

fifth of the whole number, but nothing was said about the children in the streets who were non-attendants. Still it appeared that there was a large class of children who, by reason of their own perverseness, or the neglect or poverty of their parents, received little or no benefit from the instruction provided for them by the city. These children belonged, for the most part, to that description of persons which has been denominated "the dangerous and perishing classes," and, in 1846, compulsory measures began to be adopted to secure their education. In this important movement, which has resulted in so much good to the community, the lead was taken by Mayor Quincy, who, soon after coming into office, addressed some remarks on the subject to the School Committee, requesting their co-operation with the City Council, in applying a coercive remedy to this alarming evil. The School Committee, promptly complying with the request of the Mayor, referred the subject to a Special Committee, of which Professor Theophilus Parsons was chairman. This learned gentleman, in his Report on "Truancy," dated May 5, 1846, speaks of its evil consequences in the following language:

"The mischief caused by the habits of truancy, which prevail in many of our schools, can hardly be overrated. No valuable and permanent reform will ever be carried into full effect until this obstacle is removed. Children who absent themselves without cause for a portion of the time, do not merely lose the benefit of instruction, and of the power and habit of regular attention; but, while so absent, they are, for the most part, engaged in vicious and debasing pursuits, and when they return to school they bring with them an influence that is hostile to order, good conduct, and improvement, in a degree hardly to be believed by those who have not had the pain of witnessing the evil. In some of our schools, this mischief of truancy not only interferes greatly with the regular process of instruction, but exerts a demoralizing effect which can hardly be counteracted, and employs much of the time and energy of the master in preserving the discipline which it assails. Nor is it an evil which ends with the schools. If it did, our duty would still require of us to do whatever we can do for its suppression or diminution. But it is certain that, from the juvenile depravity of which the truancy of the school is both a sign and a cause, grows a large part of the suffering and crime of society. It is rare to find in our prisons those who were well cared for as children and trained in regular habits of useful industry. An active child can be kept out of evil only by giving him something good to do; and when idleness has thoroughly corrupted the earliest years of life, what can we expect from riper years, but a maturity of vice, greater as temptations become stronger and opportunities for crime are enlarged." He further says, "If the law, on the one hand, provides schools to which all the children of this city may go, on the other, it provides another institution to which certain children may be made to go. Here, then, are institutions for those who will and for those who will not be instructed; and under one or other of these classes all our children may be arranged."

He maintained that the existing laws were sufficient, if those intrusted with their execution would but do their duty. The statutes provided that "stubborn children" might be sent to the House of Correction, and also that any Justice of the courts, on application of the Mayor, or any of the Alderman of the city, or of any director of the House of Industry, or House of Reformation, or of any Overseer of the Poor, shall have power to sentence to the House of Reformation "all children who live an idle and dissolute life, whose parents are dead, or if living, from drunkenness or other vices, neglect to provide any suitable employment or exercise any salutary control over said children," and also that any child committed to the House of Correction, may be transferred to the House of Reformation. Accordingly, the plan of operations proposed was, to ascertain through police officers what children had not entered their names at the schools, and were not kept from them by regular and proper employment or other good and reasonable cause, these not being technically truants, but absentees. The teachers were to give to the City Government, monthly, the names of all incorrigibly stubborn or habitually truant children who belonged to the schools, that is, those who were absent, more or less, though their names had been regularly entered upon the school registers. To aid in carrying this plan into execution the following orders, appended to the Report, were submitted for the consideration of the School Board:

1. Ordered,—That the several masters of the grammar and writing departments of the Grammar Schools report to the Mayor of the city, in the first weeks of May and December of each year, the names of the children belonging to each school.

2. Ordered,—That the several masters of the grammar and writing departments of the Grammar Schools report to the Mayor, on the first Monday of each month, beginning with June next, whether there be in the school under their care any children who are incorrigibly stubborn or habitually truant; and if so, their names; and their residences and the names of their parents when known.

3. Ordered,—That this and the two preceding orders, together with the 3d section of the "Act concerning Juvenile Offenders in the City of Boston," be printed in large letters and conspicuously posted in each Grammar School; and that the same be read to the assembled scholars by the masters, on the first Monday of each month.

These orders, slightly amended in the wording, were adopted in May, 1846, and became a part of the regulations of the public schools. In the revision of the regulations in 1848, the third order was omitted, the first and second remaining in force till 1851, when the first was repealed, and the words "beginning with June next" were struck from the second. In 1852, the meaning of this order was essentially modified by striking out the word "stubborn," and an unimportant change was made in its phraseology. It was again amended in 1855 by omitting the words "incorrigibly" and "on the first Monday of each month," and substituting "principal teachers" for "masters," and "truant officers" for the "Mayor." This regulation was once more modified in 1857, by dropping the word "principal" so that it might apply to all teachers, and adding after "officers" the words "of the district," meaning the truant district in which the school is located, since which time it has stood as follows: "Teachers having charge of pupils who are habitually truant, shall report their names, residences, and the names of their parents or guardians, to the truant officers of the District." The reasons for these changes will appear in the sequel.—*Iowa School Journal*.

#### 4. A LONDON RAGGED SCHOOL.

A correspondent of the *Montreal Witness* having visited a London Ragged School thus gives an account of it, in a letter dated London, 2nd June:—"I had to-day an opportunity of inspecting the Field-Lane Ragged School. The building has a school room and night refuges both for males and females, and is never out of employment. By nine o'clock in the morning all those who have there found their night's shelter, are cleared out, with perhaps a crust in their hands. The Ragged School children then assemble for their morning exercises;—the same children being again assembled in the afternoon. In the evening there is a night-school for such as are at work all day. A good attendance in the day time is, say 300; and at night, say 200. These are merely rough guesses, as the numbers are exceedingly fluctuating. To-day, the school room seemed over-crowded with about a hundred and eighty. The smallness of the numbers was accounted for by the Epsom races, which had taken off a large number of the young Arabs;—on a market day the school is almost empty. Those who do not get to school in time are not admitted, so that everything is carried on very regularly. When I went in—about four o'clock to-day—I found all the school divided in the old-fashioned way, into classes, as in a Sunday-School. There was one school-master and female lieutenant—the teachers were boys chosen from among the others, about nine or ten years of age. My doubts as to the capability of these ragged urchins to do the task assigned to them were soon dispelled by the calling up of a class at the front, and giving them work to do aloud at the black-board. All the classes, I was told, had their turn of this. The one I saw was, I believe, the first class, and had some of the monitors mixed with it; yet, it was made up of small ragged boys, and the result was sufficiently wonderful. He who acted as monitor took the chalk at the black-board. The sum set down was in Proportion, involving compound rules. The class read it over together, aloud, keeping very good time. The monitor then went over the sum, putting each mental calculation separately to the class, who answered it in unison, with hardly a dissentient voice. The sum was gone through with remarkable rapidity, and came out correct, the figures on the board being beautifully formed. Questions were then asked upon it by the master, which were answered with similar unity and correctness. All the arithmetical tables were gone through aloud by the whole school at once. The interest was varied by the changes of position so much used among the infant schools in Britain—an admirable plan for either calling in the attention or relaxing the mind. At the close there were two songs, and then a hymn, after which all reverently closed their eyes, folded their hands, and followed their master in an extempore prayer, and they went away orderly, curtsying or bowing to the stranger as they passed out, except the monitors, who waited behind, put things to rights, and then sat down together till they should have leave to depart. Among these children there were some with parents in jail, others who wore but one garment, everything having been sold within a few days by a mother for drink. Signs of mature thought and care were written on faces nine years old, and others wore the sad marks of inherited disease. The majority, however, were beautiful and healthy, with bright, intelligent eyes, and happy faces. The master, who has been with them seven years, is one of those small, active, wiry men, all life, who best know how to manage the