

five years ago, and who have ever since lived in the same school district. Thus they perfectly understand, not only the general working of the school system, as a whole, but the special peculiarities of the particular school in their own district, and constantly reinforce the best efforts of the ablest teachers with the most vigorous and efficient coöperation of thoroughly intellectual home influence.

Considering their age the San Francisco schools have done and are doing wonderfully well, but let us not forget that there are other standards of comparison than the rude and meager beginnings of our own earlier days. Like causes, in like circumstances, produce like effects. Let the parents of San Francisco realize and remember that the greatest possible improvement of our public schools rests with themselves, and the results will go far toward removing one of the greatest present obstacles to the embodiment of excellent theories in correspondent practice.

2d. *The legal requirements of some specific, adequate and indispensable qualifications for the office of School Director.*—As the law now stands, the lowest, vilest, most ignorant and most unscrupulous ward politician may become a regular member of the Board of Education, and with a sufficient number of his own kind in the Board, he would find little difficulty in becoming chairman of the committee especially charged with the particular care of the High School for young ladies. Or, the youngest, most inexperienced and least wealthy member of the Board may become chairman of the Finance Committee, charged with the auditing and virtual disbursement of hundreds of thousands of dollars of the public funds every year. The system which leaves such things possible cannot be amended an hour too soon for the public safety.

3d. *Directors of American public schools should be educated in American public schools.*—Nothing less than personal familiarity, for many years, with the details of public-school management can adequately qualify one for intelligent and beneficial participation in that management. In every other department of public affairs this obvious, common-sense and business-like principle is duly recognized and habitually enforced. Why should the single department of public schools, in respect to some points, the most important of all, stand as the solitary exception?

4th. *Directors of our public schools should be fathers of children now attending those schools.*—Otherwise it is quite impossible for them to feel that warm, personal and literally fatherly interest which, alone, can sufficiently reinforce the sense of public duty to secure the faithful and worthy discharge of the Director's onerous and often thankless duty.

To elect young bachelors of a dubiously marriageable age, and an obviously marriageable disposition, to the care of some hundreds of female teachers possessing the same two characteristics in a still stronger degree, is a decidedly perilous and a highly improbable method of securing disinterested and impartial public service.

5th. *Directors should continue longer in office.*—Under the present system one half of the members of the Board of Directors retire every year, except in case of reelection, which many of the best members of the Board seem to have grown into the habit of almost habitually declining. Hence it happens that about one half of the Board is generally new and inexperienced. This leaves the real control of its affairs in the hands of the other six. It would be better to extend the Director's term of office to three years, and have one third of them retire annually.

6th. *The number of Directors should be increased.*—The number of pupils, schools and teachers is now more than five times as great as when the present number of the members of the Board of Education was fixed. The duties of the Directors have become far too numerous to be well discharged by any twelve men. The inevitable result is that the Directors do not, and in fact cannot, even attempt to discharge some of their most obvious and important duties. In nearly eight successive years' service in this department, but one solitary Director has ever visited the writer's school with sufficient frequency, or stayed long enough at a time to enable him to form anything like an intelligent personal opinion of its condition. And that Director left the Board two years ago.

If the present system must continue, the number of School Directors should be increased to at least

eighteen—twenty-four would be still better. With twenty-four Directors of duly prescribed qualification, elected from the city at large, and having one third of their number retire annually, the public schools might receive far more intelligent, harmonious and profitable supervision than they have ever yet known in this city.

A still better plan would be to abolish the Board of Education, and intrust the management of the public schools to five Commissioners, of whom two should be prominent citizens, educated in American public schools and experienced in teaching. Those, in conjunction with the Superintendent, should have charge of the course of study and method of instruction. The third and fourth should be practical business men, familiar with the value of real estate and acquainted with the best method of building. These also, in conjunction with the Superintendent, should have especial charge of the purchase and sale of school lots, the building of school houses and the buying of all school furniture and supplies. The fifth Commissioner should be the Superintendent elected as now by the people at large. All should give heavy bonds, and receive ample compensation for at least one half, if not the whole, of their time.

Carefully prescribing and faithfully enforcing their qualifications, electing men of character, education and business experience, placing them under heavy bonds for the faithful discharge of duty, and paying them well for doing it, we might escape from the present irresponsible, dilatory, incompetent and merely nominal directorship of our public schools, and avoid such almost irreparable calamities as have overtaken the public schools of New York within three years. At present we are in a fair way to similar results.

7th. *Directors should receive pay.*—Not enough to induce any unworthy seeking of the office, but enough to fairly pay any average business or professional man for one fourth or one third of his time. No man, not even the best qualified, can justly and worthily perform a Director's duties in less than that proportion of his time.

It is unworthy of the city's honor to habitually exact, receive and profit by valuable public service without compensating the servant. It is beneath its dignity to place itself thus in the attitude of a beggar.

With properly prescribed and duly enforced qualifications for the Directorship, it need not attract unworthy aspirants to the office. With due vigilance on the part of parents and citizens, it could not.

8th. *Far greater personal interest and effort on the part of parents and citizens generally to secure the nomination and election of competent and safe Directors.*

9th. *Better qualified teachers, especially in the lower grades.*—The majority of our primary classes are taught by holders of third-grade certificates. For several years the examinations necessary to obtain third-grade certificates have been easier than those required for admission to the High Schools. Thus the managers of our schools have employed scores of teachers whose education was more than three years behind that of an ordinary High School graduate. This great wrong at the very foundation of public instruction cannot be righted too soon.

10th. *Unequal pay of teachers.*—The present law allows these same half-educated holders of third-grade certificates, after ten brief months of experimental teaching, to receive as much as ladies of five times as much education and ten times as much experience, who may have chosen to continue teaching primary grades. One very curious fact about these apprentice teachers is that they all prove qualified. Not one in a hundred is declared to have failed or is refused promotion and full pay at the end of her brief probation.

The plain truth is that experienced female teachers should receive more and the untried apprentices much less than they now do. The present custom violates the equity and business-like principles which regulate the entrance to, and continuance in, other professions, and works a gross injustice to the older and more experienced female teachers whose professional success honors the department which thus slights and discourages them.

The threadbare argument about servant girls receiving more pay than female teachers is as false in fact as it is shallow in logic. The truth is that the average servant girl receives hardly one half as much