

Miscellaneous.

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UNIVERSAL EDUCATION.

The idea of universal education is the grand central idea of the age. Upon this broad and comprehensive basis, all the experience of the past, all the crowding phenomena of the present, and all our hopes and aspirations for the future, must rest. Our forefathers have transmitted to us a noble inheritance of national, intellectual, moral and religious freedom. They have confided our destiny as a people to our own hands. Upon our individual and combined intelligence, virtue, and patriotism, rests the solution of the great problem of self-government. We should be untrue to ourselves, untrue to the memory of our statesmen and patriots, untrue to the cause of liberty, of civilization and humanity, if we neglected the assiduous cultivation of those means, by which alone we can secure the realization of the hopes we have excited. Those means are the *universal education of our future citizens*, without discrimination or distinction. Wherever in our midst, a human being exists, with capacities and faculties to be developed, improved, cultivated and directed, the avenues of knowledge should be freely opened and every facility afforded to their unrestricted entrance. Ignorance should no more be countenanced than vice and crime. The one leads almost inevitably to the other. Banish ignorance, and in its stead introduce intelligence, science, knowledge and increasing wisdom and enlightenment, and you remove in most cases, all those incentives to idleness, vice and crime, which now produce such a frightful harvest of retribution, misery and wretchedness. Educate every child "to the top of his faculties," and you not only secure the community against the depredations of the ignorant, and the criminal, but you bestow upon it, instead, productive artizans, good citizens, upright jurors and magistrates, enlightened statesmen, scientific discoverers and inventors, and the dispensers of a pervading influence in favour of honesty, virtue and true goodness. Educate every child physically, morally and intellectually, from the age of four to twenty-one, and many of your prisons, penitentiaries and alms-houses will be converted into schools of industry and temples of science; and the immense amount now contributed for their maintenance and support will be diverted into far more profitable channels. Educate every child—not superficially—not partially—but thoroughly—develop equally and healthfully every faculty of his nature—every capability of his being—and you infuse a new and invigorating element into the very life blood of civilization—an element which will diffuse itself throughout every vein and artery of the social political system, purifying, strengthening and regenerating all its impulses, elevating its aspirations, and clothing it with a power equal to every demand upon its vast energies and resources.

These are some of the results which must follow in the train of a wisely matured and judiciously organized system of universal education. They are not imaginary, but sober deductions from well authenticated facts—deliberate conclusions from established principles, sanctioned by the concurrent testimony of experienced educators and eminent statesmen and philanthropists. If names are needed to enforce the lesson they teach, those of Washington and Franklin and Hamilton and Jefferson and Clinton, with a long array of patriots and statesmen, may be cited. If facts are required to illustrate the connection between ignorance and crime, let the official return of convictions in the several courts of the State for the last 10 years be examined, and the instructive lessons be heeded. Out of nearly 28,000 persons convicted of crime, but 128 had enjoyed the benefits of a good common school education; 414 only had what the returning officers characterize as a "tolerable" share of learning; and of the residue, about one-half only could either read or write. Let similar statistics be gathered from the wretched inmates of our poor-house establishments, and similar results would undoubtedly be developed. Is it not therefore incomparably better as a mere prudential question of political economy, to provide ample means for the education of the whole community, and to bring those means within the reach of every child, than to impose a much larger tax for the protection of that community against the depredations of the ignorant, the idle, and the vicious, and for the support of the imbecile, the thoughtless, and intemperate?

SCHOOL SUPERVISION—LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS.

Within a year or two, much has been said and written in reference to the subject of school supervision, and the feeling is rapidly gaining ground that a better and more efficient mode may be adopted than that now in practice. As a general thing, the schools of Massachusetts do not receive that watchful and auxiliary supervision which their highest usefulness would seem to demand. This, from the very nature of the case, must be so. The whole business is usually entrusted to men whose time and attention are much engrossed in other concerns. They may be and usually are, among the best men in the community; but they are also men who have many professional cares or business engagements, and, consequently, they cannot devote very much time or thought to the interests of the schools. We contend that in order that any important department be well looked after and cared for, it should receive direct and primary attention; and we contend, also, that our schools are of sufficient importance to receive the best and first attention of good men as supervisors. Hence we believe that the true method is to entrust the main duties of school superintendence, in large towns and cities to one man who shall consider it *the business* to which his best thoughts and energies are to be given. A man thus situated would feel that he has something to do, and he would be likely to do *something*. He would do much to encourage and stimulate the teachers and pupils, much to arouse parents, much to awaken a general and wholesome interest in the whole subject of school education, much to secure a wise and economical expenditure of the means appropriated to educational purposes. We never felt more confident of the good results of this mode of supervision than we did in a recent visit to the town of Gloucester, in Essex County. For nearly two years the schools in this place have been under the supervisory control of Thomas Baker, Esq., (with a counciling board or committee,) and we feel assured that during this period as much has been done, and *well done*, as in any town of the commonwealth. School-houses have been erected and improved, and the whole cause has received an impulse which will be felt for many years. In no place have we seen more comely and convenient school-houses, and we are sure that in no place has money been more judiciously expended or more freely granted than here. It affords a strong proof that the people are ready and willing to pay liberally when their attention is rightly awakened, and when they see that the means appropriated are economically and wisely used. Mr. Baker has worked heartily, and accomplished much, *very much* good for the schools and for the town. It was our purpose to allude to his specific duties and to his general operations, but want of time and space forbids. We will only add now, that if any have doubts as to the advantage of the mode we have alluded to over the mode in general use, we would refer them to the town of Gloucester, with its present excellent mode and excellent superintendent.—*Massachusetts Teacher*.

THE TEACHER'S QUALIFICATIONS AND MODE OF HEARING CHILDREN RECITE.

At a County Association of Massachusetts Teachers held in June last, one of the questions discussed was, "the best method of conducting recitations." The following is the substance of the remarks made by the teachers and members present:

Mr. Tillinghast began the discussion by remarking that "the first great duty of the teacher in regard to recitations, is a thorough preparation upon every lesson to be recited. Many complain of a want of time for such preparation; their duties are so onerous and multifarious, that careful preparation is almost out of the question with them. He did not understand such persons. Mr. Pierce, formerly principal of West Newton Normal School, in addition to all the duties required of him as principal of the school, including general supervision of the school, correspondence with strangers, &c., always found time to examine carefully every lesson before hearing it recited.

Mr. Spear thought that a wrong notion prevails with reference to what constitutes a thorough understanding of the subject of a lesson. It seems to be thought that if a scholar can repeat the words of the text, he understands the subject. Nothing can be more false. As a result of the teaching to which this opinion gives rise, we see the pupils in our district schools, beginning the subjects of geography and grammar in precisely the same place at the com-