

2. WHAT AN EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL SHOULD BE.

The thought has often occurred to us whether Teachers' Educational Organs were fully carrying out the object for which they are published. In our view of what a *teacher's journal* should be, we think not. The true aim of an educational journal should be a constant endeavor to instruct teachers into a higher path of moral training, instilling into their minds that they have something more to learn than becoming moving automatons of modes and methods. How is this to be done! Not by giving them page after page of solutions and problems in algebra and mathematics, and filling the balance of the magazine with reports of teachers' institutes, and with resolutions passed at meetings of boards of supervisors. This may be all very well for the writers, but do the teachers, for whose benefit these articles are ostensibly written, read them? We emphatically say no. Teachers have as many systems of teaching crammed down their throats as there are months in the year, and in about the same space of time, until they become perplexed in the wilderness of multifarious methods, and consequently are disgusted with any and every work touching upon these subjects.

We contend that a State educational journal should possess a high tone of literature; its pages should be filled month after month with subjects that would tend to lead the teacher into a moral and refined tone of thought, thereby guiding him into those paths of study which elevate and culture the mind. Then, instead of making him a piece of dead mechanism, as is now the case in almost every instance, we should find him pleased with his vocation, and his mind occupied with one object—the best and surest path to knowledge.

Refinement and knowledge make the best teachers. Let our teachers possess these, and we may then throw aside all prescribed and approved methods, for they will soon strike out one of their own. Let a teacher become accustomed to proceed from thought to thought, from principle to principle, to understand what he is about as he goes on, to see the object of teaching distinctly before him, and to be enlivened and excited by subjects level with his capacity, and treated so as to stir his fancy and imagination, and then how great a change comes over his mind. It is as if a veil were lifted, daylight admitted, the fine connections of logic, grammar, numbers and forms, are disclosed, a sense of beauty is excited, an interest is inspired, far beyond that which would ever be produced by mechanical agencies.

"The character of such a teacher is impressed upon the whole school. There is a secret power that is seen and felt, not only in refining the tastes, but in forming the mental and moral habits of the pupils. It is not by earnest and skilful teaching alone, that a school is elevated to the highest standard of excellence, but by the hallowed influence of a pure and noble example with which it is surrounded."

Let the editors and promoters of our State educational journals constantly have in view the elevation of teaching and teachers; let the pages of such journals be filled with material that will instruct, purify and elevate; throw into the waste paper basket all such articles as essays on text books, etc., and give something more useful and attractive: gems from our finest literature; extracts from our monthly magazines,—the compensation of teachers is small, and they cannot buy them—*original essays* on educational and other subjects, and then devote the balance to communications from the teachers themselves. Do this, and we shall soon find our journals supported, not only by teachers, but by parents and scholars, and each number will be looked forward to with pleasure, and not, as is now the case, thrown on one side, with their leaves uncut.

This article is not written in a spirit of dictation, as to the manner in which school journals should be conducted, but we wish to call the attention of the promoters of education in our own State, and also to impress upon our teachers the fact that it remains with them, and them alone, to decide whether our own journal shall possess claims more deserving of their patronage, and of all friends to educational progress.—*James Ellis, in Iowa School Journal.*

3. FACTS RELATING TO THE TRUANT SYSTEM.

What shall be done for a quite large class of boys in the cities and large towns who are in the habit of playing truant from school, or of loitering about the streets and public places, is a question of serious import. Concerning such it may be taken as true that they have an aversion to the restraint of the school-room, that they have a proclivity to habits of idleness and mischief, if not of vice, that their parents are indifferent about their education or unable to control it, and, also, that, without any sort of justification, they are increasing the amount of ignorance and crime in society, entailing upon it burdens against which it is its duty to protect itself, and depriving it of the benefits which might arise from their education and good habits. Whatever may be said of compulsory education in general, there can hardly be a difference of opinion concerning these. They should not be allowed to become vagrants.

At present our school-system is quite powerless to reach them. There are excellent regulations concerning the attendance of those who are fond of school, or whose attendance is desired by their parents. They do much good. They compel a prescribed course on the part of those who are members, and the parents compel membership. But what of the idlers and runaways? Who compels them? If compulsion is good for the mass, why not for them? Is it expected that moral suasion on the part of the teacher is going to do for them what it, aided by the influence of the parent, and the compulsory power at school and at home, is only able to do for those who attend?

It seems quite evident that our school-system should be supplemented by some such power of compulsion for that class of boys and girls who are, educationally speaking, orphans. Moral suasion is excellent, but a power is needed in reserve to give force to it. The system of truant-officers has been adopted in several of the cities of the country, with very gratifying results. We have before us the past year's report of the truant-school of Worcester, Massachusetts, a city of 40,000 inhabitants. The average number of pupils belonging in school for the year was 6,320. The truant-officer has attended to 2,230 cases of absence from unknown causes. Of these, 1,260 were returned to their schools. 130 obstinate truants have been assigned to the public schools. Of these, 29 were taken before the municipal courts, and 17 convicted and sent to the truant-school for six months or a year each. The committee say in their report, "But the utility of this institution is by no means confined to them. The great majority of our boys, who incline to truancy, have a wholesome respect for 'the farm,' and when once brought to school by the officers, and reminded that the first step thither has been taken, they are far more punctual at school than if no such school awaited them. Only a small portion of those thus brought to the schools persist in their truancy till they become inmates of this."

It is a grave question whether the friends of education should not take steps to secure legislation authorizing the adoption of a truant-system in our cities and larger towns.—*Illinois Teacher.*

4. COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE.

In these days of excessive taxation, every tax-paying citizen is directing his attention to the expenditure of money for public purposes. This is as true of the school fund as that for public improvements. Those who pay taxes have the right to demand an equivalent for their contributions to the general fund.

It is conceded by all that the education of the children is the only safe-guard of the State. But, with few exceptions, there are in every town and township large numbers of children under fifteen years of age, who are neither in school nor engaged in any labor that earns a livelihood or gives them the knowledge of any trade. These children grow up and become a political power injurious to the highest interests of the tax-payer. They depreciate his property, curtail his business, and degrade its character. As a matter of justice, therefore, he has the right to demand that every child who draws public money, or for whose education he is taxed, shall be compelled to attend school, at least when not employed in labor, such as learning a trade.

As it is, thousands become tired of school duties and prefer the street, and are indulged in their idle habits by over-fond parents. If the law required that every child, before leaving school, should pass an examination in reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic, and that whenever unemployed he should attend, it would result in more obedient and worthy children than are now commonly found.

The present use of the school fund does not secure this result, though such is the design of the school system. It belongs, then, to those who provide for and support the schools, to modify the system to such an extent that there will be the greatest possible number who receive the greatest advantages of the system, and the fewest who receive little or nothing therefrom.

It is not our purpose now to show in detail how the system can be modified to remedy the evil which is so apparent, and which will prove an irreparable damage to society, if not arrested, but to call attention to the fact that great numbers receive little benefit from the schools.

We have tried the idea that every one is civilly the equal of every one else; that the lowest may become the greatest; but it does not go far enough. Something should be done to make education more of a necessity to every human being, or to compel a minimum of education. To bring about this end, the school system seems the most direct way. Making intelligence the condition of exercising the elective franchise, and competitive examinations the condition of every accepting public office, would doubtless effect a wholesome change in the direction of which we speak; but it seems impossible for either of these most desirable conditions to become law, and we know of no better way to secure the desired result than to compel attendance at school.—*Chicago Schoolmaster.*