

most serious attention and decided action on the part of Township Councils generally :—

"The complaint is made from nearly every part of the State, that the District Schools accomplish but little, that the money expended upon them is little better than thrown away, that during the long vacation the scholars forget so much, that, when they commence again under a new teacher, it requires nearly half the term for them 'to become acquainted with his ways,' and to advance as far in their studies as they were at the close of the previous session. Much of this is doubtless true, and will continue to be, so long as small districts, short school terms, and cheap teachers, frequently changed, are continued. Hence the vigorous efforts which the intelligent friends of education are making to unite school districts, secure a proper classification of scholars, sustain the schools from eight to ten months in the year, and secure the employment of competent teachers in every department of the schools."

A GOOD SUGGESTION.—A local superintendent and able writer makes the following excellent suggestions, in which we fully concur; and we shall be happy to insert communications of the kind referred to, upon the triple condition that they be short, intelligibly written, and approved of in regard to character and style :—

"May I permitted to suggest, that the *Journal of Education*, now one of the best of the kind in the world, might be made still more acceptable, and, therefore, useful, if a few pages of every number could be filled with communications from teachers in different parts of the country, containing their several experiences in teaching, essays on the art, different methods of school examination, discipline, government, methods of teaching the different branches of knowledge," &c.

A GENERAL SYSTEM OF FREE SCHOOLS.—Many communications have been made by local school authorities to the same effect with the two following, the first being an extract of a letter from a local superintendent of schools in the County of Norfolk :—

"I am fully of opinion that some judicious general system of free schools would be a rich boon conferred on the rising generation. Several of the sections in this township have availed themselves of the provision of the law to tax themselves for the support of their schools; the result has been invariably a large increase of scholars in the school—in some instances amounting to double the number under the rate-bill system. But with all this advantage, a common evil grows out of the free school system, as now adopted. Respectable ministers are opposed to it, and often a sharp contention ensues which paralyzes the best efforts for a time. Indeed taxes, on the whole, are more agreeably paid when imposed by some other authority than that of neighbour taxing neighbour."

A local superintendent in the County of Oxford remarks, as follows, on the same subject :—

"From the fact that the new act to amend the school law expires on the 1st of April next, I take it for granted that you hope to get a more complete measure passed before the close of the session. I beg to say, that you would greatly increase the obligations under which the country is already laid to you, if you would include a provision to make the free schools compulsory. This is what the country now needs, and, I believe, desires. The present system, though it has borne some good fruits, is inconvenient and unsatisfactory. There have been many instances, certainly, where the majority of the people have decided for free schools; but in nearly every instance there is left a disappointed and bitter minority, who frequently fill the school and the section with animosities and hatred, sometimes even affecting the peace of Christian churches. In many, I think most instances, the bitterest opposers, in these townships, say that they approve of the principle, and if it were the law of the land they would cheerfully support it; but under the present system, they say, they may be compelled to pay their money for the benefit of others for some years, and that when a school would

be useful to their own families, others who have been enjoying their money may vote the free school down. There is much force in this objection. Let the system be made a Provincial one. Let the people decide by their vote, as to the time (not less than six months) that the school shall be kept open, but let it not be optional or doubtful how the school shall be supported."

SHOULD VAGRANT CHILDREN IN CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES, BE COMPELLED TO GO TO SCHOOL?—The Committee on school attendance, appointed by the *American Association for the Advancement of Education*, concludes its Report in the following words :—

"Laws must be enacted upon the subject. All children, not engaged in any lawful calling, who habitually frequent the streets, and other public places, should be deemed vagrants, and treated as such. They should be compelled to go to school. In most of the States our schools are supported by direct taxation upon property. The man of wealth, every citizen in the community, whether he has children to send to school or not, is taxed directly or indirectly for the education of youth; and if he complain, he is told that the support of common schools is essential to a republic, even for the better security of personal property, and even of life itself. He is compelled to pay his money for the support of schools, and has a right to demand, in return, that every child in the community shall receive the benefit of a good education."

PUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE OF PUPILS AT SCHOOL.—In the Report of the Committee on this subject, (appointed by the *American Association for the Advancement of Education*,) we find the following excellent remarks :—

The best method of securing the regular and punctual attendance of children at school, is a subject which has long engaged the attention of practical teachers, and is one of the utmost importance. Most of the teaching and recitations in our large schools, are conducted in classes: consequently, every absence is not only a hindrance to the individual absent, but it retards the progress of the whole class. All teaching to be effective, must be thorough. The steps to be taken in acquiring an education, must be gradual and certain. Our class-books are so arranged, and the course of instruction is such, that no recitation can be omitted without serious injury to the individual or to the school; as the class must wait for him to make up the lessons omitted, or he will experience the want of them in all his future progress.

"The cause of these absences may in most cases be traced to the negligence or indifference of parents, and this negligence or indifference arises principally from a want of knowledge as to the extent and magnitude of the evil. Some of them are influenced by their affections, and yield readily to the wishes of their children, granting them permission to be absent for trivial causes, whenever they desire it. Others have not sufficient control over them to compel their attendance. Every experienced and thoughtful teacher has witnessed the baneful effect which these absences have upon the progress of a school, and many have been the expedients adopted to remedy the evil. Much has been, and may be accomplished by a faithful and conscientious teacher, by appealing directly to the children. He should make it unpopular in the school-room, to be absent at any time without good and sufficient cause. Public sentiment in the school-room is as powerful in directing the actions of children, and may be used with as much effect, as it is in directing and controlling the actions of men in the social and political affairs of life. The teacher should therefore impress it upon the children that he regards absence from school as a serious offence; and every instance of it should be made a subject for investigation and comment. He should endeavor at all times, to interest them in everything which pertains to the reputation and welfare of the school; for it will always be found that those children who are really interested in the studies of the school will be the most regular and punctual in their attendance. Whenever these means do not accomplish the object, as in all cases they will not, let him appeal to the parents themselves, personally or by letter, and arouse them to a sense of the importance of the subject. Let him call upon all the friends of education through the public press, to aid him in forming and directing public sentiment aright upon this topic, and the evil, so far as it exists among the virtuous and intelligent portions of the community, will soon be remedied."