

in the following circular, addressed to parents, written by an observing and intelligent superintendent of schools, in the State of Vermont.

I know you feel an interest in the education of your children, and therefore I wish to call your attention to the winter schools, which are about to commence.—What shall be the value of the school in your district to your children? Are you aware that the success of your school will depend much upon your co-operation with the teacher? I find throughout the county, that where the parents take the most interest in schools, there they have the *best schools*, and where they take the least interest, the poorest schools. It is the uniform testimony of teachers, that the active co-operation of parents is essential to success in their schools. Shall *your* teacher have this co-operation the coming winter?—You may receive the public money, pay your taxes, employ a good teacher; but unless you take an interest *yourselves*, you cannot have a good school. The school will be what you make it. Do you ask what you can do to secure a good school?—There are many things you can do. I will mention some of them:

1. You can furnish your children with *suitable books*.
2. You can see that your children attend school *punctually in the morning*, and regularly *every day*. The tardiness and irregularity of scholars is one of the greatest evils in our district schools. Parents can correct this evil, *if they will*. In Putney, the average attendance last year was much greater than the year before—the average attendance in one school of fifty scholars being sixty days out of sixty-six day's school. In most schools in the county, the average attendance is not over forty or forty-five days—more than one-fourth of the schooling being absolutely lost, *needlessly lost*, while the value of the remaining three-fourths is greatly diminished. If your children are tardy, or occasionally absent from school, they will not be interested in the schools, or make progress in their studies. A few days' absence frequently destroys the value of more than half a winter's school. If your breakfast is half an hour too late, it may be the means of preventing your children from being interested in their studies for that day, and so through the winter. Will you not, then, as parents, *see to it that your children attend the school punctually in the morning, and regularly every day?*

3. *You can visit the school.* The practice of visiting schools is becoming more common in some towns, and the good effects of such visits are seen in both teachers and pupils. Still, there are many districts where neither the parents nor the committees ever go into the schools, and the best teachers accomplish but little in such districts, on account of the indifference of parents. It is impossible for a teacher to keep a first-rate school where parents do not feel interest enough to look in and see whether their children learn or not. You may as well expect to raise corn in winter, as to find a good school in such a district. The neglect and indifference of parents will be as fatal to the interests of the school, as the snow and ice to the growth of corn. If you have a field of grain, are you not accustomed to visit it, now and then, to see how it grows, and that, too, when your visits do the grain no such good as they should do your children? for the grass and the grain have no eyes to see you, no smiling faces and cheerful hearts with which to greet you, as the children in the school-room have. If the sun shines and the showers fall, the grass and the grain will grow on. But what the sunshine and showers do for the fields, the interest of parents will do for the school. A visit from you who are parents, will often be as serviceable to the school, as a shower of rain on the grass, or the warm sun, with a dressing of plaster, on the corn. Will not every parent in the country visit the district school at least *once* during the coming

winter? If the teacher is a good one he will be glad to see you. If he is unfaithful, negligent, or incompetent, there is still more need of your visiting the school, even though the teacher should not wish to see you.

4. *You can sustain the teacher in the government of the school.* There is great complaint in our country, that the schools fail for want of *order*. This want of order is sometimes the fault of teachers, and sometimes of the parents. If parents do not govern their children at home, if they allow them to stay at home for every petty dislike they may have against the teacher, or if they are accustomed to take their children out of school, when favorite son or daughter is punished, no teacher can govern the school. One of our town superintendents stated in a public address, last winter, that most of the failure of their schools in government, had arisen on account of the unwarrantable interference of the parents in the government of the school. If parents listen to the foolish complaints of their children, the children will generally have complaints enough to make. If your teacher has faults, it is better for you to go and speak of them kindly to him, than to find fault with him or backbite and slander him behind his back. For much of the trouble with teachers arises from some misrepresentation or misunderstanding, which a little explanation from the teacher would have removed. Where there is a decided public opinion in favor of order, there will seldom be much disorder or rebellion in school. It is because the unruly and disobedient expect "*aid and comfort*" among some in the district, that they venture upon open disobedience and rebellion in school. If your teacher is incompetent, or unfaithful, let him be fairly *dismissed*; but do not let a *faithful* teacher be put down or driven away by the ill-will of an offended parent, or the clamor of unruly boys and girls, to the disgrace of the teacher, and still greater disgrace of the children and the parents. Your duty as parents, and as good citizens, is not discharged by simply *not encouraging disorder*; it is your duty to sustain order, and frown on rebellion by your words and your influence. Men may *encourage mobs* in school, as well as in government, by *looking on and keeping still*, when they ought to *speak out*, and *frown down* rebellion. It is because the orderly keep still, that the few disorderly in our school districts make so much trouble.

5. You can do much, also, to benefit your children, by endeavouring to interest them in obtaining an education; by encouraging them to study and improve their minds during evenings; by discouraging those amusements which take off their attention from the school, and dissipate their minds; by showing that knowledge and virtue are better riches for them than any treasure of silver and gold.—JAMES TUFTS, *Supt. of Common Schools.*

MILLIONS OF MONEY THROWN INTO THE GUTTER.

That man gets his bones from the rocks and his muscles from the atmosphere, is beyond all doubt. The iron in his blood and the lime in his teeth were originally in the soil. But these could not be in his body, unless they had previously formed part of his food. And yet we can neither live on air nor on stones. We cannot grow fat upon lime, and iron is positively indigestible in our stomachs. It is by means of the vegetable creation alone that we are enabled to convert the mineral into flesh and blood. The only apparent use of herbs and plants is to change the inorganic earth, air, and water into organic substances fitted for the nutrition of animals. The little lichen, which, by means of the oxalic acid that it secretes, decomposes the rocks to which it clings, and fits their lime for "a-simulation" with higher organisms, is, as it were, but the primitive bone-maker of the world. By what subtle transmutation inorganic