

public spirit and good management than to be prosperous; that inasmuch as the theory of popular education is founded upon the principle that the public security requires the education of all the citizens, and that it is both just and expedient to tax the property of the people for the education of all the children of the people, and inasmuch as the school-tax is levied equally upon all parts of the township, and as the object contemplated, which alone justifies such taxation, is the education of the whole mass of the population, without distinction, nothing short of an equal provision for all should satisfy the public conscience.

"Whatever diversity of opinion" he adds "may exist among educationists, as to the best manner of constituting Township Boards of Education, there can be but one opinion as to the propriety of having a township school organization. Facts, experiments, the observations and opinions of those competent to judge, have fully settled this matter. It is not, however, so clearly determined whether the School Committees or Boards of Education of townships should consist of three or six persons; one-third to be elected, and the other third to go out of office annually; or whether they should be elected by the township at large, or by the sub-districts. Nor is the principle fully settled, whether a township should be divided, for certain specific purposes, into sub-districts or not. But it is fully settled that if a township is thus divided, the lines of sub-districts should not in the least interfere with the proper classification, gradation and supervision of its schools.

"It is thought by some that to provide the same amount of means and facilities for educating those who reside in the poorer and less populous portions of a township, as for those in the wealthier and more thickly settled portions, would deprive the latter of their rights; just as if the taxes for the support of schools were levied upon sub-districts, and not upon the State and townships.

"If all the property of the State and of the townships is taxed alike for the purposes of educating the youth of the State, there is no principle plainer than that all should share equally, so far as practicable, in the benefits of the fund thus raised, whether they reside in sparse or populous neighborhoods."

#### IN INDIANA.

As Indiana has faithfully tried both systems, and is a sister State of the great North-West, I shall freely cite the results of its Township experience, as contrasted with the old district plan:

"Under the old district system," says Hon. W. C. Larrabee, in his report as Superintendent of Public Instruction in that State, in 1852, "heretofore in use in this State, and until lately in all the Eastern States, serious inconveniences, and sometimes insurmountable difficulties could but exist. I myself came near being wholly cheated out of an education by this most iniquitous system. The township was mapped off into districts by geographical lines. The district boundaries could not be passed. A family must send only to the school to which they may be geographically assigned, though a swamp or a river be in the way, though unluckily they might live on the very frontiers of the district, and their might be in another district a school house provokingly near them.

"Under our present system these districts are utterly abolished. Each civil township forms a corporation for school purposes. The township Trustees are authorized and required 'to establish, and conveniently locate in the township a sufficient number of schools for the education of all the children therein.' Each family may send to any school in the township convenient or agreeable. Whenever any person can be more conveniently accommodated at the school of some adjoining township, or county, he is at liberty to make his own selection, and attend where he pleases.

"This repudiation of arbitrary district lines, and this liberty to the family of choosing a school according to its own convenience and pleasure, is one of the most admirable features of our system. It gives, wherever it has been put to practice, unbounded satisfaction. It only needs, in order to become universally popular, to be understood in its practical advantages. One of the committee who reported the law last winter, a gentleman, whose services and experience in the cause of education render his opinions of great weight, thus writes to me of the operation of this principle in his own county: 'The people express much satisfaction at the provision of the new law, which enables them to make their own selection of schools, unrestrained by geographical lines. A few days ago, I met a farmer, whose name had by accident been omitted in our enumeration. I requested him to give me the number of his children, which he said he would do, as it might be of some advantage to us, although it was of no use to him. I asked him, why? He said the school in his own district was so remote, and the road so difficult, that he had altogether given up sending his children. I told him that districts no longer existed, that he could send his children, without charge, to any public school he might select. On this his countenance directly brightened up. 'Well,' said he, 'there is sense in that. I will send my children to-morrow.' Another ven-

erable man, nearly seventy years old, as he was paying his tax yesterday to the Treasurer, said, 'I have been paying a heavy tax for several years, and have derived no benefit therefrom.' I asked him, why? He answered, 'I reside in a remote part of the school district. It is utterly impracticable for me to send to our school house. There is a school-house in an adjoining district close at hand, but I have no right to its privileges.' I told him that senseless obstacle had been removed under our new system. He could now send to school, if more convenient, in an adjoining township, or even in an adjoining county. 'Well,' said he 'I shall hereafter derive some benefit from the school system.' Wherever this principle is understood by the people, it is popular.'

"In such a territory as ours, in many parts nearly roadless, and intersected by bridgeless streams, in some of the northern counties, obstructed in communication by impassable swamps, such a system is the only one promising any success. It is indeed strange, that the people have so long submitted to the district system, so replete with inequalities, injustice, and inconveniences, and deficient in redeeming qualities. So true it is, that we often remain, for a long time, unaware of the serious inconvenience and injury we suffer from imperfection and abuses to which we are accustomed. But when the remedy is discovered, and the corrective applied, we wonder how we could so long overlook so simple a remedy for so serious evils.

"Indiana," says Mr. Larrabee, in his report of 1853, "was the first State to abolish the old district system. But not the last. Ohio has followed in her footsteps. Massachusetts is preparing to follow, and in a few years the township system will be the rule, and the district system only the exception, in more than half the States of the Union. It is conceded on all hands, that this system will, in the end, when fully developed, work out the most favourable results. It is the only system by which we can make any tolerable approach to equality in educational advantages for all parts of the State."—*Wisconsin Journal of Education*.

## II. Papers on the School.

### 1. CLAIMS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

Experience has demonstrated the truth of the assertion, that "liberal appropriations, and legislative enactments, cannot, of themselves, impart to any system that vitality essential to success." An enlightened public opinion is absolutely prerequisite to ultimate and permanent success. Law is but a dead letter, a lifeless skeleton. Well directed popular will is not a creature of impulse. It is controlled by motives that are first approved, then felt. The heart must be trained to feel, after the intellect has been trained to perceive the claims of any cause upon us for sympathy and support. Especially is this true of the great cause of popular education, which touches us at more points, and affects more interests than any other. The social, the political, the physical, the intellectual, the moral interests of our children, are intimately connected with it. It appeals to us as parents, as citizens, as patriots, and as philanthropists. A few of its claims upon us I will briefly adduce:

1. It is a supply exactly adapted to the want.  
The mind of the child ever seeks for something wherewith to satisfy its longings. The public school comes to the restless and absorbent mind with the invitation, "take freely of the good things I bring you, and be filled with the blessings I have in store for you."

2. It is the only supply that will meet the necessities of the larger part of our people.  
*Family instruction* will not meet the demand. Some parents are morally unfit to become the teachers of their children; some have not sufficient training themselves; many have not the time that can be spared from other and pressing duties pertaining to the physical comforts of their families. Take from the whole number of parents, those who can not, and those who will not, properly instruct their children, and comparatively few remain.

*Private enterprise* will not meet the demand. According to the last census, but one out of thirteen of the pupils of the United States is enrolled as attending private schools of all kinds and grades. This estimate embraces all the States of the Union, some of which have no public school system.

The census reveals, also, one other fact bearing directly upon this point. The number of persons, natives of any State, who can neither read or write, is in reverse ratio to the interest manifested in public school enterprises. I use not this argument to discourage private enterprise, but rather to show that this alone is an unsafe reliance. Colleges, academies, and seminaries, are of necessity confined to narrow spheres of direct labor, though their indirect influences are unlimited. They are the most efficient where the field is prepared by public enterprise.

3. It is a home school.