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To some persons the idea of compulsory education is at once distasteful and revolting. The very word "compulsory" strikes upon their ears with harsh effect, nettling their nervous organism, and inflaming a spirit of resentment. Be it so; still we must remember that the most pleasant things or those which give forth the most delicate and attractive sounds are not necessarily either the worthiest objects of search, or productive of the greatest benefits; while, on the other hand, an inharmonious strain, or apparently unpropitious occurrence is no sure precursor of evil.

We wish to offer a few thoughts in refutation of the idea that a compulsory school law would be a dire innovation upon the liberty of the individual, or the prerogative of the parent; and to make good the position that the forced acceptance of a boon, the value of which is well known would be most highly conducive to the welfare of our countrymen.

Has not education sufficient attractions to draw men to the threshold of her temple? Does she not promise to her faithful adherents, rewards far surpassing the difficulties of acquiring them? Does

she not give pledges attested at her consecrated altar, sealed in the Temple of Truth, that guarantee us an abundant harvest? Yet many are slow to avail themselves of the advantages that education presents, —nay, through indifference and neglect their steps are turned from the "thinking shop."

What are the facts of the case even in our own province. Men even now are living with their minds bound by the strong manacles of ignorance without making the least exertion to disenthrall themselves or to prevent the minds of their offspring from being fettered by the same heavy chains. The advance of education is, in fact, grossly and unpardonably retarded through the carelessness and apathy of uneducated parents. Irregularity of attendance at our public schools still widely obtains, and greatly impedes their development and mars their efficiency. Truly this is the one great drawback to the successful working of our present system of education. The fact that the average attendance does not amount to half the number of pupils registered, plainly shows that at least one half of the money of the country appropriated to educational purposes falls short of the accomplishment of its object, or, in other words, is practically squandered. How is this evil with its sequences to be remedied? Some salutary lesson ought, we think, to be given to those who refuse to avail themselves of the privileges granted them,—refuse to eliminate their progeny from under the radical sign of ignorance. A legislative enactment enforcing attendance during a *portion* of the year, at least, is a need that is being felt more deeply by our best educators as each year passes by. When this idea takes shape as a law, we may expect to see results fraught with great good,—so great as to far outweigh the temporary inconveniencies which it would probably superinduce. We admit, however, that, in taking this position we throw ourselves into ranks opposed by many "good men and true." The contest has been carried on with vigor and, though still pending, is lessening in its fierceness. May we not hope that the combatants will ere long amicably bury the hatchet?

The one grand argument urged against compulsory attendance at school is that

it will infringe upon the freedom of the people;—that it is in direct opposition to that innate and universal principle of man's nature—liberty of action—nay, strikes at its very roots. Our opponents ask: Has one man a right to sacrifice at the altar of his own will that which another claims as the noblest gift of his Creator—the dearest and most sacred portion of his birth right? To this we emphatically answer *no*. No man has the right to trample ruthlessly upon the liberties of another. The question, however, misses the point at issue, in as much as the implied domination would not necessarily occur in the event of a compulsory law being passed. It is certainly the duty of the Legislature to protect the interests of the country, to enact measures that will be productive of good. If it is right for government to interfere at all in the subject of education, it is most assuredly desirable that its interference should extend so far as that the greatest possible advantages may accrue to the public.

Have parents a right to cast an ignorant offspring upon the state, to thrust upon communities elements for the increase of pauperism and crime? If a father refuses to provide food for the sustentation of the body of his child, government may interfere and see that his physical necessities are provided for. Should there not be a law, as well, that would protect the *mind* of the child from gross injustice? Assuredly some remedial measure should be enforced to prohibit the parent from wilfully starving the intellect and stagnating the mental growth of his child,—a no less crying evil to the victim himself than bodily neglect, and one far more disastrous in its consequences to society. In the prevention and punishment of crime the laws of the country frequently take precedence of parental authority; and certainly it were quite as wise a step to introduce efficient means for the prevention of illiteracy. Upon those who are already interested and zealous in the cause of education, who are anxiously watching the unfolding of the minds of the youth, such a law would bring no additional obligations. The parent who now looks upon education as a vital necessity would not resist the law as a grievance, but rather embrace it as a blessing. A decree against forgery