

Educational Department

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: E. E. QUINNAN, J. A. WILLY, J. T. MCCOLLOM, G. W. RYAN, A. T. LILEY.

SCHOOLS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Among other improvements made by the new education law in England, is one which does away with the custom of having pupil teachers or boys and girls, some of them not more than fourteen years of age, to give instruction in the English branches. Without sufficient training to enable them to be thorough masters of what they were endeavoring to give to others, with no self-discipline and no experience in imparting knowledge, the plan, cheap though it was in a present pecuniary sense, was dear in its permanent effect upon the people.

Nine years ago Great Britain put into operation the law of compulsory attendance, and this has worked a wonderful change in the elementary schools. The number of scholars is greatly increased, as was to be expected, and has necessitated a great expansion of accommodation. Yet the latter falls far short of what is required and prevents the law from being enforced in many localities.

According to the report of the Educational Department in England, about 5,000,000 children should be upon the roll, while in reality there are only 3,500,000. Before the passage of the act which forbade the employment of little ones in the factories and workshops under a certain age, the deficiency was much greater. It is, with the compulsory law, has driven into the school rooms thousands who would otherwise never have learned to read and write.

It does not seem as if any large body of people could exist in a civilized country who would not see the necessity of an education in order to place their children upon an equality with other broad winners, or give them an equal chance with their fellows. But the facts show that in Great Britain and in the United States there are many who have not only an indifference to the improvement of their offspring, through the influence of the schools, but that stubborn opposition will be exhibited if an effort is made to influence or compel them to take advantage of the opportunities afforded. Especially is this true where self-interest is at stake. Ignorant themselves, they cannot see how an education can compensate for the loss of the few dollars that their children can earn every week. It is to fight this class that a compulsory law is needed everywhere. It is of vital importance to the well being of the State that its citizens should possess the highest intelligence that it is possible for them to obtain, and hence its right to look after the education of its children.

Aside from the possession of this law, it would appear that the public schools of the United States are, in many respects, in advance of those of Great Britain. There is not the same general determination to get cheap teaching, and instruction of youth are looked upon with greater respect, a thing which has much to do with the elevation and the efficiency of the schools.—Halt.

The session of the District Institute held at Leloy Center January 10th, was attended by a majority of teachers in the vicinity. The exercises consisted of class drills, methods of teaching, and discussions. The following teachers acted as instructors: J. N. Wright, J. Bowman, C. O. Hoagland, Belle Chapell, Miss Webster, and A. T. Liley. The work was principally of a practical nature, just as it is needed in the school room. The teachers advocate more thorough instruction in mental arithmetic.

Directors should attend the District Institute to see whether the exercises are such as to result in a benefit to the pupils of our schools. Director Lawrence, of Canton township, did the right thing in the right place when he told the teachers at the Institute at East Canton, on the 21st instant, that the schools would receive no benefit from the discussion that arose on the subject of grammar at that occasion.

COMMUNICATED. Mr. Editor.—In your issue of January 1st, I notice a communication signed "Teachers' Friend," in which the writer attempts to be very severe on a short article written by me, and which you were kind enough to publish. As the editorial "we" is used, I am to understand one of the other fellows whose names stand at the head of the Educational Department of your paper, has taken up the thing and is writing me a very long article, in which he says that I am very correct, but that I am wrong in not having enough to quote my language correctly, for it gives him the appearance of intentional perversion and misrepresentation for the double purpose of placing me in a false position, and of setting up a man of straw that he could easily demolish, and thus gain the credit of an easy victory.

Feeling that School Directors were unjustly censured for the low wages paid to teachers, my object in writing my former article was to place the responsibility where it properly belongs, viz, with the people. For, as I attempted to show them, and as I say now, the School Directors are what the people make them. They are elected from the people by the people, and are expected to carry out the will or wishes of their constituents, as are our representatives to the Legislature or to Congress. The language I used as coming from "tax-payers," I use exactly as I have heard it many times. In that article I had no attempt at giving my own individual views, except to show that School Directors were unfairly treated, and as fairly indicated in the closing paragraph. I am very confident that if "we," or "article through a pair of honest spectacles," he will be willing to acquit me of offering an "insult to the many able teachers of our country." In the course of my seven years' experience as School Director, I am happy to say, I have met with many young men, and young women, who were working bravely and doing their best, to fit themselves for the high calling of teachers. Thank fortune we have a number of them. I am now, of whom I am proud, and I am willing they should say whether they consider me their friend, or whether they think I

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