

questioner is changed, the old crutch is lost, and with it the ground of their former assurance is gone. The new teacher hasn't yet supplied one, or the scholars haven't become familiar with it. It is easier to promote smartness and a show of intelligence than to cultivate and strengthen the understanding. But I fear my notes have become too extended on this phase of the subject.

I cannot exonerate the teachers, then, from blame for the unsatisfactory state of education. But here I ought to state that in general where I have seen cause to find fault, they are prompt in accepting any hints supplied as to a more excellent way when the matter is clearly presented to them. Nor is this readiness merely apparent. I have already entered on my second term and I see a change. The blame, however, lies principally not with the teachers but with the rate-payers. There exists among them very generally an altogether inexcusable lack of interest and of intelligent action in reference to education. Dissatisfaction, it is true, is general enough; but the matter too often ends in the expression of this dissatisfaction. One way of expressing it is particularly childish. The school is voted down at the annual meeting as if the question of school or no school was one on which the annual meeting legally had a voice. It contributes, however, like some of the other ways to give vent to spite which of itself gives not a little satisfaction to human nature. A good many would like to have their own children educated; but this is a result which can be attained for them only in common with the other children of the community and patient co-operation in intelligent organized effort does not seem popular. The lack of intelligent interest and unwillingness to co-operate in organized legal efforts appear first in filling up the Board of Trustees. The law has wisely put so much in the Trustees hands that the state of education in the community depends largely upon them. In many sections, however, one cannot resist the impression that the fear that the Trustees may do too much and incur expenses is much greater than the desire that they should do all that can safely and judiciously be done. Consequently men are elected as Trustees who will represent the fear of expense. As may be expected, in very many cases, the Trustees have little intelligent interest in the school. There are many good teachers in the county; but the inferior workers get the school. This does not always arise from the determination to engage only cheap teachers; for in some cases they get higher salaries than better teachers receive. But proper exertions are not put forth in time, or the first applicant is received, or the Trustees are jealous of each other or represent distinct factions and refuse to co-operate to secure the best. Then, after the school is opened, they fail to give the teacher the moral support which quickens to the utmost efforts. Examining the registers of 75 departments very near the close of the last school year, I failed to find in some a single record of a Trustee's visit. In other cases, perhaps, two Trustees looked in. Very rarely did the three make even a visit each in the course of the year. In some sections one, in others two of the Trustees visited the school once in the course of the term. But worse than all is the irregularity of the attendance of the scholars. With the little moral support which they receive it is well nigh impossible for the teachers to labor on cheerfully and hopefully. All around them seek their own; will not their zeal flag, and they become mere routinists? The temptation is, at all events, felt to be very strong in a still higher vocation. Do what they will they cannot get their classes to assume a creditable appearance. The irregulars belong to every class, and they cannot be formed into an "awkward squad" as they deserve: for parents expect that their child will be put on with their neighbor's child who has regularly attended, and these irregulars represent every stage of progress. Much as we all dislike the idea of compulsory attendance, I fear the Legislature will be necessitated to come, in this point also, to the help of the cause. I hope, however, if this should be the case that children under seven years will be exempted from the operation of the law.