

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 47 had no education whatever; 40 could barely read; and of the remaining 100 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 it is to punish it. It costs less to keep a man out of prison than to keep him in. School books are cheaper than "Gardiner 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 annually 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 investments 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 block-head 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 can not 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 boot of 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 least 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, taking 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—intrinsic, 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 beginnings 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 proscriptive may be their methods. 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 right.

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. It is simply a waste of public money to maintain schools for only as the present stands.

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 frost 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 charging 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;

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