

ties standing most in need of education, who would not avail themselves of the boon. This is felt to be the case even in Massachusetts itself, and in some other countries where the Free System, as it is called, has been tried. And what, in these circumstances, must be done? We believe that nothing short of a compulsory enactment, such as exists in Prussia and in some of the German Principalities, by which every parent is punishable if he do not send his children to school within a certain period of their juvenility. We would say, then, try the direct assessment first, and if that plan does not succeed in diffusing a universal education, then let an enactment be passed by which parents shall be compelled either to send their children to school for a certain given period, or the children at a certain stage be required to pass through a certain examination on branches of education adapted to their external circumstances, before they are allowed to engage in any lawful business. We discuss not here the point as to the State's power to pass such an enactment. We subjoin, in the meantime, the following statement written by the pen of Dr Guthrie, one of the greatest of living orators, philanthropists and educationists:—

The want of education is not confined to the lowest of the people. Many of the children of our working classes begin the business of life before they have finished that of education, and not a few of them even before they have begun it. The condition of our labour market lies as a heavy curse upon the nation. It is an evil poorly compensated by the growth of wealth, and that more general diffusion of the comforts of life in which we otherwise heartily rejoice. Unfortunately, infant labour is remunerating now-a-days in the way of work, as it used to be in the way of mendicancy. In consequence of this, God's providence and man's plans are in collision—in direct collision. Heaven and earth are at war. The roar of machinery deafens the ear of tender childhood. The boy grows pale upon the loom, and the girl grows stunted by the whirling wheels, who should be drinking in knowledge at its fountains, or rushing from school to play with the lambs upon the flowery sward, or chasing the butterfly by the laughing stream, or gathering health and strength, beauty and symmetry, where the bee collects her honied stores for working days and winter-time. The click of shuttles and deafening noise of the manufactory are in ears that should be filled with no sound but the shouts and laughter of play, the melody of singing birds, or the hum of the busy school.

The harmony of nature is disturbed, and the effects of that disturbance on the physical, moral and religious condition of our people are lamentable—and threaten to be more so.—Children are able to support, before they have sense to guide themselves. Before God has fitted, or even intended them to be so, they are independent of parental control. Hence domestic discord, hence household rebellion, hence the defiance of parental authority. Too early removed from school, hence the spread of ignorance. Thrown in their very childhood into the company of hoary sin, hence their morals are corrupted. They are initiated into the mysteries of vice before they have the power to practise it. Without a parent's hand to guide the reins, before reason and principle have had time to assume their legitimate authority, the passions get it all their own headlong way. And in the fate of a carriage which has none to drive, but strong wild horses to drag it on; or, in the fate of a bark, which, having broken loose from her moorings, catches the gust in her wide-spread sail, ere helm is hung or helmsman stands by the wheel—in that invisible crush, in that shattered wreck, are symbolized the fate of many. Born in our great centres of manufacture, sent to work when they should be sent to school, or continued at it, and earning wages sufficient to maintain themselves before reason is developed and principles are confirmed, they laugh at parental control, and in seeking to be their own masters, become the slaves of their own master passions.

This is neither time nor place to show the extent of this evil, unless to say that, while the most extraordinary errors may lurk under general statistics, the public judging by them alone, may cherish the delusion that all is right when much is wrong. The actual truth may be best arrived at by selecting some particular locality, and subjecting it to a close and searching examination. We have done so in the Pleasant—*a* district of the city where we are about to build a church and where, through our missionary and his allies, we have laboured four years with such remarkable success. There are worse, far worse districts than that in this city. There are many much worse in every large city in the kingdom, yet there, in an area containing two thousand of a population, we found, when we entered on our labours, no fewer than two hundred children growing up without education—who should have been at school, and were not. They were not without schools, yet with these in the neighbourhood they were without schooling. They had teachers within reach of them, yet they were not taught. Now this is a very instructive fact.—The plain and very important inference to be deduced from that fact is this, that while it is the duty of the state to provide the means of education, it is no less her duty to see that they are used. In the United States of America—a country where, perhaps, more than in any other, the value of education is thoroughly understood, the means of educating all the people are ample, and, in many instances, freely provided.—Yet by one of their late reports, complaints appear to come from every part of the country that many parents neglect to send their children to school. This evil has begun to grow in America, which, in our own land, has reached so gigantic a size. Years of experience and observation, which were spent among the lower and lowest classes of the people, have produced in my mind a rooted conviction that, although public or private benevolence may plant schools in our streets, thick as trees with fruit, the evil never will be cured. From many a dark locality, the city will continue to cry, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," unless the state insist on this, that every child who should be, shall be at school.

From a system of trade which offers up our children in sacrifice to the Moloch of money, and builds fortunes in many instances on the ruins of public morality and domestic happiness—from the cupidity of some parents, and the culpable negligence of others, helpless childhood implores our protection. We laugh at the Turk who builds hospitals for dogs, but leaves his fellow-creatures to die uncared and uncared for. And we forget that dogs and horses enjoy, by act of Parliament, a protection from cruelty among ourselves, which is denied to those whose bodies and whose souls we leave savage parents to neglect and starve. I lay it down as a principle which cannot be controverted, and which lies indeed at the very foundations of society, that no man should be allowed to rear his family, a burden and a nuisance, and a danger to the community.—He has no more right to rear wild men and wild women, and let them loose among us, than to rear tigers and wolves and send them abroad in our streets. What four-footed animal is so dangerous to the community as that animal which unites the uncultivated intellect of man to the uncontrollable passions of a beast?

We have a right to insist that this shall not be. Some rights I may waive. I may waive my right to a fortune. I may abandon my claim to a competent living from those to whom I minister, and turn tent-maker like the great apostle. But if I have a right to interfere for the good of others, to shield the oppressed, to save the perishing, to instruct the ignorant—by any act, on my part, to benefit and bless my country—that is a right which I have no right to waive. God requires me to claim it and carry it into effect. Religion thus lends her holy sanction to the state, when she insists on a universal education. She commands society to take these children under her protection, and see to it that all of them are trained through means of the school to be of service to the state. The parent who does not educate his children should be regarded as a thief who is not using his liberty, but is guilty of licentiousness. When will men cease to confound the two, and cease by applying the name of liberty to that which