The Chestertown Transcript.

VOL. XV. CHESTERTOWN, FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 1876. NO. 13.

"THE AGER."

The following clever parody, by Professor J. P. Steele, editor of the *Progressive Farmer* and of the agricultural department of the Mobile *Register*, has been repeatedly published, though generally in a mutilated form. We give what is believed to be a correct version. It is good enough to bear repetition and will, perhaps, touch a tender spot in the sympathies of some of our readers:

Once upon an evening bleary,
While I sat me dreamy, dreary,
In the sunshine, thinking over
Things that passed in days of yore;
While I nodded, nearly sleeping.
Gently came a something creeping
Up my back, like water seeping—
Seeping upward from the floor.
"'Tis a cooling breeze," I muttered,
"From the regions 'neath the floor—
Only this and nothing more."

Ah! distinctly I remember,
It was in that wet September,
When the earth and every member
Of creation that it bore,
Had for days and weeks been soaking
In the meanest, most provoking
Foggy rains that, without joking,
We had ever seen before;
So I knew it must be very
Cold and damp beneath the floor—
Very cold beneath the floor.

So I sat me nearly napping
In the sunshine, stretching, gaping,
Craving water, but delighted
With the breeze from 'neath the floor;
Till I found me waxing colder,
And the stretching growing bolder,
And myself a feeling older—
Older than I'd felt before;
Feeling that my joints were stiffer
Than they were in days of yore—
Stiffer than they'd been before.

All along my back the creeping
Soon gave place to rushing, leaping,
As if countless frozen demons
Had concluded to explore
All the cavities—"the varmints"—
'Twixt me and my nether garments,
Up into my hair and downward
Through my boots into the floor;
Then I found myself a shaking,
Gently first, but more and more—
Every moment more and more.

'Twas the ager, and it shook me
Into my clothes, and took me
Shaking to the kitchen—every
Place where there was warmth in store;
Shaking till the dishes clattered,
Shaking till the tea was spattered;
Shaking, and with all my warming
Feeling colder than before;
Shaking till it had exhausted
All its powers to shake me more—
Till it could not shake me more.

Then it rested till the morow,
Then resumed with all the horror
That it had the face to borrow,
Shaking, shaking as before;
And from that day in September—
Day that I shall long remember—
It has made diurnal visits,
Shaking, shaking, oh so sore!
Shaking off my boots, and shaking
Me to bed, if nothing more—
Fully this if nothing more.

And to-day the swallows flitting
Round my cottage see me sitting
Moodily within the sunshine
Just inside my silent door,
Waiting for the ager, seeming
Like a man forever dreaming,
And the sunlight on me streaming
Throws no shadow on the floor;
For I am too thin and sallow
To make shadows on the floor;
Nary shadow—any more.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RAIN.

To understand the philosophy of this beautiful and often sublime phenomenon, so often witnessed, and so very essential to the existence of plants and animals, a few facts derived from observation and a long train of experiments, must be remembered.

1. Were the atmosphere here, everywhere, and at all times, of a uniform temperature, we should never have rain, hail or snow. The water absorbed by it in evaporation, from the sea and the earth's surface, would descend in an imperceptible vapor, or cease to be absorbed by the air when it was once fully saturated.

2. The absorbing power of the atmosmosphere, and consequently its capacity to retain humidity, is proportionately greater in warm than in cold air. The air near the surface of the earth is warmer than it is in the regions of the clouds. The higher we ascend the colder do we find the atmosphere. Hence the perpetual snow on very high mountains in the hottest climate.

Now, when from continued evaporation the air is highly saturated with vapor, though it be invisible and the sky cloudless, if its temperature is suddenly reduced by cold currents descending from above, or rushing from a higher to a lower latitude, its capacity to retain moisture is diminished, cloud[illegible] and rain is the result. [illegible] sponge fil[illegible] and compressed, pours [illegible] which [illegible] retain.

ADDRESS

OF

THOMAS M. PINKIND,

BEFORE THE

Kent County Teachers' Association,

HELD AT CHESTERTOWN, MD., *June 30th*, 1876.

Mr. President, and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Association:—It was with considerable trepidation that I received the invitation of our efficient Examiner to address you at this meeting: but, recognizing the obligation imposed by that part of our Constitution which reads, "The members of this Association being voluntarily associated for the promotion of the greatest earthly good, are expected to give to it their best thoughts and efforts," after some hesitation I concluded to accept the honor tendered me, and endeavor conscientiously to discharge the responsibility assumed therewith. We therefore respectfully ask your attention to some, as we think, practical remarks upon a subject of importance, though perhaps in different degrees, to pupils, parents, teachers, and tax-payers; and, we may also add, to citizens who are not tax-payers. We scarcely need to say that it is the much considered subject of

Absenteeism, or Irregular Attendance at our Public Schools.

The fact that absenteeism does exist in connection with our schools is too well known and too generally admitted to call for more than a passing notice: but we think that the seriousness and magnitude and extent of the evil are neither as well known nor as generally admitted as it is desirable that they should be.

We beg leave to state, here, that, in the consideration of our subject, we have not confined ourself to our own thoughts upon it, but have felt at liberty—nay, more—we have regarded it as our duty in order to its proper treatment to lay under contribution the few sources of information to which we have had access. The magnitude and extent of the evil are so closely connected that in learning about the one we become acquainted with the other, also.

From the report of the United States Commissioner of Education, for the year 1871, we learn that absenteeism prevails over the entire country to a greater or lesser degree. In twenty-three States which have furnished reports upon the subject the average number of pupils enrolled in the Public Schools is 5,840,360; and the average attendance is 3,569,780, which is about 61 1-0 per cent. of the number enrolled. The percentage of attendance in these States ranges from 41 per cent. in Minnesota to 100 per cent. in Oregon, which latter figures we think must be incorrect. Assuming such to be the fact, we find in Michigan the next highest average, namely, 87 per cent. Less than half show an average attendance greater than 66⅔ per cent.; our own State among the greater number, showing an average of a fraction more than 59 per cent. Let us now turn our attention to the exhibit of our own State.

As has been stated, the report of the Commissioner of Education shows the average attendance of pupils at the public schools of Maryland to be 59 per cent. of the number enrolled. This is taken from the State report of 1870. From the reports of the State Board of Education we gather that the average attendance in the county schools was, for the year 1872, 62 per cent.; for 1873, 64 per cent.; and for 1874, 62 per cent. of the average number enrolled.

It may not be uninteresting to know that, according to the census of 1870, the the population of Maryland between 5 and 20 years of age is 276,120; of this number, in the year 1874, 13 ,874, or 491-5 per cent., were enrolled in our public schools; and 65,168 were in attendance, which is 47 9-10 per cent. of the whole number enrolled, and 23½ per cent. of the population of "school age." This computation includes Baltimore city, and all names that were enrolled for any length of time during the year. So we see that out of the whole number of "school age," 140,246 are not even enrolled in our schools; and on an average, 210,952, or 76½ per cent., are out of our public schools every day.

If this number of the youth of our State were living without instruction, or some useful employment, the stoutest heart of the staunchest friend of universal education might well be discouraged at the prospect; but it is a source of gratification to know that some, and, we have reason to believe, a considerable number, are continuing their studies in private schools, academies, and colleges; or pursuing some useful occupation in various avenues of business, for which they have been fitted by the instruction received in the public schools of our State.

Though the State opens its schools to all youth, (under certain restrictions), between 6 and 21 years of age, we do not think that it is expected that all shall attend; for the system of classification recently introduced by the State Board seems to be based on the theory that an average pupil, regular in attendance, will, under an efficient teacher, complete the primary course in 6 years, and these 6 years, in the great majority of cases, will have been completed before the pupil is 21 years of age. Whether the results will demonstrate the correctness of the theory, time and a faithful administration of the system will make known. We think the probabilities are in favor of its success.

With this brief consideration of our subject, as related to the State at large, let us turn to the schools of our county, and in order to see our standing among the counties of the State, let us compare the attendance at our own schools, with that at the schools of the 22 other counties. As we have before remarked, the average attendance throughout the State during the year ending Sept'r. 30, 1874, was 62 6-10 per cent. of the average enrollment. The attendance in the several counties ranged from 39 6-10 per cent, in St. Mary's, to 73 9-10 in Wicomico; nine counties, only, showing an average exceeding that of the State; and six, an average exceeding two-thirds of the average number eprolled. Our county average was but 54 9-10 per cent.

The same report from which we derive this information shows the population of Kent county, between 5 and 20 years of age. to be 6,573. Of this number 2,820, or 42 9-10 per cent. were enrolled during the year, and 1,041, or 15 8-10 per cent., were in average daily attendance.

So we see that out of the 6,573 persons of "school age," 3,753, or 57 1-10 per cent. did not even enter our schools as pupils, and, on an average, 5,532, or 84 2-10 per cent. were out of the schools every day during the school year, which is a less favorable exhibit than that of the State at large.

The attendance among the several schools of our county was from 32 8-10 per cent. to 74 4-10 per cent.; which latter average was made by the pupils of the school under the charge of Mr. Joseph Peterson, in this town. Comparing the attendance in the Election Districts, we find that in the first district the average was 52 8-10 per cent.; in the second 55 9-10 per cent.; in the third 44 9-10 per cent.; in the fourth, 56 1-10 per cent.; and in the fifth, 51 5-10 per cent. of the average number enrolled during the year.

From these figures, Mr. President, and ladies and gentlemen, we see that the evil of absenteeism is coextensive with the system of Free Public Schools, and the magnitude of the evil is shown to be very great by the fact that the average absence is in the United States 38 9-10 per cent.; in our own State, 38 per cent., and in our county 45 1-10 per cent. of the average enrollment.

These facts would be sufficient to fill our hearts with dismay, and with misgivings as to the ultimate success of the system, were we not persuaded that it is making a percepible progress, not only in its practical results, but also in securing the favor and support of the people, especially in our own county.

Let us now glance, as briefly as possible, at the seriousness of absenteeism.

From irregular attendance arise injurious effects which are well known to all teachers of experience, and which we will only mention. It creates, in the absentee, a dislike for school, and a disinclination to study; checks his progress; and encourages a habit of neglect and irregularity. It also retards the progress of his class, and imposes a greater amount of labor upon the teacher at the same time that, in our county, it tends to diminish his salary.

These are some, at least, of the immediate results of the evil. The more remote, though by far the most serious, results are ably set forth in an excellent paper on "The Relations of Education to Crime in New England, and the Facilities for Education in Her Penal Institutions," by "an able and scholarly writer and a careful observer," A. S. Fisher, A. M., to some extracts from which we beg to direct your attention.

Says the writer, "Every student of the conditions of crime is immediately and always in the presence of five commanding facts. Concerning their exact proportions there may be slight variations of opinion.

"The first of these facts is, that at least 80 per cent. of the crime of New England is committed by those who have no education, or none to serve them a valuable purpose in life.

All tables are fallacious here, in two respects. Firstly, every man, not expecting to be put to the test, will overstate his educational advancement. Secondly, the mere ability to read and write with difficulty gives a man no considerable advantage, either as to character, powers, or chance in life. To be advantaged by the power to read, he must read with pleasure; must be interested in, and have the habit of, gaining knowledge by reading. Much of culture must be added to the mere power to read before that becomes of any practical advantage.

The Massachusetts figures for her State and county penal institutions are as follows: Of all those incarcerated the past year—a total of 14,315—31 per cent. could not read and write, and 8 per cent. more are registered as only able to read and write; making a total of 39 per cent. uneducated beyond this point. Twenty-three persons only are reported as having had any higher education than that of the common schools; the remainder, about 60 per cent., as having a common-school education. Of this 60 per cent., doubtless but a few came from the more advanced studies. Fully two-thirds of our common school pupils who have learned to read are not yet advanced so far as to have mastered the rudiments of written arithmetic. The Massachusetts tables, then, appear to substantiate the fact as announced.

Careful and extensive inquiry of wardens, jailers, superintendents of houses of industry, of correction, and of reformation, and of teachers and other officers of the same, have fully convinced the writer that 80 per cent. of the criminal population of New England have never mastered the fundamental rules of written arithmetic, nor entered on the study of geography or grammar. The great majority of our juvenile delinquents begin in reform schools, lower than this, and the same is true of the pupils in the evening schools of our adult prisons. Having reached such conclusions concerning New England, it is found that 28 per cent. of all the State prisoners of the country in 1868 were unable to read or write; that 32 per cent. of the adult prisoners of New York State were equally untaught; that 27 per cent. of those in her reformatories could not read, and that of 2,120 prisoners in Ohio 14 per cent. did not know their letters, and 67 per cent. more could not read and write—a total of 81 per cent. practically altogether without education.

If, now, the fact that the utterly unlettered 6 per cent of the population of Massachusetts commits 31 per cent. of all her crime be set over against the fact that of all her 14,315 criminals but 23 had enjoyed educational opportunities beyond the common school, have we not a striking illustration of the fact that ignorance is the mother of crime, and that thorough education is a very perfect safeguard against it? And this fact for Massachusetts is only a specimen of what is true of every New England State. From 3 to 7 per cent. of our population, the wholly uneducated, in New England and the United States, commit at least 30 per cent. of all our crime, and less than one-fifth of one per cent. is committed by those who are educated beyond the common school. The entirely uneducated man is nine times as likely to be a criminal as the average of the men who have been taught, and more than one hundred times as likely to become a criminal as he who has been thoroughly educated.

The second grand fact is, that, as through all the country so through New England, from 80 to 90 per cent. of criminals *have never learned any trade*, or mastered any skilled labor.

"*Education in labor bears the same ratio of freedom from crime as education in schools.* Ignorance of the methods of skilled labor is just such a danger as inorance of letters."

The fifth fact is, that, according to the unanimous judgment of all officers of juvenile reformatories, 95 per cent. of these offenders came from idle, ignorant, vicious, and drunken homes. Oftenest the answer comes, quick and clear, from these officers, when asked, 'How many of your boys or girls, come from, in any wise, decent houses?' 'Not one in a hundred!'

The answer will then be modified a little, and settle close to the figure named above. Almost the entire number are children of ignorant and besotted parents.

In the face of these facts, what can be said but this: "Ignorance breeds crime; education is the remedy for the crimes that imperil us?' Grouping them together, this is their one impression; the two first link together the two perils of ignorance of letters and ignorance of skilled labor. The one, as the other, gives employment, occupies time, prevents idleness; the one, as the other, develops the intellect, masses knowledge, and puts it to use; the one, as the other, elevates the taste, and advantages character itself; the one, as the other, advances its possessor to a new grade in society, makes him self-respecting, and wins for him the respect of his fellows; the one, as the other, opens to him new avenues for steady and compensated employment; holds out to him the certainty of an ultimate rise in life; puts in him new hope, and impulse and inspiration; lifts him above temptation. Nay, these two classes are, in fact, the same class. No decently-taught person proposes to himself the mere unskilled day's working life; he uniformly, and he *alone*, as the general law, seeks to master some skilled labor, learn some trade or mechanic art, and so by special skill and value, means to come to something better.

"The fourth fact [that intemperance makes crime] follows close in the same line. The man who is untrained in brain and in hands will have a mate like himself; will have a comfortless, and unclean and naked home; will have few enjoyments, and they will be sensual. No pleasure he can buy will seem so cheap, so convenient to procure, or so agreeable, as the pleasure of drink. So he can forget his cares, his weariness, his poverty, the wants of himself and family, and be, for the time, rich and full and happy.

The classes most widely debauched by drink are the classes least taught in letters and least skilled in labor; and now, by their habits of drink, reduced to despair and recklessness of poverty, [illegible] degradation, and helplessness, shall they [illegible] themselves to lives of [illegible] crime? Will they not [illegible]

We could pursue this line of thought to a greater extent, but we have already over stepped the limits we had marked out for ourself: and now hasten to conclude.

The burden of removing the evil of which we have spoken rests upon the school authorities. But, fellow-teachers, while we occupy our present position, a solumn responsibility devolves upon us. Let us see to it that we improve ourselves in every way that will increase our efficiency. Though our opportunities may not be great, let us make the most of them: for upon our work in the school room, depends, in a great measure, the future happiness or misery, not only of those entrusted to our care, but also of those who shall be affected, in the least degree, by the influence of our teaching. Some of us may be, at times, discouraged at the apparent failure of our efforts; but let us press onward in the discharge of our duty, relying upon divine aid, and remembering the apostolic exhortation: "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

NOTE—The figures in the foregoing paper include, as far as I know, both the white and colored races. T. M. P.

KEEP STILL.

Some big folks forget that they once were little, and wapt children to act just like men and women.

Little Robbie was sent in the country to his aunt when his dear mamma was ill. Everybody was careful to see his clothes, and his stout boots, and his warm stockings put into the big bag his papa was to take for him. But no one thought of Dick, his headless rocking-horse, or his drummer-boy, or his fife and trumpet, and they were far more to Robbie than all his clothes or shoes were.

This aunt's house was very neat; you could not find a speck of dirt in it, nor a bit of paper, nor a chicken's feather on the lawn. No flowers were allowed in these except those which Aunt Abebe put up, stiff and straight, in her parlor vases.

The dear little boy hunted round for a big stick to ride, in place of Dick, and having found one, galloped joyfully into the sitting-room to show his aunt what a horseman he was.

"O, Robbie!" she cried out, "carry that old stick into the shed and do keep still."

"That isn't an old stick, that's a hoss, auntie."

"I don't wonder your mother's being sick," said auntie, "if you are so noisy all the time at home. You must keep still here, Rob, or you'll make me crazy," she said.

So the good child put away 'Dick,' and got the big dinner bell, and went upstairs and down, and out on the piazza, which he called the deck, calling on the passengers to pay their fare.

"Now, Rob, you will craze me!" said his aunt. "Give me the bell, and sit down on the lowest step of the piazza and keep still."

So Rob folded his dear little hands on his lap; he fixed his eyes on the stepping-stone before the door, and drew a long sigh. After a little, he said, "O, auntie dear, I do pity stones so."

"Pity stones? what for, Robbie?"

"Because they have to keep so still all their lives. I'm so glad I ain't a stone!"

"There's no danger of your turning into a stone, you don't keep still long enough."

"Oh, dear, how stones must ache, keepin' still always. I ache now, just in this little speck of a time. I'm glad I ain't a fence, nor a tree, nor a rag-baby that can't move till somebody pulls you! O, auntie, my head aches, and my hands and feet are cold, and my eyes are crooked, keeping still such a long time!" he said.

"Your mouth is all right, little boy," said the lady. "That hasn't kept still at all."

Then grandma came in, and asked what was the matter; and Rob said, 'I'm all hard. I've been sittin' such an awful long time."

"One minute," said Aunt Phebe, smiling.

"O, auntie, it's an hour, a awful long hour, and I'm all asleep but my head! Can't I get up, say?"

"Yes," said grandma. "You may come up in my room and make a train of cars with the chairs."

"Won't you be crazy, grandma?"

"No, my dear, noise does not trouble me much. But it is a good plan for little boys to learn to be still, so that they will not trouble those who are not well. To-morrow morning I wish you would fold your hands and sit still one minute, and again in the afternoon. We will call that your 'lesson in silence.' By-and-by you can sit still two, three, and five minutes, to please those who do not like a noise."

"Yes, grandma dear, I will; but I hope mamma will soon be well, I'm so tired of keeping still," said the dear little boy.

☞ A gentleman saw an advertisement that a receipt for the cure of dyspepsia might be had by sending two postage [illegible] to the advertiser, and the [illegible] in your garden, and [illegible] alone.

☞ A Mississippi doctor gave a Memphis man a box of sub-bilious pills the other day, with direction written on the [illegible] Gentlemen's Daily."

WHY HE BOUGHT THE TIGER.

Those who attended the sale of animals from Barnum's hippodrome in Bridgeport, the other day reported the following occurence:

A tiger was offered. The bid ran up to $4,500. This was made by a man who was a stranger, and to him it was knocked down. Barnum who had been eyeing the the stranger during the bidding, now went up to him and said:

"Pardon me for asking the question but will you tell me where you are from?"

"Down South a bit," responded the man.

"Well, are you connected with any show?"

"No."

"Are you buying the animal for yourself?"

"Yes."

Barnum shifted about uneasily for a moment, looked alternately at the man and then at the tiger, and evidently trying his best to reconcile the two together.

"Now, young man," he finally said, you need not take this animal unless you want to, for there are those here who will take it off your hands at once."

"I don't want to sell," was the quick reply.

"What on earth are you going to do with such an ugly beast if you have no show of your own, and not buying for some one who is a showman?"

"Well I'll tell you," said the purchaser "My wife had been dead about three weeks. We had lived together for ten years, and,—I miss her." He paused to wipe his eyes and steady his voice, and then added—"so I've bought this yer tiger."

"I understand you," said the great showman in a husky voice.

ABOUT HATING.—Hate not. It is not worth while. Your life is not long enough to make it pay to cherish ill will or hard thoughts toward any one. What if that man has cheated you; or that woman has played you false? What if this friend has forsaken you in your time of need, or that one, having won your utmost confidence, your warmest love, has concluded that he prefers to consider and treat you as a stranger? Let it pass. What difference will it make to you in afew years, when you go hence to the "undiscovered country." All who treat you wrongly now, will be more sorry for it then, than you, even in your deepest disappointment and grief, can be. A few more smiles, a few more tears, some pleasure, much pain, a little longer hurrying and worrying in the world, some hasty greetings, and abrupt farewells, and life will be over, and the injurer and the injured will be laid away, and ere long forgotten. Is it worth while to hate each other?

HIS ROYAL ACQUAINTANCE.

Two young gentlemen meet on Fifth avenue, and express languid surprise at the encounter. These cosmopolitans last saw each other on the Rue de Capuchins.

"Aw, yaw heah?"

"Yes, came last week."

"On the Cunardaw?"

"Yes, the Scythiaw."

"Enjaw yourself in Paris?"

"Tolerable. Had good lettaws, you knaw. Some deuced distinguished people."

"Hunt any of 'em up? Call on 'em?"

"Yes, called on a Marquive and a Countess, and one evening I called on two Queens."

"Aw! pleasant interviaw?"

Not very. The other fellaw had three Kings, you know!"

"Aw!"

☞ A few years ago, Bismark sent his portrait to Mr. Stewart, requesting the great merchant's in return. A young friend, who had vainly endeavored to obtain one for himself, said:

"You will be obliged to have a portrait taken now."

'Oh, no," said Stewart.

"How can you avoid it?"

"Very easily was the reply; instead of the photograph I shall send the chancellor a check for a thousand dollars for the benefit of the starving population of one of the districts of Prussia."

He did so, and soon after received a cordial autograph letter of thanks for his generosity from the crown princess.

☞ Bridget; "Sure, Maria and me was [illegible]shin' over what was thim things on the [illegible]gher over the mantel."

Mistress: "Why, Bridget, those are Raphael's angels."

Bridget; "Och, thin the both of us was wrong. I said they was twins, and Maria said they was bats."

☞ Miss Joak, of New York, recently eloped with a young man. Her enraged father says if he can lay his hands on that young man he will teach him to take a Joak. If her paternal parent followed the profession of a newspaper paragraphist, he would soon become accustomed to having his best Joaks stolen.

☞ Always pick out a bald-headed barber to shave you, because he can't consistently ask you to buy any "hair restorer."

☞ A line on the forehead means experience, but there's not line to it with [illegible]

©Maryland State Archives msa_sc3326_scm8204-0142