

2. HALF SCHOOL TIME AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

(To the Editor of the Globe.)

SIR,—One thing in the Common Schools of the Province forcibly strikes the mind of the observer, and that is—that the number of days and half-day's absence during each month of pupils attending free schools is much greater than that of those attending schools supported by a monthly rate-bill. So marked is the difference that upon inspecting the register of a school supported in the latter manner, one can select in most cases, by their irregular attendance, the pupils admitted free by the Trustees. All, who give the subject any thought, agree that frequent absences from school are not only injurious to the absentees themselves but also to the remainder of the school, by disorganizing classes and being subversive of discipline. And the great argument for a Rate-bill is the benefit derived from the regular attendance it secures.

With the multitude, in schools as in other things, what costs nothing is worth nothing. Experience shows that when a parent pays twenty-five cents per month tuition fee, he is much more careful to see that the child gets the benefit of the money, by attending every day, and does not allow a trifle to detain him from school.

The proposed plan of compulsory education seems calculated to perpetuate this evil of irregular attendance, inasmuch as, while requiring the parent to send his child to school nine months in the year, it does not oblige him to send him a full month at a time. He may send, as many do at present, two or three days per week, or even alternate weeks, and comply with the letter of the law, but evade its intent.

Would it not be a better plan to make the schools all free, and at the same time, reversing the operation of the Rate-Bill, apply it to the absentee? That is to say, let Trustees be authorized to collect along with the taxes twenty-five cents for each pupil, for each month over three, that he has been absent from school, reckoning for this purpose every day and half-day's absence during the year. Its justice is unquestionable, as the parent by detaining his child from school deprives the section of a corresponding amount of Legislation and Municipal grant.

This plan would answer every purpose of compulsory attendance, and would be the more satisfactory as, while it makes it the direct pecuniary interest of the parent to have his child at school every day possible, it obviates the necessity of a prosecution and fine and costs. While it is essential that something should be done in this direction, very few of those who endorse the principle would like to see it enforced as proposed in the School Bill of last Session. The above plan could be adopted without difficulty or risk, and enforced without chance of evasion, which cannot be claimed for the other.

TEACHER.

Newboro', July 13, 1869.

3. THE POOR ECONOMY OF LOW SALARIES.

While a too lavish expenditure of the public money must always receive the unqualified condemnation of all prudent and right-thinking men, a system of economy that takes in view only the present moment, or is measured solely by the number of dollars and cents expended, regardless of other, perhaps weightier considerations, is certainly not free from objections. In the daily transactions of domestic life it is well understood that the lowest priced articles are not always the cheapest when durability, utility, and other qualities are considered. This holds likewise in the administration of public affairs. The smallest expenditure does not always show the truest economy. On the contrary, a penurious outlay must often be condemned as narrow-minded and unwise. This, we think, is the case with the practice still far too generally followed, of employing teachers of a low grade of qualifications, simply because they can be had cheap, or rather of driving away those well qualified, by offering such a miserable pittance for their services as will barely suffice to cover necessary current expenses. The common school system is sometimes opposed on the ground of the inefficiency of our schools. We grant that our common schools are, in many cases, not what they should be, and even where furthest advanced they may still be far from perfect. But the question arises, is it the system, or an erroneous or short-sighted administration of the system, to which is chargeable this want of efficiency? The true policy of improving the schools is to improve the teachers. But what inducement do school directors hold out to young men and women to qualify themselves for teaching, or to such as have qualified themselves, to remain in the profession, so long as other, perhaps less onerous vocations, everywhere, invite them to more lucrative employment.

Not until salaries are offered sufficiently liberal to warrant teachers to qualify themselves properly, and to induce them when

thus qualified to make teaching their permanent business, can we hope to see our schools attain the highest efficiency. Low wages, poor teachers, and poor schools most generally go together.—*Pennsylvania School Journal*.

4. BEECHER ON PUNISHING IN SCHOOLS.

Ought corporal punishment to be inflicted upon children?

Many think this is a point already settled, since Solomon declared, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Whether we are to infer from such language more than this, that children need rigorous government, I leave others to decide. It is very certain that good men have been brought up equally well with, and without the rod. The selection of the means of discipline must be left with the parents. If they can maintain good government without inflicting bodily chastisement, all the better.

Some children are easily governed. Some are very susceptible to persuasion and to reason. It may be laid down as good doctrine, that the rod is not to be the first and chief resource, but is to be deferred until all other means have been tried and have failed. Some parents would almost seem to watch for an opportunity to flagellate. They seem to think that the rod is in some mysterious way an instrument of virtue—a medium of mystic grace, (the very antithesis of "the laying on of hands,") by whose touch certain beneficent qualities are imparted. All government to such, seems to reside in the switch. Only whip enough, and you have cleared your skirts of all blame, whatever becomes of the child.

But, the more sensible view is, that the rod should be a thing in reserve; something on which to fall back in extreme cases, when everything else has failed—but to be wholly avoided, if possible—and never used with violence of temper on the parent's part.

1. It should be dedicated to the baser faults. A child should never be struck for inadvertencies, for faults of forgetfulness, for irritability and carelessness, and for petty irregularities. But for lying, for filthiness, for cruelty to companions or to the brute creation, for downright meannesses, it may be used. It is a coarse remedy, and should be employed upon the coarse sins of our animal nature.

2. When employed at all, it should be administered in strong doses. The whole system of slaps, pinches, snappings, and irritating blows, is to be condemned. These petty disciplines tend to stir up anger, and rather encourage evil in the child than subdue it. To be of any use, corporal punishment should be emphatic, and full of transient pain. Pain is the curative element in punishment. It emphasizes, it tends to associate temptation to evil with the receiving of pain, and so furnishes the child a motive for resistance; in case of temper, obstinacy, or cruelty, it acts as a literal counter irritation, and brings down the passionate excitement, by raising up a sharp counteracting sensation of suffering. But for any such end, there should be sharp and decisive dealing. Never use the rod for trifles—never trifle with it. Severely, or not at all.

3. In administering physical punishment to a child, the head should be left sacred from all violence.

A person who will strike a child in any manner upon the head, deserves to be himself severely punished. Pulling the hair or ears, rapping the head with a thimble or with knuckles, boxing the ears, slapping the cheeks or the mouth, are all brutal expedients. Nature has provided other regions for the exercise of discipline, and to them should it be confined. The head is the seat of the mind. It is more liable to injury than any other part. These irritating and annoying practices are far more likely to rouse the child to malignant passions, than to alleviate them.

4. The feeling with which you administer punishment will, generally, excite in the child a corresponding experience. If you bring anger, anger will be excited; if you bring affection and sorrow, you will find the child responding in sorrowful feelings; if you bring moral feelings, the child's conscience will answer back again. Anger and severity destroy all benefit of punishment. Strong love and severity will, if anything can, work penitence and reformation of conduct.—H. W. Beecher.

5. PROFESSIONAL COURTESY AMONG TEACHERS.

No person can be good in any art, unless, besides possessing the requisite knowledge and ability in that art, he also likes it for itself, and has a full sense of its bearings and uses. Hence he must wish to see his art duly appreciated by the public, and feel much interest in the success of every person engaged in it. Of the respective merits of these artisans and the honesty of their motives he can have his own opinion. But encouragement according to actual merit, is their due. All of this applies to the profession of