

and the falling to pieces of many more. A book *must* be exceedingly well bound, indeed, to withstand the straining and banging of frequent transportation at the hands of an ordinary juvenile of the present day.

Those fond of statistics may add one more fact: allowing that the average weight of school books carried back and forth at least twice a day—is two pounds only, and hundreds carry from four to five pounds—and that the average distance of the pupil's home from his school is but a quarter of a mile—and hundreds live a mile or more away—and also allow them to attend school upon an average two hundred days a year—and hundreds attend the whole two hundred and twenty days of the entire school year—and it follows immediately that our twenty thousand school children lug through the streets *twenty tons* of school books ten thousand miles a day, or four thousand tons two million miles a year. And this calculation, in all its elements, weight of books, distance traveled, number of days, and number of children, is within and below the truth in every particular. The argument needs no aid from exaggeration.

THE PLAN NOT NEW.

This proposed plan of free books is by no means new. Larger American cities than ours adopted it from fifteen to twenty years ago, and the present writer merely borrowed the idea from them when he suggested it here nearly ten years since.

ADVANTAGES OF THE SYSTEM.

Its adoption, or fair trial, would involve the following points:

1st. The State or the city should furnish all necessary school books and stationery free of direct cost to the individual pupil or his parent.

2d. The pupil should never take the books from the school room.

3d. The pupil or his parent should immediately pay for all loss of, or damage to, books, resulting from his own negligence or abuse.

Certainly no one could reasonably object to the system on the ground of cost, as the parent would pay in increased taxes the *wholesale* cost of the books, while he would save in private family expenses, their *retail* cost, thus making a net gain of the difference, which is commonly one fourth of the retail price, and, under the system of very large wholesale purchases, would become even more.

THE CASE OF THE CHILDLESS TAX PAYER.

Of course, the objector would instantly bring up the case of the childless property owner, or the wealthy citizen and heavy tax payer whose children do not attend the Public Schools. To him we answer at once that the general intelligence of a community directly increases its desirability as a place of residence, and correspondingly enhances its value as a place of investment, and that the three great public fountains of general intelligence and popular enlightenment are the school, the church, and the press, and that the church gains few intelligent voluntary members, and the press finds very few readers and fewer subscribers in communities wherein the school is not doing or has not done its work.

What would lands and houses be worth in a city or a country without schools? And which costs more, to pay for the single item of public schools or to pay the extra taxes necessary for the efficient maintenance of reform schools, county jails, State prisons, State sheriffalty, county constabulary, and city police, to say nothing of the immense cost of courts, the salaries of judges, and the fees of the vast army of lawyers, all of which are greatly increased, if not principally supported or primarily caused by the ignorance of clients, criminals, and convicts. The argument might lose no strength by including also the vast annual cost of hospitals, infirmaries, asylums, and alms houses, most of whose inmates find their way thither through causes which efficient popular instruction, made compulsory upon all, would have very largely diminished, if not wholly removed or prevented. With the kindest of feeling towards both lawyers and doctors, the student of true political economy cannot help seeing that they mainly live upon the ignorance and vice of their clients and patients, and that in proportion as the three great teachers of mankind, the editor, the preacher, and the teacher, do their work thoroughly and universally the service of the

doctor and the lawyer, at least in their present spheres, must continually grow less and less. Whether true or not, it has been often said and oftener thought, that one great reason why compulsory education, and other educational reforms, encounter so many rebuffs and progress so slowly, is the apathy, indifference, and sometimes positive opposition which they meet at the hands of the lawyer members of various State Legislatures and prospective office-seekers, who manipulate ward meetings, district primaries, and county conventions, whose ignorant members habitually cheat themselves with the self-complimentary delusion that they are having their own way and voting as they please, when the truth is that a few selfish politicians, compacted into a little clique or ring, have completely captured them and are leading them whithersoever they will. However loudly these office-seekers and ring-makers may clamor for free schools and shout for universal popular education, they are the very things which the people especially dread and detest. Between them there is and must be that natural enmity which begets and nourishes a continual conflict. As the masses rise the demagogues fall. And this is true, not only in matters educational and political, but even more so in moral and religious interests. One or the other must go to the wall, and the people, having made up their minds which it shall be, are beginning to practically understand that the free Common School is the grand source of mental enlightenment and civil enfranchisement, and to firmly resolve that neither political tyrants nor religious despots shall take it from them.

II.—MORE HOURS OF SCHOOL EVERY DAY.

Fully aware of the strong opposition which the merest hint of such a suggestion will almost certainly call forth from the majority of teachers, his experience of nearly twenty years has fully convinced the writer that an addition of at least one hour to the present number of school hours each day, with proper accompanying provisions and regulations, would very greatly improve the quality of the regular school work in all the grades, and, at the same time, rather improve than injure the health of the pupils. He thinks so for the following reasons:

1st. The present total daily time now devoted to actual school work, in the school room and under school regulations, including study time, recitation time, and all forms of regular school work, even in the Grammar and High Schools, is but four and one half hours a day. And, if we exclude the time usually occupied by calling the roll, receiving reports, etc., it is still less than this. In fact, in the highest classes, and under the strictest teachers, the most faithful pupil devotes hardly four hours a day to anything like earnest, absorbing, or really hard study. And even this small amount is not continuous; twice a day it is broken by recesses of fifteen minutes each, while at noon a solid hour of rest and recreation separates the morning work from that of the afternoon. Besides this, in accordance with a well-known law of both physical and mental effort, the *variety* of the work becomes in itself often equivalent to a full rest.

Requiring one hour more of school each day, with the accompanying proviso that the pupil should not ordinarily study at home, would involve or secure the following advantages:

1st. Instead of costing the pupil more time it would actually cost him less. Home-study is almost universally necessarily broken by unavoidable interruptions. Few families are so commodiously housed that every boy or girl can have his or her own private or quiet little study room. Studying in the midst of younger children, almost constantly interrupted by surrounding domestic noises, and by the rattling conversation of heedless callers, the average pupil, with mind comparatively undisciplined in self-control, can hardly accomplish as much in two hours as he easily accomplishes in a single hour in the school room, where all the surroundings, as far as practicable, are made to favor successful study.

2d. It would enable the teacher to train the pupils in right methods of study. In the acquisition of knowledge, the *how* is often fully as important as the *what*. Many a pupil with brains enough in head, and time enough on hand, has failed simply through not knowing *how* to use both brain and time. Right methods of study enable even average pupils to ac-