in regard to speech and dead in regard to motion, when every limb and organ aches for activity ;—to set a child down in the midst of others, whose very presence acts upon his social nature as irresistibly as gravitation acts upon his body, and then to prohibit all recognition of, or communication with his fellows, is subjecting him to a temptation to disobedience, which it is alike physically and morally

impossible he should wholly resist. What observing person, who has ever visited a school, where the laws of bodily and mental activity were thus violated, has failed to see how keenly the children watch the motions of the teacher, how eagerly, the first moment when his face is turned from them, or any person or object intervenes to screen them from his view, they seize upon the occasion to whisper, laugh, chaffer, make grimaces, or do some other thing against the known laws of the school. Every clandestine act of this kind cultivates the spirit of deception, trickery and fraud ; it leads to the formation, not of an open and ingenuous, but of a dissembling, wily, secretive character. The evil is only aggravated when the teacher adopts the practice of looking out, under his eyebrows as it is called, or of glancing at them obliquely, or of wheeling suddenly round, in order to detect offenders in the act of transgression. Such a course is a practical lesson in artifice and stratagem, set by the teacher ; and the consequence is, that to entrap on the one side and elude on the other, soon becomes a matter of rivalry and competition, between teacher and pupils. Probably it is within the recollection of most persons, that after the close of some school terms, both teacher and pupils have been heard to boast,—the one, how many he had ensnared, the others, how often they had escaped ;—thus presenting the spectacle of the moral guide of our youth, and the moral subjects of his charge *boasting* of mutual circumvention and disingenuousness.

Teachers who manage schools with a due observance of those laws with which the Creator has pervaded the human system, are accustomed, when scholars have become restless and uneasy, to send them out to run, or, in some way, to take exercise, until the accumulation of muscular and nervous energy, which prompted their uneasiness, is expended. They will then return to the school room to sit with composure, or to study with diligence and vigor.

I have deemed this matter of so much consequence, and have found, in some places, such inveterate, false habits and modes of thinking respecting it, that I have desired to fortify my own views by those of gentlemen, whose authority none will venture to question. Accordingly, I have obtained the opinions of some of the most eminent physicians and physiologists in the State, and have selected three from the number to be placed in the appendix.

The remedies for these various evils are, the establishment of Union Schools, wherever the combined circumstances of territory and population will allow ;—the consolidation of two or more districts into one, where the union system is impracticable ; and where the population is so sparse as to prevent either of these courses, there to break in upon the routine of the school, either by confining the young children for a less number of hours, or by giving to them two recesses, each half day. The health of the body must be preserved, because it is the only medium through which the brightest intellect and the purest morals can bless the world.

If it were possible to measure or gauge the quantity and quality of instruction, which the teacher could give, under the union system, compared with that which he can give in a school composed of scholars of all ages and in all stages of advancement, no further proof, in favor of a classification of the children into divisions of older and younger, would be needed. A teacher well versed in the better modes of instruction, which are beginning to be adopted, will, in most branches, teach each one of a class of twenty, more, in the same time, than he could teach any one individual of the same class. What an accession to his usefulness, that is, to the improvement of the children, would thus be gained ! And is it not an unpardonable waste of means, where it can possibly be avoided, to employ a man, at \$25 or \$30 a month, to teach the alphabet, when it can be done much better, at half price, by a female teacher ?

The Union School is found to improve all the schools in the constituent districts. The children in the lower schools look upward to the higher with ambition, and labor more earnestly, that they may be prepared to enter it. So far as my knowledge extends, no districts which have adopted, could be induced to abandon it.

SCHOOLHOUSES.

It is a subject for universal congratulation, that, when speaking of our schoolhouses, emotions of pleasure now begin to mingle with those of pain. Before the publication, in 1832, by the American Institute of Instruction, of two most valuable papers on this subject,—viz. Dr. Alcott's Prize Essay, and the Lecture of William J. Adams, Esq.—there was not to my knowledge, (and I have now

been four times over the State, with this subject among the uppermost in my mind,) a single public schoolhouse in the Commonwealth, which in its general construction, and especially in its interior arrangements, would now be considered even tolerably good. From that time to 1838 and 9, the erection of a schoolhouse became a fact of less rare occurrence ; and in some of those which were built, a part of the improvements suggested in the excellent productions above referred to, were adopted. During the year now just passed, more schoolhouses have been erected than for ten years, previous to 1838 ; and not only is the number greater, but many of them are admirable models of schoolhouse architecture. The examples set by Boston, Chelsea, Charlestown, Lowell, Roxbury, Plymouth, Greenfield, are worthy of universal imitation.

The subject of schoolhouse architecture has been so extensively discussed, both in former reports, and now in the Abstracts, as to preclude the necessity of any detailed reference to it, at the present time. The close connection of the schoolhouses with the cheerfulness and health of children, with their symmetry of form and length of life ; its intimate relation to their habits of order, cleanliness, and punctuality ; its powerful influence on intellectual progress, on manners and temper, and through temper on conduct and character ; its prerogative of deciding the question, whether the school shall be a place of attraction or repulsion to the young, from the day of their earliest associations with it ; its power to further, or to baffle all the plans of a good teacher ; and its being the pride or the opprobrium of the district where it stands ;—all these considerations have been so earnestly and loudly urged, that there can scarcely be an individual in the State whose ears they have not reached. There is not a town in the State, where some men cannot now be found who comprehend this subject in its great relations to the public good ; and to them must be committed the duty of arousing the public mind to an active sense of its importance. Academies and private schools, which are sustained by a few individuals, are, almost without exception, kept in comfortable, well-arranged and attractive buildings. Why is it, that the whole public is so much less able than a part of it, to maintain decent and respectable places for education ? Why should private dwellings, churches, courthouses, markets, or even

jails and prisons be superior, in some of the most important desiderata of a residence, to the public schoolhouse? Certainly, a foreigner, in travelling over our territory, would find a surer augury of the perpetuity, or the downfall of our institutions, in the appearance of our schoolhouses, than in all else within the range of his observation. Forts, arsenals, garrisons, armies, navies, are means of security and defence, which were invented in half-civilized times and in feudal or despotic countries; but schoolhouses are the Republican line of fortifications, and if they are dismantled and dilapidated, ignorance and vice will pour in their legions through every breach.

Before leaving this subject, however, it is necessary to point out one evil which a little precaution will abundantly remedy. I refer to the bad repair of schoolhouses. A schoolhouse may be tolerable in its general construction and appearance, and yet be wretched and perilous, from wanting a few panes of glass in the windows, a hinge or panel for the door, plaster for the ceiling, a few feet of good stove pipe, or some similar repàration. It is a sad commentary on the character of the people, when a schoolhouse, surrounded by elegant mansions, is suffered to remain out of repair. A pane of glass will occasionally be broken, and the expedient of supplying its place, temporarily, with a hat or a coat, may be necessary; but a wooden substitute, well fastened in, argues premeditated neglect. These mischiefs often arise, because the prudential committee, whose duty it is to put and to keep the schoolhouse in good condition, has no district funds, in his hands, for that purpose, and he dislikes to run the district into debt to any third person, or to assume the expense himself, and thereby become its creditor. The district neglects to levy a tax, because the amount immediately required may be but three or four dollars,—perhaps only as many shillings, and because the expenses of assessment and collection will exceed the sum needed; and thus the evil continues, although each individual suffers more than the whole cost of the remedy. One district, last winter, had the sum of \$73 to expend for its winter school. A panel was gone from the schoolhouse door, which a few shillings would have replaced, but there were no funds, and the consequence was that it cost \$23 out of the seventy-three for fuel, while the remaining fifty dollars was expended for wages and board. Such enormous waste-

fulness is probably without a parallel, but any condition of things which permits it, should be immediately changed. It ought to be universally understood, that the prudential committee of a district carries an unlimited credit with him, as well for repairing, as for providing a schoolhouse ;—nay, that he is liable to indictment, if he neglects, in the language of the law, to “provide a suitable place for the school.” But as it is always more agreeable to the agent to receive all requisite pecuniary means from his principal, the district ought always to keep a little money on hand, to be drawn upon, when necessary, by the prudential committee ; or it should pass a vote, authorizing him to borrow sums sufficient to meet all exigencies, and then grant an occasional tax for their payment. In most cases, a tax of forty, or even thirty dollars, would provide for all contingencies for some time. Being granted and certified, the tax might be assessed and collected with the town taxes. One grant, in half a dozen or more years, would probably be sufficient ; there would always be money on hand, and thus the mischiefs of delay, and the expense of separate levies for small sums, would both be avoided.

There is one other obstacle in the way of having a good schoolhouse, which, indeed, but seldom exists, but when it does exist, it is a very serious one, and at present, incapable of removal. It has happened several times within the last three years, that when a district very much needed a new house, and was ready to erect one, no site could be obtained for the purpose. The owner of a large farm, occupying the centre of the district, being opposed to the erection of a new house, either because he had no children to be benefited by the school, or could educate his own at a private one, or was averse to paying his share of the tax, has utterly refused to convey a piece of land for the house to stand on, or has demanded a price so exorbitant as to make a purchase by the district impossible. In these cases, I have been asked how it happens, that when a private citizen or a corporation wishes to erect a mill for spinning cotton or wool, or sawing timber, or grinding corn or bark, or making nails ; or when land is wanted for a turnpike or a railroad ;—how it happens, that a man's tillage land, his orchard or his garden, may be taken, or even his house cut down or removed, and his whole farm appropriated, but when a district wants but a single half acre of land

to be consecrated to the culture of the rising generation, it cannot be had. My answer has been, that in regard to the more material and corporeal interests of manufactures and thoroughfares, the Legislature has been importuned to act, and has provided by statute for a compulsory transfer of a man's estate, at a price fixed by a third party ;—but that, in regard to the spiritual and moral interests of our youth, no such application to them has ever been made, nor has any public opinion as yet existed, which would give to such an application a prospect of success.

INEFFICIENCY AND UNPRODUCTIVENESS OF EXPENDITURE, FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The theory of Public Instruction, in this Commonwealth, as deduced from the statute book, and as it generally exists in the minds of the people, assort or distributes that instruction, under two heads ;—first, that of the Incorporated Academy, and second, that of the Common School. The general sphere or office of the incorporated academy is to prepare students for college, or to give to them such specific instruction in advanced studies, as qualifies for some department of educated labor. But the institutions for common education have a wider,—a universal, sphere of action. They are designed, like the common blessings of heaven, to encompass all ;—so that every child that is born amongst us, shall as truly be said to be born into a world of intellectual and moral, as into a world of natural light ;—not a world where a few splendid beams fall upon a few favored eyes, while others are involved in darkness, but where a broad expanse of light spreads over and glows around all. Our theory of education proceeds upon the supposition, that every child will have too many duties to perform in after-life, not to begin to prepare for them, even before he has any conception what they are to be ; and that he will have too many dangers and temptations to encounter and to repel, not to begin to provide against them, even before he is apprized that they lie in ambush about his path. For these grand purposes the Common School was established, whose very name proclaims its eulogy.

The average number of students in the incorporated academies, in the school year 1838-9, was 3,599 ;—in the year 1839-40, it was 3,701. It is gratifying to witness this increase. It shows,—what

indeed could not have been doubted beforehand,—that whatever advances the prosperity of the Common Schools, will advance that of all the higher institutions of learning. The sum paid for tuition, last year, in the incorporated academies, was \$57,458 59, or between fifteen and sixteen dollars apiece for the students.

During the same year, the number of children in the State between the ages of four and sixteen years, was 179,268, or, in round numbers, one hundred and eighty thousand, and the expense for education in Common-School studies, was \$718,335 44. I propose hereafter, to show what proportion of this sum of money was lost by the permanent absences of the children from the schools, or their irregular attendance upon them. My present purpose is to demonstrate the prodigious loss, which all portions of the community have suffered from the inefficient and unproductive manner, in which this ample sum has been expended.

Of this \$718,335 44, expended for instruction in Common-School studies, the sum of \$477,221 24 was expended in the public schools, and the balance, viz. \$241,114 20, in private schools, select schools, high schools, unincorporated academies, schools kept to prolong Common Schools, &c., all of which may be classed under the general head of private schools. The average length of the public schools was seven months and ten days, and of the private schools, six months and ten days. The average wages of male teachers, in all the public schools in the State, was \$33 08, and of the female teachers, for the same schools, \$12 75, per month. Now, had the above-stated amount of money, (\$718,335 44,) which was expended for instruction in Common-School studies, but which, being divided into two funds, was sufficient to keep the public schools only seven months and ten days, on an average, and the private schools, only six months and ten days on, an average,—had this sum been united in one fund, and appropriated for the support of the public schools, it would have sustained them more than eleven months each ;—that is, for a longer portion of the year than it would generally be thought desirable to have our schools kept. This presents the astounding fact of a direct loss of nearly four months' schooling, to all the children in the State, in consequence of a division of the fund, to support two classes of schools, the public and the private, instead of concentrating its energies upon one. Even if the aggre-

gate of eight thousand three hundred and twenty-four months,—which is the amount of time, during which all the private schools, select schools, &c., were kept,—were averaged upon the public schools, and added to the length of their term, it would lengthen them only to ten months, instead of eleven ; and hence, even in that case, a month would be lost for each of the three thousand and seventy-two schools in the State.

Again, without this division of the fund, expended for instruction in Common-School studies, the public schools might all have been continued for ten months of the year, and the wages of all the teachers in them advanced more than ten per cent., without appropriating an additional dollar of money for the purpose. What a vast gain would accrue from such an enlightened change in our policy ;—schools prolonged nearly three months in the year, such liberal compensation given that all teachers could afford to prepare themselves better for their arduous and responsible duties, more talented persons engaging in the service, and an inducement held out to all to continue in the employment for a longer term.

In this computation it is only assumed, that if the whole fund were expended for public schools, the amount contributed for board and fuel would be in the same ratio to the whole sum that it now is. It undoubtedly would be greater.

Of this whole class of schools, which I have included in the generic term, private schools, it is difficult to speak in a manner not liable to misconstruction. But entertaining no unfriendly feelings towards any class of persons connected with them, whether as teachers or patrons ; never having cast, and intending never to cast any imputations upon their motives ; and feeling, moreover, that it is impossible fairly to discuss the great interests of Public Education, and leave this important branch of it unnoticed, I shall throw myself upon their candor, while I endeavor to show, that a dedication of all our means to one object, and a united and fraternal coöperation in promoting it, would confer a vastly greater amount of good upon each one of the whole, than any of them now enjoys ; and that an end so desirable can be accomplished at a diminished expense.

In the first place, however, I would remark, that it is due to many of those who sustain the system of private schools, to say, that they have been driven into its adoption, by the imperfect character of the

public schools. If a parent, who feels,—as every one worthy to be a parent does feel,—an obligation upon himself, authoritative as a command from heaven, to give to his children a good education, and who, therefore, is resolved, in the last resort, to make any sacrifice for the object ;—if he cannot command that education in the district where he belongs ; if the school term is short ; if from the low rate of compensation given, a perpetual succession of young and inexperienced teachers, are employed ; if the schoolhouse is in such a condition as to put the health of his children in daily jeopardy ;—then, after he has made earnest and persevering efforts to obtain, at least, a safe schoolhouse, a suitable length of term, and a competent instructor, and such efforts have proved unavailing ; so far is that parent from being blameworthy for securing a safer house, a longer term, and a better teacher, that if he did not do it, the voice of the community would unite with that of his own conscience in condemning his neglect. The necessity, however, of providing a private school for his children, in no case supersedes the obligation of laboring to elevate the public school, until the private one shall be no longer needful. And so of those who wish to dedicate their talents to the honorable profession of teaching. If they can command only short terms and scanty wages in the public service, they are free to seek employment elsewhere, for on no principle of justice can the public demand from them gratuitous labor. These concessions being made, may not a candid and impartial attention to the relation in which these schools stand to the great cause of free, public, Common-School instruction, be now expected ?

All private schools are naturally divided into two classes, the first of which consists of

SCHOOLS KEPT TO PROLONG COMMON SCHOOLS.

There is a custom in many districts, after the money appropriated to the support of the public schools is expended, for a few of the inhabitants most interested in education, to propose a few weeks' continuance of the school, at private expense. A subscription paper is circulated through the district, parents set down the number of children they will send, and, at the close of the school, the expense of sustaining it, (with the exception of the schoolhouse, which is occupied, rent-free,) is assessed upon them, according to the num-

ber of the children sent. Such schools are universally known in Massachusetts by the name of "Schools kept to prolong Common Schools." The same person who taught the public school is employed; the course of studies is the same, and the compensation of the teacher is generally the same. The difference is, that the expense is borne by persons of competent property who have children, while the wealthy who have no children, pay nothing, and the children of the poor who most need the benefits of the school, are kept at home, because of their parents' poverty. Here the question naturally arises, what is gained by such a course? Every one must see the loss, in the deprivation of a part of the children of the greatest of all benefits; but where is the compensatory gain? Suppose a town raises the sum of \$1,200 for its public schools;—suppose this sum sufficient to keep a school in each of its districts, six months, including both summer and winter terms; and further, that the districts, respectively, not satisfied with so short a school, desire to prolong it to seven months and a half; (I take this term of time, because it is very near the average length of the schools, last year.) This would be an addition of six weeks to the length of the public schools; and this addition being equal to one quarter of six months, will, of course, cost one quarter of \$1,200, i. e., \$300, so that the aggregate paid in the town, both for the public schools and the schools kept to prolong them, would be \$1,500. Now, wherein is any thing gained, by obtaining schools, for seven months and a half, in this way, over what would be realized, should the town grant the \$1,500, in the first instance? This only is gained;—suppose there are eight districts in the town, then there are eight subscriptions to be filled up, by a canvass of the eight districts; and eight assessments are to be made and collected. There is no prudential committee man to look after the condition of the schoolhouse; and difficulties not unfrequently arise in relation to injuries done to it, while the private school is keeping. The school has no title to be visited, and is not visited, by the town committee. The expense being paid by those who send, it is a departure from the great principle that the property of the State is bound to provide a good Common-School education for every child in the State. But the paramount vice of the measure,—that which renders all others insignificant in the comparison,—is, that the children of the poor do not

attend the school. Those who have little property get little education ; for when the advantages of a private school are offered to a poor man, the question whether he shall send his children to it, is a question to be settled by reference to his property ; but when the advantages of a public school are offered to the same man, the question, whether he shall send to it, is settled by the value he attaches to their education ; and the probabilities are, that these questions will, almost invariably, receive opposite answers. The evil re-acts, also, upon those who seemed to be exempted from it. At the opening of the next school term, the children of the poor are turned in upon the school ; and, by their relative backwardness, they hang as a clog upon the feet of the advanced scholars.

There is one advantage, however, belonging to this course of proceeding, which, in an impartial comparison of merits and defects, ought not to be overlooked. It affords to the district an opportunity to prolong the school, when the teacher happens to give good satisfaction ; or to close it, with the expenditure of the public money, when he does not. But this is very far from being a compensation for the evils referred to, to say nothing of the temptation which it sets before the teacher, to cultivate, by an unequal attention to their children, the good will of a few families, whose favor may be most likely to ensure a continuance of the school.

As to that large class of towns, then, which are in the habit of supplying the deficiency in the length of the public schools, by a contribution for this kind of private ones, it is respectfully suggested, whether a true economy of time, trouble and expense, the advantages of a better supervision of the schools, and the more equal and diffusive benefits of education, do not alike counsel them to add to the customary amount of the town's appropriation, a sum equal to what is now expended for prolonging the Common Schools. When the town will not increase its appropriation to this amount, then, to prolong the Common Schools is, on the whole, undoubtedly better, than to suffer under the stinted term, which the public money will sustain ;—especially is this so, if the praiseworthy and benevolent course, adopted by some districts, is followed, viz., that of opening the school to all the children in the district, whether their parents contribute to its support or not.

SELECT SCHOOLS, PRIVATE SCHOOLS, HIGH SCHOOLS, &c.

Under this head are included all the kinds of schools, which fall below the grade of those incorporated academies, whose design it is to prepare pupils for the college, or for some of the departments of educated labor. This class of schools teach the same branches which are taught, or should be taught, in the Common School ; and, on the part of those who sustain them, they are, to a very great extent, truly and professedly, substitutes for what the Common School ought to be. Their ordinary expense is six or eight times as great as that of an equally good Common School would be, if the two funds were united. But having, in my First Annual Report, explained, in some detail, the unfavorable influence, which this class of schools exerts upon the free ones, I will not go over that ground again, except in a very summary manner. It was there shown that the natural effect of this class of schools was to enhance the cost of education, without improving its quality ; to give the teachers a higher tuition fee, for each scholar, but to add nothing to the amount which, under a better system, they would obtain from the public ; to withdraw, from the public schools, some of the best scholars, and therefore to leave the rest without the benefit of their example, and, with the children, to withdraw, also, the guardian care and watchfulness of some of the most intelligent men in the district. It was further shown, that these schools, having supplied their patrons with means for educating their own children, adequate to their wants, they took away all motive to increase the town's appropriation, if they did not cause a positive reduction of it ; and that, as in most country districts, there were no surplus intelligence and public spirit that could be spared from the cause of public education, the transfer of the sympathies and interest of a considerable number of the most intelligent citizens left the Common School to languish ; or, what is infinitely worse, to acquire, through neglect, a pernicious efficiency in the formation of bad habits and character.

It is now three years since these views were expressed ; and after the most attentive observation and reflection during the intervening time, the only modification of them I would make, would be to set forth in a more earnest and impressive manner, the disastrous effects of this division of the fund, and this sundering of the unity of interests,

which should be kept forever one and indissoluble, and consecrated to the promotion of a common cause. As before stated, could these two funds be united, our school terms might be prolonged to the period of ten months in a year, and all the teachers receive an addition of more than ten per cent. to their wages, without the appropriation of an additional dollar. Other consequences which would necessarily flow from such a union of resources and concert of action would be, that the best of the private-school teachers would be transferred to the public schools; in many cases, the convenient and even elegant houses, which have been prepared for the private schools would be purchased by the districts, and thus the stigma of their own forlorn and wretched buildings be taken away;—for it is as certain, as that the shadow attends the substance, that on entering a handsome village in almost any part of the State, and seeing a small, low-roofed, dilapidated, weather-beaten schoolhouse, obtruding itself from the corner of some street, or surrounded by noisy workshops, there will be found in that village one or more flourishing private schools, kept in commodious and elegant houses.

Taking the whole number in the State, of the class of schools generally called private, they average less than twenty-two scholars apiece. This number is obviously too small for economy, or for realizing the full benefits which the social feelings of fellow-pupils may exert upon them. When the teacher depends upon the school for his support, and the school is so small, he must be a highly conscientious man, to incur the risk of losing any portion of his pupils by thwarting their wishes in regard to the course of study, by enforcing thoroughness in the less attractive branches, or by such checks as are often necessary for the restraint of youthful impulses.

It is a matter of great curiosity to observe the workings of conflicting motives, in the same town, on the subject of its expenditures for the schools;—the motive of economy, limiting the amount of the town grants, and the motive of liberality for extending the schools. The latter strives to palliate the consequences of the former. And it will often be found that a majority of the inhabitants of a town will vote against a proposed increase in its appropriations, and then, the same year, a large majority in the same town will give, by private contribution, three or four times the amount of the pro-

posed increase in order to make up the deficiency in the town's grant. In the county of Barnstable, for instance, the practice extensively prevails, after the town has made its annual appropriations, for the districts to call meetings and to decide by a major vote, that the school shall be kept a given number of months, irrespective of the distributive share they are to receive from the town. When the school commences, the teacher is directed to keep an exact account of the attendance of each scholar during the term. At the close of the school, the expense of it is ascertained ; the district's share of the town money is first applied to defray that expense, and the residue is assessed upon the parents and guardians of the scholars, according to the amount of their attendance. This proceeding is known by the name of "*mixing the money.*" Although this is done by the district, without any shadow of legal authority, yet it has been generally acquiesced in ;—the desire of a longer school prevailing over the question of strict, legal right. In some few instances, individuals have declined to contribute for prolonging the school,—proposing to take their children from it, after the town's money should be expended. But to defeat this purpose, the district, in some cases, has voted that the school be kept from public and from private money, in alternate weeks or fortnights ; that is, the first week or fortnight from the public money, the second from the private, the third from the public again, and so on. This would virtually compel all to come into the plan of ratable contribution, because such an intermitting attendance,—one week in and the next week out,—would be nearly valueless. In some cases, all the children have been allowed to attend the school, and the tax has been remitted in regard to the poor ; and thus a spirit of generosity has done much to remedy the inherent defects of the system ; and the principle, that the property shall support the school, has been reverted to, in substance, after all the trouble of departing from it, in form, has been incurred. In point of policy, the mode of *mixing the money* seems even less exceptionable, than the one which is more generally adopted, in other parts of the State ; viz. that of the town's voting an inadequate sum, and then for a few persons to take their children from the public schools and establish a private one for their sole benefit ; or for the leading inhabitants of the districts to prolong the Common

school, at their individual expense. It is gratifying to find, that notwithstanding the great amount of money expended, last year, in the county of Barnstable, for private schools, compared with the sum raised for the public ones, yet that a majority of all the towns in that county, materially increased their appropriations over those of the preceding year ; and thus, that they are adopting the most effectual of all methods for an ultimate remedy. And, however paradoxical it may seem, it is still true, that a gradual enlargement of the town appropriations, from year to year, is the only way to diminish the aggregate of expenses for education in Common-School studies ; and the more rapidly the increase is made, the greater will be the saving in the whole expense. Each additional hundred dollars, raised by the town for public schools, will save two or three hundred in the expense for private ones, besides drawing after it the consequences of higher compensation for teachers, longer school terms, greater intelligence in the general administration of the system and more zeal for the advancement of the scholars. An enlargement of the town appropriations, therefore, is alike dictated by policy and economy.

The prostration of the energies of our school system, by this division of the funds expended to sustain it, is not the only evil which that division causes. It tends strongly to a perversion of the social feelings of the children,—to envy on the one side, and to an assumption of superiority on the other. We may moralize to children, forever, upon the duty of *doing* to others, as they would be done by ; and also, (which is within the equitable interpretation of the same divine law,) upon the duty of *feeling* towards others as they would have others feel towards them ;—or upon the duty of each one's esteeming others better than himself ; but if they are sent forth at the same hour, and pass along the same streets, to enter houses of instruction almost as different from each other as the squalid wigwam of the savage from the elegant mansions of the civilized, it is impossible, while human nature remains as it is, that feelings of alienation, of distance and discord, should not spring up and choke out their social affections. An enemy is among them sowing tares,—not in the night, but in the open day ; not while the parents are asleep, for it is the parents themselves who scatter the seed. The social and dissocial feelings of children are, to a very great extent, the natural growth of the circumstances in which they are placed ; and therefore it is, that

the circumstances, as far as possible, must be sought or avoided, out of which proper or improper feelings naturally emanate ;—and they are responsible for the result, who determine the circumstances.

The whole number of scholars attending the private schools of all kinds, last year, was less than thirty thousand ; that is, less than one-sixth part of the whole number of children in the State, between the ages of four and sixteen years. Amongst whom are these thirty thousand children destined to live, when they pass from minority to manhood ? Is not this one-sixth to receive good or suffer evil from social institutions, which the other five-sixths will mould according to their own will ? Are they not to depend, not only for social consideration and public favor, but also, to a great extent, for the security of person and property and reputation, on the feelings of the community towards them ? And is it not, therefore, the clearest policy, as well as the highest duty, to establish such relations among all the children, as will prepare them for their common destiny when men ? Besides, it is impossible to inflict any other so great an intellectual injury upon a child, as to inspire him with the pride of a superiority which is merely accidental ;—and the result is the same, whether that pride be inspired, by direct inculcation, or by surrounding him with circumstances which naturally excite it. Personal exertion is the only unfailing resource, upon which he can draw. Take away every thing else, but leave the spirit that prompts to exertion, and you leave the means of the highest worldly prosperity and honors. Take this spirit away, and he is impoverished, though left in possession of every adventitious good. The idea of superiority, derived from the casual and accidental distinctions of wealth, or parentage, or rank, seems to take away the necessity of personal exertion, and thus it destroys the sources of greatness ; and men of wealth, of rank and of conspicuous standing in society from whatsoever cause, must reconcile themselves to see their children become inferior men, and fall into inferior positions in society, notwithstanding all the labor and cost bestowed upon them, until they will provide for those children some antidote against thinking themselves superior to their fellows, on any grounds but those of the power and the will to do good. All children, born to what is commonly called a better fortune, so far from having their attention turned to that fact, need the strongest motives to counteract its influence.

These views bear directly upon the subject of private schools, especially in our country towns and villages ; and that they are beginning to be adopted, and, to some extent, acted upon, the statistics of the last Abstract give gratifying evidence. In the school year, 1838—9, the expense of tuition in this class of schools amounted to 270,462 80 ; in the year 1839—40, it fell to 241,114 20. A falling off of \$30,000 in this item, in a single year, while the amount of appropriations by the towns was simultaneously increased, an equal sum, is a fact for which I can assign no cause but the prevalence of a sounder public opinion on the expediency of bringing all the children, for their own sakes, to the same starting-post, to commence together, the journey of life.

At the same time, not only the number of students as before stated, but the amount paid for tuition, in the incorporated academies, have substantially increased. No person, having any knowledge of the relation of cause and effect, as applicable to this subject, has ever doubted, that an improvement in the condition of the Common Schools, while it would concentrate the intelligence of the community upon them, and draw over, by the offer of higher compensation, the best professional, private teachers, to the public service, would also, as a natural consequence, promote the prosperity of those institutions, which really occupy the place, and give the instruction appropriate to academies, and are not mere district schools, under a corporate name, and governed by boards of trustees, instead of a prudential committee.

TEACHERS.

Nothing but an imperative sense of duty could induce me to approach this most difficult subject ; because, to speak of the necessity of higher qualifications, in any department of business, may always be construed into an intentional disparagement of those who administer it. This would often be unjust. It would be especially so, in regard to the subject of education. If the idea of the immense power of education over individual and social welfare, and of its absolute and unconditional necessity, under political institutions like ours ;—if this grand idea be not a new one, amongst us ; still, the extent to which it is now embraced, and the depth of conviction with which it is now held, are new. None can deny that these views are now seen with a clearness and prevail to an extent, never known before ; and with the prevalence of such views, it is natural and inevitable that a sudden rise

should take place in the acknowledged standard of fitness for agents, appointed to carry on the great work. But a preparation for the office of teacher requires both labor and time. Hence there must be an interval between a knowledge of the want which leads to the demand, and the preparation by which that demand is supplied. It is this very juncture, which we have now reached. To make known these new demands, and to point out the particulars in which the improvements are to consist, implies therefore, no special disparagement ; or, if it does, it disparages the intelligence of those who, heretofore, were ignorant of the want, as much as it does the qualifications of those, who satisfied that want. What was the object, which led the founders of that most useful association, the American Institute of Instruction, ten years ago, to combine their exertions, and annually, since, to expend money, time and talent ;—what has been the object of recent legislative action, not only in this State, but in more than half the free States in the Union, but an improvement in the system of education ?—and for this purpose, the qualifications of teachers hold a place, second in importance to none. It can, therefore, only be from the instigation of a perverse and sinister mind, that any one would even whisper into the ears of teachers, that the call now made for higher qualifications, however loud or often repeated it may be, is to be construed in derogation of their past character or usefulness.

I believe there is scarcely a single instance, in the reports, where the school committee speak with universal commendation of the success of the teachers, they have approved. The praise they bestow is qualified by exceptions. Some schools are said to have made great progress in a single branch, as in grammar or reading, but to be deficient in other branches ; in other schools, the older scholars have done well, while the younger have been stationary, or retrograde ;—and thus it is alleged that the teachers are deficient, either in regard to their literary qualifications, or in their power of inspiring scholars of all ages with the love of study. In other cases, it is lamented, that, notwithstanding all the labor and expense bestowed upon the school, the scholars should have been both intellectually and morally injured ; and it is, indeed, hard, that a community should be taxed to pay for having the minds of their children darkened or perverted.*

* Mention is often made of candidates being such “as will *just* answer the law,” “as will *just* pass ;” “as are qualified to instruct in a particular district,”

In some children there is, undoubtedly, a remediless incapacity, the removal of which by the teacher would imply, not the power to improve, but the power to create ; but this is never true of all the children in a district, and, therefore, where the whole school fails to advance, the teacher ought not to look abroad or out of himself, for the cause of so great a misfortune.

FEMALE TEACHERS. It is gratifying to observe that a change is rapidly taking place, both in public sentiment and action, in regard to the employment of female teachers. The number of male teachers, in all the summer and winter schools, for the last year, was thirty-three less than for the year preceding, while the number of females was one hundred and three more. That females are incomparably better teachers for young children than males, cannot admit of a doubt. Their manners are more mild and gentle, and hence more in consonance with the tenderness of childhood. They are endowed by nature with stronger parental impulses, and this makes the society of children delightful, and turns duty into pleasure. Their minds are less withdrawn from their employment, by the active scenes of life ; and they are less intent and scheming for future honors or emoluments. As a class, they never look forward, as young men almost invariably do, to a period of legal emancipation from parental control, when they are to break away from the domestic circle and go abroad into the world, to build up a fortune for themselves ; and hence, the sphere of hope and of effort is narrower, and the whole forces of the mind are more readily concentrated upon present duties. They are also of purer morals. In the most common and notorious vices of the age, profanity, intemperance, fraud, &c., there are twenty men to one woman ; and although as life advances, the comparison grows more and more unfavorable to the male sex, yet the beginnings of vice are early, even when their developments are late ;—on this ac-

&c., &c. Now, as such a vast latitude of construction may be given to the word "qualification,"—as the word may include so much, or so little, according to the expounder,—the danger is, that when the pressure is all in favor of approval, the errors will all fall on that side, that the candidate will be approved, and, as a consequence, the children will suffer. In one report the committee say, "we have had better luck with the female teachers than with the male," as though it were a matter left to "luck," what intellectual and moral guides, the rising generation should have.

count, therefore, females are infinitely more fit than males to be the guides and exemplars of young children.

Females are beginning to be employed, to a considerable extent, in the winter schools. This practice is highly commended, in some of the committees' reports ; it is strongly discountenanced in others. With deference to those who hold these opposite opinions, I take the liberty to suggest, that no uniform rule can be laid down on the subject. A sound discretion must be exercised, and each case decided upon its own merits. In very few instances, if in any, would it be prudent to employ a young female, for her first term, in a winter school. To meet the greater difficulties of such a school, there should be, at least, the preparation of experience. So, where the quiet and harmony of the school are endangered by large and turbulent boys, the power of a sterner voice, and of a firmer hand may be necessary to overawe an insurrectionary spirit. Yet even this class of cases is the subject of discrimination. Sometimes, from false notions of honor and pride, boys would be spurred on to disobedience and open rebellion against the authority of a master, while their generous sentiments would be touched with a feeling of chivalry towards a female ; they would therefore respect a request from a mistress, though they would spurn a command from a master. But, if a dissension pervades the district on any subject in the remotest degree connected with the school, it can hardly ever be safe to place a female between the contending parties. Her influence is of a moral character ; it flourishes amid peace and union,—consisting more in the persuasion that wins, than in the power which overrules. But when the teacher has experience, when the district is harmonious, and will frown into silence the slightest whisper of mutiny from the scholars, then a female will keep quite as good a school as a man, at two-thirds of the expense, and will transfuse into the minds of her pupils, purer elements, both of conduct and character, which will extend their refining and humanizing influences far outward into society, and far onward into futurity. Some of the finest schools in the State are the result of this happy combination of circumstances.

In regard to teachers, generally, the reports of the town committees abound with admonitions to the prudential committees, and with advice to the districts to employ none but those who are good.

Some districts are charged with delay in choosing the prudential committee ; and again and again, throughout the whole body of the reports, the prudential committee are exhorted to be on the alert in their inquiries, and to secure teachers in season ; because, as it is alleged, if the committees delay, the good teachers are all preëngaged, and the districts must pay the penalty of remissness, by accepting such as can be found, at a late hour, and in such haste, as precludes deliberation. This is a view, which very naturally presents itself to the committees of the several towns, each earnest to obtain the services of an able instructor for its own schools, and, so far, regardless of the incompetency which must fall to the lot of its neighbors, in consequence of its own success ; but the whole urgency of the call proceeds upon the supposition, that the number of good teachers to be found is far less than the whole number of teachers to be employed ; and, therefore, that those who come first to the winnowing, will obtain the wheat. But this eager competition of the towns presents itself in a very different aspect, to one who takes a comprehensive survey of the great interests of education throughout the State. Such a one has no predilection for particular towns ; but having the welfare of all parts of the Commonwealth equally at heart, it is not a subject of special rejoicing to him, that one district has a good teacher, when, as a necessary consequence, other districts must accept poor ones. That all the good ones should be engaged is what he desires,—but whether in one place, or in another, is, to him quite immaterial. That any one district should be subjected to the necessity of employing an incompetent teacher, is what he deplures ; and the question which forces itself with painful intensity, upon his mind, is, how can all the districts enjoy the blessing of good teachers ?

There is, however, one great advantage in engaging teachers early in the season ; it gives them an opportunity to review their studies, and to read on the general subject of education, as preparations for entering the school.

The whole number of teachers in the public schools, last year, including both summer and winter, and males and females, was six thousand three hundred and six. As a number of these, however, were employed in the same school, both summer and winter, and as some of them may have kept two summer or two winter schools, they are

reckoned twice in this computation. On the other hand, two persons were sometimes employed for different portions of the same school. The number of different individuals could not have fallen much below six thousand. A brief consideration of a few of the qualifications essential to those who undertake the momentous task of training the children of the State, will help us to decide the question, whether the complaints of the committees, in regard to the incompetency of teachers, are captious and unfounded ; or whether they proceed from enlightened conceptions of the nature of their duties and office, and therefore require measures to supply the deficiency.

1st. A KNOWLEDGE OF COMMON-SCHOOL STUDIES.—Teachers should have a perfect knowledge of the rudimental branches which are required by law to be taught in our schools. They should understand, not only the rules, which have been prepared as guides for the unlearned, but also the principles on which the rules are founded,—those principles which lie beneath the rules, and supersede them in practice ; and from which, should the rules be lost, they could be framed anew. Teachers should be able to teach *subjects*, not manuals merely.

This knowledge should not only be thorough and critical, but it should be always ready, at command, for every exigency,—familiar like the alphabet, so that, as occasion requires, it will rise up in the mind instantaneously, and not need to be studied out, with labor and delay. For instance, it is not enough that the teacher be able to solve and elucidate an arithmetical question, by expending half an hour of school time in trying various ways to bring out the answer ; for that half hour is an important part of the school session, and the regular exercises of the school must be shortened or slurred over to repair the loss. Again, in no school can a teacher devote his whole and undivided attention to the exercises, as they successively recur. Numerous things will demand simultaneous attention. While a class is spelling or reading, he may have occasion to recall the roving attention of one scholar ; to admonish another by word or look ; to answer some question put by a third ; or to require a fourth to execute some needed service. Now, if he is not so familiar with

the true orthography of every word, that his ear will instantaneously detect an error in the spelling, he will, on all such occasions, pass by mistakes without notice, and therefore without correction, and thus interweave wrong instruction with right, through all the lessons of the school. If he is not so familiar, too, both with the rules of reading, and with the standard of pronunciation for each word, that a wrong emphasis or cadence, or a mispronounced word will jar his nerves, and recall even a wandering attention, then innumerable errors will glide by his own ear unnoticed, while they are stamped upon the minds of his pupils. These remarks apply with equal force to recitations in grammar and geography. A critical knowledge, respecting all these subjects, should be so consciously present with him, that his mind will gratefully respond to every right answer or sign, made by the scholar, and shrink from every wrong one, with the quickness and certainty of electrical attraction and repulsion. In regard to the last-named branch, geography,—a study which, in its civil or political department, is constantly mutable and progressive, the teacher should understand, and be able to explain, any material changes, which may have occurred since the last edition of his text-book ; as, for instance, the erection of Iowa into a territorial government by the last Congress ; or, during the last year, the restitution of Syria to the Turkish government through the intervention of the Four European Powers. This establishment of a link between past events and present times, this realization of things as lately done, or now doing, sheds such a strong light upon a distant scene, as makes it appear to be near us ; and thus gives to all the scholars, a new and inexpressible interest in their lessons.

However much other knowledge a teacher may possess, it is no equivalent for a mastership in the rudiments. It is not more true in architecture, than in education, that the value of the work, in every upper layer, depends upon the solidity of all beneath it. The leading, prevailing defect in the intellectual department of our schools, is a want of thoroughness,—a proneness to be satisfied with a verbal memory of rules, instead of a comprehension of principles,—with a knowledge of the names of things, instead of a knowledge of the things themselves ;—or, if some knowledge of the things is gained, it is too apt to be a knowledge of them as isolated facts, and unaccompanied by a knowledge of the relations, which subsist between

them, and bind them into a scientific whole. That knowledge is hardly worthy of the name, which stops with things, as individuals, without understanding the relations, existing between them. The latter constitutes indefinitely the greater part of all human knowledge. For instance, all the problems of plane geometry, by which heights and distances are measured, and the contents of areas and cubes ascertained, are based upon a few simple definitions, which can be committed to memory by any child in half a day. With the exception of the comets, whose number is not known, there are but thirty bodies in the whole solar system. Yet, on the relations which subsist between these thirty individual bodies, is built the stupendous science of astronomy. How worthless is the astronomical knowledge which stops with committing to memory thirty names !

At the Normal School at Barre, during the last term, the number of pupils was about fifty. This number might have been doubled, if the visitors would have consented to carry the applicants forward at once, into algebra and chemistry, and geometry and astronomy, instead of subjecting them to a thorough review of Common-School studies. One of the most cheering auguries, in regard to our schools, is the unanimity with which the committees have awarded sentence of condemnation against the practice of introducing into them the studies of the university, to the exclusion or neglect of the rudimental branches. By such a practice, a pupil foregoes all the stock of real knowledge he might otherwise acquire ; and he receives, in its stead, only a show or counterfeit of knowledge, which, with all intelligent persons, only renders his ignorance more conspicuous. A child's limbs are as well fitted, in point of strength, to play with the planets, before he can toss a ball, as his mind is to get any conception of the laws which govern their stupendous motions, before he is master of common arithmetic. For these, and similar considerations, it seems that the first intellectual qualification of a teacher is a critical thoroughness, both in rules and principles, in regard to all the branches required by law to be taught in the Common Schools ; and a power of recalling them, in any of their parts, with a promptitude and certainty, hardly inferior to that with which he could tell his own name.

2nd. **APTNESS TO TEACH.** The next principal qualification in a teacher is the *art of teaching*. This is happily expressed in the com-

mon phrase, *aptness to teach*, which in a few words, comprehends many particulars. The ability to acquire, and the ability to impart, are wholly different talents. The former may exist in the most liberal measure, without the latter. It was a remark of Lord Bacon, that "the art of well-delivering the knowledge we possess is among the secrets, left to be discovered by future generations." Dr. Watts says, "there are some very learned men, who know much themselves, but who have not the talent of communicating their knowledge."* Indeed, this fact is not now questioned by any intelligent educationist. Hence we account for the frequent complaints of the committees, that those teachers who had sustained an examination, in an acceptable manner, failed in the school room, through a want of facility in communicating what they knew. The ability to acquire is the power of understanding the subject-matter of investigation. Aptness to teach involves the power of perceiving how far a scholar understands the subject-matter to be learned, and what, in the natural order, is the next step he is to take. It involves the power of discovering and of solving at the time, the exact difficulty, by which the learner is embarrassed. The removal of a slight impediment, the drawing aside of the thinnest veil, which happens to divert his steps, or obscure his vision, is worth more to him, than volumes of lore on collateral subjects. How much does the pupil comprehend of the subject? What should his next step be? Is his mind looking towards a truth or an error? The answer to these questions must be intuitive, in the person who is apt to teach. As a dramatic writer throws himself, successively, into the characters of the drama he is composing, that he may express the ideas and emotions, peculiar to each; so the mind of a teacher should migrate, as it were, into those of his pupils, to discover what they know and feel and need; and then, supplying from his own stock, what they require, he should reduce it to such a form, and bring it within such a distance, that they

* While writing this paragraph, I received the fifth report of the Glasgow Educational Society's Normal Seminary, for 1839. It contains the following:—"There is perhaps no mistake so fatal to the proper education and training of youth, as the practical error of imagining, that because a man possesses knowledge, therefore he will be able to communicate it. The knowledge of a Newton or a Bacon would avail little, without a proper mode of communication."

can reach out and seize and appropriate it. He should never forget that intellectual truths are naturally adapted to give intellectual pleasure ; and that, by leading the minds of his pupils onward to such a position in relation to these truths, that they themselves can discover them, he secures to them the natural reward of a new pleasure with every new discovery, which is one of the strongest, as well as most appropriate incitements to future exertion.

Aptness to teach includes the presentation of the different parts of a subject, in a natural order. If a child is told that the globe is about twenty-five thousand miles in circumference, before he has any conception of the length of a mile, or of the number of units in a thousand, the statement is not only utterly useless as an act of instruction, but it will probably prevent him, ever afterwards, from gaining an adequate idea of the subject. The novelty will be gone, and yet the fact unknown. Besides, a systematic acquisition of a subject knits all parts of it together, so that they will be longer retained and more easily recalled. To acquire a few of the facts, gives us fragments only ;—and even to master all the facts, but to obtain them promiscuously, leaves what is acquired so unconnected and loose, that any part of it may be jostled out of its place and lost, or remain only to mislead.

Aptness to teach, in fine, embraces a knowledge of methods and processes. These are indefinitely various. Some are adapted to accomplish their object in an easy and natural manner ; others in a toilsome and circuitous one ;—others, again, may accomplish the object at which they aim, with certainty and despatch, but secure it by inflicting deep and lasting injuries upon the social and moral sentiments. We are struck with surprise, on learning, that, but a few centuries since, the feudal barons of Scotland, in running out the lines around their extensive domains, used to take a party of boys, and whip them, at the different posts and land-marks, in order to give them a retentive memory, as witnesses, in case of future litigation or dispute. Though this might give them a vivid recollection of localities, yet it would hardly improve their ideas of justice, or propitiate them to bear true testimony in favor of the chastiser. But do not those, who have no aptness to teach, sometimes accomplish their objects by a kindred method ?

He who is apt to teach is acquainted, not only with common meth-

ods for common minds, but with peculiar methods for pupils of peculiar dispositions and temperaments ; and he is acquainted with the principles of all methods, whereby he can vary his plan, according to any difference of circumstances. The statement has been sometimes made, that it is the object of Normal Schools to subject all teachers to one, inflexible, immutable course of instruction. Nothing could be more erroneous, for one of the great objects is, to give them a knowledge of modes, as various as the diversity of cases that may arise,—that like a skilful pilot, they may not only see the haven for which they are to steer, but know every bend in the channel that leads to it. No one is so poor in resources for difficult emergencies as they may arise, as he whose knowledge of methods is limited to the one in which he happened to be instructed. It is in this way that rude nations go on for indefinite periods, imitating what they have seen, and teaching only as they were taught.

3d. **MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT, AND DISCIPLINE OF A SCHOOL.**—Experience has also proved, that there is no necessary connection between literary competency, aptness to teach, and the power to manage and govern a school successfully. They are independent qualifications ; yet a marked deficiency in any one of the three, renders the others nearly valueless. In regard to the ordinary management or administration of a school, how much judgment is demanded in the organization of classes, so that no scholar shall either be clogged and retarded, or hurried forward with injudicious speed, by being matched with an unequal yoke-fellow. Great discretion is necessary in the assignment of lessons, in order to avoid, on the one hand, such shortness in the tasks, as allows time to be idle ; and, on the other, such over-assignments, as render thoroughness and accuracy impracticable, and thereby so habituate the pupil to mistakes and imperfections, that he cares little or nothing about committing them. Lessons, as far as it is possible, should be so adjusted to the capacity of the scholar, that there should be no failure in a recitation, not occasioned by culpable neglect. The sense of shame, or of regret for ignorance, can never be made exquisitely keen, if the lessons given are so long, or so difficult, as to make failures frequent. When “bad marks,” as they are called, against a scholar, become common, they not only lose their salutary force, but every addition to them debases his character, and

carries him through a regular course of training, which prepares him to follow in the footsteps of those convicts, who are so often condemned, that at length they care nothing for the ignominy of the sentence. Yet all this may be the legitimate consequence of being unequally mated, or injudiciously tasked. It is a sad sight in any school, to see a pupil marked for a deficiency, without any blush of shame, or sign of guilt ; and it is never done with impunity to his moral character.

The preservation of order, together with the proper despatch of business, requires a mean, between the too much and the too little, in all the evolutions of the school, which it is difficult to hit. When classes leave their seats for the recitation-stand, and return to them again, or when the different sexes have a recess; or the hour of intermission arrives ;—if there be not some order and succession of movement, the school will be temporarily converted into a promiscuous rabble, giving both the temptation and the opportunity for committing every species of indecorum and aggression. In order to prevent confusion, on the other hand, the operations of the school may be conducted with such military formality and procrastination ;—the second scholar not being allowed to leave his seat, until the first has reached the door, or the place of recitation, and each being made to walk on tiptoe to secure silence,—that a substantial part of every school session will be wasted, in the wearisome pursuit of an object worth nothing when obtained.

When we reflect, how many things are to be done each half day, and how short a time is allotted for their performance, the necessity of system in regard to all the operations of the school, will be apparent. System compacts labor ; and when the hand is to be turned to an almost endless variety of particulars, if system does not preside over the whole series of movements, the time allotted to each will be spent in getting ready to perform it. With lessons to set ; with so many classes to hear ; with difficulties to explain ; with the studious to be assisted ; the idle to be spurred ; the transgressors to be admonished or corrected ; with the goers and comers to observe ;—with all these things to be done, no considerable progress can be made, if one part of the wheel is not coming up to the work, while another is going down. And if order do not pervade the school, as

a whole, and in all its parts, all is lost ; and this is a very difficult thing ;—for it seems as though the school were only a point, rescued out of a chaos that still encompasses it, and is ready, on the first opportunity, to break in and reoccupy its ancient possession. As it is utterly impracticable for any committee to prepare a code of regulations coextensive with all the details, which belong to the management of a school, it must be left with the teacher ; and hence the necessity of skill in this item of the long list of his qualifications.

The government and discipline of a school demands qualities still more rare, because the consequences of error, in these, are still more disastrous. What caution, wisdom, uprightness, and sometimes, even intrepidity, are necessary in the administration of punishment. After all other means have been tried, and tried in vain, the chastisement of pupils found to be otherwise incorrigible, is still upheld by law, and sanctioned by public opinion. But it is the last resort, the ultimate resource, acknowledged, on all hands, to be a relic of barbarism, and yet authorized, because the community, although they feel it to be a great evil, have not yet devised and applied an antidote. Through an ignorance of the laws of health, a parent may so corrupt the constitution of his child, as to render poison a necessary medicine ; and through an ignorance of the laws of mind, he may do the same thing in regard to punishment. When the arts of health and of education are understood, neither poison nor punishment will need to be used, unless in most extraordinary cases. The discipline of former times was inexorably stern and severe, and even if it were wished, it is impossible now to return to it. The question is, what can be substituted, which, without its severity, shall have its efficiency.

But how important is the relation, in which a teacher stands towards a supposed offender. If the grounds of suspicion are presumptive only, how nice the balance of judgment in which they should be weighed, lest, on the one hand, injustice be done by bringing a false accusation against the innocent ; or lest, on the other, a real offender should escape, through mistaken confidence and charity. If there be sufficient ground to put a pupil upon trial, the teacher, in his own person, combines the characters of the law-maker, by whom the rule, supposed to be transgressed, was enacted ; of the counsel

who examines the witnesses ; of the jury, who decide upon the facts ; and of the judge, interpreting his own law, and awarding sentence according to his own discretion. And after all this, he is the executive officer, inflicting the penalty himself has awarded, unless that penalty is remitted by the pardoning power, which also resides in him. Often, too, this representative or depository of so many functions, is himself the person supposed to be offended ; and thus he presents the spectacle of a party in interest, trying his own cause, and avenging alleged insults against his own dignity. If he suffers the out-door consequences of inflicting punishment to enter his mind, his fears will become his counsellors, and they will be as false as his pride. This specification is not given for the purpose of excepting to that usage, which makes the teacher the sovereign of the school room, but only to show what danger of error there must be, when teachers are employed, who have had neither experience nor instruction, and whose judgment, years have not yet begun to ripen. Are there not teachers, to whom all the children in the district are entrusted, for their education, and for all the momentous and enduring interests connected with that word, to whom scarcely a parent in the district would surrender the care and management of his own children, for the same length of time ? Yet how much less incapable would the teacher be of governing and controlling a family of five or six children, than a school of fifty or sixty ? Every child ought to find, at school, the affection and the wisdom, which he has left at home ; or, if he has left neither wisdom nor affection at home, there is so much more need, that he should find them at school.

A school should be governed with a steady hand, not only during the same season, but from year to year ;—substantially the same extent of indulgence being allowed, and the same restrictions imposed. It is injurious to the children, to alternate between the extremes of an easy and a sharp discipline. It is unjust, also, for one teacher to profit by letting down the discipline of a school, and thus throw upon his successor, the labor of raising it up to its former level.

4th. GOOD BEHAVIOR.—In two words, the statute opens, to all teachers, an extensive field of duty, by ordaining that all the youth in the schools shall be taught “*good behavior.*” The framers of

the law were aware, how rapidly good or bad manners mature into good or bad morals ; they saw that good manners have not only the negative virtue of restraining from vice, but the positive one of leading, by imperceptible gradations, towards the practice of almost all the social virtues. The effects of civility or discourtesy, of gentlemanly or ungentlemanly deportment, are not periodical or occasional, merely, but of constant recurrence ; and all the members of society have a direct interest in the manners of each of its individuals ; because each one is a radiating point,—the centre of a circle, which he fills with pleasure or annoyance, not only for those who voluntarily enter it, but for those also, who, in the promiscuous movements of society, are caught within its circumference. Good behavior includes the elements of that equity, benevolence, conscience, which, in their great combinations, the moralist treats of in his books of ethics, and the legislator enjoins in his codes of law. The school room and its play-ground, next to the family table, are the places, where the selfish propensities come into most direct collision with social duties. Here, then, a right direction should be given to the growing mind. The surrounding influences, which are incorporated into its new thoughts and feelings, and make part of their substance, are too minute and subtle to be received in masses, like nourishment ;—they are rather imbibed into the system, unconsciously, by every act of respiration, and are constantly insinuating themselves into it, through all the avenues of the senses. If, then, the manners of the teacher are to be imitated by his pupils,—if he is the glass, at which they “do dress themselves,” how strong is the necessity, that he should understand those nameless and innumerable practices, in regard to deportment, dress, conversation, and all personal habits, that constitute the difference between a gentleman and a clown. We can bear some oddity, or eccentricity in a friend whom we admire for his talents, or revere for his virtues ; but it becomes quite a different thing, when the oddity, or the eccentricity, is to be a pattern or model, from which fifty or a hundred children are to form their manners. It was well remarked, by the ablest British traveller who has ever visited this country, that amongst us, “every male above twenty-one years of age, claims to be a sovereign. He is, therefore, bound to be a gentleman.”

5th. MORALS. On the indispensable, all-controlling requisite of

moral character, I have but a single suggestion to make, in addition to those admirable views on this subject, which are scattered up and down through the committees' reports. This suggestion relates to the responsibility resting on those individuals, who give letters of recommendation, or certificates of character, to candidates for schools. Probably, one half,—perhaps more,—of all the teachers in the State are comparatively strangers, in the respective places where they are employed. Hence the examining committees, in the absence of personal knowledge, must rely upon testimonials exhibited before them. These consist of credentials, brought from abroad, which are sometimes obtained through the partialities of relationship, interest, or sect ; or even given, lest a refusal should be deemed an unneighborly act, and the applicant should be offended or alienated by a repulse. But are interests of such vast moment as the moral influence of teachers upon the rising generation, to be sacrificed to private considerations of relationship, or predilection, or any selfish or personal motive whatever ? It may be very agreeable to a person to receive the salary of a teacher, but this fact has no tendency to prove his fitness for the station ;—if so, the poor-house would be the place to inquire for teachers ;—and what claim to conscience, or benevolence can that man have, who jeopardds the permanent welfare of fifty or a hundred children, for the private accommodation of a friend ? In regard to pecuniary transactions, it is provided by the laws of the land, that whoever recommends another as responsible and solvent, becomes himself liable for the debts which may be contracted, under a faith in the recommendation, should it prove to have been falsely given. The recommendation is held to be a warranty, and it charges its author with all the losses incurred, within the scope of a fair construction. It is supposed, that, without this responsibility, the expanded business of trade and commerce would be restricted to persons, possessing a mutual knowledge of each others' trustworthiness or solvency. But why should the precious and enduring interests of morality be accounted of minor importance, and protected by feebler securities, than common traffic ? Why should the man who has been defrauded by an accredited pedler, have his remedy against the guarantor, while he, who is instrumental in inflicting upon a district, and upon all the children in a district, the curse of a dissolute,

vicious teacher, escapes the condign punishment of general execration? In the contemplation of the law, the school committee are sentinels stationed at the door of every schoolhouse in the State, to see that no teacher ever crosses its threshold, who is not clothed, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, in garments of virtue; and they are the enemies of the human race,—not of contemporaries only, but of posterity,—who, from any private or sinister motive, strive to put these sentinels to sleep, in order that one, who is profane, or intemperate, or addicted to low associations, or branded with the stigma of any vice, may elude the vigilance of the watchmen, and be installed over the pure minds of the young, as their guide and exemplar. If none but teachers of pure tastes, of good manners, of exemplary morals, had ever gained admission into our schools, neither the school rooms, nor their appurtenances would have been polluted, as some of them now are, with such ribald inscriptions, and with the carvings of such obscene emblems, as would make a heathen blush. Every person, therefore, who endorses another's character, as one befitting a school teacher, stands before the public as his moral bondsman and sponsor, and should be held to a rigid accountability.

It will ever remain an honor to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that, among all the reports of its school committees, for the last year, so many of which were voluminous and detailed, and, a majority of which, probably, were prepared by clergymen, belonging to all the various denominations in the State, there was not one, which advocated the introduction of sectarian instruction or sectarian books into our public schools; while, with accordant views,—as a single voice coming from a single heart,—they urge, they insist, they demand, that the great axioms of a Christian morality shall be sedulously taught, and that the teachers shall themselves, be patterns of the virtues, they are required to inculcate.

The limits proper for a report debar me from pursuing the topics under this head, into further detail. It may, however, be briefly observed, on the one hand, that there are some delinquencies on the part of a teacher, such as the commencement of a school without having submitted to an examination by the committee, as required by law; the unauthorized introduction of books into the school, which are not contained in the list, furnished by the committee; and the open dis-

regard of directions given by the committee, in respect to the classification or management of the school,—all, or either of which prove that the teacher is destitute of good principles, that he is capable of a wilful violation or evasion of the laws of the State, and which, therefore, demonstrate his unfitness to fill a place, where a spirit of subordination, and of obedience to legitimate authority, is among the lessons to be taught by practice as well as by precept. On the other hand, I can only refer to those eminent advantages which would accrue, from employing a teacher, who in addition to the qualifications enumerated in the statute book should possess a mind filled with stores of knowledge, collateral to the branches pursued in the school ; so that the pupils, from day to day, might not only be enlivened and instructed by apposite anecdote and impressive illustration, but be led to emulate the attainments, which it is their delight to witness in him. So too, if, from the extent of the teacher's acquirements, and the worth and dignity of his character, his society should be sought by all the families in the neighborhood, and, as he visited from house to house, he should exhibit a living example of those powers of instructing and of pleasing, which are derived from intellectual resources and benevolence of disposition, he would imbue the youth of the district with the love of knowledge and the desire of excellence, and thus lay the foundation of tastes, habits and institutions, which would shed their pure and ennobling influences over a long tract of future time. It is an authentic anecdote of the late Dr. Nathaniel Bowditch, that when, at the age of twenty-one years, he sailed on an East Indian voyage, he took pains to instruct the crew of the ship, in the art of navigation. Every sailor on board, during that voyage, became afterwards a captain of a ship. Such are the natural consequences of associating with a man, whose mind is intent upon useful knowledge and whose actions are born of benevolence.

BOOKS.

When the scholars meet the teacher appointed for the school, they must be provided with books. It is, of course, presumed, that the school committee have seasonably complied with the law in prescribing a list of books, so that it will be universally known what books are required. As our schools are at present conducted, books are the store-houses or reservoirs, whence the scholars draw their daily

supplies of knowledge. Excepting the oral instruction, given by the teacher, the pupils must derive knowledge directly from books, or originate it themselves, or leave the school without it. The teacher cannot give much oral instruction to those who do not coöperate with him by studying text books ; the amount of useful knowledge, which the pupils can themselves originate, is indefinitely small ; and therefore, the parents, who send their children to school without books, ought not to complain if they leave it without knowledge. To borrow a book of a neighbor's child, and thereby deprive him of the use of it, is not merely like borrowing one of his utensils or implements,—it is like borrowing his well-stored granary or barn. That deficiency of books which leads to borrowing, is, in this State, left without excuse, because it is here provided by law, that when any parent is pecuniarily unable to furnish the requisite books for his children, they shall be supplied at the expense of the town ;—the Legislature wisely judging that the present cost of suitable books and instruction for such children, is not to be compared with the prospective expense of poor-houses and prisons. This law is evidently much better observed now than it was three years ago, when the attention of the public was first called to it, though there are still cases of non-compliance.

A uniformity of school books for scholars of similar ages and attainments, is so important, that, although it was dwelt upon, at considerable length, in my First Annual Report, I wish, for a moment, to recur to it again. Uniformity in books belongs to classification of scholars ; without uniformity, indeed, classification is impossible, and without classification, a school loses its collective character, and becomes a promiscuous company of individuals. Should a teacher hear his scholars recite, individually,—the first in geography, the second in grammar, the third in arithmetic, and so on, all must see the inevitable waste of time, and the spiritless routine of the exercises. But one scholar may recite in geography, the next in grammar, and the third in arithmetic, and so forth, just as well as two can recite together from two books of geography, one of which treats, first, of mathematical or astronomical geography, then of civil or political, and then of physical ; while the other takes up the political divisions of the earth, one by one, but embraces all the civil, physical, and mathematical descriptions under the successive political heads.

It seems not to be considered, that, though all the books may be labelled 'geography,' yet that a different arrangement of their contents makes them different books, and renders simultaneous teaching from them impossible.

Whatever defeats classification destroys the power of the teacher ; and the loss of power increases in far more than a direct ratio ;—the progression being rather geometrical than arithmetical. If the teacher is compelled to divide the time, which he should devote to one class, into two or three parts, in order to hear two or three classes, in the same study, but with different books, all his opportunity for illustration and for oral instruction is taken away, because his whole time is occupied in hastening through the lesson. But if, as has sometimes been the case, the teacher is compelled to divide the time for a recitation in one branch, into six or eight parts, because there are six or eight different kinds of books, there will be hardly power enough left to be the subject of computation. The energies of the most efficient teacher will be broken down under such a system, or rather such want of system. For many other evils, an ingenious teacher may devise some palliation, some mitigating alternative ; but for this, there is but one remedy, viz : a conformity with the law, by the school committee, and a conformity with the committee's directions, by the parents and guardians.

A very simple expedient, adopted in many towns, has resulted in the desired reform ; and by means of it, the end is attained, without exciting the opposition of parents. Let a list of the books prescribed by the committee, be entered on the Register which is to be given to each teacher, at the opening of the school ; or let a list be given to the teacher, at the time of his examination, which it will then be his duty to enter upon the Register ; or, as some committees do, let a copy of this list be hung up in the school room, as a general advertisement to the district. Let all the booksellers in the town, or in the neighboring towns, if any, where the parents go to purchase school books, be furnished with copies of the same list. These booksellers, being made acquainted with the kinds of books prescribed for the schools, will readily conclude that they can sell more of the approved than of the unapproved kinds ; they will be disposed, therefore, from motives of interest, to procure the former ; and the

right kinds of books, being more accessible than the wrong, will naturally tend towards the school room by a sort of outward pressure as well as by a gravitation within, and will soon become its sole occupants. When a uniformity is thus established throughout the town, not only will all the mischiefs above described, be avoided, but a poor family, to whom the expense of school books is sometimes a serious burden, can remove from one district to another in the same town, without either buying a new set of books, or aggravating the evil of diversity which may already exist in the school, by carrying in its old ones.

By the 19th section of the 23d chapter of the Revised Statutes, school committees are authorized to purchase class books, at the expense of the town; and to establish depositories for them, where they shall be sold at such prices as just to reimburse the expense. The adoption of this plan, also, would soon result in a uniformity of books in the schools:

SCHOOL APPARATUS AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The utility of apparatus and libraries, as instruments of instruction, and as means of general improvement, having been spoken of, heretofore, at great length, I will only add, that observation and the testimony of all intelligent teachers and educationists, conspire to prove, that the children who are destitute of these aids, do not make half the progress they otherwise would; and thus are passing away the years, which are never to return, without those means of knowledge and of usefulness, which a slight encouragement, on the part of the State, such as was recommended by the Board, in their report of last year, would place within the reach of the entire rising generation.

In the year 1838, under the recommendation of Governor Marcy, the Legislature of New York appropriated, from the school fund, \$55,000 annually, for three years, to the purchase of District-School Libraries, on condition that the towns would raise an equal amount for the same purpose. In 1839, under the administration of Governor Seward, the appropriation was extended on the same conditions, for a further term of years; and, in the late message of the last-named

governor, it is said, that almost every district in the State, is now in possession of a library ;—the number of volumes already amounting, in the whole, to about one million. By an inquiry, made last year, in regard to the schools in Massachusetts, it was found that there were but about ten thousand volumes, in all the District-School Libraries in the State.

“ Within the five years limited by the law,” says Governor Seward, “ there will have been expended, in the purchase of books, more than half of a million of dollars. Although an injudicious choice of books is sometimes made, these libraries generally include history and biography, voyages and travels, works on natural history and the physical sciences, treatises upon agriculture, commerce, manufactures and the arts, and judicious selections from modern literature. Henceforth, no citizen who shall have improved the advantages offered by our Common Schools, and the District Libraries, will be without some scientific knowledge of the earth, its physical condition and phenomena, the animals that inhabit it, the vegetables that clothe it with verdure, and the minerals under its surface, the physiology, and the intellectual powers of man, the laws of mechanics, and their practical uses, those of chemistry and their application to the arts, the principles of moral and political economy, the history of nations, and especially that of our own country, the progress and triumph of the democratic principle in the governments on this continent, and the prospects of its ascendancy throughout the world, the trials and faith, valor and constancy of our ancestors, with the inspiring examples of benevolence, virtue and patriotism exhibited in the lives of the benefactors of mankind. The fruits of this enlightened and beneficent enterprise are chiefly to be gathered by our successors. But the present generation will not be altogether unrewarded. Although many of our citizens may pass the District Library, heedless of the treasure it contains, the unpretending volumes will find their way to their fire-side, diffusing knowledge, increasing domestic happiness, and promoting public virtue.”

It surely is a subject for rejoicing, that the youth of any portion of our common country should enjoy the aids to learning, the incitements to virtue, and the restraints from temptation, furnished by a library of good books ; for it is as though the distinguished authors of those books, together with the wise and good men whose lives and deeds they record, should re-appear upon the earth, and again come and take up their residence among men, and should proffer their counsel and guidance, to enlighten, to instruct, to please, to persuade all, or any of those who would seek society and communion with them. But is it

not matter of regret, if not of humiliation, that while the children of a sister and a border State, are enjoying these inestimable privileges, the children of Massachusetts,—a State, which has taken the lead in so many noble enterprises of benevolence and patriotism,—that these children, to whom we are bound by all the ties of consanguinity and duty, should be destitute of equal means of material, and of mental improvement?

CONSTANCY AND PUNCTUALITY OF ATTENDANCE.

After the territory of the State has been judiciously districted; good schoolhouses prepared; the scholars all provided, both with the requisite number and proper kinds of books, and the town has made appropriations, sufficiently liberal to command the services of well-qualified teachers;—after all these preliminaries have been attended to, *the power of money ceases*. Up to this point, the possession of property and a spirit of liberality in bestowing it, are indispensable, but here their agency terminates. The schools here pass, as it were, under a new jurisdiction,—from material to moral influences; and if not cherished by the latter, they might as well have never been founded. So far, it is external organization, the preparation of an outward form, merely; but it is yet a cold, inert, dead mass,—a body of clay. A vitality, a genial warmth, a living principle of energy, are now to be infused, and spread through every fibre of this organized frame, or all the skill and cost, which have been expended in its formation, will be lost; or, what is far worse, and perhaps far more probable, that body will corrupt, and in its corruption, engender a thousand pernicious forms of life. Moral power is now to be added to pecuniary, or the pecuniary had better never been exerted.

Under this head, the first thing in the order of time, if not the first in point of importance, is the constant and punctual attendance of the scholars. Without authentic information on the subject of irregularity in attendance, the extent to which it has prevailed would have been wholly incredible. According to the school census of last year, the whole number of children in the State, between the ages of four and sixteen, was one hundred-and seventy-nine thousand two hundred and sixty-eight, 179,268
The average attendance during the summer of the same
year, (1839-40,) was 92,698

Do. during the winter,	111,844
Of the number attending, who were under four years of age, there were	7,844
Do. over sixteen years of age,	11,834

19,678

If the children under four years of age, who attended school, are deducted from the aggregate of attendance in summer, and those over sixteen years, from the aggregate of attendance in winter, the average attendance of those between four and sixteen, will stand thus ;

For summer,	84,854
For winter,	100,010

And allowing twelve thousand, as the number of the children who derive their whole education from academies and private schools, and therefore, are not dependent upon the Common Schools, at all ; and deducting this number from the number of children in the State, who are between the ages of four and sixteen years, (thus $179,268 - 12,000 = 167,268$,) and the proportion of those who attend the Common Schools, in summer, compared with the whole number, dependent upon those schools, is as 84,854 to 167,268, or a very small fraction more than one half ;—and the proportion of those who attend the same schools, in winter, compared with the whole number dependent upon them, is as 100,010 to 167,268, or about ten-seventeenths only.

One striking aspect of this lamentable fact, is, the waste of money which it proves. The amount raised by taxes, last year, for teachers' wages and board, and fuel for the schools, was \$477,221 24. Of the portion of this sum which was expended for the summer schools, about one half was lost ; and of the portion expended for the winter schools, about seven-seventeenths, through irregularity in the attendance of the scholars ;—that is, of the \$477,221 24, raised for the support of our public schools, more than two hundred thousand dollars was directly thrown away, by this voluntary abandonment of privileges. Nor, in this computation, is any thing included for interest on the cost of schoolhouses ; for the loss of an equal proportion of the amount contributed for public schools, (\$37,269 74) ; for an

equal proportion, also, of the income, (about \$20,000,) of the State school fund ; of the income also, (15,270 89,) of local funds for public schools ; and of such portions of the income of the surplus revenue as individual towns have appropriated for the support of the schools. Vast, enormous, as the main item of the pecuniary loss, is, a proportional loss from these sources, (which, in the whole amount to more than \$75,000,) would materially enlarge it. If made out with the exactness of a business account, it would startle every business man in the community. Is it a subject for less surprise and regret, because it is an education account ? What manufacturing, or other business establishment could prosper, if its laborers should absent themselves for a corresponding proportion of the time ? What a direful calamity it would be justly deemed, if some wide-spreading epidemic should visit the State, from year to year, and deprive its children of an equal amount of their school privileges ? It is well remarked in one of the reports, that the promulgation of a law, which should deprive the children of so noble a boon, would produce a stamp-act ferment.

Who, beforehand, could have deemed it possible, that a people, so renowned for the virtues of frugality and economy ;—for their skill in turning limited means to a great account, would have tolerated this extent of wastefulness ? The fact can be explained only on the ground, that we were unaware of its existence. A parent who surmounts no obstacles to get his children daily to school, or who keeps them at home to subserve the pettiest convenience, has no conception, how rapidly the column of absences lengthens, nor of the amount of its footing at the end of the term. He does not see that for every day's absence of his child, so much mental nourishment is withheld, his growth so much retarded, and that he is preparing to send out that child into the world, an intellectual dwarf.

But with the industrious habits of our community, this amount of money can be re-earned ; indeed, it bears no proportion to the annual products of our labor and skill. But an item of loss is involved, which neither labor nor skill can ever repair. The *time* is irrevocable. The spring-season of human life, once past, cannot be restored. The seed-time lost, the harvest also is lost. This forfeiture is without redemption.

The period, during which, as a general rule, our children attend

school, viz : between the ages of four and sixteen years, is twelve years. The proportion of twelve years corresponding with this amount of absences, is more than five years ; and, therefore, the children, on an average, for so much of the period of life that should be sacredly devoted to education, are deprived of its benefits. It must also, be remembered that this deduction is not made from an entire year, but from the period of seven months and ten days, which was, last year, the average length of the schools ; so that schools, originally far too short, are cut down to a little more than half their apparent length, and so much, even of a scanty mental subsistence is taken away. When Dr. Franklin said, " Time is money," he referred to adults ; with children, time is more valuable than money, it is education.

Our law, in establishing the legal age of majority, or period of emancipation from parental control, at twenty-one years, has followed the clear indications of nature. The period of minority and tutelage which precedes this age, is necessary for the growth and preparation, required for the labors and duties of manhood. And the indications of nature are equally clear in regard to the mind. The young mind needs the instruction and guidance of more mature minds ;—it needs instruments and aids, which it is incapable of preparing for itself, nay, of the very existence of which it is itself ignorant, until the full period, or nearly the full period, of legal minority has passed. Were it not so, the young of the human race would have come to their bodily and mental maturity, like the young of the inferior animals, at an earlier period,—at the end of a month, or a year, or, at furthest, at the end of a few years. It is this extensive and irrevocable portion of early life, proved by all observation and analogy to be so essential to a preparation for the duties of manhood, that is withdrawn ; and yet, when these neglected children shall arrive at the state of manhood, the duties belonging to that state will be required of them, or society, in some, or in all of its relations, must suffer the penalty.

The main trunk of this evil of non-attendance sends off numerous branches, each of which is laden with its own peculiar kind of bitter fruit. One effect is, the injustice done to the teacher. If the Register of the school bears the names of seventy different scholars, while the school is reduced by absences to an average of fifty, the common inference is, that, although seventy is a greater number than

one teacher can properly instruct, yet that he must be in fault, if he does not teach the fifty in a competent manner, and advance them at a rapid rate. And yet a school averaging fifty scholars, reduced to that number from seventy, by absences, is far more difficult, both to instruct and to govern, than a school of a hundred, all of whom attend regularly. A teacher, therefore, ought to be excused, not blamed, if he does not carry a small number of scholars rapidly forward, if the number is made small, by irregularity in attendance ; yet those who send their children most irregularly are among the first to complain that they make little progress. The law, (under a certain condition,) requires the employment of an assistant teacher in all the public schools, when the average number of scholars is fifty. But the principal teacher needs an assistant quite as much, when a school of fifty is reduced to an average of thirty, by absences, as when it rises to seventy by a regular attendance of all the scholars belonging to it.

Again, if parents keep a child at home, for two or three days, or for three or four half days, in a week, he must, at least, be stationary, while the class to which he belongs is advancing. Hence, on his return to the school, he is not in a suitable condition to rejoin his class. But, generally, there is no other class in which he can be placed ; and the formation of new classes to meet these cases would soon destroy classification altogether ; because the classes would soon become as numerous as the scholars ; and the school which should march onward in regular divisions, would be reduced to a promiscuous throng of stragglers. Unless in extraordinary cases, therefore, the absent scholar must resume his place in the class ; but, as the correct understanding of each successive step in his studies, depends upon his having mastered the preceding steps, he is almost necessarily incapacitated for intelligent study and good recitations. Out of this come, not merely loss of knowledge, but habits of incorrectness. The pupil, accustomed to failures and mistakes, is hardened into indifference ; he loses the greatest incitement to study,—the pleasure of understanding his lessons ; becomes careless, mischievous, disobedient ; draws down upon himself the displeasure of the teacher, perhaps punishment ; has all his associations established, adverse to learning ; looks for pleasure elsewhere ; is disgusted with the school ;

and, as soon as possible, forfeits its privileges by abandonment,—the victim of irregular attendance.

The previous half day, when a child expects to be absent, and the half day after he has been so, are worth but little, even with good scholars. A child must have an almost inconceivable love of the school to desire to be there, when he knows that his ignorance of the lessons is to be put in direct and public contrast with the knowledge of his class-mates ; and he must have an almost incredible love of knowledge to derive any gratification from the broken fragments of it, which he can obtain at these irregular intervals. The spirit of pride, which would prompt him to stay away from the final examination of the school, lest he should be questioned upon parts of a study, which he had never seen, or upon parts dependent upon what he had never seen, would promise as much for the character of the future man, as the spirit of indifference that could tamely bear the exposure.

Irregularity of attendance in any one member of a class, is an act of injustice to every other member of it. After an absence, whether longer or shorter, the pupil, on his return, must inevitably learn his lessons in a very imperfect manner. He occupies double his share of the time at a recitation ; he requires double the amount of explanations from the teacher, and these explanations having been previously given, are not necessary for the others. Hence, the absent scholars are a perpetual clog upon the class. The advanced body must wait, while the laggards are coming up ; and thus not only the absentees themselves, but the reputation of the teacher, the condition of the school, the character of the district, are all made to suffer the consequences of the guilt of unnecessary absence.

The effects of a want of punctuality, though less in extent, are similar in kind ; co-existing, they are a mutual aggravation.

But, without entering into further detail respecting the losses, embarrassments and injustice, resulting from this common delinquency, it becomes a matter of primary importance to inquire what measures can be adopted to dry up a fountain of mischief, which sends forth such copious streams.

The first thing to be done, is, to render the schoolhouse, both by its external appearance, and its internal conveniencies, a place of attraction ;—or, at any rate, to prevent it from being a place, odious to the sight, and painful to the bodies and limbs of the pupils. The

excuses and contrivances of children to stay away from a repulsive, unhealthful schoolhouse, seem to be preventives, which Nature, in her wise economy, has provided, to escape the infliction of permanent evils.

The teacher can do much, in various ways, to diminish the cases of absence and tardiness. When the question is debated, at the evening fire-side, or at the breakfast table, whether a child shall stay at home, or go to school ; the child has a voice and a vote, and often the casting vote, in its decision. If he loves the school, he will be an able advocate for the expediency of attending it. If errands, or any little household services are to be done, the child will rise an hour earlier, or sit up an hour later, or bestir himself with greater activity to accomplish them, that he may attend the school. For this object, he will forego a family holiday, postpone the reception or the making of a visit, endure summer's heat, or brave winter's cold. On the contrary, if the pupil looks towards the school with aversion ; if his heart sinks within him, when the name of the teacher is mentioned, or his image is excited, then every pretence for absence will be magnified, and invention will be active in fabricating excuses. In the former case, he would almost feign to be well when he was sick ; here, he will feign to be sick when he is well. Hence it will very often happen, that the pleas or excuses of the pupil himself will determine the question of going or staying ; and it depends primarily upon the teacher which way this steady and powerful bias shall incline.

During the first part of the school term, and while the habits of the pupils are forming, a skilful teacher may do much towards inspiring a laudable pride in the scholars, in regard to constancy and promptness. He can cause a public opinion to be spread through the school, that absence or tardiness, without the strongest reasons, is a stigma on the delinquent, a dishonorable abandonment of the post of duty. When errors are committed, or difficulties felt, in consequence of either of these causes, he can point out the relation between the cause and its effect, and warn against a repetition. To save the feelings of a child who comes late, or after a half day's absence, and renders a valid excuse, he can acquit him before the school, of the apparent neglect. He can refer to the state of the Register in a brief remark at the close of the day ; taking occasion,

if the attendance is full, to commend the scholars for it,—to express his regret and mortification, if it is not ;—but always so measuring and attempering his blame and his praise, that none shall be disheartened by the severity of the former, and that the latter shall not become valueless by its superabundance. If regularity and punctuality could be secured, during a four months' school, by expending an entire week in this way, at its beginning, the loss would be repaid, seven-fold; before its close. If the teachers have not consideration enough to speak, on these subjects, to their pupils ; how can they expect that the pupils, unprompted, will originate proper views concerning their importance ?

There is one act of justice, which a teacher, who demands punctuality, should never fail of rendering. Let him observe the golden rule, and when he demands punctuality of his pupils, be punctual himself,—punctual, not only in the hour of commencing his school, but in the hour of closing it. Pupils have a sense of justice on this subject ;—if the regular intermission is an hour, and the afternoon session commences at one o'clock, they want to be dismissed at 12. In this respect, let the teacher bestow what he demands, and enforce his precept by his example ;—or, at least, when the morning or the evening hour arrives for dismissing the school, let him bring its exercises to a pause, and give his pupils an option to retire or to remain. Years of mere talk are often lost upon children, while a practical lesson is never without its effect.

Some teachers have adopted the plan of sending to the parents and guardians of all the scholars, weekly reports, or cards, containing an account of all cases of absence or tardiness. In some instances, these cards contain, also, a description of the quality of recitations, of the general deportment of the children, or whatever else the teacher desires the parent or guardian to be acquainted with.

To secure a prompt attendance at the opening of the school, each half day, some teachers make it their practice, during the first five or ten minutes of the school, to have an exercise in vocal music, or to relate some useful and instructive anecdote, or to read an interesting incident from a biography, or to give a description of a curious fact in natural history ; or, where there is apparatus, to perform, occasionally, a striking experiment, and explain to what department of business or the arts it is related ;—to show the pupils, for instance,

that, in an exhausted receiver, a feather falls as rapidly as a stone ; that without air, gunpowder will not burn ; how a steam-engine is made, or a rainbow formed. Why should all the curiosity of children be pent up for months, to vent itself, at last, on the occasion of raree-shows, circus-riding, or militia musters ?

The teacher ought also to visit the parents of children who attend irregularly, and kindly and affectionately to expostulate with them on the irremediable injury they are inflicting on their offspring, both by the time they lose, and the bad habits they form.

In several of the larger towns in the State, the school committees have enacted positive regulations, excluding for the forenoon or afternoon session, all who come late ; and for the residue of the term, all who are absent, unless from sickness or some other disabling cause ; for a fixed number of days, or half days. There may be some objections to this course,—such as the fact, that truant-dispositioned boys, may contrive to be absent the requisite number of days, or half days, for the very purpose of being excluded afterwards ; but almost any other evil is less than the combined influence of the innumerable throng that follow in the train of a general irregularity and tardiness. For most of the scholars, this last mentioned method is very effectual. It is the practice of many of the lyceums in the State to close the doors of the lecture room at a given hour ; and rail-road cars and steam-boats have a fixed time for starting,—the consequence of which is that every body is punctual ; and, were all the gains of this punctuality added together, it would be found, that years of time are saved, daily, by the regulation.

Some towns, in order to bring the force of a pecuniary motive to bear upon the subject, distribute the school money among the districts, not in the ratio of the children, between four and sixteen years of age, but in the ratio of their attendance upon the schools.

Although teachers as a body, can do more than any other class in the community to abate the evils of inconstant and tardy attendance ; although school committees can do something through the instrumentality of school regulations, and even towns can make their appropriations of money subserve the same end ; yet neither of these, nor all of them united, can complete the work. The final, authoritative decision, in each case, rests with parents. They, therefore, should be appealed to with the most earnest and importunate solicitations, not

to be guilty of so great cruelty to their own children, of so great injustice towards the teacher and towards their neighbors, as to cause or suffer those children, except in cases of imperious necessity, to be absent from the school, a single day of the term, or a single hour of the day. From time immemorial, in all schools, truantship has been regarded as a high offence in a pupil, and forbidden under the sanction of severe, corporal punishment ; but it is difficult to see why an unnecessary absence from school, at the pleasure of the child, is worse than an unnecessary absence, at the pleasure of the parent. The real cause of the difficulty must be, that parents are not aware of its existence, and of the manifold mischiefs it involves. Until recently, even the well-informed friends of education were not apprized of its magnitude ; as, before the use of the Register, no authentic means of making it known, existed. The diffusion of a knowledge, both of the fact and of its consequences, cannot fail to produce a remedy ; and for this purpose, as I have elsewhere suggested, the reading of the Abstracts, at meetings of the inhabitants of the districts convened at the schoolhouse, or other convenient place ; the circulation of their contents by means of lectures and newspapers ; the visitation of negligent parents, by the teachers and by the committees, together with conversations, held on all proper occasions, by those who know more of the subject, with those who know less, will be rapid and effectual means of conveying the information to the very individuals who need it, and must lead, in the end, to a much-needed reform. It is surprising and cheering to know what can be done by the combined and harmonious exertions of all, to accomplish this object. There were many families of children, last winter, who did not miss a single day in their attendance ; and in one school, although the roads were almost impassable from snow, there was scarcely the absence of a scholar, during the whole school term.

If the school is to continue four months, and parents or guardians cannot send their children more than two or three, let them be sent continuously, while they are sent at all, and taken wholly from school, the residue of the time. Six weeks of constant attendance is better than three months scattered promiscuously over a four months' school. So if nine o'clock comes too early in the morning for punctual attendance, let the school begin at ten, or even at half past ten. Almost any thing is better for children than to form the pernicious habit of

tardiness, which in regard to the rights of others, has all the practical effect of dishonesty, and varies but a shade from it, in the motive.

Notwithstanding the melancholy view of the subject, presented by existing facts, yet when we consider the excessive severity of the last winter, the depth of snow which, for a long period, overspread all the inland counties, rendering the roads nearly impassable for weeks together ; and also the fact, that in many places, children suffered to an extraordinary degree, from epidemic sickness, the average attendance was better than in former years. It was not until last year, that any return was ever made of the children, under four and over sixteen years of age, attending the schools. The number was found to be about twenty thousand. Heretofore, in comparing the average number of children in school, with the whole number of children in the State, between four and sixteen years of age, for the purpose of ascertaining what proportion of the whole number were in school, those who were below the age of four, and above that of sixteen, have been reckoned as between four and sixteen, and thus have materially swelled the apparent proportion of attendants.

SUPERINTENDING, OR TOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEES.

By the combined influence of the new interest which has been excited on the subject of education, throughout the State, and of the act of April 13, 1838, which relieved the office of school-committee man from being a pecuniary burden, as well as a tax on time and labor ; the schools, during the last winter, received more than double,—probably three times,—the visitations from the committees, they had ever enjoyed before. The benefits of these visitations can hardly be overestimated ; but I have spoken of this elsewhere.

In regard to the examination of teachers, a moment's reflection will show, that the intervention of a school committee is essential, in order to maintain a proper standard of teachers' qualifications. With a more dense population than any other State in the Union ; with all such departments of business as are deemed most eligible, full to overflowing ; and with so many young people amongst us, seeking to gain a subsistence without manual labor ; the station of a teacher has become a desirable one, to a largely increased number of persons. Co-existing with these facts, are the private biases or temptations, which beset the prudential committee, whose duty it ordinarily is to select

the teachers. Few prudential committee men, can be found, who have not relatives in the first, second or third degree, or partners in business, or personal and near friends, some one or more of whom, in the dearth of other employments, will apply to him for the school ; or who, perhaps, have secured his election that they might apply. Under such circumstances, though we allow to the prudential committees a full share of integrity and public spirit, it is hardly possible, that, acting from motives common to all mankind, they should not, sometimes if not frequently, favor proposals for the school from applicants who are incompetent, either in literary qualifications or in moral character. In such cases, without a superintending committee of firmness and integrity, who will protect the children of the district from the impending calamity of a bad teacher ?

Again, it is an acknowledged fact, that a great proportion of the teachers in our schools follow the occupation for a short period only. Probably a majority of them do not keep school more than two or three, or at most three or four seasons. Their places are then supplied by others, who are not only inexperienced, but who add to their inexperience, the imperfections inseparable from youth and immaturity of mind. To these teachers, the sympathy, and kindness, and advice of a judicious committee are of incalculable service. In regard to the teacher himself, they stand in the relation of friends and counsellors ; in regard to the district, they are his mediators and advocates ; and in regard to the school itself, their presence, their persuasion or rebuke, and even the expectation of their presence, persuasion or rebuke, exerts an influence powerfully impulsive to diligence, and repressive of disorder.

The town committee, also, are set as guards to prevent the ingress of one of the most insidious and formidable evils to which our schools are exposed ;—an evil which has been a canker, fatal to the usefulness of many of the public ones, and still more so to the private. No teacher can be so entirely dead to the reputation he is to leave behind him, as not to desire the favorable appearance of his school, at its close. But where the scholars have been put upon the acquisition of no *real* knowledge, during the first part of the term, it is still practicable for them to master a little *verbal* knowledge, during the last. And, hence, it sometimes happens that previous to the close of the school, in order to atone for the neglect of all the

other powers of the mind, the faculty for remembering words is put on double duty. A few lessons are selected for the respective classes, on which they are daily drilled, with a tacit and mutual understanding on the part of teacher and classes, that, on the day of examination, these are to be displayed as specimens of the pupils' general attainments. Viewed as an intellectual exercise, the utter hollowness and mockery of such a proceeding, entitle it to the severest condemnation ; but regarded in a moral light, it is premeditated and egregious fraud. Under pretence of a sample, whose very name imports that it is similar to, and a part of, the main body or bulk ; it palms off the most valueless of all things,—an empty form of words,—for one of the most valuable of all,—substantial knowledge. The most iniquitous part of this proceeding, however, consists in its enticing the children themselves, to become voluntary participators in the deception. It would be far less deplorable, were the fraud practised *for* them, instead of *by* them. But though their consciences would revolt at it, if it were presented in its true character and odiousness, yet, as it is presented in so disguised and alluring a shape, they are readily seduced to become partners in the conspiracy. The offence has the double aggravation, that, in regard to knowledge, it gives words for things ; while, in regard to dishonesty, it teaches the thing itself.

Against the continuance of this useless and immoral practice, wherever it exists ; against its introduction, wherever it threatens ; the school committee are our legally constituted defenders and protectors. At their first visitation of the school, they can explain to both teacher and scholars, that all knowledge is for use, and not for show ; that books are to be regarded as means only, and not as ends ; that the mind is to gain ability or power by the exercise of its faculties, as well as a knowledge of facts by the aid of memory ; that the value of the school consists in its preparation of the scholars to enter upon the sober business, the momentous scenes, the solemn duties of life, but in no degree upon its enabling them to make a supposed brilliant display for five or ten minutes, at the end of the term. By a clear and strong exposition of these ideas, at the first visitation of the school, and by giving notice that they shall take the final examination, substantially, into their own hands, both teacher and scholars

will be apprized of the grand destination, which they are to keep perpetually in view, and of the course of study, by which alone it can be reached. At the monthly and other intermediate visitations, let the advice given, and the questions proposed, be directed to the same points ; and, at the closing examination, let little reference be made to the school books, but let the whole investigation take a practical character. To test the knowledge of the upper classes, one member of the committee can produce a promissory note, having numerous endorsements, and give it to a class in arithmetic, that the interest may be cast ; another may give the minutes of a deed of land, where the premises are set out by courses and distances, and direct another class to plot it, and calculate its quantity in acres ; or he may demand the superficial measurement of the floor of the school room, or the cubic contents of a given pile of wood, or quarry of marble or granite ; another class may be called on to explain how it happens, that, while the equatorial diameter of the earth is twenty-six miles longer than its polar diameter, yet the river Mississippi, which rises not far from 50° N. latitude, runs south into the Gulf of Mexico, and the river Amazon, one branch of which rises near 20° S. latitude, runs northwardly, and falls into the Atlantic, so that the mouths of both these rivers are much farther from the centre of the earth in a direct line, than either of the poles are ;—or to explain why the inhabitants who live within the tropics, have two winters and two summers, each year, while those who live in the temperate and frigid zones have but one, and so forth and so forth ;—of course varying the subject-matter, and the difficulty of the questions, according to the general standing of each class. If such a course of direction and of examination, could be pursued for a few years, the character of many of our schools would be vastly improved, and the deception of show-examinations be forever abolished. If I were the commander of an army, and should expect to fight a pitched battle, to-morrow, I might feel justified in appealing to the strongest motive-forces in each officer and soldier under my command ;—in showing to the ambitious that there would be an opportunity for the display of bravery, and to the timid, that their greatest safety was in the vigor of the onset ;—in calling up visions of honor, of country and of home for the patriotic, and inspiring the conscientious with

stronger feelings of duty,—and thus, running around the whole circle of the predominating motives, make all conspire to the production of my immediate aim. But in a school, where the object is to prepare, not for to-morrow, but for life,—not for a single exploit, but for character, the very opposite of this course is often necessary. If any faculty or impulse of a pupil is so strong that it threatens to grow into a deformity ;—if any faculty or impulse is so weak that the future character will be unbalanced, unless the deficient power be cultivated into a symmetrical proportion with others, then the strong should be repressed, and the weak should be fostered,—during the whole school, if need be,—however much the season of recitation, or the day of exhibition may suffer. That education is false, which sacrifices the well-being of the future to the eclat of a passing hour.

The school committee is the only body, who can make such a report to the town respecting the condition and wants of the schools, as may be made the basis of a wise and liberal course of municipal action in their behalf. No other board of town officers can have such an acquaintance with facts,—at once comprehensive and minute,—as will furnish materials, upon which the fathers of the rising generation can act, in reference to the well-being of their children. The prudential committee cannot do it ; for however intelligent and faithful they may be, in their respective spheres of duty ; yet, being confined each to his own district, they cannot have those comparative views respecting different schools, which are essential to sound, general conclusions.

On the whole, the services of the school committees seem second to those of no class of public functionaries. They are worthy to be sustained, rewarded, honored ; and though their faithful labors may not be appreciated by contemporaries, they cannot fail to receive the gratitude of posterity.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.

During the last year, an event, worthy of special notice, has occurred, in relation to the supervisory part of our school system. I refer to an appropriation by the town of Springfield of the sum of \$1000 as a salary for a superintendent of their schools, to be selected and

appointed by the town committee. In that town, as in a considerable number of others in the State, the schools are so numerous, and their terms so long, that if one person were to visit a school, each working day in the year, the number of days would be too few to complete the circuit of visitations, as required by law. Where the legal number of visitations is so great, and the duty of making them is devolved upon men engaged in professional, or in common avocations, it is impossible to avoid a competition between the private business of the committee man, and the public duty of visitation ; and, where this competition exists, there is always danger that the former will triumph in the rivalry. Nor can it be denied, that one, whose whole time and talents are devoted to the interests of the schools,—to an examination and selection of text books, to the introduction of improved processes in teaching, and of better modes of governing ;—in fine, to a more thorough acquaintance with the great subject of education, in its principles, and in its practical details, would be far better qualified for the discharge of his duties, than if those duties were only an occasional employment, and collateral to his main pursuits. Guided by these views, the committee of Springfield, in their last annual report, recommended the appointment of a superintendent of the schools. The town adopted the recommendation ; but owing to some unavoidable delays, the gentleman who was appointed did not enter upon the duties of his office, until a considerable portion of the current school year had elapsed. It is obvious, that the success of this measure will mainly depend upon the competency of the officer chosen to execute it. That success is most earnestly to be desired ; and, I may add, is reasonably to be anticipated. Should such be the happy result, it may be expected that the example will be followed by other towns, where the number of the schools is too large, and the engagements of the committee too engrossing, to permit a full compliance with the law, both as to the number and the quality of the visitations. The neighboring city of Providence, which, within the last two years, has established a system of public schools upon the most liberal foundation, has incorporated the office of superintendent into her general plan ; and, under the auspices of a gentleman,* in every respect admirably qualified for the station, her schools are making very rapid improvement.

* Nathan Bishop, Esq.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE.

Though the prudential and the superintending committee generally derive their authority from different sources, and are amenable for its exercise, to a different constituency ; yet some of the most important portions of their respective duties are so intimately blended, that a want of harmony between them is fatal to the welfare of the schools.

The prudential committee not only has great powers, but all his acts become still more important from the fact of their being antecedent or preliminary. It is his duty to provide both a house for the school, and fuel and furniture for the house ; and, in a climate like ours, whoever has the prerogative of determining in what kind of house a man shall live, and what fuel and furniture he shall have, has the power of determining, whether or not he shall live at all. As the general condition of the school, and of its permanent fixtures, goes far towards representing the character of the district, so the particular condition of the house and its appurtenances, and their state of repair, are an open and visible commentary on the character of the prudential-committee man. If he does not provide a good place, in which to keep the school, it is hardly possible for the united exertions of the district and of the town committee to ensure a good school.

So, too, with respect to the teacher of the school. In all governments, it is justly held that an immense accession of power is conferred upon the department, to which the initiative in legislation is given, i. e. the power of propounding all bills, drafts or projects of law. The prudential committee, with very few exceptions, has this initiative in regard to the teachers. As a general rule, he "selects and contracts," with them, subject, indeed, to have the contract vacated, by a refusal of the town committee to give a certificate of approval ; but a refusal of a certificate, even for good cause, is so unwelcome a duty, and the range of construction which may be put upon the word "qualified," is so vast, that there are a hundred chances that an incompetent candidate will be approved, for one that a competent person will be rejected.

It is of unspeakable importance, therefore, that there be no conflict of interests, of feelings, or of motives between the prudential, and the superintending committees. They are but different fingers

of the same hand, and they cannot wield this instrument with any efficiency, unless they seize it with a united grasp. If the prudential committee selects, and presents for approval, any candidate, of whose literary qualifications, personal habits and manners, or moral character, there is ground to doubt ;—in the first place, he commits an act of unkindness towards the candidate himself, who, thereby, is exposed to the mortification of being rejected ; and, in the next place, he subjects the superintending committee to the alternative either of inflicting this mortification, or of approving an incompetent person. But the position of the examining committee is that of judges of a most important question pending between the applicant, as one party, and the children of the district, as the other ; and they should never be tempted, by bribe or bias, to depart from rectitude in their decision. When solicitations for the school are made by suspicious applicants, the prudential committee can pass them by without inflicting any pain, or giving any publicity, and thus save all parties from great ultimate harm.

As a general fact, the importance of the office of prudential-committee man is greatly underrated.

MANIFESTATION OF PARENTAL INTEREST.

Sovereign, reigning over and above all other influences upon the school, is, or rather might be, that of the parents. The father, when presiding at his table, or returning home at evening, from the labors of the day,—the mother, in that intercourse with her children which begins with the waking hour of the morning, and lasts until the hour of sleep, enjoy a continuing opportunity, by arranging the affairs of the household in such a way as to accommodate the hours of the school ; by subordinating the little interests or conveniencies of the family to the paramount subject of regular and punctual attendance ; by manifesting such an interest in the studies of each child, that he will feel a daily responsibility, as well as a daily encouragement in regard to his lessons ; by foregoing an hour of useless amusement, or a call of ceremony, in order to make a visit to the school ; by inviting the teacher to the house, and treating him, not as a hireling, but as a wiser friend ; by a conscientious care in regard to their conversation about the school, and their award of praise or blame ;—

in fine, by all those countless modes, which parental affection, when guided by reason, will make delightful to themselves,—the parents can inspire their offspring with a love of knowledge, a habit of industry, a sense of decorum, a respect for manliness of conduct and dignity of character, prophetic of their future usefulness, and happiness, and honor.

For one who has not traversed the State, and made himself actually acquainted with the condition of the schools, by personal inspection and inquiry, it is impossible fully to conceive the contrasts they now present. I have no hope, therefore, of making myself adequately understood, when I say, that in contiguous towns, and even in contiguous districts, activity and paralysis,—it is hardly too much to say, life and death,—are to be found, side by side. Wherever a town or a district has been blessed with a few men, or even with a single man, who had intellect to comprehend the bearings of this great subject, and a spirit to labor in the work, there a revolution in public sentiment has been effected, or is now going on. In some districts, last winter, the prosperity of the school became a leading topic of conversation among the neighbors ; the presence of visitors, from day to day, cheered the scholars ; a public spirit grew up among them, animating to exertion, and demanding courteous, honorable, just behavior ;—the consequence of which was, that, by a law as certain as that light comes with the rising of the sun, a proficiency surpassing all former example was made ; and when the schools drew to a close, a crowd of delighted spectators attended the final examination, which, from the interest and the pleasure of the scene, was prolonged into the night. In some places, the visitors who did not come early to this examination, could not obtain admittance on account of the crowded state of the house ; and, in one, although a cold and driving snow storm lasted through the day, yet a hundred parents attended, whom the inclemency of the weather could not deter from being present, to celebrate this harvest-home of knowledge and virtue ;—while, on the same occasion, in an adjoining town, perhaps in a bordering district, a solitary committee man dropped grudgingly in, to witness a half hour of mechanical movements, got up as a mock representation of knowledge, and to look at the half-emptied benches of the school room made vacant by deserters. These differences are not

imaginary ; they are real, and their proximate cause is, the interest or the want of interest, manifested by the parents towards the schools.

It is a celebrated saying of the French philosopher and educationist, Cousin, that "as is the teacher, so is the school." In regard to France and Prussia, where the schools depend so much upon the authority of the government, and so little upon the social influences of the neighborhood where they exist, this brief saying is the embodiment of an important truth ; but with our institutions, there is far less reason for giving it the currency and force of a proverb. Here, every thing emanates from the people ; they are the original ; all else is copy. If, therefore, the transatlantic maxim, which identifies the character of the school with that of the teacher, be introduced amongst us, it must be with the addition, that "as are the parents, so are both teacher and school."

A visit to the school by the parents produces a salutary effect upon themselves. Although it is feeling which originates and sends forth conduct, yet conduct reacts powerfully upon feeling ; and, therefore, if parents could be induced to commence the performance of this duty, they would soon find it not only delightful in itself, but demanded by the force of habit. Nor is it any excuse for their neglect, that they are incapable, in point of literary attainments, of examining the school, or of deciding upon the accuracy of recitations. If they have no knowledge to bestow in instruction, they all have sympathy to give in encouragement. Indeed, the children must be animated to exertion, before they will make any valuable or lasting attainment. This animation the parents can impart, and thus become the means of creating a good, they do not themselves possess.

It is surprising that the sagacity of parental love does not discover that a child, whose parents interest the teacher in his welfare, will be treated much better in school, than he otherwise would be ; and this too, without the teacher's incurring the guilt of partiality. If the teacher is made acquainted with the peculiarities of the child's disposition, he will be able to manage him more judiciously, and therefore more successfully, than he otherwise could ; he will be able to approach the child's mind through existing avenues, instead of roughly forcing a new passage to it ; and thus, in many instances, to supersede punishment by mild measures. A wise physician always desires to

know the constitution and habit of his patient, before he prescribes for his malady ; and a parent, who should call a medical practitioner to administer to a sick child, but should refuse to give him this information, would be accounted insane. But are the maladies of the mind less latent, and subtile, and elusive than those of the body ; and is a less degree of peril to be apprehended, in the former case than in the latter, from the prescriptions of ignorance ? I have been credibly informed of a case, where a child received a severe chastisement in school, for not reading distinctly, when the inarticulateness was occasioned by a natural impediment in his organs of speech. The parent sent the child to school without communicating this fact to the teacher, and, under the circumstances of the case, the teacher mistook the involuntary defect for natural obstinacy. This may seem an extreme case, and one not likely to happen, but doubtless, hundreds of similar, though less discoverable ones, in regard to some mental, or moral deficiency, are daily occurring. Again, if parents do not visit the school, until at, or near its close, they may then discover errors or evils, whose consequences, might have been foreseen on an earlier visit, and thus prevented. It is another fact, eminently worthy of parental consideration, that many young and timid children, unaccustomed to see persons not belonging to the family, are almost paralyzed when first brought into the presence of strangers. An excessive diffidence cripples their limbs and benumbs all their senses ; and it is only by their being gradually familiarized to company, that the fetters of embarrassment can be stripped off, and the shy, downcast countenance be uplifted. After a few years of neglect, this awkwardness and shame-facedness, become irremediable ; they harden the whole frame, as it were, into a petrification, and their victim always finds himself bereft of his faculties, at the very moment when he has most need of freedom and vigor, in their exercise. On the other hand, pert, forward, self-esteeming children, who are unaccustomed to the equitable reciprocities of social intercourse, commit the opposite error of becoming rude, aggressive, and disdainful, whenever brought into contact with society. Now, one of the best remedies or preventives which children can enjoy, both for this disabling bashfulness, and for this spirit of effrontery, is the meeting of visitors in school, where, a previous knowledge of what the occasion demands, helps them to behave in a natural manner, notwithstanding the

consciousness that others are present ; and where they are relieved from the double embarrassment of thinking both what they are to do, and how it should be done. Especially is it necessary, that mothers should accompany sensitive and timid children, when they first go to school, to obviate a distrust of the teacher, or a fear of other children, which might otherwise infix in the mind a permanent repugnance to the place. Whatever confers upon the school a single attraction, or removes from it one feature of harshness, clears the avenue for a more ready transmission of knowledge into the pupils' minds.

THE BREAKING UP OF SCHOOLS.

The breaking up of schools is a most serious evil, and one of not very infrequent occurrence. It happens from two causes. One is the literary incapacity of the teacher to instruct. Where teachers are guilty of the illegal and dishonorable practice of smuggling themselves into a school, without having obtained a certificate of qualification ; or, where the committee have granted such certificate without due scrutiny into the attainments of the candidate, the school term rarely closes, without giving demonstration of the great truth, that, in the long run, it is always impolitic as well as wrong, to swerve from principle. The school is either broken up, through the manifest incompetency of the teacher ; or, what is still worse, it is prolonged through a diseased existence, every day of which originates and scatters among the pupils, the infection of bad mental habits. The only remedy for this branch of the evil is to be found in the previous preparation of teachers, and in the conscientious discharge of duty by the examining committee.

The other cause of the breaking up of schools, is the open and successful resistance made by the scholars to the authority of the teacher. It is not all the scholars, however, in any school, who are implicated in this offence. The reports of the committees, for the last two years, have not disclosed a single instance, where the girls belonging to the school have caused its violent termination, or even participated in fomenting an insurrectionary spirit. Nor, among the boys, is it the younger who are ungovernable. A spirit of disobedience in them can generally be quelled by superior physical force, where it is not subdued by the infinitely better methods of kindness,

persuasion and an enlightenment of the sense of duty. There is then, but one other class of scholars, on whom the accusation can fall, of instigating and executing a successful rebellion ; and, to any man who has any adequate conception of the value and excellence of propriety and decency in conduct, and of the universal necessity of order and law in the management of affairs, it must be a source of immeasurable regret, that this class should, without exception, consist of the *larger and older boys of the school*. It must be a source of immeasurable regret, that, at the very time when we begin to look to these young men for a self-regulating power, for decorous and gentlemanly behavior, for a thoughtful and dignified anticipation of the great duties of life, which lie so immediately before them ;—that, at this time, we should find them recklessly engaging in a course, which involves in its catalogue of wrongs, not only the squandering away of the last few running sands of their school-going life, and the exhibition of a most baneful example before the junior members of the school ; but also the crime of ingratitude towards parents, friends, and townsmen, who, at great expense, have placed within their reach the inestimable privileges of education.

Yet such is the melancholy and almost incredible truth. The following are specimens of the expressions, used by committees, in reporting the schools which were broken up by a rebellion of the scholars, during the last winter : “two or three large and mischievous scholars ;”—“the rudeness and ill conduct of some of the larger boys ;”—“some of the larger scholars combined to interrupt the school ;”—“disturbance was made by one or two young men ;”—“turbulent boys defied the authority of the teacher ;”—“the larger scholars have done immense mischief ;”—“the pernicious example of the larger scholars ;”—“the larger and more turbulent scholars ;”—“levity of conduct on the part of a few of the large scholars ;”—“a spirit of insubordination manifested by some of the large scholars ;”—“two or three lawless young men ;”—“disorder occasioned by the refractoriness of the oldest boys ;”—“school broken up by the disorderly and insolent conduct of the scholars.” These are specimens of the phrases in which the sad story of an expelled or rejected teacher and a disbanded school, is told.

In surveying the whole social condition of the State, it would rarely

happen, that a more alarming and unnatural spectacle would be beheld, than that of a school, exploding before half its term had expired,—of a teacher going forth from the door of the schoolhouse, for the last time, in mortification and dishonor, instead of respect and affection ; and followed by insurgent and tumultuous scholars, proclaiming their own infamy, by shouts of triumph and language of insult. Or, if the event does not assume this conspicuous and riotous character, the passions which it displays, and the consequences to which it leads, are equally to be condemned and lamented. These “ young men,” (if without years of penitence, they will ever be worthy of the name of men,) have probably been, in most instances, from fifteen or sixteen to eighteen or twenty years old. Of course, they must all have passed the age when the law confers upon them certain rights, and demands of them the performance of certain duties, because it supposes that they have attained a certain amount of knowledge and discretion. They must have arrived at an age, when they can see for themselves the advantages of a supreme law for the government of all, because, without such law, there are others, both older and stronger than themselves, under whom they may be trodden down. Yet at this period, when their opportunities for an education are hastening rapidly to a close, instead of improving them with a zeal that should compensate for their brevity, they terminate them, at once, by violence and in disgrace. At the time when the law begins to clothe them with rights and duties, they begin to manifest their unfitness for the trust, by contemning the privileges it bestows. As they are about to become members of a republic, whose boast it is that men are capable of self-government, they are taking practical lessons in resistance to rightful authority ; as though it were possible, that those should ever be fit to govern others, who, themselves, have never learned to obey.

In regard to the various evils and deficiencies, which I have specified in the progress of this Report, I have endeavored to suggest, in each case, some antidote or remedy for their prevention or removal. But in regard to the guilty agents in these acts of insubordination and violence, I am at a loss what measures to recommend, which shall, at once, arrest their course, and inspire them with a due sentiment of abhorrence for their misconduct. What idea can these young men

have formed of common justice and equity, when for the purpose of indulging their own passions or prejudices against a teacher, they are willing to rob all the children in a whole neighborhood, as well as themselves, of the benefits of the school? Have they so little regard for the reputation and feelings of parents and relatives, as to feel no repugnance at involving them in the common odium of this flagrant misconduct? Can they look forward with satisfaction to a life, during which this will be the only alternative left to them, that, if they ever become respectable citizens, they will bitterly repent their course;—or, what is worse, they will escape the pain of repentance only by never becoming respectable. The institution of the Common Schools, for almost two hundred years, has been honored and eulogized by the greatest and the best men, who, within all that period, have enlightened and blessed this Commonwealth. Do these young men, who break up the schools by sedition and revolt, deem themselves so much wiser and better than all the wise and good men, who have lived before them, that they are authorized to destroy the usefulness, and to bring disparagement upon the name, of an institution which has been so long respected and honored? Perhaps they have heard some individual boasting, that when a pupil, he had rebelled against his teacher, encountered him with force, and driven him from the school; but, if they will take a second thought, they will invariably find that such boaster was a low, base, despised man, without respectability and without shame; and is it their ambition to resemble such a model? If they will look about them, and inquire into the personal history of individuals, they will find, that, in nineteen cases out of every twenty, those who are now the substantial, worthy, influential, beloved and honored members of society, were, when at school, the most orderly, diligent, and well-mannered scholars. They will find that it is the slothful, disobedient, mischievous, truant scholar who threatens to become, in after-life, the thriftless and squalid pauper, or a candidate for the house of correction or jail;—if he goes to college, to get expelled, if he obtains an office, to disgrace it, and finally to be an outcast in society; and are these the patterns which the young men, who rise up in defiance of the authority of their teachers, wish to imitate? To the teachers, whose

misfortune it is to come into collision with these young men, I can only say further :—Let them be warned, admonished, entreated, plied with every consideration that can sway a perverse, or kindle a generous disposition, to check the sallies of an ignorant and foolish temper, and to subject their impulses to the control of those laws of reason and duty, without which, all society and government, as well as the school, must be broken up. During the few days, while yet the precious boon of the school remains, let them redeem their time, by an earnest application to the studies, and an assiduous cultivation of the “good behavior,” which in after-life, will give them the intelligence proper for a citizen, and the character belonging to a gentleman, and will secure for them the universal respect of society.

I am aware of having dwelt long upon this topic ; but when we consider the enormity of the evil, any thing, tending to its repression, may be pardoned.

If it is difficult to express the depth of our grief, in regard to the conduct of the scholar who casts away his birth-right of education, by rising against his teacher and breaking up the school, what shall be said of the amazing infatuation of a parent who so violates the sanctity of the parental relation as, directly or indirectly, to encourage in his children the spirit of revolt ; or who, for any cause, allows his passions to obtain such mastery over the convictions of his reason and his sense of propriety, that he invades the school room to vilify or assault the teacher in the presence of the scholars. Happily, such cases are now very rare, and it is to be hoped that the public mind will soon be so enlightened and renovated, in regard to the value of our schools, as to render their recurrence impossible.

Although no word ought to be said in palliation of the deliberate and premeditated misconduct of scholars towards their teacher, yet there are numberless acts, rising in the scale from slight indiscretions even to grave misdemeanors, which argue an impulsive and vehement, rather than a perverse or incorrigible disposition ; and which are often committed by high-minded and honorable, though mistaken boys. Children play a thousand foolish, perhaps roguish, pranks, from a false, but current opinion, that they are becoming, that they are reputable, and proofs of what is called spirit. Children, too, are often applauded for acts of misbehavior, if accompanied by indications of wit or genius. The wrong is forgotten, or supposed to be atoned for,

by the skill manifested in committing it ; and hence their emulous minds seek for further applause, to be won by some other sally or contrivance of mischievous wit ; as though the mischief could be redeemed by the wit displayed in its execution. Now all this pride of success, this ambition of winning the approval of others, which, under a false guidance, leads, at first, to slight departures from decorum, ingenuousness, or rectitude, and, afterwards, to great delinquencies ;—all this pride and ambition might be converted, by one who understands the springs of human action, into a powerful auxiliary in the cause of good conduct. If the mind has an innate propensity whose sole function it is to delight in the good will, and to dread the displeasure of others, and which, of course, is indifferent to moral qualities ; then those who have the power of bestowing praise or blame, turn the whole force of this propensity towards right or towards wrong, by the actions which they select for approval or condemnation. This explains the influence of public opinion upon children,—an opinion which they do not create, but into which they are born,—just as they are born into the atmosphere,—and for the justness of which, therefore, they are, at first, no more responsible, than for the healthful or noxious qualities of the air given them to breathe. There is such a public opinion in every school. It is handed down from the older to the younger classes, and from one school term to another. Skilful, devoted, conscientious teachers always do much to reform and elevate it, and thus improve the school, not only during their own term, but for subsequent years. Bad teachers debase it, and throw heavy burdens upon their successors. But this train of thought leads insensibly back to the importance of employing such teachers,—and none but such teachers, as not only know, theoretically, the qualities which are desirable in the character of a scholar and a man, but, practically, how those qualities may be cultivated.

ABSENCE FROM FINAL EXAMINATION.

There is another species of misconduct, occasionally committed by the older half of the scholars, which is dishonorable in its motive and pernicious in its example. It is what is often denominated in the reports, “dodging the examination.” A portion of the scholars, on the day when the committee are expected to examine the school, absent themselves, leaving behind them neither papers nor writing book ;

nor, indeed, any vestige, by which the state of their knowledge, or their proficiency during the school, can be ascertained. This proceeding is, on the very face of it, self-condemnatory. Such scholars need no accusers ; they have volunteered a confession, upon which they must be convicted. The legal maxim, that flight is evidence of guilt, is here emphatically true. The vacant seat they have left behind, proves the vacant mind they have taken away. This mode, however, of escaping censure, is a delusive as well as a short-lived expedient. Though they may have indulged in idleness, during the school term, in anticipation of avoiding an exposure of their ignorance by deserting the school, at the closing examination ; yet, whither will they fly to hide their shame, when, coming upon the stage of life, their ignorance will be made manifest to the world, in all places where they appear, and in every word they utter.

RETROSPECT. NUMBER AND COMBINATION OF INFLUENCES, NECESSARY TO A GOOD SCHOOL.

In discussing the various topics imbodyed in this Report, and in pointing out, under each successive head, the imperfections belonging to it,—imperfections which prevent our school system from conferring those abundant and precious benefits, it is capable of bestowing, I have not been without fear, that my remarks might seem to wear an aspect of accusation, and to savor of harshness ; and although it might be admitted that no just exception could be taken to the views presented on any particular topic, still, that the tenor of the whole might seem too condemnatory and reprehensive. To be the bearer of unwelcome tidings, is proverbially a thankless office ; and the fidelity that tells a friend of his faults is too apt to forfeit the friendship which it should have strengthened. Yet, to these general rules, there are noble exceptions. A wise man wishes to know what is wrong in his affairs, that he may rectify it ; and every sincere lover of excellence rejoices to be made acquainted with his faults, that he may correct them. In commenting, therefore, upon what I consider the imperfections of our system, in good faith, and with a single eye to their removal, I have proceeded upon the conviction, that our people do possess that wisdom, and that love of excellence, which desires to “ forget the things which are behind,” and, in the career

of well-doing, to “press forward to those which are before ;” and rather to devote their energies to still higher achievements, than ignobly to waste them in vain-glorying and self-eulogy. It would have been easy for me,—and could duty have allowed, it would have been delightful,—to have occupied much more time, and to have filled a much larger space, in recounting those merits and excellences of our system of free schools, which, abroad as well as at home, it is acknowledged to possess ;—in pointing to the bright train of blessings which, from age to age, it has been the means of conferring upon the people of this State,—which it is now conferring, and, as it remains steadfast, while the generations rise and pass away, it promises still to confer, upon unborn millions. But, at best, the pleasure of self-adulation is fleeting, and it leaves no abiding improvement behind.

It should be remembered, too, that, in the administration of our system, a larger share of power is possessed by the people, than in any other state or country in the world. If it were true, here, that, as soon as any error or deficiency became known to the Legislature, —or to any central and supervisory body,—they could forthwith issue an edict for its correction, such a summary mode of proceeding would supersede the necessity of all explanation. But, where all measures of improvement and reform are to be carried out by the people, at large, it becomes necessary that they should first be made acquainted with the evils, which it is their interest and duty to remedy ; and, for this purpose, I have endeavored, faithfully, to perform the unwelcome task of describing them.

The explanation, and, to some extent, the excuses for the deficiencies here enumerated, are to be found in the number and complexity of the parts, whose combined and harmonious action is essential to a good school. We have no other institution, where such a confluence of favorable influences is necessary to the production of the desired result ; nor have we any, whose usefulness is so liable to be impaired, or even destroyed, by a single adverse tendency. A long train of measures is requisite to accomplish the end, and a failure in any one of the series, is ruin. If the school-house be bad, in regard to its location or internal construction, then,

not only will the improvement in the children's minds be materially lessened, but the healthiness of their bodies will be exposed to continual danger. If the house be otherwise well built, but deficient in the single requisite of ventilation, two thirds of all the intellectual power of the children will be destroyed, at the very moment when they are called upon to exercise it. In the whole range of science, no fact is better established, than that the breathing of impure air benumbs and stupifies every faculty ; and, therefore, to call upon children to study, or understand, or remember, while we give them impure air for breathing, is as absurd as to put fetters upon their limbs, when we wish them to run swiftly ; or to interpose an opaque body between their eyes and any object, which we wish them to see clearly. But if the schoolhouse be the best that art can build, yet, if the town grants only penurious supplies of money, the school will but just begin, when the means of supporting it will end. This is the false economy of saving, in the seed, though thirty, or sixty, or a hundred fold be lost in the harvest. Even when the town makes liberal grants of money, in proportion to its valuation and census, still, if it has unwisely divided its territory into minute districts, it defeats its own liberality ; for, by attempting to support so many schools, with disproportionate means, it gives an efficient support to none. But with a good schoolhouse, and with such large and populous districts, or union districts, as give the multiplying power of union and concert to individual action ; still, the employment of a bad teacher will vitiate the whole ; and the place will have been prepared, and the money appropriated, only to gather the children into a receptacle, where bad feelings and passions, bad language and manners will ferment into corruption ;—and, without a good prudential and superintending committee, the chance of securing the services of a good teacher becomes so small as to elude even a fractional expression. And again ; if the most perfect teacher is obtained, still the scholars must be brought within the circle of his influence in order to be benefited ; and, therefore, absence, irregularity and tardiness must be prevented, or the good teacher will have been employed in vain. Let all other influences be propitious, and the single circumstance of which so little has heretofore been thought, viz., a diversity of class books

for scholars of similar ages and attainments will derange every operation of the school ; because no perseverance, no fertility of resources on the part of the teacher, can carry it forward, if each pupil brings a different book. The obstacle defies human genius. All that reciprocal aid and stimulus is lost, which the different minds of a class afford each other, when they have once been awakened, and their attention turned upon the same point. To expect progress, under this embarrassment, is as unreasonable as it would be for a singing-master to expect concord of sounds, when all his pupils were singing simultaneously from different notes. Even if all the preceding arrangements and appointments are perfect, it will yet be true, that not one half of the capabilities of the school will be developed, unless the parents breathe life into the children before they leave their own door, and send them to school hungering and thirsting after knowledge.

Now all these various agencies must work in concert, or they work in vain. When a system is so numerous in its parts, and so complex in its structure ; when the nice adjustment of each, and the harmonious working of all, are necessary to the perfection of the product ; all who are engaged in its operation, must not only have a great extent of knowledge, but they must be bound together by a unity of purpose. Experience has often proved how fatally powerful one ill-disposed person can be, in destroying the value of a school ; but experience is yet to prove, what an amount of corporeal and material well-being, of social enjoyment, of intellectual dominion and majesty, of moral purity and fervor,—what an amount, in fine, of both temporal and spiritual blessedness, this institution, in the Providence of God, may be the means of conferring upon the race.

Experience is yet to develop the grandeur and the glory which, through the exhaustless capabilities of this institution, may be wrought out for mankind, when, by the united labors of the wise and the good, its elastic nature shall be so expanded as to become capacious of the millions of immortal beings, who, from the recesses of Infinite Power, are evoked into this life, as a place of preparation for a higher state of existence,—and whom, like a nursing mother, it shall receive and cherish, and shall instruct and train, in the knowledge, and the observ-

ance, and the love, of those divine laws and commandments, upon which the Creator, both of the body and the soul, has made their highest happiness to depend.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

BOSTON, JANUARY 13, 1841.

NOTE to pp. 45—6.

Since the paragraphs, on pp. 45—6, respecting "Female Teachers," were written, I have received, from England, a pamphlet, "ON DUTCH AND GERMAN SCHOOLS, by W. E. HICKSON," from which, as corroborative of the views contained in the text, I select the following :

"It is to be remarked, that in Germany there are no Normal schools for female teachers, beyond one or two, confined chiefly to the object of fitting them to give instruction in sewing and knitting; and there is this peculiarity in Dutch and German schools, that women are rarely employed in them excepting in that capacity, or as mistresses of infant schools. In large rooms, filled entirely with girls, we rarely found a schoolmistress, or a female teacher, unless the children belonged to the lowest class in the school, and were merely learning the alphabet, or unless the hour for needle-work had arrived. The Germans greatly underrate the physical strength, and intellectual power of women, as adapted for the work of instruction. They affect a great contempt for female authorship, arising partly, perhaps, from the fact that they have but few writers of that sex, or but few to be compared with the best of those of England and France. We believe this prejudice against female talent to be unfortunate and mischievous. There is nothing that a girl can learn, that a woman is incapable of teaching, when properly trained; and in many cases,—as every one knows who has frequented Sunday schools,—women make better instructors than those of the other sex. Women have often more talent for conversational teaching, (the best of all forms of instruction,) more quickness of perception in seizing difficulties by which the mind of a child is embarrassed, and more mildness of manner than a master commonly possesses; and when these important qualities are combined with the proper degree of firmness, (and that, too, may be acquired,) they cannot be excelled. For teaching singing they are especially qualified, as the pitch of their voices enables them to sing in unison with children, instead of an octave below; and for the physical strength said to be wanting, no instruction can be fit for a child that is given in a form that would exhaust any frame but one of iron or brass. But we need not dwell upon this part of our subject, for English notions of delicacy would not permit schools to exist in which girls of thirteen and fourteen should be left, for hours together, without any person to consult belonging to their own sex. Normal schools, therefore, if ever established in this country, must be formed for women as well as for men."

Jan. 15,	Gov. Everett's order to C. Pierce for repairs on Normal School building,	178 04	
July 25,	Gov. Morton's order to N. Tillinghast, for 19 weeks services as assistant,	250 00	
May 30,	Gov. Morton's order to C. Pierce,	491 83	
July 1,	B. Mussey's bill, 1 year's rent and taxes to date,	107 42	2921 91
Mar. 4,	To sundry bills for Barre Normal School: S. P. Newman's bill for 1 quarter's tuition to March 1, 1840,	350 00	
June 1,	Do. do. for 1 qr. to June 1,	350 00	
Sept. 1,	Do. do. to Sept. 1,	350 00	
Dec. 1,	Do. do. to Dec. 1,	350 00	
April 16,	Gov. Morton's order to S. P. Newman, for services of assistant 11 weeks, 137 50 do. do. writing master, 25 00	162 50	
Dec. 1,	Gov. Morton's order for do. writing master, 25 00	188 50	1841
Nov. 2,	To Gov. Morton's order to N. Tillinghast,	1751 00	Jan. 1,
Dec. 31,	To balance to new account,	100 00	
		1590 94	
		<u>\$6473 13</u>	
	By balance from old account,		<u>\$1590 94</u>
			<u>\$6473 13</u>

Errors Excepted.

Boston, Jan. 12, 1841.

CHAS. H. MILLS, *Treasurer*,

1841, Jan. 21.—The Committee of Finance, to whom this account was referred, have examined the same, with the vouchers for the several items, and find the whole correctly cast and properly vouched. R. RANTOUL, JR., *Chairman*.

APPENDIX.

Referred to, page 27.

Letter from DR. SAMUEL B. WOODWARD.

STATE LUNATIC HOSPITAL, WORCESTER, DEC. 7th, 1840.

HON. HORACE MANN,

DEAR SIR,—I received your note of the 28th of November, but owing to the uncommon pressure of business and the preparation of my Annual Report, I have delayed answering it.

The subject of your inquiry is one of deep interest, and I fear not generally understood by parents or teachers.

Children under eight years of age should not usually be confined to the school room more than one hour at a time, nor more than four hours in a day.

These hours should afford considerable diversity of employments, so as to enable the child to change his posture frequently, and to be more or less upon his feet; and, also, to change the subject of thought, so that the mind shall not be occupied by one subject too long or too intensely.

Intensity should be carefully avoided; it leads directly to disease of the brain, and often probably *arises* from this cause. Precocity is generally the result of a morbid condition of this organ, either *functional* or *organic*; the *former* may generally be cured by timely attention, the *latter* exhibits itself in epilepsy, insanity, or an imbecility of mind, or proves fatal, by the occurrence of inflammation or convulsions.

If a child exhibits any symptoms of precocity, it should be taken immediately from books and be permitted to ramble and play in the open air, or engage in manual labor and such amusements as will give rest to the mind, and health and vigor to the body.

The recess at school, for children of eight years and under, should be long, the play active and even noisy, (for the lungs acquire strength by exercise as well as the muscles;) every child should be required to unite in the sports of play time.

Fifteen minutes is short time for recess; half an hour is better, particularly in summer.

During recess, the school room should be thrown open in warm weather, and the windows be dropped a little way in cold weather, so as thoroughly to ventilate the apartments. We have hardly learned yet that pure air is equally as important to health and life as good nourishment and pure water.

In school regulations, regard is usually had to mental and moral improvement only. We forget that we have bodies, the preservation and training of which are not less necessary to the young, than the acquisition of knowledge. Without health, we can have little enjoyment. With it we can learn all that is necessary, with ease,—if we are not in too great haste. No limit is given to the age in which the vigorous and healthy may acquire useful knowledge.

It is of little use to make great acquirements, if in doing so, we sow the seeds of disease that will destroy the happiness and usefulness of life.

In haste, yours very truly,

S. B. WOODWARD.



Letter from DR. JAMES JACKSON.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your note of the 26th, I beg to say, that it will give me much pleasure to aid in the great work in which you are engaged, in any, the humblest manner. You have a right to demand assistance from any man in the Commonwealth, and to call out the posse, if need be.

“What is a suitable length of time to confine children under six or eight years of age in school, during the day; and what is the suitable length for one session, without a recess.”

This is your question. I reply that I think four hours, in the short days, and five hours, in the long days, may safely be devoted to school, even at this early age, especially in those over five years. But you will see I have changed a word; I do not say, confined in school, but devoted to school. Perhaps in the country, where children go some distance from home, and do not go all the year, six hours are not too much even for young children, in days not shorter than ten hours; i. e. ten hours of sunshine.

But I do not think it wise to *confine* children, *in school*, so many hours in a day as I have mentioned. On the other hand, I regard it as essential that they should not remain in school more than one hour, at a time, on an average; that, during that hour, they should not be confined in one position, but, if possible, be engaged in short lessons, and short recitations, so as to have a diversity of employments; or in other ways have some variety; and that an hour's confinement should be followed by a recess of fifteen minutes. In very young children, (3 to 5,) the period of confinement should be shorter, and the recess longer. I take it to be easy to occupy young children usefully in school, without books and without perfect quiet, a part of the time, and that this is done at the present day to some extent. It is to this notion I refer, when I speak of other variety, than is afforded by book-study and recitation.

Will you ask me, now, whether these opinions are derived from the settled principles of physiology? I answer, in part, but not wholly. This science, (the science of man, if we mean human physiology,) gives no such defi-

nite rules. In general, it teaches that young children, much like young colts and calves and lambs, are disposed to short, active gambols, and then to lie down, or otherwise to take short rests; and that this exercise is most suitable to them. I never see a child marched, in a moderate, regular step, through a long walk, without regretting it. It is much easier to them to run ahead, and then stop a while. Young children cannot maintain a purpose a long time, nor an effort a long time, without fatigue. In their training or education, they should be alternated in these respects; for it is not the part of training to let every shoot grow wild; but it must be done gradually, for this reason, if no other, that we cannot proceed in any other way to attain our purposes. We may stop all growth, or we may produce deformity, but we cannot make a good growth in any other way.

In children, restraint in one position, except lying down, soon produces fatigue; not because they want to be at play, but because they are obliged to keep in constant action those muscles, by which the head and trunk are supported. This, at least, is one reason, an important one, and perhaps the principal one. I feel assured, that the lateral flexure of the spine in young girls, so much noticed, the last thirty or forty years, is to be attributed much more to the effort to sit upright too long, than to tight lacing, &c. You will not suspect me of being an advocate of this vile practice, but I cannot charge to it an evil, which has commonly occurred before that practice is begun. Unhappily, the evil is hereditary in a vast many families. But this by the by.

Children should not, then, be confined long to one position; when sitting or standing, they should not be required to maintain constantly an erect position of the body; for their muscles require more frequent alternations, (each one by itself,) than those of adults.—So much physiology teaches. But physiology does not point out just how many minutes a particular muscle may be kept contracted. In other words, there are not any general rules, precise in this respect, which are deduced from observation or experience. Nor can it well be otherwise. We differ so much in temperament, and each one differs so much at different times, according to the state of his health, and from various accidental causes, that such precise estimates cannot be made. An average might be obtained from long continued and accurate observations of large numbers of children; but this would require much labor and time, unless done in a loose way. This last, the loose way, is exactly what is done by those, who observe the experiments constantly going on in our houses and schools. It is from estimates made in this way, that you and I, and others, do make up our opinions. These are more to be relied on than any rules which can be derived from scientific physiology; though this may furnish an explanation of the mode in which evils are produced by too long confinement. I should therefore submit my opinion to that of an experienced teacher, who had been instructed in the general principles applicable to the subject, and who had observed carefully the

effects of confinement, for different lengths of time, to school exercises. Only, in such a case, I should require that teacher to tell me exactly how his pupils were employed, from one ten minutes to another.

I believe, that what I have said of too long continued exertion of any one muscle, or set of muscles, in sitting still, or in exercise,—in the case of young children,—will apply to too long continued devotion of the mind to any one object, or in any one mode. This must be injurious to young children, as in its proportion it is to older children and to adults; the difference, however, being very great between young children and those approaching adolescence. But I do not believe, that much harm is done in this way; for I much doubt whether young children can often be made to devote their minds intensely to study for a long time, uninterruptedly. “A boy may lead a horse to water,” &c. A schoolmaster may keep a boy, under eight years of age, in his seat, and *over* his book, for two hours at a time; but he cannot, as I believe, often succeed in keeping his mind occupied in study for half an hour, or not more. As regards health, then, it is the confinement in school, and in one spot, for too long a time, which is mostly injurious.

Among various things, which press on my mind, relative to this matter, allow me to express my detestation of the practice of giving young children lessons to learn at home. In respect to those of any age, I speak of school boys or girls, under sixteen,—among these, the most which should be permitted, is a short lesson to be studied in the evening, when the days are long; such, perhaps, as a lesson in grammar, which must be committed to memory.

I am greatly in favor of sending children to school, at a very early age; when three years old, if in good health. But the benefits which I look for, and which seem to me very valuable, are not such as would be increased by studying lessons at home. I would have such young children gradually taught to sit still and study, but it should be for a very few minutes at a time, at first, and without restraining them, or attempting to restrain them, for any length of time, from whispering to each other. They will do this, and if forbidden, they only learn that they may disobey with impunity. But what are the benefits I look for, from this early schooling? They are the gradual accustoming of children to discipline, and to the confinement of school, so as to prepare them for their future course; but still more the bringing of them into the company of their peers. This last is of the greatest importance, as regards the physical, intellectual and moral education; and I think you may trace great evils, from the want of it, in all children brought up at home; and the earlier it is begun the better.

I must say a word about the recess. One would desire, that, during the recess, children should have a large and dry play-ground, sunny, and protected from the north and east, and having ample shade from trees. In cities, this cannot be afforded. Seldom can a good yard be allowed them. It is, however, essential to give them a turn in the open air, and not to

let this be in a cellar-like yard, on the north side of a house. Where there is nothing better, the children should go into the street, a few at a time, when the weather is good; and in bad weather, (when it rains or snows,) they should have a pleasant play-room; or, in default of this, be allowed to use the school room as such.

I might go on to speak of warming and ventilating school rooms, and then of various other matters connected with education. But I have already availed myself largely of the liberty you gave me to disregard the precise limits of your question. Nor, in truth, do I imagine that the general notions which I entertain on the subject, can be of any value to you, who have studied it much and carefully.

With great respect,

I am, dear Sir,

Your friend and obedient servant,

JAMES JACKSON.

BOSTON, DECEMBER 28, 1840.

To Hon. HORACE MANN.

Letter from DR. SAMUEL G. HOWE.

SOUTH BOSTON, DEC. 9, 1840.

HON. HORACE MANN.

MY DEAR SIR,—The questions which you have addressed to me are very important ones; and such as I fear very few persons engaged in teaching, ever propound to themselves.

How many hours daily, should children be confined in school; and how frequently should they have recesses?

The length of confinement, (how cruelly expressive of school time is this word) should, of course, depend upon the age and physical condition of the child; and the recesses should occur as often as his wearied mental powers require them.

It would be impossible to prescribe any precise number of hours which schools should be kept for children of different ages, and under all circumstances; because the child of nine years cannot bear so much as one of fourteen; and none of them can study so long in dog days, as in the spring.

A school, such as I suppose you would wish to see, should be entirely at the discretion of the master, with respect to the hours it is to be kept; and his rule should be never to confine his pupils to their duties longer than he can command their attention, and interest them in their lessons. He would

extend the time over as great a part of the day as possible, and have frequent and long recesses.

Were he limited to six hours instruction, I think he would effect more by holding three daily sessions, of two hours each, one in the morning, one at noon, and one towards night, with an intermission of fifteen minutes in the middle of each session, than he could, by having two sessions of three hours, and a recess in the middle of each.

The principles of physiology would teach him that, even were it possible to keep up a long continued and intense mental activity, it would be only at a very great risk; he would consider that over-action of the brain fatigues it, just as much as over-action of the muscles of the arm fatigues them; with this fearful difference however, that over-action of the brain, in young persons, may lead to subsequent mental weakness, imbecility, and even idiocy. Moreover he would consider that its effect, though certain, is less obvious at first, and that functional disease of the organ may make considerable progress unobserved even by the sufferer.

But alas! how little attention is generally given to this subject; and into what strange contradictions are people led in governing children! How often do you see a master, or a parent, striving to keep immovable in his seat, for hours together, a robust boy, of sanguine temperament, to whom motion is as natural as to an eel, and whose body almost bounds from innate elasticity; and who is punished perhaps for some start or outbreak which he could not help, by being deprived of his recess, instead of being let out to blow off his extra steam by the rough and tumble exercises of the playground.

There was as much philosophy as fun, in the boy of this impatient temper of body, who after writhing with the torture of confinement and silence for two hours, suddenly shocked the decorum of the school by a loud and shrill whistle; and being sternly asked by the master why he did so, replied, "I didn't whistle, Sir, *it whistled itself!*"

Sometimes again, you may see a boy whose brain and nervous system are already too much developed,—who would leave play for study,—and whose puny frame already shows the effect of over activity of mind,—you shall see him, I say, excited to more intense application by praise, or by emulation, until his over-tasked powers give way, and the precocious prodigy sinks below the level of his companions, and perhaps remains for life a weak and inefficient man.

I do not say that great intellectual precocity is always indicative of morbid activity of the brain, but in the vast majority of cases it certainly is so; and I am rather inclined to pity than to congratulate parents whose children are prodigies of intellect. But, especially are they to be pitied if they do not understand physiology; and if they so far mistake the nature of the case as to add fuel to the flame which is already devouring the child. It is often the case, however, that persons who have some knowledge of physiology commit the very great error of judging the condition of the brain and nerves, as

they do that of other parts of the system : “ when the muscular system,” say they, “ has performed work enough, a feeling of lassitude informs us of the fact, and we take rest ; and when the brain is weary, we in the same manner feel inclined to repose ; so that, as long as we feel lively, and *wide awake*, we may work the brain :” and they do work it, late into the night. But often, when the body has been excessively fatigued, and the nervous energy is exhausted, sleep follows not on rest, but we toss and turn in vain upon our pillows, courting slumber,—but “ with all our wooings, can’t win her to our couch.” So it is with the brain when over-worked ; it becomes *morbidly excited*, it seems to crave action, and we, mistaking this for healthy action, go on and urge it to the utmost limit of its safe endurance, perhaps even beyond that. Now there is no question but this morbid action is often encouraged in children, and that it not unfrequently terminates in organic disease.

But I have wandered insensibly from my subject ; let me return to the number of hours which children should be kept in school. Since we cannot immediately realize our *beau ideal* of schools, we must consider them as they actually exist. My experience leads me to the conclusion that children under eight years of age should not be confined in one position, or have their minds fixed upon one branch of study, *more than half an hour at a time* ; that by following this rule, and giving them long recesses to be spent in the open air, they may study four entire hours daily. It also leads me to believe, that children over eight, and less than fourteen years, should not be confined in one position, or at one branch of study, more than three quarters of an hour at a time ; and that they should have the last quarter of each hour for exercise in the play-ground ; that is, they should leave their seats at fifteen minutes before ten or eleven, and be back to them again, by the time the clock strikes the hour. During recess, the doors and windows should be opened and the room freely ventilated. In this way children may be kept in school from eight in summer, and nine in winter, to noon ; and from three to six in the afternoon. I know that this will be sneered at by those school-masters who are attached to the *status in quo* : and that it may be asked how a school room with two hundred children could be kept in any kind of order if there should be a recess every hour ; I answer, that two hundred children have no business in one school room ; and I assert moreover, that those who so arrange the schools do so only from motives of economy, and that they are putting the physical, intellectual and spiritual interests of children in one scale, and vile dross in the other.

If it be said that one master cannot take care of children if kept in separate rooms, then I reply, have two—or three—or as many as the good of the children require, *cost what it may*.

If our school committees, or common councilmen, would fully realize the operation of being shut up in school, an hour and a half, and required to give close attention to study, let them (if they are twenty-four in number,) hold

their meetings, in a closet eight feet square, and as many in height, and be called to order for every hitch of their chairs, and for every yawn ; and see how long before an adjournment will be called for ; and yet such a closet would be as large in proportion to the number, (allowing for difference of size of the persons), as is allowed to children in schools not far from the metropolis.

I believe that the time for school, and the number and frequency of recesses which I have stated above, would be a better arrangement than is now generally adopted ; my own experience is in its favor, and so I believe are the inferences from physiological principles.

The length of time, however, which children may exercise their minds, not only with impunity, but with advantage, will depend greatly upon the tact of the teacher in the disposition of their tasks. Suppose a person wishes to apply three hours daily to the study of mathematics, three to moral philosophy, and three to music ; can there be a doubt which would be most advantageous, to study mathematics three successive hours, moral philosophy three, and then music three ; or to labor at his mathematics one hour, or one hour and a half, then to take a half an hour of music ; then go on with his mathematics, finish them, and recruit again with music, before applying his mind to moral philosophy ? It is just as certain that he would be relieved by the change, and effect more work, as that a man would carry a heavy bucket of water more easily by shifting it often from one hand to the other, than by carrying it all one day, in his right hand, and all the next day in his left.

I am aware that there are adults, who, by training, have brought their minds to such a state, that they can with impunity give their undivided energies, for hours and hours together, to one study ; but I have not yet marked their end,—nor, if I had, and should see their powers undiminished to the last, would it alter my views of what is fitting for children.

While on this subject, let me notice one very great fault in many of our private schools, which, in other respects, are very excellent, and regarded as models ; I mean the holding but one session daily, from nine until two o'clock. This practice, which I fear is continued in some cases for the convenience of the teachers alone, is in violation of the principles of physiology ; so obviously, indeed, that it needs no comment.

Similar to this fault, and originating from similar motives, is that of long vacations of six, or even eight, or ten weeks. These are destructive of habits of regular study, and mental discipline ; and are, in every respect, objectionable, except for the convenience of the teachers.

I do not believe, that vacations of more than two or three days are necessary in well regulated schools. I mean, they are not necessary for the physical or mental health of the pupils ; however convenient and even necessary they may be on other accounts. I believe that the Creator intended man should exercise his physical and his mental powers every day while he is in health ; I believe that he may, and ought so to exercise them ; that

he will need no vacation if he does not overwork his body or mind; nay, I believe that more harm than good will follow his letting his physical or mental powers lie idle, even two days in succession. The night is given to man for rest, and it should suffice him; when it does not, he may be sure he has violated some of the natural laws. He is not intended to hybernate like the bears, or to let any of his powers lie dormant for weeks and months together, but to use them every day of the few years which are allotted him on earth.

This doctrine will be pronounced by many to be in direct contradiction to their experience; and especially by the schoolmasters, or professional men, who feel so much refreshed by a vacation, and who return with so much boasted vigor to their pursuits. But, is not the very lassitude, which makes them desire a vacation, a proof that they have been over-taxing themselves, —working harder than Nature meant they should? And does not the very vigor which they feel on their return, indicate an accumulated power, which tempts them to renewed excesses? But I am again departing from my subject, which warns me that I have used my brain long enough for this time, and that I should close by expressing the deep interest which I feel in the noble cause, which you have at heart, and the sincere wishes which I entertain for your success, and your happiness.

Truly yours,

S. G. HOWE.

ACME
BOOKBINDING CO., INC.

MAY 6 1991

100 CAMBRIDGE STREET
CHARLESTOWN, MASS

