

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

State Superintendent of Public Education

THOMAS W. CONWAY,

TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF LOUISIANA;

FOR THE YEAR 1871.

SESSION OF 1872.

NEW ORLEANS:

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1872.

STATE OF LOUISIANA,
OFFICE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION,
New Orleans, January 1, 1872.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of
Louisiana:

GENTLEMEN—In accordance with the requirements of law, I have
the honor to submit my annual report of the public schools of the
State of Louisiana for the year ending December 31, 1871.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOMAS W. CONWAY,
State Superintendent of Public Education.

THE SCHOOL LAW.

Without claiming perfection for the present school law, it is but just to say that in its operation it has realized the expectations of its friends, and it may be fairly questioned if, taking all things into consideration, it is not as well adapted to the condition and wants of our State as any law which can be framed. Some errors have been committed in the past by assuming that laws and systems of administration which have proved useful in States where a different condition of society exists would prove equally efficient here. The present law, in its amended state, is the result of experience in the school work as prosecuted under the peculiar difficulties and embarrassments which beset it among ourselves, and in its adaptation to the conditions under which the educational work must here be performed gives satisfaction to those on whom rests the responsibility of its successful prosecution. If changes are urged by any, they are only by persons who, having had no experience in the work, are ignorant of the difficulties which confront every endeavor to establish and extend popular education in Louisiana, and who, for that reason, are incompetent to determine what is required. That the present law may, in the future, be profitably superseded by another which shall be better adapted to the then altered conditions of the time, is not questioned, but any radical change at present would tend to retard rather than to further the work. The changes heretofore suggested by myself, and recommended by the State Board of Education, have been for the purpose of obviating practical difficulties, as they have successively arisen, and have resulted in the present amended law, the effectiveness of which has been sufficiently proved during the nine months it has been in operation. It may not satisfy that class of theorists who would provide by law for every possible contingency, but such should remember that every perfected school system is a matter of growth, developing with the progress of the work and broadening with the increase of intelligence in the community. It required fourteen years to perfect the

school system in Pennsylvania, and Horace Mann was twenty-one years in bringing the Massachusetts school system to its present stage of perfection.

Unnecessary changes are always injurious, and usually costly. New blanks, new books of record and necessary forms are required, not to mention the extended correspondence which even a limited change demands, involving time and labor. The present system has been in operation only since last May, but during that period new blanks, forms, etc., have been prepared and issued to the various boards of school directors; an admirable system of school records has been adopted, the most complete and perfect anywhere employed, samples of which will be found in the appendix to this report; and with the system thus set in effective operation and answering the expectations of its originators, it would be alike precipitate and unwise to suggest any present change, except merely in the matter of revenue.

SCHOOL HOUSES.

Though a number of excellent buildings for school purposes has been provided during the year in some of the towns and rural districts of the State, not a tithe of those needed has been supplied. The refusal or neglect of the large majority of school districts to vote the tax required for the erection of buildings has resulted in leaving nine-tenths of the State without suitable school accommodations. Hired rooms, basements of churches or rude chapels, have been obtained for this purpose; always inconvenient, generally uncomfortable, and rarely supplied with desks, the labors of the teachers have been conducted under the most unfavorable circumstances. It is sufficiently sad that a school should be deprived of the apparatus usually considered indispensable to the efficient instruction of its pupils, but when to this is added the privation of the commonest conveniences for the teacher's work, the situation assumes an aspect almost barbarous.

The dread of taxation—which in this instance means simply the moderate cost of supplying the children of the State with necessary tuition—has been used by demagogues as a means of retarding the educational work among the families of the poorer citizens of the State. Yet with the facilities which the mechanic arts now present,

a neat, and, in every way, convenient school house could be erected in each school district at a cost so trifling as to be scarcely felt by any person.

"The Dorrn Building Company," manufacturers of sectional school houses, capable of being transported in parts to any point, have proposed to erect buildings elegant in design, and by their commodiousness and internal arrangements adapted to any rural district in the State, for a sum far below that for which even a rude structure could be built by ordinary mechanics. An attractive school building, capable of seating fifty scholars, with desks and seats complete, costs but seven hundred dollars; and for one of real elegance, to accommodate one hundred scholars, with every convenience of desk, seats, etc., the expense is but fourteen hundred dollars, not including the cost of transportation from New Orleans to the spot on which it is to be erected. This trifling cost in most school districts would scarcely average fifty cents per capita for the population, and when it would provide a pleasant, commodious and substantial school house for the district it is difficult to fitly characterize the spirit of those who by refusing to meet it compel our youth to bear all the ills and inconveniences to which I have referred, or, to escape them, remain in ignorance.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

I am informed that the scrip issued by the general government for the establishment of an agricultural college in this State has been secured. That such an institution would prove of great benefit to the State is unquestionable, and it is within the province of your honorable body to take such measures as will result in making the grant available immediately. By uniting the means secured by this grant with the local resources at our own immediate command, it appears to me that a building of suitable dimensions can be erected and so appropriately located and furnished as to answer both the needs of a State normal school and those of an agricultural college.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

The system of public education has its germ in the conviction that every human being possesses an inalienable and indefeasible right to be provided with the means for the development and culture of that intelligent mind which is the crown and glory of manhood. The first shoot from that germ was the district school, limited in its design and restricted in its facilities to imparting the mere rudiments of knowledge. It aimed only to place the key of the immense storehouse of learning in the hands of the young, leaving them, if they might, to open the heavy portals and search amid its many chambers for the wealth which they contain. But as the shoot developed into the blade, and that again into the stalk, the range of purpose widened, till the grammar school, the high school and the free college presented, in varying degrees, opportunities for a higher culture. So far, however, the aim was general, having no regard to

the different avocations to which the after-life would be devoted. Then followed a further advance in the recognition of the duty of the State to adapt the instruction furnished to the uses for which, in the maturity of the pupil, it would be needed. The industrial school is the outgrowth of this purpose, and now forms an important and cherished portion of the most advanced systems of Europe, commending itself by the definiteness of its aim and by the importance of its ascertained results to the approval of the most intelligent authorities on the subject of popular education.

The following statements, for which I am indebted to the able report of Hon. John Eaton, Jr., National Commissioner of Education, will present an outline of the progress of industrial schools abroad, and indicate the importance ascribed to the subject by the statesmen of Europe:

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

How far or on what principle a parent is legally justifiable in withholding from his child the training and culture necessary to develop his higher nature, has not in this State been determined. Legal enactments, in lands whose claims to enlightenment are not so lofty as our own, make it a criminal offense. To maim the mind, to cripple the intellect, and to indurate those sensibilities which, when attuned by education, utter the grandest music of the soul, is elsewhere deemed at least as cruel as to maim the body. Dwarfed minds and imbruted hearts are considered as calamitous to a nation as deformed bodies, and the strong arm of law is extended to arrest and strike down the hand which should attempt to inflict such wrong upon the State. It is not a question of the parent's control of his child, but of the duty of a State to secure the prerequisites of intelligent citizenship to those who are to become its strength or its weakness.

If socially no one may come between a parent's right and a child's duty, politically no one, whatever his relation, may come between the State and its subjects. The parent and the child are alike subjects of the State, and the authority which legislates for the protection of the one is bound to do so for the protection of the other. If the law protects the parent's arm, it should protect the child's mind. If its strong arm would fall with sternest force on one who should condemn to barrenness the father's field, it should descend with equal strength on him who would consign to ignorance the mind of his child, stripping it of power, and converting its beauty into desolation.

The United States Commissioner of Education, Hon. John Eaton, Jr., in considering the European educational systems, says:

"One of the greatest benefits conferred on the working classes of Austria is the general school bill of the thirteenth of May, 1869 which renders national education compulsory, and greatly elevates the standard of it. In accordance with this law, compulsory attendance at school begins with every child at the age of six, and is continued uninterruptedly to the age of fourteen. But even then (that is to say at the end of his fourteenth year) the child is allowed to leave school only on production of certified proof that he has thoroughly acquired the full amount of education which this great law fixes as the *sine qua non* minimum of education for every Austrian citizen."

Education has justly come to be regarded as the strength of a nation, not only by giving efficiency to the arts of peace, but equally by endowing a people with the elements of success in war. It is no narrow nor partial view of the late European conflict which ascribes the easy triumph of Germany over the armies of the most renowned military power of Europe to the superior education of her troops, and her late rival, formerly contented with efforts to excel her in the excellence of her military weapons, taught by disaster, now imitates her recent foe in seeking to develop the underlying strength which springs from the education of the masses. Early in the last month the Council General of the Department of the Seine voted in favor of the establishment of a system of compulsory and gratuitous education, rightly deciding that children are the wards of the State, which, as their guardian, is morally obligated to secure for them this highest of national and civil rights.

CO-EDUCATION OF THE SEXES.

In the majority of our schools through the State the youth of both sexes are received and instructed together; in others there are separate departments for boys and girls with their respective teachers, while, in yet others, and those generally the higher grade of schools, the sexes are taught separately. The wisdom of this division is questioned by the best educators of the day, many of whom maintain that the highest results of education are unattainable under this separate system. The subject should at an early day

secure attention from those who control the educational system of the State, inasmuch as the form given to our schools in their origin is the one most likely to be perpetuated. A recent writer in commenting on the popular objections to the education of the sexes, gives the following one, which is, undoubtedly, that which lies at the basis of the opposition:

"It is generally admitted that the association of young men and women, under proper conditions, is elevating instead of degrading, but there is doubt if bringing them together in a school provides for, these proper associations. The wholesome association of the young requires the presence and influence of those who are mature and have experience and a sense of responsibility—more of the family influence than can be secured in a large school. Is there not danger that young men and young women thus brought together in the critical period of life, when the distinctive social tendencies which draw the sexes toward each other seem to act with greatest intensity, will fail of that necessary regulative force and fall into undesirable and unprofitable relation?"

This apprehension is entirely theoretical, and is unsustained by facts in the history of schools (a large and increasing number) where the sexes are educated together. On the other hand, some of the many advantages of education are given by Dr. Fairchild, of Oberlin College, as the result of the experience of a third of a century in that flourishing school:

1. Economy of means and forces. The teaching force and other apparatus required in all the higher departments of study is made available to a larger number.

2. Convenience to the patrons of the school. It has been a matter of interest with us to note the number of cases in which a brother is accompanied or followed by a sister, or a sister by a brother. I can not give exact statements upon this point, but it is an interesting and permanent feature in our operations.

3. Another advantage we find in the wholesome incitements to study which the system affords. This is a want in all schools, provided for often by a marking and grading system involving a distribution of honors and prizes. An acknowledged defect in this plan, not to speak of anything unwholesome in the spirit of rivalry which it induces, is in the fact that it appeals to comparatively few in a

class. The honors are few, and the majority soon cease to strive for them. The social influence arising from the constitution of our classes operates continuously and almost equally upon all. Each desires for himself the best standing that he is capable of, and there is never a lack of motive to exertion.

4. Again, the social culture which is incidental to the system is a matter of no small importance. To secure this the student does not need to make any expenditure of time, going out of his way, or leaving his proper work for the pleasure or improvement resulting from society. He finds himself naturally in the midst of it, and he adjusts himself to it instinctively. It influences his manners, his feeling and his thought.

5. Closely connected with this influence is the tendency to good order which we find in the system. The ease with which the discipline of so large a school is conducted has not ceased to be a matter of wonder to ourselves.

MIXED SCHOOLS.

It is with pleasure I refer to the removal of those apprehensions which existed in some minds in regard to the effects to be produced by a faithful adherence to that requirement of the constitution which provides that no child shall be excluded from the public schools of the State by reasons of race, color or previous condition of servitude. The right thus bestowed by the highest law of the State and recognized by every school act passed since the adoption of the constitution, *has been vindicated with such prudent firmness as to be no longer questioned.* This final settlement of the principle, this general acknowledgement of the right, has been attended by such moderation in its exercise on the part of those most interested, as to effectually rebuke the passionate denunciations of the malcontents who predicted the disorganization or destruction of the public school system if this right were conceded. As a rule, the children have chosen to attend schools made up principally of those of their own race, and their parents have preferred they should. Yet in many of the schools white and colored pupils may be seen together, and where this exists, it is not too much to say that the latter are treated with greater kindness by their fellow pupils than, under similar circum-

stances, they would be in many northern cities. Those children who were temporarily withdrawn from some of the city schools under the impression that rash and coercive measures would be adopted when the legal authorities assumed control, are gradually returning to their places, and it needs only a continuance of the firm yet moderate course thus far pursued to convince all who are accessible to reason of the fallacy of the arguments brought against the present school system.

NEW ORLEANS SCHOOL BOARD.

FIRST DIVISION.



OFFICE OF DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION,
Amite City, La., October 5, 1871.

To the State Superintendent of Public Education, New Orleans, La.:

SIR—I herewith transmit my report of the condition of public schools in the First Division for the year ending October 5, 1871.

R. C. RICHARDSON,
Division Superintendent of Public Education,
First Division, Louisiana.

SECOND DIVISION.

OFFICE OF DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION,
Carrollton, La., December 15, 1871.

To the State Superintendent of Public Education, New Orleans, La. :

SIR—I hereby transmit my report of the condition of public schools in the Second Division, for the year ending September 1, 1871.

E. S. STODDARD,
Division Superintendent of Public Education,
Second Division, Louisiana.

MIXED SCHOOLS.

Be it known that the population of the country parishes of Louis-

iana is composed of three separate and distinct classes, viz: the slaveholding aristocracy, the colored element, and that class that has always been known at the South as the "poor whites." The former as a class, never favored education for the masses; was never friendly to public education at all, consequently could not be expected to favor a system that proposed to receive the children of their recent slaves to equal rights and privileges with their own. From the start then they were found arrayed bitterly against this plan until it became apparent to the most obtuse among them that the great change in the condition of that people and consequent change in the interests of the State and nation imperatively demanded that they should receive educational privileges. They alone had represented the intelligent and educated element of the people; under the old order of things they had ruled, and it was well with them. When freedom despoiled them of their slaves they found themselves like Sampson shorn of his locks, also shorn of their power.

Hereafter the masses must rule, and as a protective measure, both to public and private interests, those masses must be educated. They accepted the fact because they could not prevent, and in many instances are now apparently lending their interests and influence cheerfully to the establishment of schools for the colored people, but they do not themselves send—they prefer rather as always before to educate their children at private institutions, sometimes at home, but more commonly abroad. I do not think that many children of this class would be found in attendance were schools established exclusively for the whites.

The "poor whites," the largest element of the population of the country parishes, is yet the most unfortunate class so far as they are affected by the operations of the present system. They are generally too poor to provide private means of educating their children, and consequently must depend upon the public schools or be without educational advantages altogether. Reared as they have been in superstition and ignorance, and especially schooled to look down upon the colored people as hewers of wood and drawers of water, in other words as a despised and hated race, though their condition is far more to be commiserated than that of the color they so intensely despise they will be the last to patronize a school that admits a colored child to a seat therein. "No" they say, "we will

sooner see our children grow up like the wild grass of the prairie." Uneducated themselves, their appreciation of learning is not equal to their prejudice deep rooted in superstitious ignorance.

When good schools, attended by colored children, have flourished right among them for upward of two years, not a parent has applied for admission for his child, nor, in my opinion, ever will till the fearful pall of ignorance has been lifted from their obscured intelligence.

There are not six children of this class attending schools with colored children in my Division, and the fact is pertinent that where white children are found attending with colored, they are universally the children of intelligent parents.

The colored people eagerly seek the benefits of public education whenever public schools are placed within their reach, and have not, up to the present time, abated in that interest at first displayed, as predicted by some would transpire when the novelty should have worn away.

The question with them has been settled; they are to be educated. In fact, they have already received that which will tell in the future destiny of the race. The wealthy aristocratic whites will take care of themselves, and the great problem yet to be solved is, "What is to be the destiny of the poor whites?" It might be inferred from the above that none of that class of the population were receiving the benefits of public education. Not so. Nearly one-fourth of the children attending in my Division are of that class, and the occasion is thus: Among that class known as "Acadians," being very exclusive in their habits, are found many settlements where no colored people reside, or at least very few, and these few, with generous tolerance unappreciated by the race they conciliate, prefer to send a much greater distance, often from four to six miles, rather than apply where they know they would be so unwelcome guests. These schools, then, in such localities, by the nature of things become white schools—white, because there are either no colored children in the district, or because they choose to send elsewhere. All other schools are colored—colored, because, as before stated, the whites will not send.

I did not start out with the above heading proposing to discuss the propriety or impropriety, the right or wrong, of the system that

recognizes all classes as possessing equal privileges in the public schools of the State. I consider that question to have been long ago settled in the fundamental principles that underlie our noble government. I wished to make merely a plain statement of facts as they exist. This I have done to the best of my ability, and I leave the subject.

GENERAL CONDITION OF THE SCHOOLS.

The schools, in spite of the usual unattractive school rooms, I have generally found in a very good condition. The boards have generally been successful in securing a faithful corps of teachers, under whom the pupils have made a commendable advancement in their studies. The colored children, as a rule, are advancing rapidly, much more so than the white. (I refer to the rural districts.) There is a reason for this, however. As a class their appreciation of education is undeniably greater than that of the whites, as proven by the facts in the case. They are more regular in attendance, will go further and sacrifice more to attend school than will the white. Many colored children of my Division have been in constant attendance, traveling to do so a distance of from four to six miles, while the whites will grumble if the school is placed a half a mile from their door.

The colored children, almost without exception, understand the English language; consequently, can proceed from the start understandingly. With the whites the exception is the other way; few or none can understand or speak a word of English. They have first to learn a language; therefore it can be readily understood how it is that the colored children will be found reading smartly in the higher readers, and reciting, commendably, lessons in Geography, Grammar, and History, when beside them in a school composed mainly of whites you will find pupils of the latter class only translating in the First and Second Readers. The prospect for this class is indeed discouraging when we consider that only about one out of three, on an average, can be induced to seek the benefits of public education. When urging them to send their children you invariably meet with that very suggestive shrug of the shoulders, and the response: "No need," "No good." Not able to read or write themselves, they cannot comprehend of what advantage education can be

to any one; and really, considering the life they lead, one can hardly see any use it would be to them were they still to pursue the same course of life. It is hard for any one unacquainted with the nature and habits of the class of people above alluded to to comprehend the above remarks. In fact, I have conversed with many citizens born and raised and gray-headed in the State of Louisiana, who were utterly unconscious that such an element constituted three-fourths of the population of the State, (at least it will reach that proportion in the Second Division.)

They have never traveled up and down the innumerable bayous that divide and sub divide the low lands of Louisiana, and that class of people being by nature very exclusive in their habits, never seek the metropolis or marts of trade, and consequently never come in contact with the intelligent portion of the community, unless it may be a very few, the most enterprising among them, who with skiff, oyster smack or lugger penetrate to the centres of trade to dispose of the oranges, bananas, oysters, game and fish which constitute the main of their articles of traffic. These may be termed their merchants, and can be met with anywhere up and down the banks of the Mississippi. From them may be judged the masses who never venture to the borders of civilization.

Thus it is that so little is known about them, and in this country where everything has been made to subserve to the *almighty dollar*, the mission of the Christian teacher not excluded, this poor people have remained unnoticed and uncared for over a century, since, fugitives from untold oppression and hardships, an outcast people, they sought an asylum in the quiet depths of the Louisiana swamps. What wonder, to those who know their sad history, that they shrink from the face of every human being not of their own race, and seek that seclusion that has literally kept them *buried* in the heart of a thriving, pulsating Yankee nation. This people belong almost exclusively to the Latin race, being chiefly of French descent, and mostly the descendants of the exiles from "Acadia," who, in 1765, first settled in this State. There is, however, a considerable admixture of the Spanish, Portugese and Italian elements. Their language is principally French, or was originally, but has become so corrupted that it retains but little of its original purity, and is hardly intelligible to an educated Frenchman. It is hard to realize that

large communities of this poor unfortunate people exist within seventy-five miles of the city of New Orleans, the great Queen City of the South, who are living to-day as they lived a hundred years ago, without having advanced one step in this great world of enterprise, but have rather marked a retrograde, slow, but unfortunately sure. If they build a house to-day, though in a land abounding in a rich profusion of cypress lumber, it is invariably the "adobe cabin," mud walls, thatched with palmetto leaves, the "*Maison d'Acadien*" of a century past; and thus they have lived, or rather existed, in a condition almost reduced to squalor, without that enlightenment which the privileges of education afford; without intercourse with any intelligent human beings; aye, and without religious teachings or influences of any kind.

In my last inspection tour, to which I have before referred, I visited a community of over twelve hundred inhabitants, where, I was informed, a Christian minister had never been, except a Catholic priest, and he had been there but once for over a year. I further assert that I do not believe six persons could be found there excepting three teachers who had been sent there in charge of schools, who could read or write in any language, or that a particle of printing matter, not even a Bible, could be found in one of their houses, except the school books that had been recently sent there for the use of the pupils. Bear in mind that this people understand not a word of English, speak not a word, and that their children never hear it only from their teachers, and it will be understood how the colored children have so much the advantage over them. I have been particular in describing this much-to-be commiserated class, because I have felt it my duty to do so; and if I can have excited in others the sympathy that I have felt, that shall lead to greater efforts in their behalf, and that shall ultimately rescue them from the fearful condition into which they have degenerated, my labors will not have been a failure, and all of my exertions will have been abundantly rewarded. I give below extracts from the report of a teacher of one of the best schools of the class above referred to, that a clearer idea may be had of their actual condition. The community in which the school is situated is a favorite watering place, where many citizens of New Orleans yearly resort to spend the sultry summer months, besides has here-

THIRD DIVISION.

OFFICE OF DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION,
Baldwin, St. Mary Parish, La., December, 1871.

To the State Superintendent of Public Education, New Orleans, La.:

Sir—I herewith transmit my report of the condition of public schools in the Third Division for the year ending September 30, 1871.

R. K. DIOSSY,
Division Superintendent of Public Education,
Third Division, Louisiana.

MIXED SCHOOLS, PEABODY FUND, ETC.

The subject of mixed schools has in no wise embarrassed my operations. There is no question about race or color; accommodations are provided for all the children; and teachers, white and colored, male and female, from all sections of our country are employed whenever their qualifications will allow. It is quite difficult, however, to obtain as many colored teachers as are needed, although every effort is made to secure them, and they are well received everywhere. I estimate that little less than one third of the pupils reported are white—a solid argument against those who declare that the white children of our State are neglected by the public school officers, and therefore claim that there is a necessity for that abnormal school arrangement the Peabody plan. It is my deliberate judgment that the use made of that good man's money in my division is for the most part a hindrance instead of an advantage to the cause of education. At one place, a notorious inebriate is principal of the school; in others, favorites are pensioned upon the fund; and in all cases the amounts granted are so inadequate as to be of very little value. The object of the trustees would more certainly be attained if their funds were placed in the hands of each local public school board, or of parties who would co-operate

with the school officers. It is however to be feared that the real purpose is not so much to educate the white children as to keep up a disloyal sentiment, and to antagonize the work of reconstruction in the State.

While most of the schools, by the choice of both children and parents of all classes, are practically separate, in some localities the children of both colors attend school in common, and sometimes a colored teacher has in his school numbers of white children. Teachers and school officers, with scarcely an exception, comprehend that while they must not discriminate against any child it is no part of their duty to stir up strife. Questions of prejudice must be left to the arbitrament of time and the effects of education.

Such is the confidence which has grown up among the people in our school system that a large number of private and many of the denominational schools reported a year ago have been merged into our public school work. We are gathering into our schools the children of the most intelligent classes, and placing upon our roll of teachers some of the best educators in the State, many of them native Southerners who are earnestly endeavoring to build up the waste places and give us an educational standing equal to that of other States.

Parish of Iberville

"In that mooted problem—the capacity of colored children for acquiring knowledge—our ablest teachers whose candor is not swayed by prejudice against caste are of our own opinion. While they admit that colored children make slow progress in receiving elementary ideas, they claim that this evidence of obtuseness is more an effect traceable to condition than to natural cause. And if they are slow at first they claim that no sooner does the light of reason burst upon their untutored intellects than their aptitude for mental handiwork places them in the same rank with their more pretentious exemplars. This is a gratifying representation to the true friends of the colored man of his capacity for mental cultivation. And we implore him to avail himself of the advantages which a benign and paternal government has placed within his reach in the priceless boon of free education. He is by law eligible to the high places of the land, but it is by an educated mind alone that he can reach them and grasp the honors which await him. And with a future of such promise opening before the colored people of this commonwealth, it is the bounden duty of every colored parent to clothe his children in the panoply of intelligence, that they may become worthy members of that nation of which they form no inconsiderable part.

"By scrupulous economy and devotion to the duties which it assumed our parish school board is establishing for itself a record to which it may always point with pride. And we have no doubt that a grateful people will award to it the unmeasured thanks which are ever due to the faithful public servant."

St. Landry Parish

W. G. Bell, a Director, writes : "The board desires to do its utmost to open schools for colored children in places where the teachers will not be in danger. It is proposed to have one at Bayou Boeuf."

Mr. B. S. Gay, a teacher, says: "My patrons were notified that the board would close the school, unless twenty-five pupils attended. At once, twenty-four were enrolled. No director has ever visited my school. The house is out of repair, and an appropriation has been refused. It is a frame building, sixty by thirty feet, gallery on both sides, ten windows, two doors, mud walls, is on the public road, no fence, boys, sheep and cattle prowl around and within, no seats, no shutters, door broken, etc. This is no unusual picture in the back districts of many parishes. He says the directors have arranged to have the colored children taught three months and the whites three months, but that most of the people do not favor the education of colored people.

"These schools are now in a formative state. The children having no home instruction, must depend upon their teachers for instruction in deportment, morals and science. These facts necessitate superior excellence on the part of the teachers of children. The Northern and Eastern schools could better afford to employ inferior teachers than could the Southern States, for there the child had the example of intelligent parents, and the duties of the teacher were confined to the school room. To many it seems little less than robbery to take the money of one class and apply it to the education of another class. This objection could not stand against the advancement of civilization. The school was a better investment than the taxes paid to support prisons and almshouses. Besides, there are peculiar conditions in the relation of the freedmen to the Southern States that increase the obligations of these States to educate them. John Chinaman is shipped here to labor; he works three months to pay his passage money, and ever after pockets his own earnings. These States have worn out three generations of these Africans in building themselves up; during that time they had paid their passage money and there remained a large balance in their favor, which should be paid in education. Should these States refuse, to pay this just claim they will have the debt to pay with heavy costs, for no State can long endure the burden of a predominating element of ignorance and vice when that element is free to act. Hence it becomes the duty of every good citizen to work earnestly for the success of the public schools. There are many evidences of an increasing interest in these schools; the parish newspapers are more respectful in their language when speaking of the schools; large planters have learned that when they have schools on their plantations they are sure of plenty of laborers.

"In reference to the teachers of these schools, Mr. Close said, that owing to the multiplicity of duties that devolved upon them, their mission is evidently one of labor; the quality of their minds was of

such a nature that they do not learn their lessons, but must be taught their lesson. All true teaching embodies the same principle, and the methods successful in graded schools, if properly used, will be successful in ungraded schools. To modify the methods so as to adapt them to the particular work, first understand the methods, then use them properly."

SIXTH DIVISION.

OFFICE OF DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION,
New Orleans, La., November 17, 1871.

To the State Superintendent of Public Education, New Orleans, La.:

SIR—I herewith transmit my report of the condition of public schools in the Sixth Division for the year ending August 31, 1871.

J. B. CARTER,
Division Superintendent of Public Education,
Sixth Division, Louisiana.

NORMAL SCHOOL.

By an act of the Legislature, approved March 15, 1858, the directors of the public schools were authorized to establish in one or more of the public high schools a distinct division, to be known as the "Normal School Department," for those only who might desire to receive instruction in the science and art of teaching. An appropriation out of the general fund of the State was made for its support. By section three of this act said directors were to exercise executive control over this department and its teachers. A normal school was subsequently organized, according to the provisions of the aforesaid act. The war caused it to be discontinued, but early in 1868 it was revived by the board of directors, and became, according to original design, a department of the public schools of New Orleans. Soon after the accession of a new board of directors, under the act of March 16, 1870, the school ceased, the retiring school authorities taking no further interest in it. They, however, subsequently established a school of the kind. Recently a communication was transmitted by them to the City Council, claiming that the present Peabody Normal Seminary (which is entirely separate from the public schools) is the legitimate successor of the normal school; asking for it a large appropriation, and asserting a right to four lots of ground in the city of New Orleans, which were pur-

chased by appropriations made by the State and city before the war as a site for a normal school. The communication was referred by the Council to the present board of directors, and by it to the committee on high and normal schools for investigation. No report has yet been made on the subject.

NORMAL AND TRAINING SCHOOL.

I respectfully recommend to your honorable body the establishment of a State Normal and Training School at as early a day as possible. The first normal school, in its day, accomplished much good, but in view of the high standard everywhere demanded of these and similar institutions of learning, it seems necessary to reach beyond the system initiated many years ago, and found an institution of the kind equal in character to any in the land. The term normal school does not really signify the institution generally understood by the phrase, and is in fact a misnomer. The word normal, by derivation, signifies an architect's square, and tropically, a pattern or model, and would imply only an ordinary school of unusual or model excellence. The phrase normal and training school more properly designates a school for instruction in the theory and practice of teaching—the learner to acquire the science in the one department and the art in the other.

It is unnecessary at this day to urge the immense advantages of such a school as a most potent auxiliary to the cause of general education. Its establishment would have an immediate effect upon the public school system of the State, as the schools necessarily take their character from the teachers. The standard of excellence required for teachers should be much higher than it is at present. Doubtless attention will be given to this important matter as soon as appropriations can be obtained, and every effort should be put forth to accomplish this desirable end in Louisiana at the earliest day possible.

Address of the State Superintendent of Public Education, at the Teachers' Institute of the Sixth Division, held at Lyceum Hall, New Orleans, May 31 and June 1 and 2, 1871.

Allow me now to say something touching the difficulties in our way. These are surprisingly numerous, unaccountable and inexcusable. I will endeavor to name some of them:

The first and greatest is the inadequacy of our school revenues.

The second is the prolonged existence of passions engendered by the late war, and still cherished by many who cling to the idea that any system of learning made necessary by that unhappy event should be rejected.

The third is the disorganized condition in which the war left the affairs of our State—a condition which required much time, expense and care to improve.

The fourth is the general ignorance of the people in most of the rural districts touching school organization, rendering it almost impossible to secure competent men or women to carry on our work.

The fifth consists in the stringent requirements of the constitution, as well as those still more severe which are contained in the school acts of the General Assembly, requiring the admission to the schools of all applicants, irrespective of race or color.

The sixth difficulty consists in the malicious, groundless, vindic-

There are some colored children in the schools attended by the whites, and it is a matter of pleasure for me to be able to state that they are not treated with incivility or unkindness.

The population of our State is gradually increasing. Since the close of our own unhappy war large numbers of men have come here from the North and West who have brought families with them. The termination of the war in Europe will unquestionably result in a large tide of emigration from both France and Germany to this State. Probably our educable population will reach three hundred and fifty thousand inside of the next ten years. To provide instruction for this large number, we must maintain the public schools we now have and establish five times as many more. Private schools will never answer the demands of this vast want. They may serve the necessities of an aristocratic few, but they can not supply the needs of the great mass. On this subject I will take the liberty of quoting the language of State Superintendent Fitzgerald, of California:

“The gravity of this question of popular education in relation to the ballot is also vastly increased by the foreign immigration that annually pours in upon us. These foreigners come to us with a genuine love of liberty in their hearts, but often with crude notions of it in their heads. It is a wonderful thing that we propose to do—the assimilation of these diverse elements, and molding them into homogeneity of opinion, character and relation. This is the work of the schools. It can be done no where else. It is the work of the school teachers. None else can do it. It is a great work, and there is a great body of earnest workers engaged in it. It is a great fight and there is a grand army on the march. God give them the victory! for the hopes of humanity are involved in the contest. You and I, fellow teachers, belong to this great body of workers; let us work with all our might. We belong to this grand army; let us valiantly fight the good fight. The noblest men and women that live are our fellow laborers and fellow soldiers. Let us be worthy of the relationship.”

admit colored children into any of our schools on an equality with the whites is one which has taxed my conscience, my judgment, and my sense of personal interest, beyond the reach of human calculation. Often have I been tempted to yield to the popular clamor against the admission of this class of our educable youth.

Often have I been asked to put my personal comfort in the scale with my earnest convictions, in the hope that my interest might outweigh my personal convictions. Often have I been asked whether it was not needless that I should become a scoff and a reproach to the proud and the fashionable because of my devotion to a moral obligation.

I have found it difficult to stand up in this community for eight years the unwavering, uncompromising friend of the newly enfranchised element. For this cause I have suffered the curses of the vulgar and the contempt of some of the professedly educated and refined elements of the community.

This cross was hard to bear. A crown of thorns would not have given me much more pain than I have endured on this account.

Finally, the sacred precincts of my home, the grave itself, was invaded by a vile newspaper as a means of punishing me because I recognized and enforced the black child's right to admission to our schools as required by law.

This was severe; it was heart-rending; it was an ordeal through which I trust no one here will ever have occasion to pass. But, thank God, I could not defeat the force of my conscience. I dare not violate my oath. I would not ignore the law. I could not add to the oppression and wrong already chaining and degrading a hundred thousand black children. I said to myself, "It is far better that I should suffer for a principle than by ignoring it prolong an injustice which affects the life, and vigor, and health, and happiness of not only this great number of children, but of the commonwealth itself."

The principle involved has been rigidly enforced. My oath of office was not violated. The law has been enforced. The schools have not been destroyed. Justice has triumphed, and to-day our schools, though open to all, regardless of color, are in a more flourishing condition than before we took control of them. The colored children generally, and of their own choice, attend school by themselves, while the whites attend in the same way.