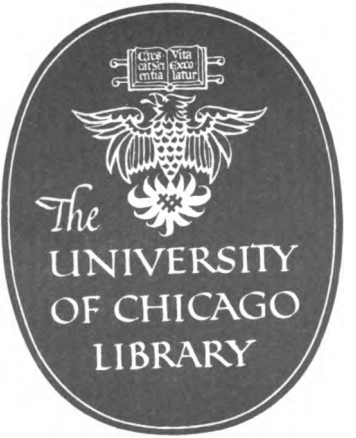

PROFESSOR STOWE

ON

PRUSSIAN EDUCATION.

TO PARENTS AND SCHOOL TEACHERS.

A warm friend of Common Schools has said, 'Among the duties of the guardians of public Education, it is one thing to provide the ways and means in support of the cause, another to obtain competent teachers, and last, to furnish them, as you would the mechanic or the artist, if you would expect the best result from their labors, with proper *tools* and *materials*—that is to say, with the *best books*. Money lavished in the purchase of inferior books, is not only lost—but that time, which is the most *precious* to the young for improvement, is gone, and cannot be redeemed.'

The friends of education are requested to examine the 'ECLECTIC SERIES OF SCHOOL BOOKS' noticed at the close of this volume. Their *merit* will, doubtless, gain for them a wide circulation.

THE

PRUSSIAN SYSTEM

OF

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION,

AND ITS APPLICABILITY

TO

THE UNITED STATES.

BY CALVIN E. STOWE,
Professor in Lane Seminary.

CINCINNATI:
TRUMAN AND SMITH.

1836.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The within is the substance of a Discourse recently delivered by Professor Stowe before the Convention of Teachers at Columbus, during the session of the legislature.

The annexed communications will show the deep interest which is felt in this system, as drawn out by Professor Stowe, and the desire to have it in a permanent form.

PUBLISHERS.

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RECOMMENDATIONS.

From M. P. Jewett, Professor in Marietta College.

Marietta, Ohio, April, 1836.

Messrs Truman & Smith,

It gives me great pleasure to learn you intend to publish the Discourse of Professor Stowe before the late Education Convention. 'Cousin's Report' on the same subject has attracted universal attention, and is worthy of the distinguished hand that prepared it. But to say nothing of the want of entire adaptation to the genius of our institutions, and to the character and circumstances of our population, that work is too extensive, too heavy and tedious in its details, ever to gain a general circulation. Professor Stowe has embodied in his Discourse all the important principles, and all the great facts illustrative of those principles, contained in the 'Report'—adding also the suggestions of his own experience and of more extended research—and the whole is now presented in a volume which may be bought by all; and, what is more, *may be read* by all. I shall be disappointed, if this little work is not the object of general and eager inquiry. The subject of which it treats is of paramount, commanding, interest. At this moment, the claims of popular education are

touching the best hearts, and engaging the first minds in the community. Let the truths brought to view by Professor S. be studied by the parents, the teachers, the legislators, the patriots, the philanthropists, of the west—they shall contribute to the formation of an enlightened public sentiment, the wisdom of whose plans, and the energy of whose executive measures, shall rescue this nation from the reproachful superiority of the monarchies and despotisms of Europe, and secure to our republic the triumphs of UNIVERSAL EDUCATION.

Yours, respectfully,

M. P. JEWETT.

From E. D. MANSFIELD. ESQ. Examiner of the Public Schools, Cincinnati.

MESSRS TRUMAN & SMITH,

I understand it is your intention to publish the Address of Professor Stowe, delivered at Columbus, in January last, before the Convention for the promotion of education. I was a member of that Convention, and heard the Address with both pleasure and profit. I am sure it must be of public utility to have prepared for popular use so clear an exposition of the best system of education adopted in modern times, and of the very able Professor's views in relation to its adaptation to our country. The subject

of education now occupies a large share of the public attention, and its principles must be now determined and settled, or we can never hope to have a permanent and well-devised system, peculiar to American institutions and American manners.

EDW. D. MANSFIELD.

Cincinnati, April, 1836.

FROM HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR LUCAS.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE, OHIO,
Columbus, Feb. 4, 1836.

TO THE HONORABLE,
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

I have this day received a communication from Professor Stowe, of Lane Seminary, in this state, inclosing to me a copy of a Discourse delivered by him before the Convention of Teachers, in this city (Columbus) in January last, on the Prussian system of public instruction, and its applicability to the United States. This Discourse is alluded to in the proceedings of the Convention of Teachers I had the honor to transmit to the consideration of the general assembly a few days since.

Considering the subject of education of the most intrinsic importance, as tending to promote the happiness and prosperity of the people, any information that is calculated to enlighten the public mind on this important subject, is deemed truly desirable, and cannot fail to be interesting to the friends of general instruction; and believing that much useful information is contained in the Discourse of Professor Stowe, above alluded to, I have thought it advisable to submit the copy transmitted to my care,

to the consideration of the general assembly, together with his letter transmitting the same, and respectfully request that they receive that respectful attention that is due to the importance of the subject.

Having but one copy, I have thought it advisable to transmit that copy first to the senate.

Very respectfully,
your obedient servant,
ROBERT LUCAS.

THE Hon. ELIJAH VANCE, *Speaker of the Senate.*

PREFACE.

THE occasion and object of the following Discourse are sufficiently explained in the title and the communication of governor Lucas. The Western College of Professional Teachers, in pursuance of their high purpose, appointed the meeting of the Convention at Columbus, and assigned to their delegates the topics for discussion. The delegates received the most gratifying attention from the citizens, the members of the legislature, and the executive of the state. The meetings of the Convention were well attended, and deeply interesting. A copy of all the proceedings was transmitted to the governor, who communicated it to the legislature, and it was ordered to be printed. The following Discourse, together with the very interesting address by Mr. Samuel Lewis of Cincinnati, and the minutes of the Convention, have, by this means, already been extensively circulated in another form. It has been

thought advisable by some friends, in whose judgment I confide, that the development of the Prussian system of instruction should be again printed in a durable and convenient form for extensive distribution.

For most of the facts, I am indebted to the Conversations-Lexicon: articles–Schools, Prussia, and Frederick William; and particularly to the elaborate report of M. Cousin. This latter work, in the translation of Mrs. Austin, is already widely circulated; and if it could reach every family, and be read by every citizen of the west, the necessity of this publication would, in great measure, be superseded: but the size of the book, and the elaborateness of its details, will render it inaccessible to multitudes, to whom a shorter and more simple account may be very acceptable.

The wisdom and benevolence of this admirable system render it well worthy the attentive consideration of every friend of the human race; and it cannot fail to be useful to the enlightened and patriotic citizens of Ohio and the other western states, who are now laboring with so praiseworthy a zeal in the cause of education. There seems to be both a willing-

ness and ability to do what needs to be done for the intellectual wants of this rising nation at the west; and the people are anxiously inquiring *what* they shall do, and *how* it can be most effectually done. The following attempt to aid them in this inquiry is respectfully submitted to their attention, by a sincere advocate of the cause of intellectual and moral advancement.

THE AUTHOR.

PRUSSIAN SYSTEM

OF

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

PART I.

THE kingdom of Prussia, at the present time, affords the rare spactacle of an absolute sovereign, exerting all his power for the intelligence and moral improvement of his people. The government of Prussia, in which the voice of the king is every thing, and the voice of the people nothing, does more for the education of the whole people, than has ever been done by any other government on earth. In order to understand the system of public instruction in Prus-

sia, it will be necessary to glance at the history of her civil institutions.

Poland was early converted to christianity and civilized, and its peaceful inhabitants were severely harassed by the heathen savages, who inhabited Prussia. In the year 1230, they invited the Teutonic knights to protect them, and after a war of sixty years, these military monks entirely subdued the Prussians, and they embraced christianity. These knights remained for several centuries, the sovereigns of the territories which they had subdued, but at length, for their intolerable tyranny, they were suppressed, and in the year 1525, Albert of Brandenburg, whom they had ten years before chosen for their protector and leader, took possession of their territory. The Teutonic knights became

the nobles under the new government, and thus was laid the foundation of the Prussian monarchy, though the sovereign did not assume the title of king, till two centuries afterwards.

From these circumstances, the Prussian government assumed the form of a military despotism; this characteristic, it has always retained, and by it, all its institutions are strongly marked. These military tendencies of the Prussian government, were increased and confirmed during the warlike reign of Frederick the Great. The successor of Frederick, was a weak, tyrannical prince, and Prussia was miserably oppressed, till the present king, Frederick William the III. ascended the throne in 1797. The first acts of his reign were to revoke the hateful edict respecting religion,

issued by his father; to abolish the censorship of the press; to reform the administration of justice, and introduce a rigid economy into the royal household. Subsequently, he secured the peasantry against oppression from the nobles, and subjected the lands of the nobility to taxation, in order to alleviate the burden of the lower classes. Thus has he always shown himself the friend and father of his people.

He is a member of the calvinist church, though a majority of his subjects are lutherans; but in the year 1817, the third centenary of the Reformation, he effected a union between the lutherans and the calvinists in his dominions, under the title of the *Evangelical Church.*

His kingdom has the disadvantage of

being made up of disjointed provinces, without any natural bond of union, extending to the Rhine on the west, and beyond the Wiemen, on the east, in a form that has been not unaptly compared to two long arms without a body between them: The whole territory includes about 107,000 square miles; that is, 26,000 less than the three states of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, and is inhabited by about 13,000,000 of people, the same number that, at the last census, there were in the whole of the United States.

In 1826, these were divided among the different religious denominations, as follows, viz: 7,496,000 evangelical protestants; 4,690,000 catholics; 154,000 Jews; and 16,000 belong to the baptists and other small christian sects.

The Prussians are now the best educated people in the world, and among them, school duty is placed, in all respects, on the same ground with military duty.

Popular education in Europe commenced with the Reformation. This was as much a political, as a religious conflict—a struggle for the rights of the people, against the encroachments of royalty and the assumptions of an ambitious priesthood. It was therefore a prime object with the Reformers to enlighten the great body of the people, and to make them feel their power; and Luther, very early in his career, published an eloquent address to his countrymen, urging them to establish schools in every part of their territory. Such was the spirit of the Reformation, and it was introduced into Prussia, by Albert, her

first sovereign. About the year 1670, the Prussian schools received a new impulse, and were very much improved by Spener, the celebrated pietist. About the year 1700, they were still further improved; and some of the most valuable features of the present system were introduced by the benevolent Franke. At this early period, seminaries were established *expressly* for the education of teachers, and laws were enacted, obliging parents to send their children to school. Similar laws had been in force among the Puritans of New England, even before that period. The system of public instruction has been remodeled and perfected by the present king and his able assistants, among whom, the baron Von Altenstein, deserves honorable mention. In

the year 1819, the plan was completed, and the first minister of public instruction appointed.

It is difficult to convey to an American audience, an exact conception of this system, in language borrowed from our own institutions; but I will endeavor to state what would be the principal features of a system for the United States, analogous to that in Prussia. In the general government, there would be a *secretary of public instruction*, a member of the president's cabinet, like the secretary of state, or war, &c., who, with the assistance of a council, composed partly of elergymen, would have the superintendence of the whole business of education throughout the country.

In every state, there would be a uni-

versity established at the public expense, for professional education and instruction in the highest branches of literature and science. In each state, the care of education would be committed to a *school-board*, directly responsible to the general secretary for the Union. In each congressional district, there would be one or more seminaries, for the education of teachers, according to the populousness of the district, and the official superintendent of education in the district, would be directly responsible to the school-board of the state. In every county, there would be a gymnasium, for the instruction of young men in the languages and sciences preparatory to entering the universities, and the care of education in the county, would be committed to an inspector, who would

make it his sole business, and report to the school-board of the state. In every township, there would be a high school, for the instruction of the youth of both sexes in the higher branches, necessary to qualify them for the active business of life, and in every school district, an elementary school for primary instruction. In the townships and districts the concerns of education would be superintended by a committee, one half of whom would be clergymen.

All these institutions, from the district school to the university, would be regularly visited by examiners appointed for that purpose, and their conditions reported to the proper authorities. All these officers would be appointed by government, under certain legal restrictions, and paid according to the amount

of service rendered. This outline may aid our conceptions, while we endeavor to trace the prominent features of the Prussian system of instruction.

I. *General Plan.*—The general plan of public instruction in Prussia, contemplates five different grades of instruction, as follows:

1st. Elementary district schools, for the instruction of all the children in the kingdom, in the elementary branches.

2d. High schools, for the purpose of giving a good business education to those who have gone through with the primary course, in the elementary schools.

3d. Gymnasia, for the instruction of the youth, who are to enter the universities, in the languages and sciences.

4 The teachers' seminaries, for the

particular instruction of those who are to spend their lives in the business of teaching.

5th. Universities, in which the highest branches of literature and science, and the various learned professions are studied.

These five classes of institutions are designed for the whole kingdom, and the advantages of them, as nearly as possible, are equally diffused. Besides these, there are other institutions, the establishment of which is regulated by the various wants of the population in different parts of the kingdom. Among these are:

1st. Infant schools, or dame's schools, as they are there called, for the care of neglected and orphan children, who are not of suitable age to be admitted to the elementary district schools.

2d. Female working schools, for the instruction of girls in needle woork, and other appropriate employments of their sex.

3d. Manufacturers' and mechanics' schools, for the instruction of apprentices in those branches of science, which will afford them most important aid in their several occupations.

4th. Military schools, for the education of those designed to be officers in the army.

My remarks will be confined, principally, to the district and high schools and teachers' seminaries, which are most necessary for our own country, and of themselves form a complete and harmonious system for the education of the whole people.

II. *General Governmental Organization.*—For the whole kingdom, there is a minister of public instruction, who is a member of the king's cabinet, and with the assistance of a council, composed of clergymen and laymen, has the superintendence of public instruction throughout the monarchy. The kingdom is divided into ten provinces, and each province has a school-board and a board of examiners for the superintendence of the educational concerns of the province, and who are directly responsible to the minister. In every province, there is designed to be a university of the highest class.

The provinces are subdivided into regencies, of which there are twenty-eight in the kingdom. The president and council of the regency superintend the affairs of the education, and report

to the provincial board. The regencies are subdivided into circles; each circle has its educational inspector, and a suitable number of gymnasia and teachers' seminaries, according to the wants of the population. The circles again are subdivided into parishes, each of which has elementary and high schools sufficient for its whole population, under the supervision of committees appointed by the government, and directly responsible to the circle inspectors. Besides these, there are examiners and counsellors, the number of whom varies according to circumstances. All these officers are *paid* for their services, according to the amount of time and labor employed. The minister of public instruction is always a protestant; but in the selection of every subordinate officer, the most scrupulous

regard is paid to the religious views of the community in which he is to act: for example, in every parish where the majority are catholics, the majority of the school committee must be catholics, and the minority protestants; and in the parishes where the majority is protestants, the reverse.

III. *Duty of Parents and Guardians to keep their Children at School.*—All children, between the ages of five and fourteen, are *permitted* to attend school, and all between the ages of seven and fourteen, are *obliged* to attend. No excuse, whatever, is admitted, short of physical inability, or absolute idiocy. It is a duty of the school committee of every parish to consult the parish registers, and take an accurate census of all children

born in the parish; and of the school masters, to keep an accurate record of all the children who attend, note every instance of absence or tardiness, and report to the committee. If the committee find that any child is negligent in his attendance, or any does not attend at all, the parent or guardian of such child, is immediately visited, causes of delinquency are inquired into, and if the reasons are not satisfactory, he is admonished to do his duty, and if this admonition fails, he is again visited and admonished by the clergyman of his parish—and, if he still continue negligent, he is punished by fines or by civil disabilities; and, as a last resort, where all other means have failed, his children are taken from under his care, and educated by the local authorities. The children of poor parents are

supplied, at the public expense, with clothing and books when *absolutely necessary;* and when the services of children of the laboring classes are needed by their parents, the hours of attendance on school are so regulated as to meet this exigency. Should the parents object to the religious instruction of the schools, their children are allowed to withdraw during the hours when religious instruction is given; and, in these cases, the parent is obliged to give the religious instruction himself, or cause it to be given by some approved clergyman of his own creed. The reports of the school masters and of school committees are regularly transmitted to the minister of public instruction—and the absence, or tardiness, or negligence of any child in the kingdom is known. So completely success-

ful has the plan been in securing a uniform attendance, that the number of children, regularly attending school, is greater than the whole number in the kingdom between seven and fourteen, the period in which attendance is peremptorily demanded by law.

IV. *Duty of Parishes to maintain Schools.*—Every parish is required to provide a sufficient number of schools for the instruction of all the children in the parish—and in no case is there to be more than one hundred children in the same school.

The following things are demanded by the law, as essential to the maintenance of every school.

1st. A suitable income for school masters and mistresses—and a certain pro-

vision for them when they are past service.

2d. A building for the purposes of teaching and exercise, properly laid out, kept in repair, and warmed.

3d. Furniture, books, pictures, instruments, and all things necessary for the lessons and exercises.

4th. Pecuniary assistance for necessitous scholars.

Teachers are required to devote themselves entirely to the business of teaching. They cannot engage in any other employment, whatever, without the consent of the committee; and the committee have no power to permit them to do anything that would, in the least, interfere with their professional duties. To relieve them from all anxiety in regard to provision for their families, they are

comfortably supported when disabled from service, and their widows and children provided for, in case of their death. These expenses are mostly paid by a parish tax, and the committees are legally responsible; but public funds are provided, as far as possible, *especially* for the support of disabled teachers and their families. When the members of a school district are of different sects, the school master is to be of the faith of the majority, and his assistant of that of the minority. The school committee are chosen on the same principle.

V. *Course of Instruction.*—The law declares that every complete elementary school must comprehend the following objects:

1st. Religious instruction, as a means

of forming the moral character of children, according to the positive truths of christianity.

2d. The German language, and in provinces where a foreign language is spoken, the language of the country in addition to the German.

3d. The elements of geometry, together with the general principles of drawing.

4th. The elements of physics, geography, general history, and especially the history of Prussia.

5th. Singing, with a view to improve the voices of the children, and to perfect and enoble the popular songs and church psalmody.

6th. Writing and gymnastic exercises, which fortify all the senses, especially that of sight.

7th. The simplest manual labors and husbandry.

Every high school is required to give still more complete instruction in all the branches above mentioned; and, in addition to these, to teach Latin, the more important modern languages, such as the French and English, and the constitution and laws of Prussia.

Every scholar in the elementary schools, is required to complete the full course of seven years, and in the high schools, the course of three years in addition; and accurate reports on this subject are regularly transmitted to the minister of public instruction.

The bible is the basis of religious instruction in all the schools: the protestant children are taught from the protestant translation, and the catholic children

from the catholic translation, and the Jewish children from the Old Testament, if the parents require it.

Where parents assume the religious instruction of children themselves, or commit it to religious teachers of their own creed, the school committees are required to make rigorous examination, and report accurately to the government, respecting the kind and amount of religious instruction given.

VI. *Supply of Teachers.*—In order to furnish the numerous schools with well-qualified teachers, each of the twenty-eight regencies, into which the kingdom is divided, is required to maintain at least one seminary for the education of teachers. Not more than seventy pupils can be received into any one of these semin-

aries; the age of admission is from sixteen to eighteen, and the term of study three years. The law declares, that 'the principal aim of these seminaries shall be, to form teachers, sound both in body and mind; to imbue them with sentiments of religion, and with zeal and love for their duties.' The course of instruction and exercises comprehends all the branches which are taught in the elementary high schools: particular attention is given to singing and playing on the organ. They are instructed in regard to the best methods of teaching; and for the sake of practice in this branch, *model schools* are attached to all these seminaries, in which the pupils, under the superintendence of the teachers, give daily instruction.

The same care to maintain inviolate

the rights of conscience, is manifested in these as in all the other educational establishments of Prussia. In each regency, where the number of protestants and catholics are nearly equal, there is established, if possible, a teacher's seminary for each religion: but where the inequality is great, the schools of the less numerous sect are supplied from a teacher's seminary of the same sect, in another regency. In all the teachers' seminaries, common to protestants and catholics, each pupil receives the religious instruction appropriate to his own creed.

After having gone through the regular course of preparation, the candidate is rigorously examined, in respect to the acquisitions he has made, and his aptness to teach, and he receives a certificate, indicative of his degree of qualification.

Of these certificates there are three grades: 'Excellent,' 'Sufficient,' and 'Passable.' Such as prove incompetent, are either wholly rejected, or sent back to continue their studies. Those who are accepted, then receive commissions from the government, and are placed in larger or smaller schools, according to their capacity. No one can decline a government appointment, but every one has the opportunity to earn promotion, by meritorious effort. The teachers are all subjected to a most rigorous responsibility, which has all the promptness and efficiency of the strictest military discipline. They are required to form associations for mutual improvement and the combination of experience, and are furnished with libraries and apparatus at the expense of the government. The support

of teachers has already been noticed under the Fourth Head; and, in addition to this, the law declares that they 'have a right to expect, that every one should pay them the respect and gratitude to which they are entitled as laborers in the sacred work of education. Masters and mistresses ought, therefore, to be the object of general esteem, due to their laborious and honorable functions.'

VII. *Superintendence and Government of Schools.*—The schools are committed to the superintendence of the several officers described under the Second Head. In addition to these, the civil magistrates of the several towns, are required to exercise a general supervision, and aid the school committee, with all their authority. It is made the special duty of cler-

gymen to visit the schools—to watch over the conduct of the teachers—to excite and encourage the children in the prosecution of their studies—to urge on parents the importance and advantages of educating their children, and to preach at regular intervals on the subject of general education. No clergyman can receive license to exercise his functions in Prussia, until he has been examined and approved as to his knowledge and disposition in respect to common school instruction.

The government of the schools is required to be paternal and religious. Every school is required to be opened and closed with reading the scriptures, singing and prayer. No severe or degrading punishments are allowed, which would tend to diminish selfrespect, or make the

pupil forget that he is a man; and no rewards are offered, but public approbation and increased opportunities of learning.

VIII. *Private Schools.*—The government intend that the public schools shall be the best possible; but they do not prohibit, but rather encourage the establishment of private schools. These private schools, however, are obliged to make the same accurate reports, and are subject to the same rigorous responsibilities: the pupils are bound to the same punctuality and completeness; and appropriate religious instruction is, on no pretence, to be omitted. The time allotted to religious instruction, is to be two or three hours each week. 'Small christian sects throughout the country, and Jews

also, are permitted to organize, according to their particular constitution and discipline, the management of their own schools.' The law also says:

'If the public schools fear injury from the neighborhood of private ones, they have only to endeavor to avert the evil, by redoubling their efforts after perfection. The instruction of females is never committed to any but married men, or to those of their own sex. Those who receive young pupils as boarders, must ask permission of the local school authorities, who are to examine into the moral fitness of the applicants, and whether their house be suited to the undertaking, and if no objection exist, permission must be granted.'

The several particulars above mentioned, constitute the most important

features of the Prussian school system. There are numerous other regulations, which show equal wisdom and the anxious attention of the government to particulars, the most minute, which might affect the prosperity or usefulness of the public schools. For example: the school houses throughout the kingdom are constructed on a carefully devised and uniform plan; they occupy pleasant and healthful locations, and are furnished with neat play grounds, gardens and work shops. The boys' schools have public examinations at regular intervals; but in the girls' schools, both public and private, the parents only are permitted to attend the examinations, and all public exhibitions of every sort are prohibited.

This system, wise and admirable as it is, the king did not attempt to force upon

his people at once and in opposition to long-cherished prejudices. On the contrary, in those parts of his kingdom, where there had been no system of public instruction enforced by law, as in the provinces on the Rhine, he had recourse, first, to the influence of persuasion and example; and though the whole system was completed in 1819, it did not become legally binding on the Rhenish provinces till 1825. It is impossible to contemplate this system without admiring the completeness and beauty of the plan—the wisdom, benevolence, and good taste of its minutest regulations—and the promptness and efficiency with which every part of it is carried into execution.

Who will refuse to do honor to the monarch that has thus devoted himself to the best interests of his people, and

has devised and executed so admirable a plan for their intellectual and moral improvement!

When shall we see republicans doing for themselves what this absolute sovereign, this member of the holy alliance, is doing for his people?

APPLICABILITY

OF THE

PRUSSIAN SYSTEM

TO THE

UNITED STATES.

PART II.

THE system of public instruction, which we have been considering, however admirable and complete, has grown up under institutions entirely different from our own, and is designed for a people whose circumstances and habits have little resemblance to ours. It would be unwise, therefore, to attempt to introduce it among ourselves without considerable modification. Our people are not a military people, and they would be very impatient under the restraints of

military discipline. Besides, innovations should never be sudden, even when they are desirable; and as an accurate observer has well remarked, 'it were good that men, in their innovations, would follow the example of time itself, which indeed innovates greatly, but quietly and by degrees scarce to be perceived.'—'What is settled by custom, though it be not good, at least it is fit; and those things which have long gone together, are, as it were, confederate in themselves; whereas *new* things piece not so well; but though they help by their utility, yet they trouble by their inconformity.'—'It is good, also, not to try experiments in states, except the necessity be urgent, or the utility be evident; and well to beware that it be the reformation that draweth on the change, and not the desire of change that

pretendeth the reformation.' These observations of lord Bacon are well worthy of attention in this day of sudden changes and disregard of antecedent experience. It is unwise to make experiments by legislation; and it is unsafe for laws to attempt much more than to embody and enforce the experience already acquired. Legislation should not be subject to frequent changes; for such changes break up that deep reverence for the laws, which constitutes the principal safeguard of a free state. Moreover, laws cannot any where, not even in despotic governments like Prussia, anticipate improvements, and go before the spirit of the people: much less can they do it here, where every thing must depend, at least, on the favor of the people at large.

Yet we can, and must make effort,

even by legislation, to give more completeness and efficiency to our system of popular instruction. Enough has already been done to test the spirit of the people, te show that they do appreciate the importance of general education, and to lay the foundation for great and permanent improvements. The constitution of Ohio recognizes the right and duty of the legislature, to provide for the education of the people; and the laws, which from time to time have been enacted with reference to this subject, have carried forward the school system as fast as the circumstances of the state would seem to permit. The legislature of Ohio has always manifested a readiness to adopt suitable means for the enlightening of the public mind. The system of measures for the establishment of district schools, which

has already been so wisely commenced —the valuable and judiciously selected state library—and the recent message of our chief magistrate, calling the legislative attention to the Prussian school system, and recommending still further improvements in our own—are all-sufficient proofs of the readiness of our public men to further this good work, and of the disposition of the people to sustain them in it.

In considering the modifications in the Prussian system necessary to adapt it to this country, we remark, in general, that among us, more must be left to popular action—to the free choice of the community—and less attempted in the way of positive legislative enactment. In respect to the method of supervision and of enforcing responsibility, the people must,

to a greater extent, have the power of electing the superintendents of their schools, and of appointing their own teachers. These superintendents and teachers must be, in some way, directly responsible to them as well as to the government. Greater reliance, too, must be placed on the means of simply moral influence, and more patience put in requisition, in the execution of our plans for popular education; for we cannot expect our people to submit to the peremptoriness and precision of military discipline.

The mode of sustaining the expenses of the schools must be different in this country from that which exists in Prussia. There, certain things are peremptorily required to be done, cost what they may, and the community must bear the expense of it—or, if absolutely too poor

to do it, they must apply to the government for aid. Here, it is necessary, either that a specific property tax be assessed, and the expenses brought within the amount thus raised, or public funds must be provided; and it must be left to the people to determine, within certain limits, how much they will do beyond the avails of these funds. The latter is the system adopted in the state of New York, and the school laws of Ohio endeavor to combine the advantages of both plans.

The participation of different sects in the management of schools, must be regulated on different principles here from what it is there. There are there, in fact, but two religious denominations of any extent—the protestant and the catholic; and one or the other of these predominates in every community. Besides,

the religious differences there are not violent, and there is, comparatively, little of sectarian jealousy. Owing to these circumstances, it is easy to avoid encroachments on the rights and feelings of the different denominations, when legislating expressly with reference to them. But here religious denominations are numerous, of equal responsibility, and possessing equal rights. The district schools, instead of being made up of two, or, at most, of three religious sects, often comprehend six or eight; and it would be impossible to select teachers and school committees, with reference to the numerical proportions of these different sects, for the purpose of satisfying them. In general, men best qualified for the station of committees and teachers, must be selected without reference to their

denominational tenets, and the religious instruction in schools must occupy the common ground on which the different sects are agreed: and there is more of this common ground than people are apt to suppose. All christian sects agree that there is a God, and that the scriptures are the record of his revealed will. They all agree that Jesus Christ is the great Teacher and Savior of mankind, and that our salvation depends, in some way, on his merits and sufferings. They all agree, that the bible contains a perfect exhibition of our duties to God and man, and that all men are under the most solemn obligations to believe its doctrines and obey its precepts; and that there is a day of final retribution for all. Here, surely, is common ground enough to form the basis of a system of religious

instruction, sufficiently extensive for any of our educational establishments.

Indeed, few, if any, of the Prussian laws can be adopted without some modification—still there are many great principles involved in these laws, which are worthy of universal adoption, and some of which have already been acted upon here and elsewhere in the United States.

To these principles our attention will now be turned.

1st. The placing of school duty on the same ground with military duty is a sound principle, and ought to be universally acted upon.

By this, I do not mean that our school system should be regulated by martial law; but that the same considerations of public good and of public safety, which make it every man's duty to bear his pro-

portion in the making and repairing of roads, and sustaining the necessary expenses of the government, and oblige him to give his personal services for the defence of the country when invaded, also impose upon him the obligation to educate his children.

The constitution of Ohio clearly recognizes this principle, by placing the superintendence of education among the legitimate objects of legislative action.

If a regard to the public safety makes it right for the government to compel the citizens to do military duty when the country is invaded, the same reason authorizes the government to compel them to provide for the education of their children—for no foes are so much to be dreaded by a republic as ignorance and vice. A man has no more right to en-

danger the state by throwing upon it a family of ignorant and vicious children, than he has to give admission to the spies of an invading army. If he be unable to educate his children, the state should assist him—if unwilling, it should compel him. General education is a much more certain, and much less expensive means of defence, than military array, and altogether more productive of happiness. A well-qualified body of teachers would develope and bring out all the means of happiness to be found in the nation—while, the most that could be expected, from the best disciplined army of soldiers, would be, that they refrain from corrupting and destroying the people whom they are called to defend. Military operations, at best, are but a dangerous attempt to cure a disease al-

ready contracted—but general education, on right principles, operates as a preventive of evil: the one is like the surgeon's knife, amputating and weakening, if not killing; the other, like temperance, preserving uniform health.

Popular education is not so much a *want* as a *duty*. It has been well remarked, that 'if children provided their own education, and could be sensible of its importance to their happiness, it would be a *want*, and might be left to the natural demand and supply; but, as it is provided by the parents, and paid for by those who do not profit by its results, it is a *duty*, and is therefore liable to be neglected.' It is this consideration which renders legislative action on this subject so important and indispensable.

2d. The care for the supply and sup-

port of teachers manifested in the Prussian system, is well worthy of adoption in our country. Teaching should be a profession: the wants of the country can never be adequately supplied till it is so. There are now in our country not less than one and a half million of children destitute of schools, and for them at least twenty thousand teachers are needed in addition to the eighty thousand already employed. But how can men of competent talents venture to make teaching their profession at the present low rate of wages and uncertainty of support? How can they engage in an occupation so laborious, and the severities of which so often bring on premature old age, on a pittance which gives them but a bare subsistence from day to day, and leaves them no provision for seasons of sickness

and years of debility? If we would have competent teachers, we must give them a sufficient and certain support. They should be regarded as public servants, and in time of peace treated as soldiers are in time of war—pensioned, if disabled, and their families provided for if they fall in the service.

Teachers, to command such a support, and to be of real value to the community, must possess high qualifications. Poor teachers will soon bring into disrepute and destroy the best devised system of common school instruction—while good teachers will make their way into the affections and confidence of the people, and cause them to feel the value of education. Our citizens are not deficient in sagacity to discern what is for their real good; and they have always shown their

willingness to pay their money for that which they know to be valuable; and they are not to be blamed for their reluctance to give a high price for that which is worth little or nothing. Let a well-qualified and efficient teacher go into the most parsimonious and ignorant town in our state, and stay long enough to make a fair trial of his skill, and the hearts and purses of the parents will be opened, and he will be well sustained. Even under all the disadvantages of meagre support and inadequate preparation, under which our common school teachers at present labor, the school system has been gradually and steadily gaining ground in the affections of the people, as they have seen the benefits of it. How much faster would it have gained, had the teachers been

all properly supported and sufficiently qualified.

Well-qualified teachers cannot be provided, unless there are institutions for their education, or departments in this branch of study in the institutions already established. Such institutions have been established, to a considerable extent, by the state of New York, and it is hoped that Ohio will not be tardy in following so good an example.

3d. Another principle of the Prussian school system, which ought to be adopted by us, is the uniformity of language required in all the schools. Whatever may be the popular dialect of the district, the language of the nation and the government must be taught in the schools—not indeed to the exclusion of the vulgar tongue, but in connection with it. This

uniformity of language is of great importance to a nation's prosperity and safety: it is necessary as a common bond of union and sympathy between the different parts of the state; and without it, a nation is a bundle of clans rather than a united and living body. The facilities of business, and the progress of intelligence, require uniformity of language; and parents have no right to deprive their children of the advantages which a knowledge of the prevailing speech of the country affords, nor to deprive them of the power of doing all the service to the state which they are capable of rendering. If the foreign emigrants, who are among us, choose to retain their native language among themselves, it is well for them to do so; but let them not prevent their children learning English, and becoming qualified for

all the duties of American citizens. Children can learn two languages as easily and as rapidly as one; and as Charles V said, 'so many languages as a man learns, so many times is he a man.'

4th. The Prussian regulations to secure universality and uniformity of attendance on the schools, and to secure the completion of the prescribed course of study, is worthy of universal adoption.

But little advantage can be derived from schools, and but little systematic instruction can be given in them, where the attendance is tardy, interrupted, and too soon discontinued; and these are among the greatest evils which our schools now have to encounter. Legislation surely is as competent to remedy these evils as it is to enforce military duty, or the making

of roads, or the payment of taxes for the support of government.

5th. The extensive and thorough instruction required by the Prussian system ought to be required among us. It has been seen, that the teachers of common schools, in addition to the elementary branches of science, are required to give instruction in music, drawing, gardening, mechanics, and the various useful arts. By this means all the talent born in the nation of every kind, is called forth and early developed, and every child has the opportunity of discovering his peculiar capabilities, and of making the most of himself.

In this way a vast amount of talent and attainment is secured to the nation, which would, otherwise, have been for ever unknown.

What a rich blessing would such a system of education be to this country, where every kind of talent is in such high demand, and has such entire liberty to expand itself in every desirable direction! It is true, that some men overcome the disadvantages of early life; but how much more could even they have done for themselves and their country could they have begun in season! and how vast an amount of talent has been lost to our country for want of culture at the proper time!

6th. Another feature of the Prussian system, of universal utility, is the constant responsibility of teachers and superintendents, and their regular official reports. Nothing is ever well done without responsibility; and constant responsibility cannot be secured without regular official

inquiry into the manner in which duties have been performed. Suitable men should be appointed for examiners and superintendents, and they should receive a reasonable compensation for their services. They are generally men who cannot afford to give their time and labor gratuitously; and even if they could afford it, it ought not to be demanded of them any more than of the jurors and witnesses who attend our courts.

There is also great need of the educational statistics, which would be furnished by the accurate reports of such functionaries; and nothing would more powerfully excite our people to constant exertion in this great work than a correct account of what is actually done, and of what remains undone. Indeed, I am not sure but the appointment of governmental

agents for the express purpose of taking these statistics, in the first instance, would not be the greatest service that the legislature could render to the cause in its present incipient state.

7th. The *religious* spirit which pervades the whole of the Prussian system, is greatly needed among ourselves.—Without religion—and, indeed, without the religion of the bible—there can be no efficient school discipline. No such thing existed in the institutions of Greece and Rome, if we except the stern military institutions of Sparta; and it first commenced in the schools of the christian church. The experience of Germany and France has shown that, in christian communities, school government cannot be maintained without religious influence; and all the experiments

in our own country lead to the same result. Religion is an essential element of human nature; and it must be cultivated, or there will be distortion of the intellect and affections. I doubt not it will be conceded that, if any religious instruction is to be given in our schools, the religion of the New Testament is to be preferred to all others; and I have already attempted to show that there is enough of common ground here to unite all the different sects in this great object.

8th. As an improvement on the Prussian system, I would recommend the establishment, in all our school districts, of *district libraries*, for the use of pupils as well as teachers. In Prussia there are school libraries, but they are designed principally for teachers, and the children derive but little benefit from them. I

need not enlarge upon the advantages of those libraries here, as a bill is already before the legislature providing for their establishment throughout the state.

The present condition of our country demands legislative provision for the three classes of schools most directly essential to the instruction of the people at large: the elementary schools, high schools, and teachers' seminaries. If our republic is to be prosperous and happy, all our children must be instructed in the elements of science and religion. Our youth should receive the instruction necessary to make them intelligent and efficient men of business; and our farmers, mechanics, and manufacturers, should be made acquainted with those branches of science most essential to the prosecution of their respective employ-

ments. For the accomplishment of these purposes, there must be institutions for the training of well qualified teachers. Other literary institutions, such as colleges, and seminaries for professional education, can, for the present, take care of themselves until, by the operation of our popular schools, the demands of the country for increased facilities of learning shall be so great as to require legislative aid for higher seminaries.

The resources of our people are abundantly sufficient for any amount of expenditure that the wants of the country require. Our large surplus revenue, the income of our public lands, and the rapidly increasing wealth of our private citizens, afford an inexhaustible fund for every useful object. People value what they pay for; and it is altogether desira-

ble that they should feel the expense of their public schools, provided their burdens be not too heavy. The amount of taxation in this country is so small as to be scarcely felt, and is as nothing when compared with the taxation of every other existing government. Our people are abundantly able to do any thing and every thing that is needed for their own good, or the welfare of posterity.

Here the people are sovereign; and who would voluntarily subject himself to an ignorant sovereign? Yes, my fellow-citizens, *you* are sovereigns; and, like all other sovereigns, you are very much exposed to flattery. Those who have power are always flattered by those who are striving to obtain it; and the sovereigns of the United States have not escaped the usual lot of such dignitaries; but I

hope that flattery will never blind you to the truth, or indispose you to a calm and deliberate examination of *facts*, as they actually exist. It is a fact, that there is a vast amount of ignorance and vice in our country; that the increase of our population has far outstripped our present means of education; and that, unless increased and continued efforts are made —efforts, in some good degree adequate to the exigencies of the time—we can have but little hope of retaining the privileges and the preeminence of which we are now so prone to boast. What condition of anarchy can be conceived more dreadful than that of a democracy of ignorant and degraded men, impatient of the restraints of law, and incapable of appreciating the advantages of rational freedom! At present there is enough of

intelligence and virtue in the community to hold in check the elements of discord and wickedness; but who can tell how long this will be so, if our uneducated population continue to increase upon us for years to come as rapidly as it has for a few years past?

A mere knowledge of the elements of reading and writing is not sufficient for a people who hold sovereign power in their own hands; it may be even mischievous, by increasing the facilities for corrupting their principles, and depraving their morals. The mind must be disciplined—the heart must be trained—the moral powers exercised, to discern between the good and the bad—the intellect strengthened, to discriminate between the hurtful and the useful.

The Almighty seems now to have per-

mitted a fair experiment to be made, as to which form of government shall do most for the elevation and happiness of a whole people—an absolute sovereignty or popular freedom. One part of this great experiment has been committed to the king of Prussia, and most nobly is he striving to make it good. The other part is committed to us; and it remains for us to show, that popular freedom can do more for the general happiness than absolute sovereignty, however benevolently directed. Shall this great experiment fail in our hands, and despotism bear away the palm from republicanism?

NOTE BY THE PUBLISHERS.

Since the preceding work was put in press, we have been favored with the ADDRESS OF SAMUEL LEWIS, Esq. on Common Schools, also delivered before the Teachers' Convention at Columbus, and published by order of the state legislature.

This Address is the result of careful investigation, extensive observation, and embraces accurate and minute statements, which must be highly acceptable to all who take an interest in the subject of education.

APPENDIX.

REMARKS

ON

COMMON SCHOOLS.

BY SAMUEL LEWIS, ESQ.
OF CINCINNATI

ADDRESS.

In rising to address an assembly at the seat of government of the state of Ohio in 1836, on the subject of education, I cannot but recur to the times when I first heard of these beautiful rivers and plains. My earliest recollections are associated with the glowing pictures that were drawn of the immense advantages that must result to all that would help to people this new state. When not more than eight years of age, and in the neighborhood of that spot, rendered almost sacred by the landing of the pilgrims nearly two hundred years before, have I stood and listened, with all the curiosity of a child, to the questions of parents, grand parents and neighbors, put to those who pretended to know every thing relating to this then almost heathen land. You all recollect how highly this country was spoken of, and the most glowing panegyric was always finished by giving positive assurance that provision, the most ample, was made to educate the children of the rising state. I well recollect that this was considered one of the greatest advantages; and parents, who proposed to

emigrate, were more particular in their inquiries on this than on any other subject. I will add, that nothing did more to secure an early sale and settlement of the lands of government than the appropriations for schools; and I more than once heard the resolute but affectionate mother, when surrounded by friends dissuading her from emigration, assign it as a sufficient inducement to go to the far west, 'My children will there be entitled to education as well as the rich.' And with that ambition to see their children elevated, which only such mothers feel, did many a young mother tear herself from parents, brothers, sisters, and the home of her youth, and with only husband and weeping children throw herself into this valley, to realize those hopes that had been inspired by government and the agents of different land companies.

To what extent these hopes, so far as education is concerned, have been realized, you all know. And here let me repel, in the most positive manner, the declaration so often made by the older states, that the general government has been liberal to this and the other western states in education endowments. Ohio has never received the first farthing in money, or the first acre of land from this source, as a donation for educational purposes. True, there was a vast tract of uncultivated land owned by government, which she desired to sell; and to do this she had to

devise some plan that would allure men to the purchase: she accordingly assigned a certain portion for education—but she did not give it—it was *a part of the consideration paid*—the very same plan adopted by men who lay out new towns—they give away a part to secure a sale of the residue; and no part of the immense public domain has ever brought into the treasury so great a return as that devoted to schools.

But the impression that ample provision was made, became so general and remained so long, that for years our legislature omitted all action on the subject; and to this cause only do I attribute what would, otherwise, seem to be an unpardonable neglect. Many subjects, important of themselves, have claimed the attention of those who have, from time to time, been called to legislate for us; and where so much was to be done, and so short a time to do it in, it is not strange that some things have been overlooked: it is indeed wonderful that so much has been done. Our state, instead of requiring centuries to obtain a standing among her elder sisters, has passed, almost by magic, from infancy to maturity. To maturity, did I say! Look at the gigantic plans of improvement just begun, and those in contemplation; look at your immense facilities for agriculture, manufactures, commerce; and, above all, look at the enterprize and public spirit manifested throughout your state. With

all these in view, instead of saying that Ohio is at her maturity, must we not say that she has just entered the youthful stage with all its energies—but that in her very youth she is greater than states and nations were wont to be in maturity?

We have not attained this exalted place without incurring corresponding responsibilities to the world and to posterity; and among these responsibilities, none rests with greater weight than our obligation to educate the rising generation. In this sentiment all will, doubtless, agree; and leaving to others to excuse themselves and hold back the general cause on the plea of hostility in the people—I venture to affirm that there is no subject which the citizens would be so generally in favor of, if properly presented, as that of general education. After a residence of more than twenty years in this state, and observing public sentiment with some care, I affirm that I have never seen twenty men who would for themselves oppose a system of general instruction, adapted to the wants of the community. I have heard some professed friends of common schools express fears that others would not sustain an improvement of the system; and I have heard those to whose care the schools were entrusted, excuse themselves from taking measures to meet the demands of the community, by casting on the community the reproach of hostility: but I am much mistaken if, on a direct

appeal to the people, by cities and townships, there would be found one town in ten that would not sustain the most efficient measures.

Presuming, as I do, on the popular sentiment in favor of common schools, I shall waive the discussion of the general subject, and proceed to show that the present provision is everywhere too small, and in by far the largest portion of the state not worth the using by itself.

The population of our state may safely be estimated at 1,100,000. I estimate the whole number of children, between four and sixteen years of age—the latter inclusive—at 350,000: this is, I know, below the actual number. Now, a plan of common schools sufficient to meet their wants, must make provision for teaching this whole number, at least to read and write, and for instructing them in the elements of arithmetic, geography, and in the history and constitution of the United States and of our own state, and English grammar. What is usually known as a common-school education, can, under good teachers, be acquired, with proper attention, by the time the child is ten or twelve years of age at farthest. So that allowing for a variety of circumstances, perhaps one half of the whole number would be as many as would attend at any one time; and we must think ourselves fortunate if public schools throughout the state were always open for that proportion, and

furnished with the means of instruction. This would leave, to be constantly provided for, 175,000 children; and supposing a teacher to be competent to instruct forty scholars, (which is the largest number proper, even in schools where the most can be gained by classing and a division of labor) this requires 4,375 teachers. A part of these may be females—others, males; and their annual salaries, to command the most talent, must be liberal—certainly not less than from $150 to $500: a low average would be $250. This would require, for tuition, say $1,193,750 per annum. Now, supposing one half the children only to be at school, this gives for that half only $625 per year—or $1 56 per quarter. Let me repeat that this contemplates a provision for only one half the children.

Let us now look at the provision actually made by law for public education. The grand taxable levy of the state is put at $94,000,000—which, to make even, I will call $100,000,000. The tax levied by law for school purposes is one mill, which in the whole state is $100,000. There are some cities, where they are especially authorized by law to increase the tax another mill; but $20,000 will cover all such additional levies, making $120,000 school fund raised by tax. There are, however, other resources, viz: the Virginia military school fund, United States military school fund, Western Reserve

school fund, and the school sections, a part of which has been sold and the money funded—the residue remains unsold. I have not time, nor would it be in order to go into all the details of these several sources of school revenues further than to say that, taken in the aggregate, they make up but a small part of the deficiency.

There are some townships near our largest cities, or favored by other advantages, that derive very considerable revenue from the proceeds of the school sections: in such, however, the denseness of the population increases the demand for instruction. But in more than one half of the state it is presumed, that the school lands would not produce an annual rent of thirty cents per acre; and in some cases they are totally unproductive. The whole amount of lands for school purposes in the state, will not exceed one thirty-sixth part, or 693,333 acres; and allowing some of it to be of very high value, the whole will not average more than four dollars per acre—this would give $2,773,333, the interest on which would be $166,000. This, I am satisfied, is too high in the quantity and quality of land. But admitting such to be the case, and the whole land could now be sold and the proceeds funded—this, with all the school revenue and tax in the state would not, probably exceed $286,000 dollars per annum. I make no pretensions to exactness in this estimate; as I

have not had time since I was called upon to address you to prepare a precise estimate, though I think I am high enough for the facts.

But this is not all. If the whole was realized and equally divided, it would make the small sum of eighty cents and a fraction to a scholar. But the fact is, where the best and most extensive provision is made by taxes, and where the land is most productive, if you except three townships in the state, the provision is less than two dollars to a child; while in many, and I feel authorized to say, in a majority of the townships in the state, the provision is less than fifty cents to a child—so great is the inequality in the distribution of school funds. In Clermont county there are 8,892 children of an age to attend school, and they only receive from their lands $1270—13 or 14 cents to a scholar. The tax is $1999 84, or 23 cents to the scholar—making the funds, altogether, yield 37 cents to a scholar. What now is the practical operation of this system? Why, where the schools are organized at all, to make the money go as far as possible by getting a low-priced teacher and crowding into his school as many children as he can with his utmost endeavors keep tolerably in order—leaving him but little time, if he had the ability, to teach well. Thus it is no uncommon thing to see a teacher, who has been hired for twelve to eighteen dollars per month, with from sixty to ninety scholars;

and I have actually seen one hundred under a teacher. In the largest part of the state, even such a school cannot, with public funds, be sustained more than two or three months in the year. Is there any man of experience, who will report that such education is advantageous? At the last meeting of the Western College of Teachers, it was unanimously determined that, from thirty to forty pupils was the highest number that could, with propriety, be placed under any one teacher.

I have thus shown what is the least sum required to make a tolerable provision. I have shown what is the greatest provision made—and the result is, that at this time, on the most favorable estimate, there are not school funds for educating one half of the children of the state in a proper manner; and that, generally speaking, these funds are so applied as to render but little service. Like the farmer, who would sow a peck of oats in a ten acre field—it may come up, but is not worth the harvesting; and if gathered at all, mixed with vicious seed and rendered useless.

It would be wrong to insult the citizens of this state by seriously propounding the question, whether a general system of education is to be provided; for men of intelligence would consider themselves insulted by such an inquiry. All, whether professional, mercantile, or agricultural, are enthusiastic in their praises of education. Witness the thousand orations

on the subject; witness the praises lavished on all those who engage heartily in the work. Scarcely a fourth-of-July oration can be pronounced without eulogizing common schools. Witness the annual messages of your executive, particularly the last, which, on account of its paragraph in favor of education, has obtained for it more general applause than any message ever received that omitted to urge the subject. It has made the friends of the chief magistrate rejoice with pride; while many, that knew him not, have received it as sufficient evidence of intelligent patriotism.

If, then, there is such a general concurrence of opinion in favor of common schools, is it not natural to wonder why so much remains to be done? Why is it that every thing else is carried forward with enthusiasm, and this neglected? One of the causes may be found in the hurry of executing so many other things, and the fact that public attention has not been especially directed to a specific mode of opration. One would almost think that we expected a boon from some foreign source, and that all our praises were lavished to induce a favorable consideration of our case; and, if the fact were not palpable, it would scarcely be supposed, that we were *beseeching ourselves to grant ourselves this favor!* We forget how it sounds to lavish praises in favor of common schools, and to reproach those who are hos

tile thereto, when we ourselves exhibit the utmost inconsistency. With the power in our own hands, do we not seem to think, when a fine speech is made and a few spirited resolutions passed, that the work is done? Verily, out of our own mouths we are condemned. Action, then, decided action, is indispensable. And here let me advert to a few reasons why action should not be delayed.

First: Our population is made up of so many different castes, states, nations, languages, and prejudices, that, without some care, we shall never become one people. We have held out our hands to all nations, and your 200,000 and more of emigrants prove that our offers have been accepted. In the bustle and hurry of the first few years, strangers can get along together: perhaps the present generation may do so without any inconvenience. But, if national distinctions are to be kept up among the coming generation, we may safely calculate on the most unpleasant results. Even now, we find some persons who have attempted to assume the place of leaders of emigrants, and openly discourage even the learning of the English language: and the proposition has been made, that you shall apply a part of the already too small provision for education to instruction in a foreign language! As well might you be asked to establish common schools for Latin and Greek, before the alphabet is learned. Why, these persons, instead

of exchanging Germany or France for America, would remove Germany or France into America: instead of becoming Americans, they would have us to become Germans or Frenchmen. Pardon this digression; but if these things are attempted at this early stage, what may we not expect some twenty or thirty years hence?

Another great division that demagogues never fail to turn to their account, is that between the rich and poor. We already hear it. The poor are taught to believe the rich are their natural enemies; and under the present system you perpetuate and widen the breaches; you appoint no ground that is common for all, where all can mix and form a general acquaintance. You, at best, give to the poor but just learning enough to comprehend fully their ignorance and the wide difference between them and their more wealthy neighbors. It is to be borne in mind that ours is a government of public opinion; and when manhood arrives, the most ignorant and depraved lad about your streets will have as much positive influence as the most wealthy and intelligent; and their influence among their fellows is generally even greater, owing to the prejudice against the rich. Nor are all the wealthy wholly exempt from a prejudice on the other extreme; especially when educated in select schools, and confined to select society.

Establish common schools, and sustain them well,

and you will, most assuredly, fix a place where all classes will, in childhood, become familiar, before the influence of pride, wealth, and family, can bias the mind. An acquaintance, thus formed, will last as long as life itself. Take fifty lads in a neighborhood, including rich and poor—send them in childhood to the same school—let them join in the same sports, read and spell in the same classes, until their different circumstances fix their business for life: some go to the field, some to the mechanic's shop, some to merchandize: one becomes eminent at the bar, another in the pulpit: some become wealthy; the majority live on with a mere competency—a few are reduced to beggary! But let the most eloquent orator, that ever mounted a western stump, attempt to prejudice the minds of one part against the other —and so far from succeeding, the poorest of the whole would consider himself insulted, and from his own knowledge stand up in defence of his more fortunate schoolmate. I appeal to all who hear me, if the ties of friendship formed at school have not outlived every other, where relationship did not exist? Can the oldest man in this assembly meet the schoolmate of by-gone days without feelings that almost hallow the greeting? And these are the feelings that I would, by common schools, establish in the bosoms of every son and daughter of Ohio. Distinction will soon enough find its way into society from

considerations of wealth and influence: it should be the duty of our legislature to provide an antidote against all its evil consequences. Now, you have the power. Now, your state is American in all its feelings. Wait not until those who are hostile to such a measure are able to make head against you. We must remember, that we occupy new ground in the world. We look to the past, but rather as a beacon than a guide. No state before us has ever presented a spectacle so magnificent. Less than forty years since and the state of Ohio was only in prospect: since that time she has come into being. Behold her now the fourth state in the bright catalogue; with more than a million of people, intelligent and enterprizing; with her four hundred miles of canals—her turnpikes, rail roads constructing and projected. See her steam boats, her mills, her factories, fields and flocks; and sustaining, at home and abroad, the highest credit. Does even ancient fable tell of anything like it! Add to all this, that our government is of the most popular kind. Public will gives law and enforces obedience: public sentiment, then, is the unlimited sovereign of this state. Other nations have hereditary sovereigns; and one of the most important duties of their governments is, to take care of the education of the heir to the throne: *these children about your streets, who cannot even speak your language, are your future sovereigns.* Is it not im-

portant that they should be well educated? Is it not important that they should understand the genius of your constitution—your laws? Should they not be able to read the daily issues from your different presses, civil and religious? Can you calculate highly on their judgment, either in governing themselves or selecting others for posts of honor, if they are uninformed themselves? All nations are looking on our experiment. Individuals bid us God speed; but every court in Europe would rejoice to see us do as they have long prophesied we must do, viz: dissolve in anarchy—and after being for a brief space made the sport of contending factions—and after our houses are burned, our fields made desolate, and our families destroyed, hail as our deliverer the fortunate tyrant who has had the address to seize the reins of government, and hold them steadily enough to secure our lives and property.

From such a state all are ready to say, Good Lord, deliver us! and many, perhaps, are prepared to say, the speaker dreams. But let me refer you to the history of other nations and other times. Did not France desire to be free? Did not she deserve to be free—if a sacrifice of blood and treasure could merit freedom? Nor was she without learning among the privileged orders. No court was ever so crowded with men of learning as that of the unfortunate Louis. But the great mass of the community were

not learned. Hence they were imposed upon by the few: and the people, after enacting all that patriotism, bravery, wealth, and numbers could do—and breasting the opposition of combined Europe with success—ultimately threw themselves into the arms of a Corsican soldier! yes, passed under the yoke of the most galling tyranny, to save themselves from the ravages of an outraged and ignorant mob! And it is only through fear of the re-enacting the same scenes, that France has recently sumitted to a tyranny, as much worse than that of the dethroned monarch as we can well conceive.

I might cite you the contending parties now rending once beautiful Spain and Portugal with intestine and bloody commotions. Think you that the occupants or claimants of the thrones are themselves ignorant? No: they are well learned. But their subjects, the great mass of the people, are ignorant: they are thus imposed upon, and are daily sacrificing each other, to gratify the ambition of their intelligent masters. Shall I be told that these are not Americans? I answer, that education and circumstances only make the difference. If the mass of this community were as ignorant as the mass in some other countries, it could as easily be imposed on by the designing. Now, it is to place the people beyond this danger, that we are thus desirous of speedy and effective action.

It may not be thought in place to point out the modes by which provision can be made for general instruction; but I shall venture a few suggestions. It is, in the first place, indispenable that the means provided should be adequate for the object proposed, viz: to make the common schools the best schools in the state; and thus induoe the rich as well as the poor to send to them. And by adequate means, I intend as much as will furnish a teacher to every forty scholars, at farthest, that will attend at any one time. In cities, the schools, for many reasons, should be sustained the year round; and the law should prohibit a crowded school, as a species of sacrilege in education. This is an important—I add, almost indispensable legal provision, for town, country, or city. In the country, it might sometimes suit the convenience of parents to avail themselves of their children's help in summer, after they are ten or twelve years of age. The school, in summer, would accommodate the small children, who could not go from home in winter; and the school, in winter, would accommodate the elder children, who could not attend in summer, and with whom a short walk would be no objection. This plan is adopted in a large part of New England, with advantage. If the schools are kept open constantly in cities, and not crowded—the children entering at six years of age, will complete a common school education by the

time they are ten or twelve, unless the course should be enlarged.

If I had time, I would show that, on the score of interest, it is the cheapest mode of education. Suppose a man pays, in Cincinnati, seventeen dollars tax: two of this is for education. The same man has one, two, or more children. He cannot (if he can do otherwise) in view of the progress of his child, send to a school where from sixty to ninety scholars are placed under one teacher: he must therefore send to private schools, at the rate of four dollars per quarter; and thus pay sixteen dollars per year for the schooling of a single child: whereas, if he paid two or three dollars more school tax, it would make the public schools better than most private schools now are; and he would thus, instead of losing the amount paid, get his money back again with compound interest. A man that pays one hundred and seventy five dollars tax, only pays twenty one for school purposes.

Thus, in Cincinnati, where the greatest provision for common schools is made, there are 1500 children taught at private schools; and from what I know of prices, I venture to say that eighteen dollars per year is under the average price of tuition: making 27,000 dollars. Now, of all the instruction thus given, three fourths consist of the same branches professed to be taught in the common schools; and

one third of the above sum, or $9000, would pay for all that is purely classical, or beyond common school learning. Now, add the residue, $18,000, to the tuition fund as now provided—which is $12,000 per annum—and you can sustain schools for the entire youth of the city, at least equal to the best private schools in the west: and yet this whole sum, $27,000, is expended in the city, and only 3700 scholars are even pretended to be taught.

When I say, that a few years since I visited a school room where eighty children were placed under one female teacher, you will agree with me, that she must be more than mortal to be of much service to that number. Still, though the amount is expended, one half the youth remain untaught; and one third of those who do attend school, are but very imperfectly taught. Great gain, I will here remark, would result from such a division of labor as could be introduced in common schools.

But I am told that it would come heavy on the rich. I answer, that this, if true, results from the form of government under which you live. It is a species of tax for the support of the government. It is the principal aim of despotic governments to make the laboring class of community sustain the whole burden and expense. And there are some few in our country—though they are few—who cannot see how it is their interest to pay a school tax, when they have

no children of an age to send. To such I would say, it is as important for you and your children's security, as it is to maintain your judiciary; and it is the cheapest mode of preventing evil. But *you* do not finally pay it, any more than the merchant who first pays a duty on his merchandize, loses it. He gets it back from his customer, and you get it back from your tenant, or in some other way.

But some say it will bring a crowd of poor here, for the purpose of securing the education of their children. And to this I reply—let them come! That parent who has so much regard for his children as to make the advantage of education determine him in selecting his location, will always make a good citizen. And, if some thousands of such families would remove into our state, it would give you back, in the increase of the value of your property, an hundredfold for all your school tax. Finally, let me say, you have no choice left: it is the only way you can secure to your heirs the quiet possession of your treasures.

But it is still said, that public opinion is not fully prepared. Give time, is the word. This has been the cry for years. But give us, we say, at least the power to test public opinion. Waiving all the mystification that some seem to think the subject involved in, if a law were enacted giving to the cities and townships, separately, power to increase the school tax to meet the demands, it would, on the one hand, put

to silence the complaints against our law makers—and, on the other, none could complain that they were taxed against their will, as it would first be tested in the most democratical form. And, after all, this is the only method you can devise that is equal. Take Cincinnati, for instance, with seven thousand children and no school fund, except direct tax; and the adjoining township, with a school fund of at least 21,000 dollars and only nine hundred children—it is evident that you must lay a different tax on these communities. The same may be said of Anderson township, with no school lands or funds, except a small income from the Virginia military fund, but with eleven hundred children; while Madison township, with a less number of children, has a section of land worth fifty dollars per acre: and this difference runs through all the state. It may be compulsory to a certain extent, or altogether discretionary. Let but the power be given, and direct the school visitors, at their own discretion, or on the application of one eighth or one sixteenth of the voters in the city or township, te ask an expression of public opinion by votes yea or nay; and on such request make it the duty of the trustees of the township or city, as the case may be, to give the proper notice, and take the vote of the people. And I say again, until at least this much is done, I will not consent that we, the people, shall be reproached with hostility to educa-

tion. I repeat, it is not the great mass of the people who are backward in this matter.* A rage for other improvements fills up, with many, all the space; and while parties are got up for this, that, and the other project of a state and national character, there is not even opposition enough to common schools to concentrate the energies of their friends. But let me say in conclusion, that you may dig canals, construct rail roads and turnpikes, establish manufactories, cultivate fields, erect your splendid mansions, accumulate wealth until you become the pride of the earth—if you do not keep a good moral education of the whole population in advance of all your other improvements, you are but making a richer prize for some bold, crafty, and succesful tyrant, who must ultimately be hailed as a welcome deliverer from anarchy and confusion. Whatever was written aforetime, we are told, was written for our instruction. This is true as well in sacred as profane history. And, without pretensions to a prophetic character, I hesitate not to say—and let my young hearers who survive thirty or forty years, remember the prediction—and you have no middle course left—you must educate the whole mass of your population, and thus take them from the influence of ambitious

* Since the meeting of the Convention, a law has been passed on this principle.

unprincipled men—or your sons and daughters will live to see this almost perfection of human government wither and become a by-word and reproach to all people; and other nations, discouraged by our failure, will give up the long agony for human liberty, and weeping bitter tears, will endeavor to choose the kindest tyrant from among those who are ever contending for the mastery. And yet I cannot believe that this shall be the history of these fair states. Methinks the prospect brightens. The people are rising in their majesty! Already some are contending for the credit of being foremost in the battle. Up, then, ye old, middle-aged, and young—up to the rescue! The tide sets fair—a gentle breeze swells our sails—day dawns with unusual splendor—heaven and earth conspire to urge on the glorious work—the darkness of ages begins to retire! Come, all! let us forward with quick step to a general charge! God, who has hitherto so evidently been our guide, will still lead us on to a bloodless triumph.

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