GOV. HARTRANFT SAYS, "FORWARD!"

THE annual messages of Governor Hartranft have been distinguished for full, clear, timely and progressive views on the subject of education. As in the army, no one can mistake his purpose to be at the head of his troops. In his late message in particular, he plants himself in an advanced and somewhat exposed position, and gives the order, "forward!" He would have our school laws revised, our courses of study improved, plans adopted for building better school houses, and making our school organizations more efficient. He takes strong ground in favor of increasing the provision for higher education, and of establishing industrial and technical schools. And he would have all the neglected and destitute children of the Commonwealth gathered into homes and instructed and cared for. But every school man will want to read and study the message for himself, so we present below, in full, what the Governor says on the subject of

EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS.

The reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction will exhibit the educational progress of the year. They testify strongly to the unshaken interest felt by the people in education, and contain recommendations which are entitled to your serious consideration.

Our school laws, the expressions of a growing public sentiment, made from time to time, are a mass of fragmentary enactments, which would be well to reconstruct in harmony with the wants of the community and the tendencies of the times. A revision of the methods and course of studies, a plan for building better and improved district school houses, and greater control over the whole system than the State now has, are among the changes that are desirable.

The first design of the common schools was to furnish an elementary education to the poor. The system has rapidly overgrown the original boundaries. It reaches into all departments of learning, professional, industrial, and artistic, and the manifest tendency is to have the State assume in toto the function of public educator, and give to every class of its citizens special and appropriate training. Every year the recommendations cover a wider field, and new institutions of higher and special instruction are pressed upon the State. High schools, academies and colleges, industrial and art schools, and work-
shops and laboratories, are confidently assumed to belong to a system of State education. The drift of public opinion is unmistakable. The growth of this opinion, the increasing industries of the State, and the example of foreign nations, concur in urging the extension of the system. My views upon the subject of compulsory and technical education have already been laid before you. I have heretofore uniformly encouraged all efforts to raise the standard and increase the utility of the public schools. They are the nerve-centres of the body politic, from which emanates the intelligence that gives life to its institutions. Whatever strengthens them strengthens the Commonwealth. The suggestions of the Superintendent, that the field of public education be still further enlarged by the establishment of secondary schools of a higher grade, and the system supplemented by industrial and technical schools, will scarcely need my endorsement to commend them to your attention.

While we are extending and enlarging the system of public instruction, we must not allow the destitute and neglected children, whom it was intended to benefit, to drift beyond its bounds. It is safe to say that not one in a hundred of this very class is to be found in the schools. Thousands of children throughout the State are driven prematurely to work, or wander in idleness, exposed to the vicious influences of ignorance and want, of filth and crime. The halt, the blind, the deaf and dumb, are not more circumscribed by the hard condition of things than these miserable and friendless waifs. They are equally entitled to the care of the State; self-interest and charity are here identical. Embryo criminals nurtured in want, these outcasts, grown to maturity, eventually fill the prisons and almshouses, and the money that the State refuses to redeem them it is at last forced to expend to repress them. Some provision by which they could be sent to the numerous homes for friendless children, and educated and cared for at a partial expense to the State, would be an act of wisdom as well as charity.

The schools for the education of soldiers' orphans are in a flourishing condition, and the children are, as a body, healthy and happy. “Their intellectual and moral improvement has been satisfactory, and no backward step has been taken in the work of rendering as efficient as possible, the industrial departments of the several schools.” Since the system went into operation, eight thousand five hundred and eighty orphans have been admitted; and the number of children in the care of the State, on the first day of September, 1876, was two thousand six hundred and forty-one. The expenditures were a little over four hundred thousand dollars, being about twenty thousand dollars less than for the last year. The estimated appropriation for 1877–8 is three hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars. As the time approaches for the dissolution of this noble charity, which has reflected infinite credit upon the State, the people can reflect with pride and pleasure, that of the six thousand who have enjoyed their bounty, many are now in lucrative employment, and all, with scarcely an exception, have become good and useful citizens. The good results obtained in this work should stimulate our zeal and quicken our action, in regard to the other destitute and friendless children before referred to.

The recommendation to raise the standard of the Normal schools, and fix the legal status of teachers, is worthy of attention. Undoubtedly the great want of our public school system, is a body of teachers who have chosen the profession as a life-work. Such a class cannot be formed without special training and inducement. To reap the full fruit of our school system, it is, therefore, necessary to liberally support and equip our Normal Schools, to secure the tenures of our teachers, and to provide a just compensation that will not leave them destitute after years of faithful toil. The extraordinary expenses of the past year have prevented the usual appropriations to these schools; as these are no longer required, I trust you will extend such aid as the finances of the State will permit, to enable the Normal Schools to successfully perform their function.

Pennsylvania is indebted to the voluntary zeal and energy of the School Department, seconded by efforts of educators and teachers throughout the State, for the creditable educational exhibit at the Centennial. In the short space of three months, the hall was erected and the immense mass of material suitably arranged—a work involving an amount of labor from the Superintendent and his assistants, which is worthy of all praise. The exhibition awakened renewed interest in educational matters, and will undoubtedly be the means of invigorating and improving our schools.

“COLD WATER.”

Below we insert an extract from the late message of Governor Robinson, of New York. He professes friendship for the common schools, and some of his suggestions are well worthy of consideration; but as a whole we like neither its temper, tone nor sentiments. If such a message had appeared in this state, we would consider it “cold water,” bitter cold water, thrown on all our educational movements. In happy contrast is the broad and liberal message of our own Governor.

Governor Robinson says:

The amount paid for teachers' wages during the past year was $7,049,085.17. The whole number of children attending public schools was 1,097,199. The number attending normal schools, 6,391. The number of children of school age in private schools, 134,404. If to all these we add the numbers of those who are instructed at home by private tutors, in academies, colleges, and other institutions not reported, some idea may be formed of the immense amount of money drawn from the people of the state, voluntarily or by taxation, for school purposes. Without intending to intimate the least suspicion that any part of this large amount is unwisely or improperly expended, the subject is of such magnitude as to be worthy of careful examination and scrutiny.

The question whether the state can educate all the children within its limits better than they can be educated in schools organized, conducted, and paid for by the parents of the children themselves, has been decided in favor of the state, which is now conducting the experiment on a very large and expensive scale. It is of the utmost importance that the experiment should be successful, and that it should be so conducted as to merit the confidence
and support of the entire community. To this end, if there are any errors in the mode of conducting it, they should be corrected before they lead to evils which it may be difficult, if not impossible, to remedy.

The only ground upon which citizens who have no children can justly be compelled to pay taxes for the education of the children of others, is that it is necessary for the safety of the whole people under our form of government. Our institutions, by their very theory, carry with them the assumption of a certain grade of intelligence among the citizens. It seems, therefore, to be the duty of a state to see to it that each and every citizen, so far as practicable, shall be educated to such a degree as will enable him to read and understand the laws, the Constitution, and the ballot that he votes on election day. The schools in which education is given to this extent always carry their line of instruction far enough to embrace all the branches usually taught in our common schools. It seems to me to be a clear violation of personal rights for the state to go beyond this, and levy taxes to support free academies, high schools, and colleges, in which the higher branches of literature and science are taught, and young men prepared for the learned professions. This should be left to individual effort, from which better results always come than from any amount of donations from the state.

It should also be remembered that the expenditure of such large amounts of public money has almost invariably led to great abuses, and there is no security against the same tendency in educational management. The expenditures for school-houses, repairs, and furniture, during the last ten years have amounted to $19,599,109.97. It is perhaps well to inquire whether this large amount has been wisely expended in the construction of plain, substantial, and comfortable school-houses, or whether it has been, to any extent, handled by fraudulent contractors, or devoted to the construction of costly and ornamental buildings, for the benefit, possibly, of the owners of adjoining property.

I would also suggest an inquiry as to whether the normal schools are really worth to the system what they cost. I am informed that a very large portion of the pupils instructed in them never follow the profession of teaching for any length of time. There ought, also, to be found some remedy for the great abuse and expense arising from number of new school-books, and the frequent changes made, for no good purpose, but simply to benefit the publishers and agents. It is undoubtedly true that inducements are frequently offered to school authorities and teachers to aid in the work of changing books and selling new ones. It would be strange if these temptations were always resisted. It seems to me proper that the Legislature should fix some limit to this evil. Finally, I would recommend a return to the former system of making an appropriation of a specific sum in each year from the State Treasury for the benefit of the common schools, and put into the tax-levy a rate sufficient to cover the amount—$2,500,000 at the utmost ought to be, and will be, amply sufficient, if proper care is taken in the use of it. These suggestions are made in a spirit of sincere friendship to our common school system, to the end that it may not be exposed to any just objection; that its administration may be characterized by a wise economy, and by degree of purity which shall place it above suspicion, and keep it in the future, as it now is, strongly intrenched in the confidence of the people.
ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARDS THE COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM.

We find under the above heading the following article from the pen of Prof. N. C. Schaeffer, of Franklin and Marshall College, in the Reformed Church Messenger, and republish it on account of the timely truths it contains. We fear, however, that Prof. Schaeffer is thinking of the normal schools more as feeders for the colleges than as nurseries of teachers for our common schools. Our own opinion is that they will not engage, and ought not to engage largely, in the work of preparing students for college. They will, however, if well supported by judicious state aid, do indirectly for the colleges all that Prof. Schaeffer could wish.

During the sessions of the State Teachers' Association recently held at West Chester, a watchful eye could not help observing the wide chasm which separates the common school system from the institutions that stand directly under the fostering care of the Church. Only three colleges were represented (Lafayette, Westminster, and Franklin and Marshall), and although the Association invites all friends of education to become members, very few of the clergy took any part in the exercises, or even showed their faces at any of the sessions. The large majority of those in attendance were teachers or school officers connected with the system of public instruction now in vogue throughout the entire State.

This representation is unfortunately an index to the condition of things which prevails to a large extent all over the commonwealth. The cause of higher education is in the hands of colleges, which are supported and controlled by various religious denominations; the oldest and most experienced educators are identified with these colleges, and have little or nothing to do with the common schools, which are supported and controlled by the State. In some communities the clergy, feeling dissatisfied with certain features of the system, stand aloof from it and assume towards it an attitude of indifference, if not of hostility. Thus they throw away the influence which they might otherwise exert; for the moment a man severs his connection with a religious or social body of any kind, he cuts the sinews of his power, and renders himself helpless so far as the membership of that body is concerned. In such circumstances the employment of teachers and the general management of the schools often falls into the hands of those who are hostile to the Church and to all positive Christianity.

It would be an easy matter to sketch a system of parochial schools, combining the superior advantages of religious and intellectual training; but such a system can only be carried into operation where the whole community belongs to one religious denomination. In Pennsylvania the adoption of such a system is a practical impossibility. The common school system is a fixed fact, and we may as well make the best of it. The new Constitution gives the Legislature to make an annual appropriation of at least one million dollars towards the support of these schools; school edifices on a magnificent scale have been erected in most of our cities and towns; nearly a dozen state normal schools have been established for the purpose of training skillful teachers; and the old, time-honored academies are rapidly disappearing before the pecuniary inducements which the state enables her normal schools to offer. Moreover, the graded schools of our cities and towns have attained such a degree of efficiency that parochial schools can no longer compete with them either in thorough work or stringent discipline. The teacher of a private school is under the constant necessity of humoring his pupils; otherwise he may lose the patronage, upon which the very existence of his school depends. This difficulty has hampered parochial schools wherever they have been tried within the territory of the Reformed Church.

It would be folly to suppose that parochial schools are a panacea for all the ills which afflict our systems of training the young. The result in Germany is anything but satisfactory. During the writer's sojourn abroad, whenever he heard young men and women complain of dull or mischievous times at school, it was in connection with the hour set apart for religious instruction. Americans are often appalled at the knowledge of Scripture, coupled with extraordinary profanity, which some graduates of the gymnasiurns evince. Christian nurture evidently involves far more than mere instruction in the Bible. To know the commandments and to obey them are two very different things. Whilst it would be a great mistake to undervalue the importance of a knowledge of Biblical truth, it is a still greater mistake to identify such knowledge with Christianity itself.

After all, the main thing is that the teacher himself be an earnest Christian. In moulding and training the young, as well as in everything else, example is better than precept. Very seldom did Dr. Arnold, the great teacher of England, speak to his pupils on religious subjects; it was the silent influence which he exerted upon others, that made his pupils what they were. In the very nature of the case religious and secular instruction can not be imparted at the same time. The man who thinks he can teach the Bible while drilling a class in Algebra does not understand the fundamental principles of mental culture. Our public school system leaves religious instruction where it properly belongs, that is, with the family, the Sunday-school and the catechetical class. If these succeed in fully discharging the duties devolving upon them, the same end is reached as that contemplated by a system of parochial schools. The duty of every pastor plainly is to make the agencies at hand in the bosom of the Church as efficient as possible, and to use his influence as far as he can to secure good Christian teachers for our public schools.

Objection might be made that the state does not recognize the clergyman as such in her system of common schools. But the proper way for him is to work in his capacity as a citizen of the commonwealth. If he be the leading man in the community, which he ought to be, those who have charge of the schools will gladly listen to his advice and heartily welcome the support which he may be able to give them. The few college men who were at West Ches-
ter, had every opportunity to make themselves heard. The complaint was made that the normal school graduates, upon whom by reason of their skill as teachers the moulding of the common school system has largely devolved, seldom have any knowledge of the classics, and that therefore the graduates of many of our high schools find it impossible to enter the Freshman class of any decent college in the country, and hence never get the benefits of a liberal course of training; and in response the principal of the oldest and most successful normal school in the state advocated the establishment of one normal course instead of three, which should include Latin and Greek as far as the Sophomore class in college. If the committee appointed to report a plan for revising the normal school system should adopt a modification of this kind, it would bridge the chasm which now separates our colleges from the public schools; and, although such a policy will in the end surely prove the death of our academies, yet, on the other hand, it will be a source of immense gain to the cause of popular and higher education in the Keystone State.