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A PLEA FOR FREE EDUCATION.

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE COURT HOUSE, JACKSONVILLE, BY SYL. C. SIMPSON, ESQ., STATE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, ON THE EVENING OF THE CLOSING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE TEACHERS' INSTITUTE.

(Continued from our last issue.)

In the Ohio penitentiary, out of 276 inmates, nearly all were reported as ignorant, and 175 as grossly so. In the Auburn prison, New York, out of 244 inmates, only 39 could read and write. To come nearer home: According to the official report of the Superintendent, there were received at the Oregon Penitentiary from September 15th, 1870, to September 1st, 1872, 187 convicts. Of these 17 had no education whatever; 40 could barely read; and of the remaining 190 it is safe to say that not more than a dozen had received a good common school education.

These facts are terribly significant. It is useless to deny that education tends to prevent crime when we see the ranks of the illiterate furnishing ten times their proportion of recruits for our prisons. It is cheaper, too, to prevent crime by proper instruction than to punish it. It costs less to keep a man out of prison than to keep him in. School books are cheaper than "Gardner's shackles." Why, just think of it! It costs this State, on an average, something near \$40,000 a year to keep less than a hundred convicts in the penitentiary, after the buildings are provided. And yet probably not more than \$150,000, at a rough estimate, is expended for the education of the 39,000 school children in the State! Nearly \$500 a year paid for each convict and less than \$5 for the schooling of each child! We must remember, too, that the cost of the penitentiary is only a single item in the long bill of expense that crime annually imposes upon Oregon. Adding thereto the expenses of all the criminal prosecutions in the State, the cost of keeping county prisoners, and the interest in the investment in prisons and other public buildings made necessary by crime, the aggregate would be swelled to an amount more than sufficient to maintain free schools in all the districts of the State all the year round.

I claim also that it is the duty of every State to maintain a complete free school system, for the reason that it adds far more than the cost of the investment to the wealth-producing power of the people. There is no position in which a man can be placed wherein his effectiveness will not be increased by education. The humblest manual labor can be better performed by a man who is trained to think than by one who is not. From a series of careful observations in the factories of New England, Horace Mann ascertained that those operatives who could sign their names to their weekly receipts for pay could, as a general thing, do a third more work and do it better than those who made "their mark." I doubt not that an intelligent hod-carrier can do better work than an ignorant blockhead who only knows enough to climb a ladder.

In these days, in particular, the value of intelligence and education in manual employments is much increased by the rapid introduction of improved machinery. Men who think are wanted in the shop and in the field to manage the labor-saving contrivances of the day. "Other things being equal," the material prosperity of a State is exactly commensurable with the average intelligence of its people. The more education is diffused among its citizens the greater is its wealth-producing power. The more school houses, the more factories and busy workshops and cultivated fields. Why, so potent in this direction is the spread of education among the people that it has even the power to galvanize into seeming life the stagnant civilization of Asia and to make the Chinese a thrifty and prosperous nation.

It is also the duty of the State to provide for the education of its people at public expense, for the reason that it can be more cheaply and effectively done in that way than by private enterprise. Society, acting as a whole, under some general system, can carry on any great work for the public good at infinitely less cost than can all the members of that society acting separately and each for himself. United efforts will accomplish in such cases what could never be done by any amount of individual exertion. For instance: The experience of the world has proved beyond all doubt that a State or nation can carry and distribute the mails more cheaply than can possibly be done by private enterprise. Just compare the relative cost of carrying letters, papers, etc., by mail and by express. Here, for example, is Wells, Fargo & Co.'s express, an institution

that has almost a world-wide business and fame and millions of capital, and is as admirably organized and ably managed as it is possible for any mere private enterprise to be. And yet it cannot begin to compete in cheapness of transportation with the United States Mail, although it uses the same conveyances. The express company will charge you, say, twelve cents for carrying a package from Jacksonville to Yreka in the express box, when in the mail bag, that lies right by it in the stage, Uncle Sam will for three cents take a package of the same weight to the furthest corner of this great land. This is a striking illustration of the great truth that affairs of this kind can always be better carried on by the State than by any number of individuals or combinations of individuals. Of course I do not claim nor do I believe that the State can manage all business better and more cheaply than individuals can. My position is that public business can be best conducted by the public, but I am just as confident of the truth that individual business can be conducted best by individuals. The State always fails ignobly and disgracefully—deservedly fails, too—when it undertakes the management of matters that are in their nature private.

Now, education is, as has already been shown, legitimate public business. It follows, therefore, "as the night the day," that the State can carry it on at less cost and with greater effectiveness than anybody else. Indeed, I need not go outside of the business itself to prove it. To be convinced of the truth of my position, you have only to compare the relative cost of instruction in public and private schools throughout the country. Every State in the Union can, by a small annual tax, maintain flourishing public schools in almost every neighborhood, and yet, in the same localities, private schools and academies, of the same grade, will require immense funded endowments in addition to the exorbitant rates of tuition that they charge in order to be able to live at all.

Besides, it seems to me that there is a positive danger in leaving a matter that so nearly and vitally concerns the public welfare, as does this subject of education, to the hap-hazard control of private enterprise. Just think of it for a moment. The eternal destiny of every organized society in the world hangs upon the intelligence of its members, and therefore, of necessity, upon the kind of training that they get. A great man once said: "Let me make the ballads of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws." So I can say, with even greater force: Let me control the schools of a nation, and I care not who controls its legislation. I will mould it like clay in the hands of the potter," in spite of all other influences combined. A single year's management of the education of the thoughtless little prattlers that to-day romp over the hills and valleys of this broad land, talking no thought for the morrow, would seal the fate of America forever. Our schools are the very citadels of our liberty. Admit the spirit and teaching of despotism there, and no power could save us from the hand of the oppressor. What madness then would it be to garrison these citadels with mercenaries and bigots, by opening their doors to whoever might choose to enter and control them. Popular education is the great fountain of our freedom, and if we permit wrong-headed men to poison its pure waters with the bitterness of hate, and creed, and faction, Liberty will drink and die. Oh, there is peril—imminent, deadly peril—for this dear land of ours, if we surrender the entire control of our educational interests to the one-sided bias of private or sectarian education. The only safety is in the State taking the control of the beginning of culture by establishing a free system of popular instruction. Let the broad foundation of liberal American education for all the people be laid in the common schools, and we may safely leave the completion of the structure to private and sectarian institutions if we will. Thoroughly Americanize our children in the public schools to begin with; saturate their very being with the spirit of liberty; immerse them, in orthodox Baptist fashion, in the great Fountain of Freedom, of which I spoke, and I am not afraid then to trust them in private institutions, however narrow, and illiberal, and prescriptive may be their models. For the present, at least, it seems to be wisest and best to leave the higher education to private schools. At least that has been the teaching of experience in the past. But the State must keep faithful watch and ward over the beginnings of popular culture. It may leave the cultivation, pruning and shaping of the tree to others, but it must "bend the twig" so that it shall point, "true as the needle to the pole," to the clustering stars in the constellation of the Union.

After all, friends, for this subject of popular education only a question of expediency? As members of organized society, have we not a duty to perform to humanity, to our race, in this matter? Have we a right, as members of the great brotherhood of man, to stand idly by and permit thousands of our fellows, on every hand, to perform the journey from the cradle to the grave, walking in the eternal sombre shadow of intellectual darkness? The day of knowledge is streaming all around them, flooding the valleys with radiance and bathing the hill-tops with glory; and yet they droop on, each wrapped in the dense cloud of his own ignorance as in a garment, with never a beam of light or hope to illuminate the dreary, rayless, lonely night of his soul. And so they stumble out of the dark gate of death and drop from our sight forever into the shadowy, great unknown beyond—souls that never knew their own worth or strength—minds that never were thrilled with the electric life-giving power of thought. Think of the grand aggregate of intellect thus wasted by want of culture. Every graveyard in the land is tenanted by poets who never sang, and orators who never spoke, because their lips were never touched by the fire of education. There is melancholy truth as well as poetry in the language of Gray's "Churchyard Elegy": "Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire; Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed, Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre. "But knowledge to their minds her ample page, Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er enroll; Chill Penury repressed their noble rage, And froze the genial current of the soul. "Full many a flower of purest ray serene The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear; Full many a gem of purest light unseen, And waste its sweetness on the desert air. "But would it not be true if society would but do its duty. There is no pearl in the deep sea of ignorance that may not be brought to surface. There is no flower in the vast wastes of uncultivated intellect that may not be transplanted and set to bloom among the habitations of men. Every intellect that goes through the world without culture represents a fault, a failure of duty, in society.

Oh, there is need—strong, solemn, urgent need—for the spread of popular education in this land. According to the census there is to-day "smothering and counter-marching" over the hills and valleys of our country a vast army of adult illiterates, thirty-six thousand strong, and nearly every male among them is armed with that dread weapon in the hands of ignorance—the ballot. Is not this a greater peril than the presence of legions of foreign foes? Oh, we need strong, pure hands to uplift our constitution, the ark of the covenant of our freedom, above the mad surges of ignorance that is threatening to engulf it. Let us not flatter ourselves with the delusive notion that we are safe because the people rule. In that very fact lies our peril, if the average of intelligence among the people is low. I would rather entrust my liberties to the keeping of an enlightened aristocracy than to an ignorant democracy. I believe in the doctrine of popular self-government, but I have faith in it as a guarantee of freedom only so long as the people are intelligent enough to see the right and virtuous enough to follow it. Josh Billings says that he believes in the doctrine of universal salvation if you will let him pick the men. So am I with reference to this doctrine of the power of self-government by the people. I believe in it, but I want to pick the people. I do not believe that an ignorant, degraded, licentious populace can rule a nation wisely and well. The intelligence of our people, and not the mere fact that they have the right to govern, is the real security of our liberties.

Looking at this great question in this light, I believe it is the bounden duty of every lover of his country to work steadily and heartily for free education by the State. That is our duty here in Oregon. The day for a thorough free school system has come in our State, and we can have it if we will. We have only to make it our objective point to secure the levying of a tax sufficient to maintain free schools throughout the State, say for six months in the year, and we can push it through. The Legislature can be made to see that it has the same right to levy five mills for school purposes as it has to levy three, and that it is simply a waste of public money to maintain schools for only three months, as the present tax does. It requires no sage to understand that efficient education is out of the question when there are nine months of vacation to every three months of school.

I think, too, that the hour is ripe for this reform. I have faith to believe that it is not very far away. We are standing even now in the faint glimmering dawn of a brighter era of education in Oregon. The heralds of the morning are riding up the Eastern sky, driving in the picket guards of the night with keen lance and spear. Let us welcome them with glad acclaim. Let us hasten to meet and usher in the "good time coming."

Men of thought be up and stirring Night and day; Sow the seed! Withdraw the curtain! Clear the way! There's a fount about to stream; There's a light about to beam; There's a warmth about to glow; There's a flower about to blow; There's a midnight darkness changing Into day; Men of thought and men of action, Clear the way!

Once the welcome light has broken, Who shall say The unimagined glories Of the day— What the evils that shall perish In its ray? Aid the dawning, tongue and pen; Aid it, hopes of honest men; Aid it, paper; aid it, type; Aid it, for the hour is ripe; And our earnest must not slacken Into play; Men of thought and men of action, Clear the way!

PHYSICAL CULTURE.

ESSAY DELIVERED BEFORE THE TEACHERS' INSTITUTE BY PROF. W. T. LEEKE, OF ASHLAND.

Several centuries ago Plato, in his "Model Republic," demonstrated that no nation could long exist without physical culture. The history of nations and individuals from that time to this has proven the correctness of his assertion. In the palmy days of Rome, her sons were wont to cultivate the physical even more than the mental; but wealth produced habits of luxury and indolence, and the power of Rome vanished like the morning dew, leaving but ruins and history to tell of her ancient glory.

Greece, the seat of learning and philosophy, well understood the need of physical culture. Her games, her races, and her athletic sports were the foundation of her mental superiority. When interest in these grew less, she sank like the meteor, leaving but a brilliant trail of light behind. And America, the great "Empire of the West," rich in every resource, with mountains of iron and sands of gold, with verdant plains and bountiful harvests, is in danger of the same fate, unless physical culture receives the attention it demands.

Yet, in the face of this well demonstrated fact, physical culture has been sadly neglected in our educational institutions, and more particularly in our public schools. Our primary schools, instead of being the gardens of childhood, where the physical and mental should receive equal attention, are too often but prison-houses of hard benches and harder tasks. To begin at the foundation: What we are depends in a great measure upon what we eat. Let us compare the average English with the average American child. The first, almost invariably strong, robust and healthy; the latter pale, weak and nervous. And let us look in the dinner baskets of the two. In the first we find only good brown bread and fruit; in the latter we find cake and that indigestible compound of spice and paste called pie. From childhood to maturity the same state of things exists in equal ratio. The English lady of rank thinks little of walking five or six miles a day for pleasure, while the American lady of equal social status would faint at the very idea. The English lady is strong, robust and sparkling with the bloom of health, while her American sister is nervous, hysterical and languid, and must go to the springs or sea-side, or "she shall die—she knows she shall." It needs no further illustration to prove that Americans are becoming effeminate.

The crowds of educated young men who throng our cities, who have not the physical stamina to work with either muscle or mind, and who, if they obtain not light employment, are sure candidates for the prison or grave, are a sufficient proof of the great defect in the education of the youth of our land. The American diet, rich and indigestible, tends to create a depressed and languid condition of the system, which only a rigid course of physical

culture can overcome. To right this wrong, we must look to the teachers of our public schools. I hope the next State Legislature will so amend the school law that it will be impossible for a teacher to obtain a certificate who is not thoroughly qualified in physiology, hygiene and physical training.

The teacher should make it one of his principal duties to instruct his pupils in the laws of health and of life, to illustrate the dangers attending the departure from those laws. He should note carefully that the nervous system is not overtaxed to the detriment of the physical, mental and moral. But our teachers, as a class, through ignorance of hygiene and physical culture, rarely last more than ten years on an average, before life fails, and they become wrecks upon the ocean of life without sail or rudder. It is true that the cultivation only of the physical makes us splendid animals; but it is also true that the cultivation only of the mental makes us weak, effeminate, and good for nothing.

The Greeks adopted two widely different systems of training—one adapted to the athlete, the other to the student and philosopher. The former produced great strength, while the latter was resorted to as the surest means of securing that delicate susceptibility and elastic vigor which characterized the Greek poet or orator. The latter system is one which we find best adapted to the wants of the youth in our public schools, and is styled Calisthenics. Calisthenics are most easily taught with the aid of a piano or a drum; in the absence of these, the voice of the teacher will serve as a guide. In our mixed schools, whenever the younger pupils become restless, or the larger ones dull and listless, five or ten minutes devoted to Calisthenics would send the sluggish blood from heart to lungs and brain, renewing the life and energy of the student, tranquillizing the nerves, and stimulating the mind to renewed exertion.

I think the pupils of primary schools should never be allowed to remain sitting more than half an hour at a time. If nothing better is attempted, a simple march around the room is far preferable to no action at all. And here it may not be amiss to remark that the practice of retaining children under eight years of age, more than three and one-half hours a day in the school room, exclusive of intermission, is but refined cruelty, and no teacher who is worthy of the name would be guilty of such conduct. The scientists of the East and of Europe have advanced the theory that even the average college student is injured if he study diligently more than six hours per day. If this be true, how extremely injurious it must be for the soft and tender brain of the child to work for that length of time.

The numbers of young children who are obliged to leave school on account of failing health, and of older students who fail to graduate from the same cause, would be very materially reduced if teachers understood and practiced the laws of health and of life. If they would teach these laws as they ought, then the inharmonious between the body and the brain, which now threatens the permanency of the race, would in a few generations be restored. Children would be taught how to dress, eat, drink, sleep, study, exercise, work and live, while our prisons and hospitals instead of being overcrowded, as at present, would find but few to welcome to their halls.

May the time soon come when the teachers of our schools will consider it a duty to instruct and to train, not only the mental, but the physical also, of every child intrusted to their care. Till then they are too apt to build without foundation, a structure which every gale, however slight, is liable to shatter and destroy.

RESIGNED.—It is stated that H. W. Scott has resigned the editorial chair of the Portland Bulletin. James O'Meara takes his place.

The City Brewery.

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