

dent to such legislative restriction is enough to damage the reputation and interests of even the best of causes. Were a similar policy adopted relative to any other great interest of the State, it would be deemed unwise and ruinous in the extreme. It is, however, to be hoped, that such expressions as the following will not be lost on the public mind: 'Nearly all the books have been drawn out as much as *twenty-five* times, many of them oftener, and quite a number of the books are not permitted to remain in the library an hour before they are withdrawn.' Says another: 'Our library is doing more good than any thing that has ever been done by the Legislature of this State. Great interest is manifested in it here.' The latter remark represents the state of things in a rural district in the oldest county in the State, and the former portrays the condition of the library enterprise in a large river city in the 'Pocket.' The number of volumes embraced in the purchase, and distributed to the townships, is *two hundred and twenty-six thousand two hundred and thirteen.*"

In 1855, there were 135,378 volumes in the school libraries of the State of Indiana.

The number of volumes distributed is 226,213, at a cost of \$154,335 22.

The amount of library tax for 1855, was \$108,243 21.

"The operation of the library feature of the system, as far as heard from, has been exceedingly happy, disappointing the predictions of its enemies and the fears of its timid friends, and even transcending the most sanguine expectations of its more ardent advocates. The interest awakened by its use, and the estimation in which it is held by adults as well as youth, confirm the wisdom that gave it a township character rather than a district mission.

"There are many pleasant tokens that it has entered on a glorious mission, and the indications of the high estimation in which it is held and the usefulness it is accomplishing, are neither few nor insignificant. One township reports 1230 volumes taken out in 3½ months; another 687 in 4 months; another 1242 in 9 months; another 1050 in 6 months; another 700 in 9 months; another 1540 in 10 months; another 2127 in 8½ months. No two of the said townships are in the same county, and none of these libraries contained more than 330 volumes."—*Report of C. Mills, Feb. 11, 1856.*

IOWA.

The exemptions from military duty, and all fines, are appropriated to the support of schools and school libraries.

In 1854, there were 1520 district schools, having only 576 volumes reported in their libraries.

MASSACHUSETTS.

From the Twelfth Report of the Secretary of Board of Education, presented November, 1848, we learn that the number of volumes in the school libraries was 91,539, and their estimated value, \$42,707. "It would be difficult," adds the Secretary, "to mention any way in which a million of dollars could be more beneficially expended than in supplying the requisite apparatus and libraries for our common schools."

A communication from the Secretary of the Board of Education, dated March 5, 1859, states, "Our school system in Massachusetts does not embrace 'school libraries,' as a part. Several years ago they were established in many school districts, but have generally failed to excite the interest necessary to keep them in existence. We have no returns giving information respecting them."

MICHIGAN.

Two mills on each dollar of valuation is taxed, \$25 of which is applied to the purchase of books for the township library.

The clear proceeds of all fines, penalties, and exemptions, are devoted to the purchase of books, and apportioned by the County Treasurer according to the number of children between the ages of four and eighteen.

The books are intended for the use of all the inhabitants, and not restricted to scholars attending school.

The inspectors purchase the books for the township libraries, and make all necessary regulations respecting their use. The township clerk acts as librarian. All works are excluded having directly or remotely a sectarian tendency, and also novels, romances, &c. No person except directors of school districts can draw books, and the inhabitants of the districts draw from them. The libraries are open every Saturday from 12 to 2.

A district library is provided for the City of Detroit, by a tax of \$200 annually. Act, Feb. 17, 1842.

The whole number of school districts is 4404. In 1851, there were 97,148 volumes in the township libraries. In 1853, the number of volumes in the libraries was 112,538. In 1854, the number was 121,201.

Amount of two mill tax assessed by the supervisor, and collected for support of school and township libraries, \$67,179 55.

Amount of fines, penalties, and forfeitures of recognizance, received of county treasurers for the purchase of books and township library \$2457 80.

MISSOURI.

In 1854, the number of common schools was 1546, and of district libraries 1117.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

it.

The Secretary of the Board of Education, Jonathan Tenney, in his Report for 1856, after stating what had been done in the States of New York, Ohio, Indiana, &c., earnestly recommends the adoption of a system of school libraries in New Hampshire. He thinks it would be unwise to appropriate an equal amount to each town of such various size, wealth, and length of school as exists there. If the State will not aid in this work, he urges the teachers, committees, and intelligent citizens to persuade the towns to do it. The number of school, district, social, or town libraries in New Hampshire, is 73, volumes 47,745.

NEW YORK.

"In 1835, the districts were, by Act of Legislature, authorized to tax themselves \$20 each for the first year, and \$10 each year afterwards, for the establishment of a library. But few districts availed themselves of this privilege. In 1838, it was made imperative upon each district, the State paying half of the sum." These libraries are "not so much for the benefit of children attending school as for those who have completed their common school education. Its main design was to throw into school districts, and to place within the reach of all their inhabitants, a collection of good works on subjects calculated to enlarge their understandings and store their minds with useful knowledge." (Report, 1836.)

"Selections for the district libraries are made from the whole range of literature and science, with the exception of controversial books, political or religious. History, biography, poetry, philosophy—mental, moral, and natural—fiction—indeed every department of human knowledge, contributes its share to the district school library. The object of this great charity was not merely to furnish books for children, but to establish in all the school districts a miscellaneous library suited to the tastes and characters of every age.

"By means of this diffusive benevolence, the light of knowledge penetrates every portion of the State, and the sons of our farmers, merchants, mechanics, and laborers, have daily access to many well-selected books, of which, but for this sagacious policy of our State, a majority of them would have never heard. If knowledge is power, who can calculate the energy imparted to the people of this State by the district school and district library?" (Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools, January 2, 1849.)

"By provision of the Act of the Legislature, April 17, 1838, the sum of \$55,000 of the United States' deposit fund was required to be distributed among the several school districts of the State, and by the trustees of districts to be appropriated for three years (extended, in 1839, to five years,) for the purchase of a district library, and after that time, for a library, or for the payment of teachers' wages.

"In 1838, the means of distributing books throughout the country were by no means as great, as they now are. Railroads were but few; and the means of access to many parts of the State were unfrequent, tedious and expensive. Literature was by no means generally circulated. The authority given by the Legislature to establish joint district libraries, at the same time that it recognizes the demand made for more libraries, also admits the inconveniences, expenses, and often wastefulness, of the plan of maintaining separate district libraries."

The opinion of the State Superintendent of Schools, on the subject, as found in his Annual Report, 1857, shows how much these institutions are neglected, even in the country, where it is difficult to procure reading matter. That opinion is as follows:—

"The advantages that actually result from their establishment, while unquestionably large, are, it is to be feared, sensibly decreasing. It is now through their secondary influence in having excited a taste for reading, which seeks its gratification in the private purchase of books, that the libraries are of very considerable value, rather than by actually supplying the demand they originally stimulated. In those districts where the libraries have been best appreciated and most extensively read, the interest in their contents is to the largest degree exhausted, and can only be renewed by a constant replenishing of the shelves with fresh books. The existing appropriation is too small to produce a very marked effect in this way, and the consequence is, that both the old and the new volumes are falling into neglect.

"As the inhabitants cease to resort to the libraries, the officers who are charged with their custody and preservation, become careless and indifferent, and the books are stowed away like the forgotten lumber of a garret, to moulder and dilapidate.