

Free and *compulsory education* we certainly should have. Exactly what ought to be its details is a matter for educational authorities to discuss, but its necessity is shown by the close association everywhere of crime, disease and misfortune with illiteracy. Leaving aside crime and taking misfortune only, we see in the epidemic of small-pox in 1886 at Montreal, that about 5,000 deaths above the ordinary rate, occurred through illiteracy—the annual rate being more than doubled among our East End population. For such reasons I consider for example that our system of separate taxation of Protestants and Catholics is wrong; and that it is necessary that the school taxation be according to population. However, that is but one detail.

There are a number of other advantages which the State owes it to children to procure or see procured—good housing, public play-grounds, fine libraries, art museums, scholarships, and the opening of other public avenues to improvement. The opportunity of political equality, which has been so fully provided, is not enough; the opportunity of equipment for *social equality* if the child can win it, is also his due. That the children should suffer, generation after generation, for the sins, the ignorance, the vulgarity of their parents, where they possess an inborn capability for something more, is unjust. A fair field and no favour applies to the child in the battle of life, as well as to the contestant in any other battle. American laws generally go very far in considering the right of the child, while endeavouring to harmonize it with those of the parent. "The anxious purpose of the courts," says an authority, "is the welfare and best interest of the children. Hence, where the father or mother, or both, voluntarily release the custody of a child to a third person, such contracts will be held binding if the child is well cared for and unwilling to return to its parentso the father may, by immoral or vicious habits, or by ill-usage of the child, forfeit his parental right. In such cases the courts will exercise a discretion in awarding the custody of a child as its welfare may demand.....In Nebraska and Indiana.....the court is bound to look only to the welfare of the child, awarding its custody without reference to the rights or wishes of the parents." Needless to say that these principles go far

* Wormer, The American Law of Guardianship.