

of compulsory education; they would re-enact it themselves if abolished—the law represents the sentiments of the people. They are superior in their universal singing; one of its results is found in your music to-night, and music has been an important element in developing the German character. They are strong in object teaching—oral instruction—independence of text-books. The school authorities practically dignify labour; in the Geneva high schools the girls are taught to sew, and to run the sewing-machine. They have also thorough training of teachers in normal schools, and understand the advantage of permanence in the relation of teacher and school. In the French Schools, the admirable posture deserves imitation; it is one of the best guards against pulmonary consumption. Altogether, there is much that we might profitably study and copy in America.

DEFECTS IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS, AND REMEDY.

The defects to which I desire to call attention, Association, Prof. Allen read a paper.

1. The conditions of child-life in the school-room are not properly considered, and hence no suitable basis can be established on which to begin the work of school instruction.

2. No natural order of studies or subjects to be pursued has been established. Hence very many subjects and branches of study are taken up at improper periods, some of them entirely useless, to the exclusion of those that are highly essential.

3. No systematic method of training the perceptive faculties has been adopted. In fact, we may almost conclude from what we see daily in school-rooms as we travel over the country, that these faculties are not to be taken into account in the process of primary instruction. As a result of this, children grow up to be men and women in blissful ignorance of very many of the most common and practical things in daily life.

4. The elements of our language are among the first lessons given to a child on his entrance into the school-room. Instead of words which represent the ideas and things, meaningless letters and sounds are substituted. Books are used too soon in primary grades, and, in fact, I may say used too much in all grades. Oral spelling is taught.

5. Physical science is almost wholly ignored in primary schools. The hours of confinement in the school-room are too many. Children are required to sit while in school, when they ought to be moving about or standing at blackboard, maps, charts, or working with apparatus.

7. Inexperienced, cheap, and consequently poor teachers, are generally employed for the primary grades.

These are among the most glaring defects in our present plan, though not all. Yet I trust there is a sufficient number to form the basis of an interesting discussion.

The legitimate fruits of these defects may be found in irregularity of attendance, truancy, absenteeism, a hatred of school and books, a distaste for learning, and the much-to-be-regretted fact that the great bulk of common school pupils leave the schools at or about the age of sixteen.

The "new departure" consists—

1. In dividing school life into two periods, known respectively as the how or fact period, and the why or philosophical. Instruction during the first period consists in giving processes, familiarizing tables, acquiring rapidity and accuracy in performing, and should be wholly, or nearly so, conversational.

2. As all studies in the school-room may be classed under the three heads of language, mathematics and natural science, and as the elements of all physical and natural science should be taught to the youngest child that enters the school, every child should have daily one lesson in language, one in mathematics, and one in science.

3. Instruction should first be given in how to properly use the senses, that they may convey to the mind accurate knowledge, properly certified to or tested. Very much attention should be given to securing greater accuracy of the perspective faculties.

This embraces three studies, all that any pupil at any time of life ought to pursue. In connection with this, drawing, writing and music come in, not as studies, but as changes, which is, in the true sense of the word, rest.

4. The spoken instead of the written word should first be taught. No attention or time should be given during this first period to teach the letters or figures. Words should be printed or written (better the latter) simply as forms or as pictures are made. These may be taken from wall cards, or from lessons put upon the board by the teacher. As spelling would not be used did we not write, and as we use it properly only in writing, spelling should not be taught

until writing is learned, and oral spelling should never be used as a process for teaching spelling.

As words should be taught before letters, the time will not be long before the letters and figures will be known by the pupils, and you will have been saved a vast amount of vexatious, tedious, and patience-trying work, and the pupil will have been saved that rough, stony and thorny path over which the most of us have trodden in sorrow. They will have picked up these little waifs or integral parts of language the natural way.

If we desire to teach language efficiently and correctly, we must bear in mind that habits of speech are caught much more easily and readily than taught.

5. Physical science should be taught by bringing the subjects and things of which they treat as far as possible into the presence of the child. Let his eyes see and his hands feel the subjects and things presented. In doing this every school-room becomes a miniature museum. I should like to exhibit such an one as I now have in mind, collected entirely by the children of the school. In thus studying these subjects the child is brought in direct contact with the material with which he daily meets and has to do with in after

6. No primary school, ~~as well as his knowledge of the~~ day than four hours, and the rooms should ~~be so arranged~~ should be fixtures furnished as will allow the pupil to be standing or sitting, as he may desire. Children thus situated, it is found, seldom sit. This is nature's plan.

7. None but experienced teachers and those of much learning and culture, ought ever to be placed in primary schools. Consequently the primary teacher ought to have a higher salary than in any other grade.

3. A NEW SCHOOL FEATURE.

In Denmark children may attend school one part of the day, and work the other part. A school-house in Copenhagen is furnished for a thousand children; one session is held in the morning, a thousand attending; in the afternoon a second thousand attend, both schools being under the same general management. This system secures a happy union of bodily and mental exercise. It is profitable whether considered in an intellectual, moral or pecuniary point of view, and is based on sound principles. Experience proves a few hours of mental labour better for the educational progress of the student, than of a whole day of forced application to books, as was the custom in early times.

4. COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

While there are 5,660,074 illiterates in the United States, there are but about 3,637,000 of adult illiterates; and the latter seems the fairer way of stating it, as many persons learn to write between the ages of six and twenty-one. Only 1,148,000 of these are in the North, and of these 756,000 are in the Pacific States, thus leaving 583,000 in those States where our school system has had its best opportunity for development. In the Northern States there are 690,000 foreign illiterates; if only half of these are in the States referred to, (and doubtless there are many more,) then the number of native adult illiterates dwindles down to 238,000, or less than one to each 100 of their population. Making a fair estimate of the number of these from the South, both coloured and white, and there remains less than one illiterate to each 300 of those who have had the advantages of our free schools. Surely this is not a disgraceful record when compared with other countries, and especially with the results of the compulsory law in Prussia; for in this country, after an enactment compelling children to attend school between the ages of six and fourteen had been thoroughly tried for 128 years, there were found to be for each 100 inhabitants, one young man between the ages of twenty and twenty-two who could not read and write. What would be the proportion were older persons and females included?

History proves most conclusively that the leading nations of Europe do not base their power on any compulsory system of education, but on the superiority of their teachers and schools. Prussia affords a striking example of this, as she tried such a law for almost 100 years, and, meeting with so little success, determined to devise some plan which should prove more effectual, hence established a sufficient number of Normal Schools to educate all who wished to teach, and from their organization dates that high culture which has astonished all Christendom. With these are connected preparatory departments, in which applicants are tried for six months, at the end of which time only those who have shown considerable