

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1855.

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AUGUSTA:

STEVENS & BLAINE, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1855.

FIRST REPORT

OF THE

Superintendent of Common Schools,

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

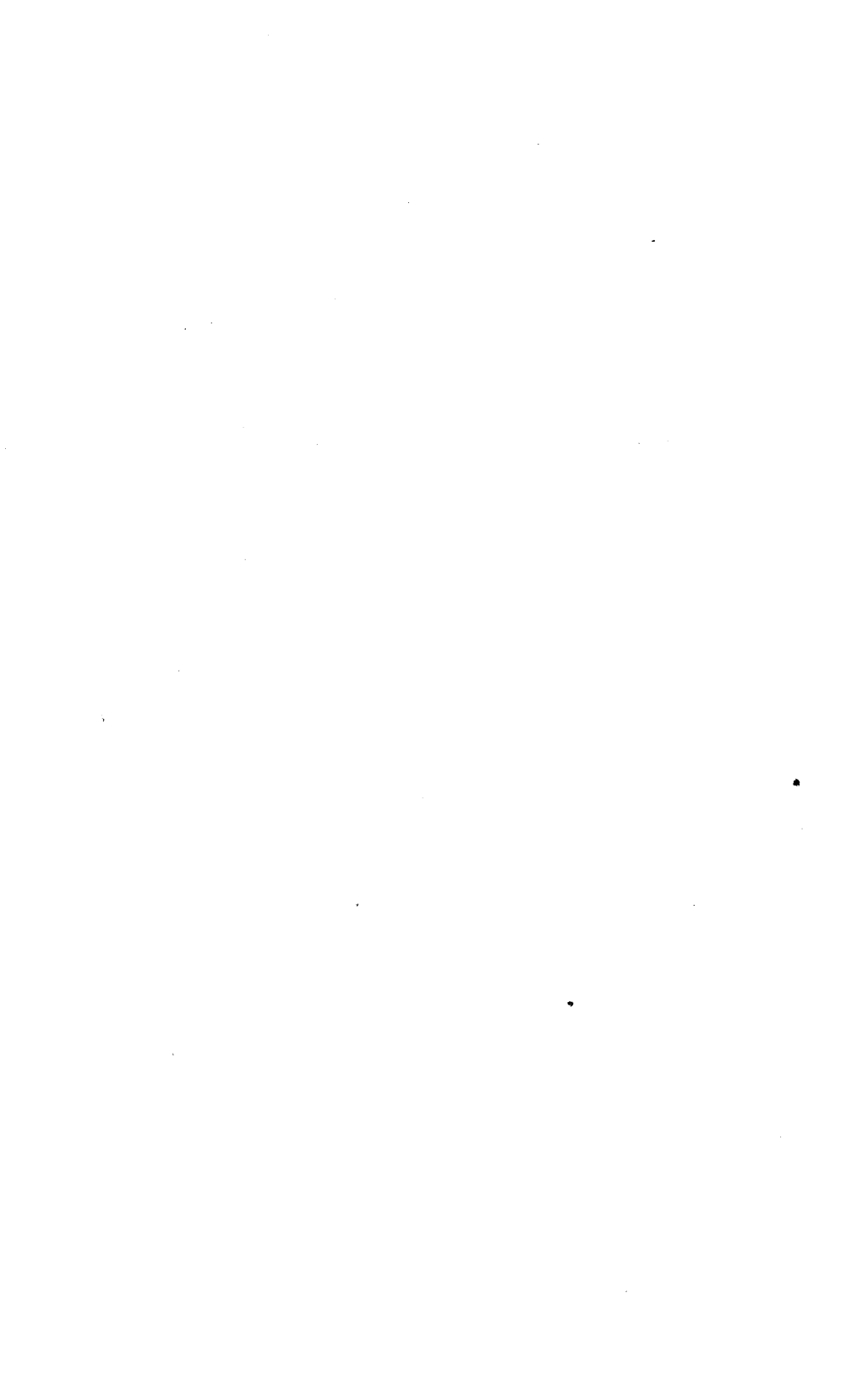
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# REPORT.

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*To the Governor and Council  
of the State of Maine:*

The Law approved April 17, 1854, providing for the appointment of a Superintendent of Common Schools, makes it his duty "to report to the Governor and Council annually, prior to the session of the Legislature, the results of his inquiries and investigations, and the facts obtained, of the school returns, including such suggestions and recommendations, as in his judgment, will best promote the improvement of Common Schools."

Since my appointment under this law, there have been no complete school returns to the office of the Secretary of State. The facts and statistics from the summer sessions only, furnish no reliable data for any general conclusions. The six months, which have not yet elapsed, have afforded little opportunity for extended observations or thorough investigations concerning the theory and practice of our Common Schools. This communication, therefore, must be received rather as an apology, than a full report of an official year.

Anxious to adopt that course which promised the most immediate, practical good to our educational system, your Superintendent, immediately on receiving his commission, consulted your predecessor in office, as to the most judicious improvement of this remnant of the year—more particularly the practicability of holding Teachers' Conventions, required in the law. To this inquiry it was replied, that there was not "time enough to complete the necessary arrangements." To content myself, "for the residue of the year, with lecturing upon the subject of Education, visiting schools, and con-

ferring with school officers," &c. This counsel, from one so well qualified to judge, having for several years filled with distinguished success, the office of the Secretary of the Board of Education—with the concurring advice of other gentlemen of educational experience, decided my course of action. This course seemed the more seasonable, inasmuch as the State had not been explored with reference to this subject, for several years. To act understandingly, therefore, it was important to examine the premises, before any intelligent effort could be made.

In accordance with this advice, an educational tour was early commenced. Those parts of the State were first visited, which were supposed, from their remote position, to have enjoyed less of the personal attention of former laborers in this cause. Two or three weeks were spent in the County of Aroostook. This large and rich section of the State, has suffered from a want of Common Schools. Its sparse population, over an extended surface, has prevented its compliance with that old Puritan, New England law, "to teach their children and apprentices so much learning, as may enable them properly to read the English tongue." Too many of the present generation, born on the soil, have failed to secure the birthright of every citizen—an elementary education. Too many are obliged, in their daily business, to substitute a cross for their signature. There are, however, relieving views. In some of those rude houses may be found proficient who would grace any school,—little girls drawing on the black-board correct outline maps of the individual and congregated States of our Union,—boys too, scarcely in their teens, explaining the rationale of the cube root. On the western boundary of Aroostook, but in Penobscot County, there is a settlement of Irish Catholics, where unusual interest is manifested in their school privileges. Notwithstanding the strength of Catholic reverence for their place of worship, the chapel at *Benedicta* is not regarded too sacred for secular instruction. A faithful, energetic female has taught here for several seasons. Such is the progress of the children, their parents are unwilling to risk a change

of teachers, even for one of a faith more in sympathy with their own. The French settlements, for about sixty miles on the St. John, extending from Fish river to Grand Falls, have been frequent subjects of legislative consideration, and objects of very liberal appropriations by the State. It was deemed advisable to visit those Plantations, to learn something of their prospects and wants, as well as to show to them that, however peculiar their frontier situation, they are not cut off from the sympathy and superintendence of the Government. In no part of his journey, was your Superintendent received with greater hospitality, or listened to with more apparent interest. Mons. Dionne, of the Parish of St. Luce, *au Chatanquau*, very cordially gave me an opportunity to address a word to his large congregation of six or seven hundred, and himself enjoined on them at length, the importance of my mission. At the polls, during the Gubernatorial election, in Madawaska Plantation, another opportunity of addressing the people was afforded, through the politeness of Mons. Cormier, the Register of Deeds and Clerk of the Plantation. Parents are anxious to have their children taught the English language, and some employ private teachers in their families, for this purpose. Isolated as they are, however, by speech and by position, adhering to the customs and language of their fathers, it was not to be expected that this people, as a whole, would discover any less of their constitutional, national *insouciance* towards educational privileges, than in other departments of civil and social economy.

In the prosecution of my tour, routes were selected with some reference to an economy of time and expense. Many points of interest, therefore, were unavoidably passed by.

It was a primary object to embrace in this journey, as many Academies and other Seminaries of learning, as practicable, in order to see those preparing to go out as teachers, the present winter. Such Public Schools were visited, as were found in session. Whenever circumstances favored, the children were assembled and addressed separately, to better inculcate the importance of improving their

time, appreciating their privileges, taking care of their school-rooms, discriminating their company, and early cultivating habits of kindness, truth, and temperance—in general, to illustrate familiarly and historically, by precept and example, “how empty learning, and how vain is art, except to guide the life and mend the heart”—that without virtue’s fitting appropriation, educational privileges will only prove “shining instruments to finish faults illustrious, and give infamy renown.”

To gain access to parents has been the first object of all my arrangements. Whenever and wherever such an opportunity offered, it was improved. Owing to the necessity of travelling by public stages, and the difficulty of always anticipating their routes and connections, it sometimes occurred that the notice of meetings was not sufficiently extended to secure large audiences,—for it should be remembered that, while six or seven hours’ advertisement is long enough to secure paying hearers to a mountebank or pantomime, as many days’ notice is requisite for an auditory on the more serious topic of our State Schools,—involving an annual expense of at least half a million of dollars. The most important points and centres of influence, in the more northern and eastern counties, have been visited in this brief tour, of two thousand miles. Besides the opportunities of addressing the children in the various towns visited, about forty public addresses have been made, and several hundred teachers of both sexes met, to whom such suggestions and words of encouragement were given, as seemed most appropriate. My chief and only aim has been, from a personal visit to the schools, or an interview with gentlemen interested and competent to judge, to earn their true condition, that my public addresses might be as practicable as possible, and adapted to the necessities of those districts and towns.

The extremes of interest manifested in my mission, are so divergent, that no average can be easily formed; while the intermediate degrees are so variable, that it is as difficult to specify in detail, as to report in general. A few references to extreme cases, may suffice



to furnish the lights and shades of this missionary field, without giving a more complete picture. At a remote point of the State, in a village without a church, academy, court-house, or town-hall, the citizens, ladies as well as gentlemen, with only two or three hours' notice, volunteered to meet me at the public house, where the evening was spent in a free interchange of opinions. In another town, somewhat larger, furnished with a church, hall, and an academy endowed by the State, the committee man could not find time, in 24 hours, to post a single notice of my lecture: so that at the appointed hour, the Superintendent was the first to oversee the ringing of the bell, the warming, and the lighting of the room! Occasionally, parents are found who take no other interest in the Common Schools, than to criticise their instruction or embarrass their discipline. Others there are, who are ready to aid them with counsel or contribution, and, to use their own language, would rather dispense with a daily meal, than lose their advantages. Among teachers, may be found equal extremes of interest; a few preferring personal ease to the progress of their pupils—others, at great sacrifice, teaching in season and out of season, and, in every way possible, seeking to advance their scholars—one, energetic, philanthropic female, taking a long walk into the suburbs of her town, to instruct a small school of colored children in the very rudiments of learning, as well as in manners and morals, because no one else would make the sacrifice. Some never furnish an illustration, nor give any explanation of the text: with no greater sign of intelligence than one of Maelzel's automata, they break silence only to correct a mistake or indicate a move; others, occupy the attention of their scholars so much in general remarks, as to leave them no time for study, and afford a subject of complaint that, they are "obliged to do their studying out of school." One trains his pupils to control themselves, and they present a picture of a well ordered government; like Virgil's race of Saturn, just, not by obligation, nor law, but by their free choice, *haud vincolo nec legibus aequam sponte sua*. Another utterly fails in a similar experiment; during an

hour's visit to such a school, of twenty-five or thirty young men and young ladies, every member left, successively, without obtaining the consent of their teacher, or even signifying their wish to leave. In one district, a "Classical teacher" regards the study of English grammar as unnecessary; in another, it is allowed to monopolize the time and attention due to other studies. In one town, the schools are graded, but by age only; in another, not age, but some one branch, constitutes the test for admission to a higher rank. In a flourishing town, in the eastern section of the State, there is a commodious room for 80 pupils; the average attendance, last summer, was only 31 per cent.—in another high-school, of equal size, in a western city of Maine, there was an average attendance of 98 per cent. In the former school, only one boy attended, continuously and promptly, through the whole session; in the latter, the register does not specify a single instance of tardiness. While there is a decided improvement in the school architecture of the State, there is still a great difference in the finish and furniture of our school-houses. Most of those red cubic forms, so familiar to our childhood, have been better appropriated as manufactories for horse-shoes and tree-nails. A few yet remain, that their ominous historic color may serve, both as an index of progress and as a warning to passing generations.

In this summary, committees and supervisors might be included, as well as parents and teachers. Honorable mention could be made of not a few, who are contributing money, and devoting time, and acquisitions more precious, to the improvement of our Common Schools. Men, without any personal interest in their advantages, are laboring, with a zeal, truly commendable, for their perfection. But this representation too, has its reverse. Those intrusted with the examination of teachers, and the whole conduct of the schools, are, too often, men incompetent for the proper discharge of their duties. In one large town, with 800 or 900 names on its school-roll, the committee visited the school but twice in two years; in another, the supervisor could judge of the qualifications of those

applying for certificates, only through their handwriting; in a third, orthography, rather than chirography, constitutes the test; such words, perhaps, as *phthisic* and *manœuvre* become the standard of those literary qualifications specified in statute. This summary method has not the merit of originality even; it can claim some for variety, if "not so long by the head as honorificabilitudinitatibus;" a word from one of Shakspeare's clowns, and which, anglicised, was prominent in the spelling exercise of Dr. Bowditch's school days.

Besides the extreme cases of interest and indifference on the part of parents; of energy and enthusiasm, tact and talent, with their opposites, on the part of teachers; of the competency and incompetency of committees, there are views of a more general character to be drawn from this subject. These observations cannot have failed to occur to every one, at all familiar with this subject. They are repeated here, not as any thing new, but in hope that their repetition may secure what they have lost in novelty.

The first noticeable evil, which salutes the eye and ear of the casual visitor to our country schools, is the want of proper discipline. An aptness to teach, is no rarer a gift than a talent to govern. They are both qualifications peculiar to the successful teacher; but, so seldom found together, that we rather admire their union than seek to secure it. The art of governing is as important an element, in the educational regime, as that of teaching. It is more important with us, than elsewhere. In other countries, there is the outward pressure of physical force to bind society together—military or religious enthusiasm, personal popularity of some chief, or the divine right of a king. With us, the cold majesty of law alone, claims our reverence and obedience; unless, while children we are taught its value, we shall never as citizens, acknowledge its power. Who are those criminals who have become amenable to the courts of the country, for the violation of its laws? Whence came the convicts of our prisons—the members of our Reform School? Where did they practice their first lessons of rebellion, but in the family-school and in the common-school? Perhaps, their parents

marked it as an indication of promise, when in early life, at home or abroad, they resisted restraint, and said in spirit, if not in word,

“ *Submission*, Dauphin, 'tis a mere French word,  
We English warriors wot not what it means.”

The usefulness of many schools is seriously impaired, every winter, from the want of this tact on the part of teachers, and of co-operation on the part of parents. Children, at home, are asking more indulgence, are claiming greater liberty; self-confidence and insubordination are the fruits, everywhere discoverable, from yielding to these demands. Parents, who will not deny the importance of discipline, in the abstract, will question its expediency in its personal application to their own children,—like the woman, who raised in her garden hellebore, for a cure for worms in her neighbors' children, but “it wrought too roughly to give to any of her own.” If parents and guardians will renounce their authority at home, they cannot act for society. A king can only abdicate for his own person, not for his monarchy; much less should those who surrender authority over their own children, expect to annul all government abroad. “The minimum of punishment is the maximum of excellence,” everywhere; but so long as society requires government, our schools will need discipline. Nor can our Common Schools be improved by reversing the natural order of things, and transferring the reins of government to the children, or by any such division of labor as would separate the responsibility of government from that of instruction. That golden age, when the State shall need no polity, and the citizen be a law unto himself, can only be introduced through the educational system,—its first approach will be announced by children, its early dawning be witnessed in the District School.

The crowded state of our schools requires notice also. Their rooms seem to be regarded as a kind of educational cars,—in which as many children as can be crowded, with or without seats, will be borne along to the desired goal. In no other way can we account for the unreasonable number admitted. In one instance, two District

Schools, of different grades and teachers, occupied the opposite ends of the same room. The report, of a former year, of the committee in a town that stands high for its common school privileges, says of one of its school-rooms, "it accommodated, or rather discommoded, 147 scholars." It is not uncommon to find 80, 90, and 100 children assigned to the same room and to one teacher. Sometimes a still greater number, (as high as 160) has been found under the same mistress or master. The precise number that should be allotted to one teacher, must depend very much on the attainments and classification of those to be taught. The younger and the less advanced they are, the more time and attention they will require. A class of fifty can receive more instruction in Kuhner's Greek Grammar, for example, in an half-hour's recitation, than one half the number of children can derive from a whole day's drill in "Cobwebs to catch flies." In a school of 120 children, one-fourth was found learning to read. In another of 90 scholars, one-half that number were learning their letters. In either of the schools, the A-B-C-darians alone could very profitably occupy the entire time of the most energetic teacher. To insure to our children any thing more than the name of education, they must have more time and attention given them. It is not very uncommon for children, in the primary schools, to spend whole sessions, if not days, without a recitation. Some of the younger ones, on first going to school, actually retrograde. Parents, who have experienced the difficulty of maintaining order and securing progress, in their own households, of half a dozen brothers and sisters, should expect little in the way of improvement where the children of forty or fifty families are thrown together,—these too, of various dispositions and culture, and imposed for discipline and instruction upon some delicate female, it may be, who is employed from motives of benevolence, because as said of one, "she is kind of sickly and can't do much work, and so she took the school." The Lancasterian mode of teaching consigns hundreds, and even a thousand, to a single individual; and the education imparted, is undoubtedly better than the utter ignorance of an European popu-

lace. The thousands of India, where originated this multitudinous system, may be benefitted even by the very little it affords. Our children are born to other hopes and prospects, and they must have not a remedial, but a definite and disciplinary training. Every scholar is to be a citizen; and as a citizen, may exercise the greatest power, and fill the highest office known to our constitution.

Important branches of an elementary education, are receiving less attention than formerly. Reading and writing occupy cardinal places in the educational course; however humble, they are primary and indispensable to any commercial or social position in society. Judging from the bad writers and spellers, in the various walks of life, one might infer that it is with us, as formerly in France, derogatory to write legibly, and pedantic to spell correctly. A British Queen discovered great versatility of talent, in her orthography of the word *sovereign*; but a popular teacher, of my own acquaintance, contrived to give as many variations as seven to the spelling of the shorter word *school*, in a code of eight rules. The neglect of writing, may be owing, in part, to the crowded state of the schools. The increase of studies too, may have occasioned this decrease of attention to particular branches. The more extended the programme, the more divided must be the time allotted to individual parts—the greater the space over which the curriculum extends, the more necessary, it has seemed, to increase the speed.

Progress is the ambition of our schools. It is measured by the surface gone over, rather than by the intellectual power and moral nerve acquired. Recitations are regarded as the way-stations; the oftener passed, the quicker the final terminus is gained. This mistaken idea of studying merely to recite, rather than to advance in knowledge and intellectual growth, has led to a very mechanical habit. If a lesson can be retained long enough to drop it into the ear of the instructor, the work is done, the mind is released, and may let go, forever, its hold on the given lesson; as if the teacher is the true beneficiary of the school-room. A large boy, when told to resume his recitation, after a slight interruption, replied: "I don't

know as I can say it now." He must be taken at the nick of time, the flood of thought, 'or lose the venture.' Another boy, when reminded of his spelling task, a column of a score or more of words, answered: "I ought to have it, for I've been over it enough times." On a closer inspection, the little fellow was found keeping score on his slate, the times he ran through his column. The wonder was, when he came to recite, that he had secured even two words, in the haste of twenty-seven repetitions. From this mechanical habit of the schools, has arisen the practice of memorizing so much; it being found easier to commit the lesson to memory, than so thoroughly to analyze and understand its elements, as to answer questions not immediately suggested by the text. The habit of some teachers, in proposing questions, increases the evil; it is done in such phraseology, as to require only a "yes," or "no;" and the risk of a guess is very much lessened by emphasis, so that children more often remind one of the Rapping Mediums, than of those who speak that they do know. Other cases might be given, not only illustrative of what is meant, but in proof of the real existence of this evil. A class of fifteen or twenty of both sexes, from eight to fourteen years of age, was reading a lesson of poetry. "What is the name of that piece?" said their Superintendent. They unanimously answered, "Christian Consolation." In order to ascertain whether their knowledge of the lesson extended beyond the mere sound of its subject, he again asked, "Is that the name of a girl, or a boy?" The young lads responded, very readily, "A boy! a boy!" After a few words of caution against mistake, the question was repeated, but in an order slightly changed, "Is that the name of a boy or a girl?" The little girls now supposed their sex was meant, and replied, "a girl! a girl!" Adaptation of exercises to the capacities of children, is the only corrective of this habit. The intellectual constitution can never be improved by food not convenient to it. That the aliment of knowledge may be appropriated, enter into the very circulation of daily life, become part and parcel of the intellectual bone and muscle, it must be not only digestible but palatable.

“Thought is the food, feeling the vital air, volition the exercise of mental life.” Any other education is only of a fungus growth. The mind will not grow, says Carlyle, like vegetable roots, with being simply littered with an etymological compost of learning. What profit can there be, to children, from lessons in Shakspeare or Milton? A class of boys, from 10 to 12 years of age, was found engaged in reading the description of the evening in Paradise,

———now glow'd the firmament  
 With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led  
 The starry host, redde brightest; till the moon  
 Rising in clouded majesty, at length,  
 Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,  
 And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

To a youth with no mere knowledge of astronomy than sufficient to tell the rising and setting of the sun, and moon, by the kitchen almanac—nor any other acquaintance with stones, than such specimens as the orchard affords—whose imagination never seared higher than the smoke of his father's chimney, this elegant extract can only be unintelligible jargon. The unreflecting mind of a boy would be as likely to take it for a description of the earth as of heaven—as a contest between the speed of horses, rather than the splendor of stars.

Mere associations of sound, reminiscences of the black-board or recitation bench, accidental helps of time and place, afford no proper basis for a practical education. That boy is little profited by his arithmetic, who can give no more intelligible explanation of the rule of Division, than by making its sign )(, with his finger in the air, with the accompanying remark, “where it comes in that a' way.” What child, with half a thought, would mistake hordes of robbers for ‘horn-robbers?’ What boy old enough to drink cold water—much less the boy large enough to wear a pair of skates, should answer, to an inquiry for “the principal points of interest in the description of rivers,” “their sore-mouth,” instead of their *source and mouth*? Every one conversant with schools, has witnessed illustrations of this evil, of following rote, rather than



consulting reason. The most simple question, will confuse scholars if clothed in other phraseology, addressed with different emphasis, from that to which they have been accustomed, or in any other order than that in which they have been practiced. It would require infinitesimals to express the value of such teaching—the utter worthlessness of any education that does not make its acquisitions a personal incarnation. In view of this mechanical, mnemonical practice of our primary schools, one is persuaded, with the French writer, to know by heart, is not to know, *savoir par cœur n'est pas savoir*. This faculty, memory, so exclusively depended on by our scholars, is a most important member of the intellectual family. It stands sentinel at the citadel of the mind. It is the key to all the treasures of the intellectual storehouse. But, to bestow on it exclusive care, would be as unwise, as for the banker to pledge all his wealth for a patent lock, or fire-proof safe. The memory is the silken cord, interwoven in the very texture of our mental fabric, which secures all its treasures—the key to the home of thought—to sacrifice the whole structure for the sake of it, would be worse than the burning of the tapestries from Raphael's cartoons, to get their golden thread.

Superficiality is becoming the crying evil of American education. The loose manner of getting and reciting lessons, already referred to, obtains mostly in the lower schools. In the higher grades, there is a want of thoroughness and of symmetry. As the course of study has been enlarged and additional branches introduced, the desire has been, to seek an acquaintance with the new guests, to the neglect of old friends. A vitiated taste in teachers, false pride of parents, but more often the misjudged ambition of pupils, is to be charged with this evil. A programme of studies for our High Schools, furnishes a new exercise, language, or science for almost every month of the allotted time. Over this prescribed course, scholars are hurried without gaining any permanent, valuable, practical knowledge. From day to day, and from term to term, they are borne along like the hasty traveller, over a tract of country, acquiring no information of the principles and habits of the region

passed. The extent of acquisition from such a course, comprises a few adventitious facts, that have been forced upon the senses by the way—such as the ease of the cars, the fees of the cabs, the names of the conductors, or the width of the gauge, by which the journey has been made. What excuse can there be for the study of Virgil, by a young lady of 18—20 years of age, before she has learned to spell the name of her own town? Why should scholars be allowed to study the higher branches of mathematics before they have mastered the simple rules of arithmetic? If the education of such is interrupted, as is often the case, they find their labor lost, and must be reckoned with those who began to build, but were not able to finish. As well, for all practical purposes, teach the spoken dialect to a mute, as impart the algebraic language to one unable to use it. Some similar ambition for progress, perhaps, may tempt a class to jump from one extreme of the Latin curriculum to the other—omitting all the intermediate stages, Cæsar, Cicero, Virgil, Sallust, &c., and pass from an Introductory Reader to some author at the foot of the list. There is a latent scepticism as to the precise point where education is to be found, and the means by which it can be secured. The impression with many, is no more definite than this: that, it is somewhere in the Common School field, between the boundaries of four and twenty-one years—and that the desired prize will be found, provided the entire surface is gone over. The invalid savage, restored to health, after drinking at a brook, but too ignorant of medical science to decide whether the cure was effected by the sanative qualities of the water, the time, manner, or vessel from which it was drank—some circumstance attendant on his journey, or by the combination of some or of all of these, is obliged to repeat the minutiae of the first visit to effect a second cure. Not very differently appear some seekers after the fountain of knowledge. Conscious that the healing gift is somewhere within the regime of a school, but unable to decide on its precise locale, the entire routine is rigidly enforced, the slightest omission of letter or sound punctiliously corrected, and the same details repeated in every

succcessive case. Such empty forms, or magic incantations, can never bring the desired relief to the masses. However constantly our children may cry "sesame," at Knowledge's gate, her hidden treasures will never, by such means, be opened to them. Howsoever often, teachers may compass her walls, howsoever long blow the horn, and howsoever loud blast the trumpet, never can the heights of science be taken by means so inefficient.

The discipline of our schools, their crowded state, their mechanical habits, their superficial instruction, and unsymmetrical education, have been deemed worthy of notice here, as the surest means of their correction. These evils are not universal, though sufficiently general to engage the attention of all friends of a complete education. How few, comparatively, of the graduates of our common schools, bring away sufficient knowledge of the very rudiments of an English education, to enable them to compose a decent letter,—not to add, to write a proper note of hand, or make a legal endorsement,—and thus are all their lifetime subject to bondage, through fear, lest some vital mistake in the daily business of life, should risk their property or expose their ignorance. How few, comparatively, after a dozen years' study of Arithmetic, are able to cast the interest on a note, ton a piece of timber, or measure a load of boards;

' Not to know at large of things remote  
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know  
That which before us lies in daily life,  
Is the prime wisdom,—what is more, is fume,  
Emptiness, or fond impertinence:  
And renders us, in things that most concerns,  
Unpracticed, unprepared, and still to seek.'

Having remarked on these evils, it may not be out of place here, to refer to the remedy. This can only be done in general language. Nothing is more certain in educational history, than that the feelings must be interested, to insure any permanent impression. The heart and the head of the child, are in much closer proximity, than in the man. While such studies are to be selected as will develope thought, mature the inner man, open sources of valuable

information and of profitable moral instruction, they must be made of present interest to the youthful feelings, as well as of practical value to the future citizen. The emotional element is the agent of intellectual progress in the school-room. Neither the duration of confinement, nor the evolutions of rehearsals and reviews, will insure improvement. Let the young pupil be set fast in the stocks of the old regime—placed between the upper and nether millstone, and an unceasing head-power be applied, it will prove useless. Confine the body as you may, you have no distrain-warrant for the mind. Incarcerate the little child within impregnable walls, its unfettered soul will scale your enclosures. Its tiny thoughts, through other avenues, than those “windows of the soul,” which alone can be barricaded by books, will escape, as on eagle’s wings, to haunts and homes more congenial. John Wesley is said to have learned all the letters of the alphabet in one day. With teachers of equal interest with a mother, and of as much time, other children might accomplish the same—for “the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.”

There is room for the exercise of judgment by the teacher; no one definite course can be prescribed indiscriminately for all. The taste and previous culture will have to be consulted. The study of the organism of man may relieve the mechanism of logic—the laws of physical being, the rules of grammar. With younger pupils, the forms and attractions of birds and beasts, afford more pleasure than the figures and graces of rhetoric. Mineral deposits and geological formations will interest the senses, more than algebraic analysis—crystal and shell, more than calculus and surd. The abstruse and exact sciences will prove more profitable, after living realities have, for awhile, engaged the attention and awakened the curiosity of youth. Let them be regaled on earth’s surface, before summoned into the less palpable regions of metaphysics and mathematics. The vegetable world presents a charming field, introductory to the natural sciences. This, which a German botanist calls the altar-cloth in the temple of God, cannot fail to call forth the praise and improve the heart of childhood. Indeed all nature teems with

interest for buoyant youth. Her studies furnish the best alternative in the present abnormal state of our Common School system. The whirl of the top, the skipping of the pebble, the bound of the ball, the flight of the bubble, no more interest the child abroad in the air and on the shore, than would the experiments of philosophy. In this gratification of the curiosity, taste and habits of thought might be turned to profitable investigation and reflection. Natural philosophy is our constant companion, from childish years. She fans us under the wide-spreading oak, whistles for us through the forest—wafts our mimic fleet across the brook, leads us o'er the ice's deceitful face, buoys us on the ocean's treacherous bosom. In short, she flies with our ball, rises with the kite, twirls in the sling, skips in the pebble, dances in the top, and breaks in the bubble.

The co-operation of parents is indispensable in this work of interesting children in their studies. It can be most effectually done by frequent visits to the school. Every shipyard requires the personal, daily or weekly inspection of its proprietors. No farm can make the same returns without a continual oversight of those interested in the soil and stock. By frequent visits to their schools, parents will impart an enthusiasm to the members. Besides the opportunity of testing the application and improvement of children; of judging of the discipline of the school; such visits will promote a better feeling towards the teachers, and in return insure from them a deeper interest in the children. One of our oldest and most successful teachers, at present in charge of an important trust in a city school, when asked "what one thing is most needed for the improvement of our Common Schools" said, "I would have the parents visit the schools frequently." The general complaint, from teachers, is, "parents, however much they may feel at home, don't discover any interest in the success of the schools, by visiting them." Pains has been taken to collect statistics on this point. The greatest number of parental visits found, is a single instance of fifteen or twenty parents, out of sixty families represented in the children. This small number, only a fractional sixth, was regarded by the

teacher as "a great many,"—and that it is an extreme case, may be seen by a comparison with others. In a city, ranking high for its annual appropriations to the cause of Common Schools, for its costly buildings, their expensive furnishing, and experienced teachers, your Superintendent visited three schools in succession—in these three schools, containing, in their children, representatives from 40, 60, and 70 families, there were, during one session, 8, 3, and 6 parental visits—making 17 visits, by one or other parent, from 170 families! In a primary school, of the same town, of 120 children, from 4 to 9 years of age, representing 75 families at least, its teacher could recall no visits. In another, containing representatives from 100 families, "five parents had called, but they came to introduce strangers." In a flourishing town, with 900 names on its roll of scholars, there was not a visit from a single parent, in any one of the five village schools, during the past summer session—excepting the official call of a member of the committee, and the gratuitous visit of a clergyman. The average attendance at the schools in this town is only 300, being but one-third of the children from 4 to 21 years. In another town of equal size but of higher literary reputation, having 800 or 1000 children enrolled, almost an equal degree of neglect was found. These schools were visited on the closing day of the session, but no parents appeared to witness the progress of their children: one teacher remarked that there had been "special pains taken to secure visits from the parents during the session; and yesterday, I sent a particular message by the scholars, that their friends, if they could spare a little time to-day, would come in and examine their children." Other teachers, in this village, testified to a similar effort; through these combined influences, from one hundred and fifty families, represented in their various schools, they were able in the course of the session, to secure calls from three mothers. These instances, so far as my observation has extended, are only fair specimens of the neglect of parents. Other examples given in this report, whether of teachers or scholars, of discipline or instruction, furnished by my own experience, are not to be con-

sidered of general application. In regard to parental visits, exceptions may be found in some of the High Schools; parents often visit these, with their friends, for their personal pleasure, or from a kind of Town pride. It is in the schools of lower grade, where this missionary labor is needed—if that can be called missionary work, which is so intimately connected with our social happiness and municipal peace. In view of this general neglect, especially in consideration of our vast outlay of annual expense, Luther's reproof, for the neglect of children's culture, seems not too severe, in comparing parents to the ostrich, which, having laid the egg, takes no further care for the offspring.

To secure the best results from our educational outlay, we need improvement among teachers. They have long been the subject of complaint. Undoubtedly there are those now discharging the duties of this office, who cannot write correctly their own certificates. In too many towns, there is great carelessness on this point. Old testimonials are sometimes legal tender with obliging agents and kind hearted committees. That it may be seen how little confidence can be placed in such currency, a case may be cited, of an examination of a candidate to teach, in one of the oldest towns of Maine. Among many testimonials of literary qualifications, four were from the successive preceptors of the Academy where the candidate received his education. One of them certifies, "I am well acquainted with his literary qualifications, and consider him well versed in arithmetic, grammar, geography, and writing, and in all the branches usually taught in our public schools." A fifth testimonial is signed by four professional gentlemen, who certify "having examined him in the several branches taught in the common schools, we find him qualified as the law requires." Respecting Arithmetic, the candidate could not tell the difference between Simple and Compound Addition. He could not enumerate as many figures, if all the same, as he had fingers on one hand. Nor did he know that the earth has any other motion than its annual one around the sun. To the question, "what causes day and night" he replied, "never heard—

believe 'tis the moon passing between the sun and earth—not certain what it is.” He had never found London in his geographical researches,—placed the Volga among the rivers of the United States; the Alleghany mountains, in the ‘south-west part of Europe,’ and also Canada. Our candidate could not decide, whether the A. D. on an almanac in sight, indicated the time of Creation, the birth of Christ, or the Declaration of our Independence. These few, among many answers, were recorded at the time,—nor were any corrections made to confuse him. A few instances of spelling, such as *Inglash, gramar, consunit, ignorance, certifecats*, may suffice as specimens of the “literary qualifications” of one, who had taught several winters, with “entire satisfaction,” as his certificates testified. This extreme case, which came under my own supervision, is given merely as a proof of the facility with which testimonials may be procured, and not of the qualifications of our teachers generally. Obligated, as they are, to alternate between a sessional school and some mechanical occupation, there is neither time nor inducement for an extended preparation. The fluctuating nature of the employment constrains many to seek other avocations. Two teachers were met the past summer, in one day, who spent the Winter-Quarter teaching and the rest of the year in Peddling,—this has been pursued, by one of them, for five successive years—forced after three months’ theory of “tare and tret,” to practice the other nine months in the merchandise of rags—to illustrate the harmony of “Proportion” in the music of tin-ware, and the truth of “Position” on the box of a Peddler’s Cart. Many of our female teachers are compelled, by necessity, to accept the tempting offers of Lowell and Manchester, in preference to the more pleasant and healthy charge of a District School. Many of both sexes annually leave the State for business elsewhere. Our quota of teachers is kept good, in number, but the places of the more experienced and energetic, are supplied by others less qualified. If something like an annuity was promised by the State, to all who should continue to teach in our Common Schools, after having honorably and successfully acquitted themselves for a



given number of years among us, it might have a favorable effect in retaining some of our best teachers. It is a serious fact, and one which conflicts very much with the prosperity of our schools, that there is no more permanency in the profession. What is more singular, we have no such profession in Maine. The Compendium of the 7th Census gives to our professions of Law, Medicine, and Divinity, 2212 males,—“other pursuits requiring education, 1727” only. Subtracting the class in our private and public seminaries, the engineers and “other pursuits requiring education,” it will be seen, that our 6000 teachers, of both sexes, have no local habitation or name. They are reckoned in other pursuits not requiring an education. They are engaged in the fisheries, in farming, in logging. Every winter the question is debated, by not a few, whether to spend the season in the school-room, or in the logging-camp. A good “swamper,” the pioneer of the logging company, and whose business is to open a road for the team to travel, the few weeks of winter, gets higher wages than he who trains our children to cut through life a path broad and during as human influence, and long as eternity itself. A smart “chopper,” a man only “famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees,” is better paid, than one skilful to subdue the giant passions, the deep-rooted vices, and elevate the soul to God. The “teamster” entrusted with brutish beasts, earns fifty dollars per month and board, because “to take care of oxen requires a man”—as if cant-dogs and a bob-sled are of more difficult use, than the Calculus and Gunter’s scale. The very “barkers,” the cheapest operatives in the logging-camp, whose duty is simply to prepare the load for the team, trim and fit the trees for their transit, receive as good pay as the majority of our teachers. These men who are called to prepare our olive plants for the voyage of life, to divest them of all such excrescences in manners and morals, as may encumber their way, or affect their usefulness, fit them to bear the burden and heat of manhood, to attain the goal of life, to be accepted and well approved pieces in the great superstructure of society.

With so little inducement, it is not strange that there are so frequent changes in the profession of teaching; only a comparative few continue ten years in this business. Fewer still, finish the second decade. Probably not a score of Common School teachers in Maine, have made this the business of a life. What profession, in addition to original tact and talent, requires more practical experience, to be gained only by years of service? The arts of life, what are they? The educational gardener furnishes the seedlings, in whose future shadow alone, can flourish the fine, as well as "the coarser plants of daily necessity." The learned professions, how do they compare with the business of the teacher? Medical skill concerns the comforts of the present life—the educator prescribes for that which is to come, as well as for that which now is. The one, treats of the hygiene of the body only—the other, of the dietetics of the soul also. The art of the former, consists principally in a correct diagnosis—that of the latter, requires the additional skill of proper treatment. The science of Law, concerns the outward mechanism of society—but what barriers or codes has it ever created, which the discipline of the nursery could not overcome? Divinity, too, might be spared much of its practical theology by the homiletics of a proper education. A teacher's appropriate work, underlies all these. It is on his foundation that other professions build—he labors and others enter into his labors. Natural obtuseness of mind and accelerated nervous action—strength of animal passions and imbecility of reasoning powers—perversion of judgment as well as of taste—alienated action of appetites and propensities—cultivation of the affections—a want of benevolence and excess of sympathetic imitation—deranged sensations and perceptions—in fine, the teachers' practice embraces a deranged moral and disordered physical constitution. Thus, as we have seen, the teacher's work is at the foundations of society. In practical life, the architect, joiner, plasterer, plumber, painter, may err, and still correct his mistakes, or conceal them by some artistic ornament, or architectural finish; but, if the educational mason slights his contract, whether through

ignorance or negligence, the omission becomes apparent to the most casual observer. The higher the structure, the more expensive the decoration, the greater the contrast and more prominent its defect. The educator labors on a foundation, not of a temporary edifice—not for a ninety-nine years' lease—but it may be for a nation's existence; the influence of many such a structure may be coterminous with the great globe itself. It is on the broad, deep foundation, laid by a country schoolmaster, that one monument has risen, in this Western hemisphere, to eclipse all others, in its symmetrical dignity and solid material, and to become the admiration of the world. Thoroughness in every branch insures strength and utility. Like the Roman sewers, let the uncomely parts have more abundant honor. A Williams' faithfulness may produce other Washingtons.

A business of such responsibilities should be raised to the dignity of other professions. That it may have more permanency, we need offer inducements for a continuance in the office. Our Canadian neighbors have made "provision for superannuated or worn-out teachers." As a State recognition of its obligation to the profession, this act is more valuable, than for the mere pecuniary relief it may afford. Till there is more permanency, and better compensation, we cannot expect much improvement in the teachers of our Common Schools. The Athenians had a saying, so common was the business of teaching among their young men, when one had been long absent, "He is either dead or turned school master." To teach now, is a forlorn hope—it has been described, though unjustly, as the "grave of the intellect"—it is the tomb of ambition—the surrender of all prospect of wealth. If those, who, for a few months only, risk limb and life in the battles of their country, are entitled to a pension, of how much more regard are these worthy, who wear out their existence in this better service of the State—whose enthusiasm leads them, Sophocles-like, to give their expiring breath to their profession. A few teachers, of one entire generation, are still patiently enduring among us the trials of a mixed school—

dealing out by days and weeks the rich acquirements of a long life. Men qualified for a Professor's chair, with sensibilities quickened by a life of confinement, daily exposed to sudden transitions from classes in Geography to recitations in Greek—from Shaksperian verse and Latin historians, to prose spelling and English abecedarians. Those with whom the tragedies of Æschylus are as household words, not only obliged like the foreign reviewers to teach on oat-meal—but, in want of culinary assistants, to follow the practice of the Pharisaical doctors, the washing of cups and pots and brazen vessels.

As the only permanent remedy for incompetent teachers, the eyes of all are turned to Normal Schools. Their early establishment is ardently desired. As my limited time has been entirely occupied at home, there has been no opportunity for a personal examination of these Institutions. It would be vain, therefore, to introduce the subject here, except to refer to its able presentation in the Third Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education. In the meantime, much can be accomplished by the facilities already at hand—a faithful, persevering administration of the already existing laws. The cause is one we can ne'er give o'er, while the State is worth a thought, or human happiness an effort. To investigate the operation of our school laws, to collect information as to the arrangement of school districts, and the location of their school houses, calls for no little observation, nor any limited travel. To impart judicious advice as to text-books, the best methods of visiting and examining schools, the most approved methods of teaching; also of training and qualifying teachers for their duties, and of testing their qualifications, will require time and research. The Superintendent's duty, enclosing within its sphere about 400 towns, 4,000 districts, 6,000 teachers, with their 250,000 children, might well employ Briarean hands, and task Herculean endurance. State, Town, and local reports, from abroad as well as at home, are to be examined; for though as numerous as autumn leaves, and as worthless too, none can be omitted, lest some figure escape, or

color be lost. Besides the much to be found in standard authors, in our own and other languages, the current literature must be sifted, and every available source examined, that all may be garnered up for the improvement of our educational scheme—a system that may be made as efficient as it is comprehensive. When Loyola would recover to papacy, the nations lost by the Reformation, he began with the instruction of youth. When a German legendary, who first opened to that nation the mine of traditionary literature, would immortalize himself and nation, he sought his materials among the children; went into the street, gathered them into groups, and became one of them, that he might hear their nursery tales and incorporate them in his national work. As he sought counsel of the past from the young, so must those who would know of the future, inquire of the children in the street. The traditionary past was found chronicled in the memories of Musæus' audience, the coming future has a living personification in the groups of American streets. The object of life is education; the result of living is education. The institutions of the day, the phraseology of the highway, the atmosphere they breathe, are imparting influences to our children. These impressions are deepening from daily contact. Every successive day, every leisure hour; at morning dawn, busy noon, or evening shade, the process goes on without vacation or intermission. These influences, however bad they may be, to which the child is subjected, are brought into the State when he becomes a citizen. Every parent has a solemn contract with government, that his children shall be received into the state co-partnership, at majority. This obligation is unconditional. Government cannot nullify the covenant, nor repudiate its obligation. In contracts for the navy or army, the case is different; crooked spars or tainted provisions may be rejected, and thrown back upon the hands of those furnishing them; but, in the other case, if the time of delivery is only complied with, nothing else can vitiate the agreement, no matter how devious the conduct, how infected the life. It is this momentous obligation on the part of the State, that makes it a

primary, pressing duty to prepare all its children to become good citizens. For the years of minority passed, the age of pupillage gone, there is no recourse but to reform our punitive legislation.

Public Schools are too often regarded as rather a superfluous part of the great machinery of government: necessary, indeed, to be kept in nominal exercise, but in great doubt whether they actually accomplish much good. Some look upon this branch of the public economy as the early settlers of New England regarded town representation—obliged to furnish their representatives with a suit of clothes—they were chiefly careful, in selecting their candidate, of the size of his feet, or the breadth of his shoulders, that the coat and boots might be turned to further account. Is it any less ridiculous to select school agents, committees, or supervisors, with reference to their political dress? Did not the Puritans, in those early times of economy, discover as much wisdom, as modern partisans who sacrifice the success of their schools to a mere political triumph? With our Puritan ancestors education was every thing. It is more than two hundred years since they established civil government on this broad basis. During a lapse of more than two centuries, the conviction has been constantly increasing, that their judgment is the only true policy. World's Conventions and Industrial Associations may exhaust their ingenuity to find some better way of insuring happiness to the species; they will all at last fall back on this old, and only conservative influence of Common School education. When Symmes' theory of Concentric Spheres shall be established, some parallel discovery for the perfectibility of reason may be expected; in which there may be, as Dr. Mitchell said, "a most perfect system of creative economy, a great saving of stuff." When clairvoyance shall substitute eyes and ears for the million, we may dispense with books. When the philosopher of New Lanark shall get off the swaddling-clothes of society, then the man-machine will walk without the leading-strings of knowledge. This Government leans not on the strong arm of military power; it is from the people, and in them only, it lives and has its being. They are to appoint officers,

make laws, judge of the qualifications of the one, and of the observance of the other. The people is the nominal and real head, and as the heads of all governments, even in the darkest ages and in the most despotic times, have been instructed in the art of ruling, the same necessity exists among us. The people, as the legal head, must be indoctrinated in all that appertains to keeping the supreme sway. This exigency is the greater with us, inasmuch as our government is one of such multiform relations and nice arrangements. This field is a broad one, and as yet but slightly explored. The stability of our republican institutions depends not so much on the amount of the knowledge conferred, as on its character and general distribution. Like the air we breathe, knowledge depends for its salubrity, on freedom. We have all the means necessary for its general diffusion, in the Common Schools; it may be inquired if we need no change of its character, to insure the long continuance of our civil privileges. This may be secured by District and Common School Libraries, in part—but in what manner it may best be done, is not our present concern.

In former ages, education was made tributary to civil despotism. Since the yoke of political and ecclesiastical oppression has been thrown off, it has now the higher, nobler office of sustaining and advancing the institutions of liberty and religion. Education has long served the King and the Despot. It has been made an engine of slavery; let it now become the auxiliary of Freedom and Virtue—made to improve as well as adorn society—to bless as well as to beautify the walks of life. With the exception of extracts in our Reading books, there is little, if any thing, in our educational course, to which any monarchist can object. There is nothing, certainly, in the seven liberal branches of knowledge, for the Trivium and Quadrivium are old friends at Court. The dead languages and the abstruse sciences can never injure despotisms or despots, nor can they establish democracy. Neither a classical education, nor an exclusively literary and scientific one can supply the necessities of our case. The rules of Grammar must not absorb the rights of citizens;

nor the study of our vernacular even, exclude a knowledge of the mother constitution. Our national pride has naturalized every peculiarity of governmental policy, and trait of individual character. We have national societies and national parties—an American system and an American policy—we want an American education. The great principles of common and equal law should be as household words—the platform of equal rights, as familiar to every child, as the domestic hearthstone. Americans need instruction in this matter, as well as Romans. They had the maxims of law among the truisms of the nursery. Cicero says to his brother, “We learnt, when boys, the Twelve Tables, like a familiar rhyme”—*discebamus enim pueri XII [Tabulas] ut carmen necessarium*. Children are not born with any more intuitive knowledge than formerly. Every successive generation brings up old heresies in new forms. If our youth are to practise the virtues of the founders and defenders of our institutions, they must imbibe their spirit. In order to this, they must read the lives of those men, to whom, says Hume, the Christian world is indebted for its practical liberty. If we would inspire our youth with the same love of country, let them breathe the same moral atmosphere. Let them drop a tear over the sacrifices of our revolutionary soldiers, rather than exhaust their sympathies upon the battles of Marathon and Thermopylæ. Let them transfer some of their admiration from the forms of ancient liberty to the living realities of the nineteenth century. Liberty, there has been; but in comparison with its living embodiment among us, it is as the corpse, to the animate, breathing life. There has been eloquence too; but American youth might first visit the Capitulum of the Potomac, before searching for the Senate-house of Rome. To ensure an American education then, American liberty must be understood, American biography read, American history studied. Whether incorporated in text books of the school, or embodied in the Library of the District, it should be done. Our children are born to other prospects than the subjects of monarchies. They have other relations to fill, other duties to perform, other



responsibilities to discharge, and they require a far different education. The children of a monarchy or an empire, have no duty but to join the popular cry, "*God save the Queen!*" or "*Vive l'Empereur!*" But with us, they are the embryo form of government itself—whatever cast this incipient state receives, determines its future condition.

The adoption of the Union plan, or Graded system, is universally popular, so far as my observation has extended. This change has supplied the element necessary to the completeness of the scheme. It renders the educational analogous to the civil constitution, by opening alike to all, its privileges and honors. It is interesting to find that this modern improvement was provided for in the old Colonial laws: "Where any town shall increase to the number of 100 families, they shall set up a grammar school,—the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the University." It can no longer be said of the classics, as in Caxton's language of Virgil's *Æneid*, "this present book is not for a such uplandish man to labor therein nor read it, but only for a clerk, and a noble gentlemen, that feeleth and understandeth in feats of arms, in love and noble chivalry." The son or daughter from the humblest walks of life, may now be found among the children of those termed 'Honorable' among men, pursuing together a course of classical study. It is from the lowest strata, by the side of the muddiest streams, that many a beautiful flower will be taken, to grace the path of life. This republican feature is the charm of the whole system. To provide a distinct education for every class in society, to maintain a separate school for every profession, might be liberal, but would be neither politic nor national. It would foster caste, rather than promote a common intercourse, a common sympathy, and a common nationality. The regime of our public schools secures a perfect equality of privileges to all, however diverse their pretensions to social position. It encourages no pride of place, nor of power—it recognizes none of the factitious distinctions of society. It destroys the oligarchy of wealth, it creates an autocracy of moral

worth. It brings together the social extremes, and moulds opposite and antagonistic elements into one harmonious whole. It is the fusion of the rough sand with an acrid salt, which forms one of the most beautiful as well as useful mediums known to civilized society. The wearing of the cloth of gold with the cloth of frieze. In the educational tournaments of the school course, many a Damascus blade has been shivered by a rude bludgeon,—some champion of Gath has found more than his match in a “Jonathan son of Shimea,”—perhaps the despised representative of a crook or sling. So, on the other hand, some confident “parvenue” in these intellectual rencounters, these educational jousts, has found his rusty weapons sharpened and mental vigor quickened by steel of more polish and higher temper,—both have met a wholesome check and received a mutual benefit:

“Cloth of gold, do not despise,  
Though thou art matched with cloth of frieze;  
Cloth of frieze be not too bold,  
Though thou art matched with cloth of gold.”

The union of thought with labor, is said to have had its first illustration in Gothic architecture—and what was then applied as a term of reproach, became afterwards that of renown. Its second incarnation was in this, our Temple of civil liberty. Those who worked at its foundations, and all, who from time to time, have contributed to its progress, have labored as they thought, and thought as they wrought. From those who worked in the quarries, or hewed in the mountains—the men who went by sea in floats or “brought great stones, costly stones and hewed stones,” this Gothic truth prevailed, as the American axiom of American economy.

In this temple of freedom, virtue and intelligence are its Jachin and Boaz. Washington considered these as the indispensable supports of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity. There are two kinds of education as different in character and results, as the two kinds of figs which Jeremiah saw in the Temple. “The good figs very good, and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten they are so evil.” Education, with the moral

element, is the only kind that can prove the stability of our times. Any other, like the prophet's figs, cannot be appropriated. Without this conservative element in our common school system, moral contamination will outweigh its intellectual advantages—and the con-course of children, only secure a confluence of vice. Education, unless set in a handle of virtue, is a dangerous weapon, which as often wounds him who wields, as him who resists it. Like the fruit-knife (of German Legend) poisoned on one side only, its safety depends entirely on the manner of its use. It is like the manioc root, a fatal drug while crude, but, when properly cured, a valuable bread. With this moral element, it affords protection more potent than was ever given by coronet, crown, or cardinal's hat—as the German herb-cap prevented bodily ill, so this forestalls every civil disorder—the antidote or anodyne to every corporate disease. A virtuous education is, on the brow of state, what the golden lock was to Nisus, a pledge of safety. It is more; it is the living miracle, not of Christmas week, but of every-day life, emblazoning and beautifully coating in gold and silver leaf all the gifts of society. It indicates, like the ancient stone monuments, the pillar of judgment of old German towns, an independent jurisdiction. This independency of moral power is an exhaustless source of wealth to any people. "For brass it will bring gold, and for iron silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron." What, comparatively speaking, are the riches of quarry, the resources of mine, the rents of soil, the revenues of shipyards, the proceeds of dairy, the products of orchard? Though Maine is not a shop for the mechanic arts, the site of beds of rich ores, or the seat of extensive manufactories, she has other means of wealth, other sources of power. With a generation, bringing into all the departments of life a virtuous education, we have the best possible assurance of prosperity. Such a treasure in the bosom of the state is richer than

—"twenty seas, if all the sands were pearl,

The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold."

Maine is thought to be behind sister states in her educational

advantages. Perhaps not more so in her schools, than in her age. The present generation recollect her admission into the Union. We have had much preliminary labor to perform; we have had to "prepare our work without, and make it fit in the field, and then to build the house." Comparisons might be made to prove that we have not been idle in this work, since coming of age, and setting up for ourselves. A gentleman who has done much for the improvement of our Common Schools, and in all the educational legislation of past years, has had an eye single to their interests, commenced his education in a "Tie-up," with a shingle for a slate. The moral code once allowed the master a bottle of spirits in his school; and scholar as well as teacher, sacrificed to Bacchus, to be favored of Minerva. So much poorer was the compensation then, than now, the master spent his recess and intermission, in some job of cobbling or carpentry—perhaps on a loom-frame, and his scholars made, if not the hewers of timber, the drawers of it from the woods to the school-house. But, if we are unwise in thus comparing ourselves among ourselves, we may be allowed to look abroad for points of difference. With the exception of a single State, Maine has fewer illiterate persons, than any other. In regard to density of population, compared with New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, we stand, omitting fractions, as 18. to 65. 112. 127. Notwithstanding this disparity against us, in consequence of our widely extended area, Maine has a larger proportion of children at school, than any other State in our Union—than of any kingdom or nation in the world. We have one scholar to every 3.1 persons; the average for the United States, is one to every 4.6 persons—a striking contrast to that of Russia—who is now waging war with freedom and civilization—which is only one to every 50 persons. Thus, may we hope to become a nursery of men, if not of "cities, with spires and turrets crowned, where low-born baseness wafts perfume to pride." In an extreme northern position, with a climate which energizes character, having a shore-line exceeding that of any state or country, showing a moral front, in advance of the world, we have nothing to fear but impatience and change.

In conclusion, other grounds of encouragement might be referred to. Having been assigned a border situation in the Union, having assumed a frontier stand in morals, let us attain a corresponding position in education—by which we may repel the incursions of ignorance, and to the streams of vice say, here shall thy proud waves be stayed. If existence is the greatest of God's gifts to his creatures, certainly the worth of the means by which alone it can be made happy, can be expressed by no lower value. A better appreciation of these means is every where manifest. Among the signs of the times is, the great attention given to the children, in the increase of facilities for their social, intellectual and moral improvement—the device of magazines, newspapers, and libraries, besides the increasing miscellaneous works, written for the improvement, and dedicated to the use of children, indicate the direction of our practical age. The current literature has felt this necessity: its most engrossing contributions are drawn from the charmed circle of social life. The latest and most popular works, for general reading, have spun their thread of mingled plot, from the warp and woof of childhood. Children constitute the heroes and heroines—boys and girls usurp the place of lovers. How prosy would "Queechy" be, without a little Fleda? "The Wide, Wide World," needed an impetuous Ellen, lest it become tame; "Uncle Tom," must give sweet Eva credit for much of his popularity; "The Lamplighter," would be only dark, without the light and life of curious, natural Gerty; nor, could "Things Actual and Possible," have any charm, without an Ida May. Thus have modern writers practised on the precept of the heathen poet, that, the highest reverence is due the child. The "smell of the lamp" has less recommendation now, than the smoke of the cabin—the romance of the imagination, than the realities of life. The heated spinning room, the throbbing engine, the dust of the highway, the soil of the market or of merchandize, are surer passports to favor, than golden dreams, or the white robes of Roman candidates. If this practical element of the day, can thus be appropriated, this popular sympathy be

encouraged, we have an Archimedean lever of influence. With one half of our population in the educational course, we can easily, with this Midas contact of our schools, fill all their streams, like Pactolus of old, with auriferous sands. Then will our only source of danger, become a means of defense. For "the glory of young men is their strength"—when this strength shall be directed by that knowledge which is moral power, and controlled by that force which is religious truth, no better thing can be said of us, than that prophesied of Jerusalem—that all our towns and cities "shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

CHARLES A. LORD,

*Superintendent of Common Schools.*

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