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I. Papers on School Economy.

1. COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS.

The following remarks on Compulsory Education are taken from a recent "Appeal to the Legislatures of the United States in relation to Public Schools," by Charles Brooks, of Medford, Massachusetts—"a self appointed missionary, now a septuagenarian, who has labored gratuitously for free public schools since 1835." After discussing the question of the proper organization and management of free schools, Mr. Brooks thus proceeds:—

It is proposed, in these remarks, rather to make some friendly suggestions to State Legislatures, than to discuss the proposition of a national system; but we ought to say a few words about *compulsion*.

In the kingdom of Prussia, every child is compelled to attend some school, whether his parents will or not. The Annual Report has these words: "There is not a single human being in Prussia who does not receive education, intellectual and moral, sufficient for all the needs of common life." This law of compulsion had been in operation but fourteen years when pauperism and crime had diminished thirty-eight per cent.

In the present relationships of our mixed population in the United States, this law of compulsion is called for as a defence of our liberties. We have in our country more than a million of children between the ages of five and sixteen who can neither read nor write! Do you ask, What are we going to do with them? That is not the question. The question is, What are

they going to do with us? Think of their future power at the ballot-box! We can disarm their animal ferocity and traditional prejudices only by intellectual culture and moral principle; and this preventive process can be effectually applied, in nineteen cases out of twenty, *only* during the period of youth. Society has a right to defend itself against crime, against murder, arson, &c. Has it not an equal and prior right to defend itself against the *cause* of crime, which is ignorance? If you force a young man into prison because he is a thief, we call upon you to force him, while a boy, into a schoolhouse, to prevent his becoming a thief. Here surely "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

At this period, when four millions of freedmen are to carry their votes to the ballot-box to help to shape the destinies of our republic, what language can overstate the pressing necessity of their being educated to comprehend their new position, exercise their new rights, and obey their new laws? It is the command of Nature's God, that all children should be educated in order to answer the purposes of their creation. If a parent be so weak or wicked as to refuse his child the daily bread of knowledge, let the Legislature stand in the place of parent to that child, and do for him what his nature demands, and the public safety requires. To enforce the law, let the select men of a town be empowered to impose on that delinquent parent a fine not less than one dollar, and not more than five dollars. This fine would not need to be imposed in any neighborhood more than half a dozen times, because public sentiment would so heartily approve its benevolent aim that it would silently change all objections, as it did in Prussia.

It is the opinion of many sound statesmen and enlightened Christians among us, that the time has come for each State Legislature in our Union to inaugurate and sustain within its border a system of free public schools, open to all children without regard to locality, condition, sex, or race.

If it seems to you, gentlemen, that this is the true initial step in the great system of free, public instruction in the United States, may not the country confidently calculate on your early and generous co-operation in the noble enterprise?

Shakspeare says,—

"Doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood."