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For the Watchman. Our Public School System.

NUMBER II.

Owing to causes not well to be avoided, this article has been delayed for two or three weeks, but without further apology, let us continue the discussion of common schools by considering some of the defects of our present system. As they are not faults inherent in the true system of public schools, but mere defects in our application of it, we may discover remedies therefor by examining its workings in other States.

One great trouble is the lack of funds. In our township, we have three school districts, each receiving about fifty dollars a year to support a school during that time. The public school law allows a first grade teacher (and we propose to give some reasons why this grade is the only one common sense would advise to employ), the law allows him forty dollars per month, so this gives the children just five weeks tuition of the fifty two in the year! The third grade teacher is allowed twenty dollars per month and by employing him, they get only two and a half months in the year. We will not stop to discuss that plan which puts out the school to the lowest bidder and gives it to him at ten dollars per month if he will board himself or take it right about among the scholars in a veritable case.

The result of this deficiency leads to many of the subsequent defects; for example, the shortness of the term. One or two committees have occasionally tried the experiment of having no school one year and a longer one every other year, but this is but robbing Peter to pay Paul. With three months now, or even five, and then vacation for two years, what mental advancement can be expected? Just as the pupil gets fairly under way, the school closes, and he returns to the plow and the "blue back" to the dust and dirt. And this leads to another defect, that of books. Each pupil, if he has a book at all, has one different from his companion, and "pap says just so hits a predicament it'll do." "can't be always having new books." Often the greatest difficulty a teacher has is the proper classification of his school and the chief trouble is the lack of books suitable.

But a far greater defect is the want of proper teachers. How can we show that only first grade teachers should be employed? Prof. Joseph Henry says, "The future character of a child, and that of the man also, is in most cases formed before the age of seven years." Phelps adds, "It may be safely asserted that multitudes of children leave our common schools for the scenes of active life every year with their perceptive and observing powers undeveloped, their intellectual appetencies dormant, their sensibilities unexercised by ennobling influences, their habits misshapen, and the very foundation of their success and happiness in the career of existence unseated if not utterly destroyed." "Deprived, as the inhabitants of the country districts are to a great extent, of the immediate influence of a high toned daily press, popular lectures, libraries, museums, and other means of instruction accorded to the residents of cities, it becomes even more important that their schools should be thoroughly taught and wisely managed."

"They are the principal sources of the intellectual and moral life of the community. They have to do with the child during the most critical, because the most susceptible, period of his existence, and when, if ever, he needs the guiding hand of a far-reaching intelligence and a skillful teacher to secure him from the dangers of false steps and perverted tendencies in the beginning. The child is father to the man; what the man is to be, the child in all the elements of character must first become. What the child is to become, must be determined by the quality of the teaching and the training he receives. There is no accident, no chance, connected with the question; it is a question of cause and effect, it is a question between a far-sighted, whole-souled, comprehensive system of thorough education and its opposite."

Properly to conduct and control the best school, demands more wisdom

than to rule a State. Teachers of high intellectual, moral, and professional attainments, only are equal to the emergency. To build school houses, supply books and apparatus, and to provide funds, alone, will not accomplish what is needed. Every school must be blessed with the presence and inspiration of a teacher worthy of the high vocation of instructing the people. This is the testimony of the best thinkers and ablest writers upon education in all parts of the world. It is the testimony of experience everywhere.

If you wish to have an enduring edifice, lay the foundation well. The child just beginning to read of all others needs the thoroughly educated teacher. Like Trumbull, like pupil.

And this implies that the school committee should be of the right caliber. They should be men of education, by all means. John Stuart Mill remarks, "The uneducated cannot be judges of cultivation." "Would you, farmer, send to town to select you a plow a man who knows nothing of plowing? Should you, then, have men to select your teachers who know nothing of teaching? Too many of our committees act on the principle that the man who will teach the school for the least money is the man for the place. Let it be added, however, that they are often seemingly forced to employ cheap teachers through the scarcity of funds.

Another obstacle to the success of common schools here is the scanty or very irregular attendance of scholars. There is a public school now in session where there ought to be at least, probably, fifty pupils in daily attendance, and yet some days not a half dozen are present. A large per cent of our children either do not attend at all, or go when it suits their parents to spare them, i. e. "wet days," and so forth.

But time fails to speak of many other defects, such as want of system in management, lack of proper building apparatus, co-operation of parents, public spirit, and others, and we would simply add that it is very easy to find fault, but not so easy to suggest sufficient remedies.

This we will endeavor to do, partially, at least, in a third and last article.

M. For the Watchman. THOSE "BLUE LAWS" AGAIN.

It is my purpose, in this communication, to examine some of the positions and arguments of a writer in the Watchman, on the 8th and 15th of May last, over the signature of "V." and "Veritas;" especially those more personal to myself. Before proceeding, however, I must express regret that I have not had the leisure to do sooner, and that even now, I am so situated that I cannot give to the subject the consideration its importance demands.

Veritas says "P is begging the question when he says 'well informed men everywhere, now regard the Blue Laws of Connecticut, as never having had an existence, as a code;' and asks the question, 'who ever said they did?'" I answer, the Rev. Samuel Peters; and I do so on the authority of the Hon. J. Hammond Trumbull, once Secretary of State of Connecticut, a man of the strictest integrity of character and thoroughly conversant with the subject of the "Blue Laws"—having written a book on the subject entitled "The True-Blue Laws of Connecticut, and New Haven, and the False Blue Laws invented by the Rev. Samuel Peters."

In the Churchman (August 11th and September 1st), the following statement, with others partially quoted by Veritas, occurs, viz: "He (Peters) does not pretend to quote them, (the Blue Laws). He acknowledges they were laws of usage and custom, rather than of a book of statutes. In other words, that they came to him rather as traditions than as recorded testimony."

To which Mr. Trumbull replies in a recent Publication, entitled "Rev. Samuel Peters and his Apologists" as follows, viz: "This is untrue. Each period, in fact, points a separate and distinct untruth. Peters does pretend to quote the 'Blue Laws' and mark them as quotations. He gives them, not as 'laws of usage and custom,' but as specimens of the 'laws made by the independent Dominion of New Haven.' (p. 63); he asserts that a vast multitude of such laws were made by the people of New Haven, previous to their incorporation with Saybrook and Hartford colonies, by the charter, of 1662, (p. 69); these laws, (p. 43.) were made by 'the law-givers of New Haven, of their own invention, to support them in their arbitrary and bloody undertakings.' He contrasts them (p. 82.) with the more 'decent' laws, enacted under the charter; and when discussing the laws of Con-

necticut, in general, he refers (p. 208.) to the specimens of the Blue Laws inserted, (p. 63.) That he meant only 'to give specimens of the materials out of which actual Puritan legislation grew,' is an unwarrantable assumption of the reviewer. Even if it were well founded it could not help Peters' case. Whether he lied about 'specimens of materials' or lied about 'factual legislation,' makes little difference morally."

Veritas cannot afford to discredit his own witness, Dr. Peters. He prefers to invalidate the testimony of Mr. Trumbull; and intimates that Trumbull will find it difficult to prove his charges against Peters. But what more, I ask, should Mr. Trumbull do than he has done? He points to the very pages, and quotes the exact language, contained in Dr. Peters' book, disproving and invalidating the assumptions of his reviewer, in the Churchman; and answering the question of Veritas. If this is not sufficient proof, upon this point, I confess to the facility of any further attempt, in that direction. Veritas may not have seen this refutation by Trumbull; he may have overlooked the quotation by "Progress," in the Watchman (April 10th), of no less than thirteen of "the old Puritan laws—by way of sample" to show "the spirit of those who framed and enforced" them; or he may have been listless as to the popinjay effusions, published, time again, on this subject; but, be all this as it may, I cannot but express my gratification, that Veritas regards this point as settled, and agrees with me that "the 'Blue Laws' never had an existence, as a code." The former line of defence is untenable, and he declines it, and retires with the exclamation, "P is begging the question." Who does this, may be seen as I proceed.

Veritas maintains that the admission of the Philadelphia Presbyterian, that some of the old laws of Connecticut were "bluish—that is, attempted to regulate social customs and parts of man's conduct, in which law can do very little good, and which law does not now attempt,"—is too mild; and says "the real question is, did these laws ever really exist substantially, in any form, and were they ever enforced, at any time, in New England?" Now, even if the Presbyterian had not defined what it meant by "bluish," there could be no mistaking the fact that bluish is not blue, but for the impression left by Veritas. Bluish is no more blue than the counterfeit is the reality; than the like, is the same; than Satan clothed as an angel of light, is an angel of light. The thirty-nine Articles of the church of England, altered, interpolated and caricatured in their text, as Peters has done in that of the laws of New England, might indeed, look *thirty-nine*, but would Veritas consider them genuine? No—their identity with the original might be *substantially the same, as to time and form*, and the innovator would be happy, indeed, if he escaped the brand of sacrilege. Veritas likes fair dealing and fair discussion, and indulges in platitudes about the proper manner of conducting controversy, with courtesy and fairness. But what is his statement of the question, and what his mode of attack? Codes, with all their realities, he discards—substance, no matter how deformed or diseased it may be, seems to suit this swift witness against the Puritans. "In any form," no matter how questionable. "At any time," no odds how remote, answers his keen desire. One specimen of blighted fruit condemns the tree: one swallow makes a summer, with him. In other cases the accused are held to be innocent, until proven guilty; in this case, they are held guilty until proven innocent. In other cases, they are convicted according to the general rules of evidence; but in this, they must suffer according to the exceptions to those rules. But we proceed.

The forty five laws, as quoted by Peters—not simply the substance of them—whether blue or not, must and can be found in the original copies on file, or as quoted by faithful historians, or they must be considered as spurious and false. Let us test the case by the following specimen from Peters, viz: "No woman shall kiss her child on the Sabbath or fasting-day,

No one shall travel, cook victuals, make beds, sweep house, cut hair, or walk in the garden or elsewhere, except reverently to and from meeting.

Whoever wears clothes trimmed with gold, silver or bone lace, above two shillings by the yard, shall be prosecuted by the grand jurors, and the selectmen shall tax the offender £300 estate.

No one shall read Common Prayer, keep Christmas or Saint's days, make mince pies, dance, play cards, or play on any instrument of music, except the drum, trumpet, and Jews'-harp. Every male shall have his hair cut round, according to a cap.

These laws are not to be found in Neal's Abridgment, published in London, 1719, sixty two years before Peters published his book, written also in England, where he doubtless had access to, and could have quoted from Neal's Abridgment, if he had desired. In reference to his History and this Abridgment, Neal says in his Preface, "I have not willfully committed any mistakes. Some of the more ancient ones (v. i. laws), relating to Fashion, Dress, &c. were obsolete; and others which require Ecclesiastical Qualification for Civil Preferments, are repealed, by the New Charter, and yet it was not proper to omit them." Now, note the fact, that the laws relating to fashions, dress, ecclesiastical preferments, &c. were not omitted, although obsolete or repealed, sixty two years before Peters wrote and quoted his laws; and the further fact, also, that none of those above quoted, from Peters, except one, sadly altered and mutilated, respecting apparel, are to be found in Neal's Abridgment, and we have a clear case of forgery by Peters, so far, at least, as this illustration is concerned.

But further: I have before me a copy of the Code of 1650, containing the Civil compact, between the towns of Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield in 1638—9, with Extracts from the Laws and judicial Proceedings of New Haven Colony, commonly called "Blue Laws," and bound withal in a blue covering; but I do not find the laws, above attributed to Peters, in this Blue-book. If they existed they should be found there, because in the Advertisement, it is said that those there printed were "taken from the original records, remaining in the office of the Secretary of State." Peters could or should have had access to those original records, before pretending to quote laws, and write truthful history. He was not obliged "to draw upon his recollection for his materials," while Neal's volumes, containing unmistakable materials, lay at his hand. Recollection is not inventive; and is not apt to supply what others, nearer the time, and prompted by the record, fail to produce. I do not assert that nothing can be found in Peter's similar to that in Neal, and the Blue Code of 1650. But similarity is not identity. But where it is found, so many literal and substantial differences exist, as to render the laws entirely distinct—especially in their application. It matters not that Veritas speaks of Mr. Hinman, as expressing surprise that "the collection of Peters should have been so correct;" and of Dr. Chapin, as having had "chapter and verse," to guide him; unless the original code, by which Hinman measured Peters, and the sacred writings containing Chapin's standard are set forth and correspond with Peters, not only as to substance, form and time, but as to genuineness and identity.

Veritas says "it is only lately, that men have had the boldness and temerity to deny the genuineness of the Blue Laws." He makes this statement, doubtless, on the authority of Samuel J. McCormick—the great grandson of Dr. Peters—who has recently republished an edition of Peters' work. J. Hammond Trumbull says of this work that "regarded simply as a reprint the book is absolutely worthless." \* There are few pages, on which some unwarrantable liberty has been taken with the author's text. \* \* Take a single instance, &c. But I need not give the instance, it is too long. I will only say it consists in the omission of some "testimony," and three lines which follow it," from the reprint. As to the novelty of the charge that Peters had not written true history, Trumbull says "it was known by a

very different name before it was fairly out of the press. In the earliest American review of the book, to which I can now refer (in the *Analecic Magazine* of 1814), the writer observes, that "in the province whose settlement it professes to record, it was called the *Lying History*, to distinguish it from all others."

But Veritas speaks of "Puritan apologists" as "vilifying and defaming, without any proof whatever, the dead Dr. Peters;" and proceeds to eulogize his character, and seem willing to consign to "eternal infamy" the whole race of Puritans, provided he can save the very doubtful character of this, his main witness. He quotes denunciations of the Puritans by the wholesale, thus saying that "nothing but 'murders,' 'plunders,' and 'persecutions,' marked their steps;" and although they too are dead, they must lie in infamy, while Peters fills a niche in the temple of fame. But that I do not speak "without any proof whatever," on this point let others, even though they may themselves be dead, speak.

More than forty years ago, (April 25th 1838) Prof. James L. Kingsley, delivered a historical discourse before the citizens of New Haven, from which I extract as follows viz:—

"The work which more than any other, has given currency to various misrepresentations respecting the New Haven colony, is that commonly known as 'Peter's History of Connecticut.' The author, Dr. Samuel Peters, at the commencement of the revolutionary war, was an Episcopal missionary, at Hebron, in Connecticut. As he was very active in asserting the royal claims, he became obnoxious to the patriots of the day. He was threatened by a mob; though it is believed, no personal violence was done him. About 1774 he went to England highly exasperated against the country, and especially his native state, Connecticut. He employed himself, while the war continued, in reviling the colonists; and in 1781, published in London, without his name, what he called 'A general History of Connecticut.' When this work first appeared, its extravagances and gross falsehoods were so apparent and good that any attempt to contradict or expose them, was considered unnecessary and superfluous. Dr. Trumbull (not J. Hammond) once told me, in reply to the question, why in his History of Connecticut, he had made no allusion to the work of Dr. Peters, that he considered a reference to it as wholly unnecessary; since any one, on a very slight examination, would see that it was refuted, in so many of its statements, by indubitable public documents, that it could gain no credit. He said, that he had been well acquainted with Dr. Peters in early life, that they were cotemporary in College, and that an occasional intercourse between them had been maintained, till Dr. Peters went to England, in 1774. He added that of all men, with whom he had ever been acquainted, Dr. Peters, he thought, from his first knowledge of him, the least to be depended upon as to any matter of fact; especially, "in story-telling."

But again: *The Methodist Quarterly Review* for January, 1878, contains the following, viz:

"The only authority for the 'blue laws' is Mr. Peters. We do not propose to spend many words upon him. He was a man who was utterly incapable of telling the truth on any subject. His so-called 'History' was the malicious libel of a Tory refugee in England, at a time of war, who was receiving a pension from the ministry, and was hoping to gain further favor by vilifying his native State. When it was published, it was said at once in London, that it bore so many marks of party spleen and idle credulity, that it was altogether unworthy of the public attention." \* \* It is filled with stories which would not be out of place in the *Travels* of the Baron Munchausen. We have space only to refer, simply as specimens, to Peters' description of an army of caterpillars who "came in one night" and "covered the earth on both sides of the Connecticut river, to an extent of three miles in length and two in depth; to his story about the "Windmill frogs," who filled a road forty rods wide and four miles in length; to his description of the "Indian paw-waw" at Stratford, where devils were seen to seize several persons, and "to mount with them into the air;" to his statement that the Rev. George Whitefield, in 1740, attempted to "bring down" the walls of the fort at Saybrook by prayer, while he walked seven times around them, in imitation of Joshua at Jericho, to

the sound of rams horns. \* \* \* Every time public attention is turned to him some new falsehood comes to light. Quite recently it has been almost, if not quite, proved that he lied about the Degree of Doctor of Laws, which he claimed, to have received from "an institution in Crotona in Tuscany."

I am not an "apologist," but I am a defender of the Puritans. They do not need apology, but they sadly need justice. Let them be judged by the light of the day, in which they conscientiously and heroically walked. What denomination of Christians or race of men, claiming civilization, and cotemporary with them, could stand the test of being judged by the lights of this age? Let it be remembered that they first fled, in 1608, from England to Holland, to escape the persecution of the Established church. That even there, they were denied the right of expatriation, and were, in 1620, compelled to a second flight; this time to America, without a charter of religious toleration, and in defiance of laws forbidding their emigration, except by royal consent. That like the children of Israel, they braved the wilderness and the heathen nations, that they might escape persecution, and worship God, according to the dictates of their own consciences, and that even in this they were annoyed and disturbed. Is it, then, any wonder that they feared their persecutors, and determined that they would not submit to the danger of further pursuit and persecution? Is it a wonder or reproach—nay, is it not a crowning glory, in the eyes of the Christian nations of the whole earth, that being without law, and its forms, they should decree that they would be governed "by the word of God?"

But how did our great ancestors act and enact elsewhere? Virginia was not under Puritan rule. The Episcopal church was there established by law. And yet it was enacted that "all the inhabitants, having no lawful excuse, shall every Sunday resort to the parish or chapel, and there abide orderly, during common prayer, preaching and divine service, upon the penalty of being fined fifty pounds of tobacco, by the County Court."

Jedidiah Morse, D.D., in his *Universal Geography*, 1796, says, "The first settlers of this country were emigrants from England, of the English church, just at a point of time when it was flushed with complete victory over the religions of all other denominations. \* The Quakers were flying from persecution, in England, several acts of the Virginia Assembly of 1659, 1662 and 1663 made it penal in their parents to refuse to have their children baptized; prohibited the unlawful assembling of Quakers; made it penal for any Master of a vessel to bring a Quaker into the State, and ordered those already here, and such as should come hereafter, to be imprisoned until they should abjure the country, provided a milder punishment for their first and second return, but death for the third."

How was it in Catholic Maryland? That State was not under Puritan domination. It is the boast of her historians, that there was free religious toleration in that State; but an act was passed there, in 1649, and confirmed, in 1676, among the perpetual laws of the province, "that those reproaching any with approbrious names of religious distinction, should forfeit ten shillings to the persons injured; and that any one speaking reproachfully against the blessed Virgin, or the apostles, should forfeit five pounds."

As to sanctuary laws, the patents given, and the observances had, both before and since the days of the earlier Puritans, were not of a higher standard than those pertaining to religion. During the reign of Edward IV, a statute was passed "which forbade the fine gentlemen of those times, under the degree of a lord, to wear pikes upon their shoes or boots, of more than two inches in length." (Blackstone Vol. 1. p. 90.) And under the reign of one of the Henrys, "it was enacted, that no one should wear shoes broader at the toes than six inches.

Under Edward, James and Charles, and as late as the commencement of

the civil war, laws were enacted and proclamations issued, against the eating of flesh during Lent—in some instances under a penalty of ten shillings; or ten days imprisonment, without flesh; and a double penalty for the second offence. "This abstemious system, however, was only compulsory on the poor. Licenses were easily obtained. Archbishop Whitgift granted to Ambrose Potter and his wife, and perhaps others, permission "to eat flesh and white meats in Lent, during their lives; so that it was done *solvendi et frugaliter, cautiously and avoiding public scandal*, as much as might be; and giving £ s. d. annually to the poor of the parish." (Hallam Cost. Hist. p. 228.)

"The custom of whipping or 'bumping' boys, at the bounds of parishes, on one of the Rogation days, is hardly yet obsolete, in England. Fifty years ago, it was so common, and so intimately associated with the usage of the Church, that it might almost be considered a part of the Anglican ritual. The solemn parambulations of the circuits of parishes, by minister, church-wardens, and people, was the only 'processioning,' which survived the English Reformation. (See *Whitney, on the Book of Common Prayer*, ch. 5, sec. 20.) In some large parishes it took three days to 'beat the bounds.' At various parts of the boundaries, two or three of the village boys were 'bumped'—that is, a certain part of the person was swung against a stone wall, a tree, a post, or any other hard object, which happened to be near the parish boundary, as an effectual method of recording the boundaries in the memory of these 'battering-rams' (Chambers' Cyclopaedia VII, 390, by J. Hammond Trumbull.) But, finally, let us hear Doctor Leonard Bacon, in his *Historical Discourses*, p. p. 96, 97, 98. "Now as to sumptuary laws—laws regulating expenditure and restraining extravagance and folly—I have no disposition to vindicate them, on the score of policy. But that they are intrinsically and essentially ridiculous, I can not admit. I have never ascertained from history that such laws, enacted by Lycurgus or Numa Pompilius, brought boundless contempt upon their authors. And how such laws must needs be more absurd or ridiculous in Massachusetts, than they were in Sparta or in Rome, I am at a loss to understand. And still more mysterious is it, how the New Haven Colony, in which no such laws ever existed, should be made a scape-goat to bear away into the wilderness the sins, in this particular, of her more eastern confederates. Laws were made in some of the colonies prohibiting the use of tobacco; but the use of tobacco, in a proper place, was not unlawful in the New Haven jurisdiction. Laws were made elsewhere to restrain the rags and follies of fashion, in regard to female attire; but I can find no evidence that anything of the kind was here attempted."

The Puritans had "the courage of their convictions." "To be convicted was with them to act." Their consciences were guided by their views of the Scriptures. That they sometimes erred is admitted; but that they erred more than their cotemporaries, or than those to whom they looked for guidance, among those who had gone before, must be denied. They read, in Exodus XXII, 18, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;" and in their Code they said, "Witches suffer death." This delusion did not originate with them; neither was it, nor is it, confined to them. Before it invaded New England, it had swept the Protestant and Catholic world in Europe; and at the time of the "atrocities," cited by Veritas, "witchcraft had not been made the subject of special consideration; and in the years in which Scotland sacrificed hecatombs to the delusion, there were three victims in New England. Dark crimes, that seemed without a motive, were pursued under that name. I find one record of a trial for witchcraft, where the prisoner was proved a murderer." (Bancroft, 1. p. 465.) Dr. Thomas Dick, informs us in his work on the Diffusion of Knowledge, (Vol. 1.) that

"Witchcraft was universally believed in Europe, till the sixteenth century, and maintained its ground with tolerable firmness, till the middle of the seventeenth century, nay, in some countries on the continent, till the middle of the eighteenth century. The extent of the judicial murders for witchcraft is far greater than most persons who have not studied the history of demonology can form any idea. From the period in which

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