

them were irregular in their attendance. This is a crying evil. Parents keep their children from school, or send them only now and then, and thus preclude the possibility of any thorough education being obtained. Meanwhile the blame is laid on the teacher, or the system, or the child, while it should be on the parent. In some country districts, and at certain seasons, a scarcity of labourers, or poverty, may make it necessary to keep the children at work; but to keep a child out of school unless from necessity, is to do him an irreparable wrong. Childhood will never return, and education, if neglected in youth, will in all probability never be obtained. The child will never in after life thank that parsimonious parent, who, in order to hoard up for him a few more dollars, deprived him of what is of far greater importance; who, to save the expense of a hired labourer, made him toil in the fields, at the very time he should have devoted to the cultivation of his mind. *Education is worth more than money.* "Wisdom cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof."

A third defect lies in the careless manner in which recitations of lessons are often conducted. Insufficient attention is paid to distinct enunciation, correct pronunciation, the inflections of the voice, and the thorough comprehension of what is read. Spelling among us is notoriously bad. To remedy this, exercises in dictation, and a thorough training in the derivation of words with the prefixes and suffixes, would be very useful.

This leads us to notice a fourth defect: a tendency to the mechanical rather than the intellectual mode of teaching. In many schools, even where there are black-boards, they are but little used, (although there is a great improvement of late in this respect,) no illustration is given, and no explanation is attempted. In Arithmetic for example, sums are given out to be *done*, and the pupil learns the *how* but not the *why*. He can go through the detail, but is ignorant of the principle. One half of the time usually spent over the slate might advantageously be devoted to other studies, if the other half were spent in illustrating and explaining the elementary principles of mathematics. The application of these principles in the practical rules might be illustrated, but expertness in the use of them will never be acquired until the lad has left school and gone into business. In History, the memory is often crammed with names, and dates, and isolated facts, while the principles of history and the connection of events are not pointed out. In Geography too, the names of countries and towns, with their populations, are often repeated, while their relative positions are unknown, and the physical geography is almost entirely overlooked. The teaching of Grammar is rendered very ineffective by the same mechanical style.

Another defect in the working of the school system is found in the local superintendence of the schools. If the provisions of the Act were carried out, a most effective superintendence would be the result. It is the duty of the local Superintendent to distribute the school money, to visit each school at least half yearly, to deliver a lecture in each school district, to take the general oversight of the schools, to attend to arbitrations, to afford all required information relative to the schools under his care, to meet with the Chief Superintendent for conference when required, to prepare and submit an annual Report, and to attend the meetings of the County Council of Public Instruction, at least four times in the year. For all the labor, loss of time, and travelling expenses connected with these duties, he is to receive a sum of not less than £1 for each school, the Council having power to add to that sum as they see fit. The legal minimum is, however, the common remuneration. The consequence of so paltry a remuneration is, that the work is not executed. The whole time of a competent person would be necessary to do the work well, but the salary is too small to induce any one to undertake a superintendence of