

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE.

In some countries society will not submit to the indifference and apathy exhibited by many parents; relative to the education of the young. In cases where the parent will put forth no effort, public opinion in statutory form steps in and relieves him of the burden. It pays the cost of the education of the poor, and in many places compels daily attendance at school, and consequently the reception, involuntary, perhaps, of a degree of knowledge. It being in the eye of the law a crime wilfully to remain in ignorance and it holds also that the country should guard itself against ignorance for its own well-being as well as against crime. The dangerous classes in society are the offspring of the ignorant, and they are constantly recruiting their active forces from them. It is safe to go farther and class the leaders of the dangerous classes as the half-educated of our common schools. When compulsory education is necessary the contest is intelligence with ignorance the battling of great forces. The latter usually yields to the former.

Prejudice against education when actively developed resists to extremity; to overcome which legal measures kindly and gently applied is the province of the executors of the law—wielding authority discreetly and humanely. The teacher and parent are intermediate agents in such education.

OUR ACADEMIES AND HIGH SCHOOLS.

In the past twenty years there has been a falling off in the usefulness of our academies viewed as a unit. There is inadequate government aid extended to them. That support has been gradually diminished till the sum of money given to each has reached a small moiety of what it once was. As a consequence the teachers have less excellence; a less accomplished grade of teachers has been employed. How can teachers instruct in that of which they have no knowledge? The money designed for the high schools has been wrongly appropriated or misdirected. What are the remedies?—A restoration of the old system, and adequate support given to the high schools. In other countries where government support has been generously accorded to such schools, they have kept pace with the times in methods of instruction and usefulness corresponding to the development of wants. The high schools are centres, seats of learning to all classes of society alike, easily accessible to all and within the reach of the poor. It is undeniable that teachers spring from the middle and poorer classes.—the rich spend no time instructing their fellows. From the poor, those of moderate means are coming to the front, our sterling business men, our active and intelligent men, those eminent in the learned professions; men who under adverse circumstances would never emerge from comparative obscurity. Can the country then afford to educate the rich only? If our high schools continue diminishing in usefulness, the young of marked natural gifts must allow their talents to slumber or be forever undeveloped. There are but few graduates of universities at the head of the country high schools. A young man with a laudable ambition for a learned profession is to-day forced to go to the cities and larger towns for his preliminary studies. The poor cannot do it. The time was when from every academy went forth annually numbers to matriculate in some one department of our colleges. They, educated in the arts, in time came back to teach, and themselves sent out still others. Constantly was the number of teachers being recruited from the

teaching classed. In those days dozens studied the classics where one person does now—(he betrays his ignorance who questions the ultimate utility of the classics). Were all our villages large villages, graded schools supported by municipal taxation would give us schools of a high order; but a large village in a county is as infrequent as large towns and cities in a province. Liberal annual grants to the academies, as of old, would be a boon to the population of the rural districts. The academies would then be as they once were, centres of Superior Education within the reach of the masses. It is the latter whom governments should help, cherish, foster and educate. The active, rising men spring from them—the rich are in no way barred by like necessities as the poor. In Ontario, the maritime provinces, and in the States, legislation is eminently conspicuous for its decentralization tendency in educational facilities. The counties are first considered. They are the *prima et ultima* for the general good.

Better would it be to foster and cherish generously with government aid all high schools now in existence in the counties, than to let one languish and die, each is a light, perhaps dim, yet shedding many luminous rays in dark places.

Politicians of late have said that Quebec was a Province to flee from; why not make it one in educational matters to attract, to force emigrants to flock to? Emigrants are of the middle and poorer classes; must they continue to go to the cities in search of higher educational facilities, or ought they to find them in localities where their only capital—labor—can be profitably employed in the rural districts?

It is impossible to leave the subject without placing upon record an earnest protest against modern tendencies prevailing in many countries—that of placing the so called accomplishments in the first rank of things to be acquired. Really they are not worth the expense, involving as they do the devotion of nearly the whole of one's time to their acquisition.

Comparatively few arrive at real merit in them; hence they can only serve as temporary amusements, and should not be regarded as the end of education. They confer little honor and less profit, unless, as the result of special study, the outcome of them is of great excellence.

In all cases it is trifling with mental powers to follow light and feathery nothings with too close application.

Again, the cultivation of muscle-brawn—by aquatic sports, is not or should not be the sole aim of being. The incapables, the unteachable, and inefficient may be excused for devoting the major part of school-days to its development; but that muscle alone is manhood is an error. Physical education, it is true, should keep pace with mental development and growth of body, but the former should never take the place of the latter, only in proportion as the necessity "to hew wood and draw water" becomes the sole means of livelihood.

FINALLY.

This slight sketch of defects and present needs must not discourage us. We have all through history shining instances of what can be done in spite of obstacles and difficulties, and though it is desirable above all things that a healthier educational atmosphere should surround us, yet there are many other elements requisite to a successful, superior system. We can be and, perhaps, are, diligent in application of means in our several departments, teacher and scholar alike, still success is not always the reward of diligence;