

# JOURNAL OF

Province of



# EDUCATION,

Ontario.

VOL. XXI.

TORONTO: APRIL, 1868.

No. 4.

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## I. SUPPLEMENTARY, OR COMPULSORY, EDUCATION AND THE PREVENTION OF CRIME.

The press, both in England and Canada, has lately given a large share of attention to the subject of what we cannot but think has been, in connection with the public schools, inaptly termed "compulsory education." The education itself is not in the sense in which the word is used compulsory. The compulsion simply consists in requiring a certain class of parents in cities and large towns to take their children perforce out of the schools of vice on the streets, and employ or educate them at home, or else send them to the schools of instruction so liberally provided for them by the Municipality. To connect the idea of compulsion with our public school system is to attach to it an unpopular and distasteful idea. In point of fact no party lays it down as a necessary rule that all the children of a city or town shall be compelled to attend the public schools. So long as they attend any school, or are usefully employed or instructed at home, most of the advocates of compulsory education so called would be satisfied.

The instinct of self-preservation from crime and lawlessness naturally impels a community to interfere to compel its ignorant and thriftless members to put a restraint upon their vices. The vast cost of our jails, reformatories, penitentiaries, (and of the whole administration of criminal justice), calls loudly for some effort being made to shut down the flood gates of vice near the source of the stream. Not that mere education (or even Sunday School instruction) can wholly do that; but it does erect a barrier in the way of vice, and gives the young, who may be

brought within its salutary influence, other and better feelings and associations than those which are so strongly developed and cherished by the "city arabs" in our streets.

Frequently, in the columns of this *Journal*, and in the official reports of the Chief Superintendent the subject of supplementary, or compulsory, education has been discussed more or less prominently. The resolutions on the subject passed at various County School conventions have also been inserted. See vol. xix., pages 55—57. In a recent report (which was laid before the Legislature of Ontario at the close of its first session), the subject of "compulsory education" has been treated of at some length, and the examples of other educating countries for and against the system adduced. The experience of these countries in this matter will be found to be of the greatest practical value in determining the question, and will enable us, we trust, to arrive at correct conclusions on the subject.

As an indication of the growing public sentiment on "compulsory education" in this province, we insert in this number of the *Journal* some articles from the Press, the charge of a judge and the presentment of a grand Jury, besides one or two letters from correspondents on the subject. We also insert a Petition of some interest addressed to the Legislature and signed by eight Judges of the Superior Courts, four Clergymen, and several prominent citizens of Toronto. This petition was entertained by the House on the last day of the session, and a committee was proposed to be appointed to take the whole matter into consideration at an early day—probably at the beginning of next session. If so, we can scarcely doubt as to the result of the investigations of that committee; and we trust that ere long we shall have some check put upon the growing evils consequent upon the vice and ignorance of the floating population of juveniles in our cities and larger towns.

Already, by means of the Boys and Girls' Homes in Toronto, a great and good work is, under God's blessing, being accomplished in the right direction. But owing to want of means and other causes, the sphere of the operations of these truly benevolent and christian institutions is necessarily limited. But they are designed only to reach a certain class of the juvenile waifs of the city. Their success has, however, shown what can be done towards rescuing many a "city arab" from the contaminating influence of vagrant companions, and of ameliorating the condition of many of the houseless wanderers in our midst.