

ing paid his school-rate—whether little or much,—he has paid what the law requires for that year's Common School education of all his children, and that they are all entitled by law to the benefits of the school. However poor a man may be, having paid what the law requires, he can claim the education of all his children as a legal right, and not supplicate it as a cringing beggar. His children go to school, not in the character and spirit of ragged pauperism, but in the ennobling spirit of conscious right, and on equal vantage ground with others. Each parent, feeling that he has paid for the education of his children, naturally desires that they may have the benefit of it. While, therefore, the rate-bill per pupil is a temptation to each parent to keep his children from the school, the annual school-rate upon property furnishes each parent with a corresponding inducement to send his children to school—relieving trustees at the same time from all fear and uncertainty as to the means of providing for the teacher's salary. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that wherever the Free School system has been tried in Upper Canada or elsewhere, the attendance of pupils at school has increased from fifty to three hundred per cent. The facilities thus provided for the education of each child in a school section, will leave the ignorant, careless, or unnatural parent without excuse for the educational neglect of his children. The finger of universal reproof and scorn pointed at him, will soon prove more powerful than statute law, and without infringing any individual right will morally compel him, in connexion with higher considerations, to send his children to school. This system of 'compulsory education,' I wish to see every where in operation—the compulsion of provision for the universal education of children—the compulsion of their universal right to be educated—the compulsion of universal interest in the school—the compulsion of universal concentrated opinion in behalf of the education of every child in the land. Under such a system, in the course of ten years, an uneducated Canadian youth would be a monstrous phenomenon.

“ 6. I think the system of Free Schools is, furthermore, most consonant with the true principles and ends of civil government. Can a more noble and

economical provision be made for the security of life, liberty and property, than the removing and preventing the accumulation of that ignorance and its attendant vices which are the great sources of insecurity and danger, and the invariable pretext, if not justification, of despotism? Are any natural rights more fundamental and sacred than those of children to such an education as will fit them for their duties as citizens? If a parent is amenable to the laws who takes away a child's life by violence, or willfully exposes it to starvation, does he less violate the inherent right of the child in exposing it to moral and intellectual starvation? It is noble to recognize this inalienable right of infancy and youth by providing for them the means of education to which they are entitled,—not as children of particular families, but as children of our race and country. And how perfectly does it harmonize with the true principles of civil government for every man to support the laws and all institutions designed for the common good, according to his ability. This is the acknowledged principle of all just taxation; and it is the true principle of universal education. It links every man to his fellow-man in the obligations of the common interests; it wars with that greatest, meanest foe to all social advancement—the isolation of selfish individuality; and implants and nourishes the spirit of true patriotism by making each man feel that the welfare of the whole society is his welfare—that collective interests are first in order of importance and duty, and separate interests are second. And such relations and obligations have their counter part in the spirit and injunctions of our Divine Christianity. There, while every man is required to bear his own burden according to his ability, the strong are to aid the weak, and the rich are to supply the deficiencies of the poor. This is the pervading feature and animating spirit of the Christian religion; and it is the basis of that system of supporting public schools which demands the contribution of the poor man according to his penury, and of the rich according to his abundance.

“ 7. But against this system of Free Schools certain objections have been made; the principal of which I will briefly answer.

“ First objection:—‘ The common