

The treasures of knowledge, like those of the material world are not to be consumed or stayed in their beneficent increase, or selfishly appropriated by any favored class of men. They are held in trust to be used for the profit of all, to be extended for the benefit of all who will enter upon the inheritance when one scanty span of stewardship is ended. Posterity receives the gift to hold it inviolate for those who in process of time will succeed to its guardianship.

To fulfil this duty, Education must be Universal. It must also be Free.

The Light of Heaven should not be more free to all to whom God has given the exquisite organ of vision, the zephyr breeze should not fan the cheek of the invalid or inflate with healthy air the lungs of all whom God has made living creatures, more liberally than the light of knowledge should extend to those whom the Great Creator has endowed with minds and immortal spirits.

As He has formed the eye to see His light, the lungs to breathe His air, so He has formed the intellect to understand His mysteries of nature and of grace. Woe to the man who steals light from the child whom God has made to rejoice amid the beauties of creation. Woe to the man who shuts out the pure air from those who gasp for it and live by it; and greater Woe to him who shrouds one mind in ignorance, who shrivels one heart by vice, who makes one life a blank or an abyss of crime and sorrow, while God has so ordered the mind that it can comprehend the true dignity of humanity, and claim for man a seat upon the throne of sentient beings.

Education must be Free, free as the light and the air. The Public School House must be open to every child—as open as the Public Highway which leads to its door.

And this, not because it is the Charitable duty of the State to offer education to all, but because it would be a high crime against humanity to withhold it. The Free Schools of the State are in no sense Charity Schools. Through them the State does not give one jot or tittle that each child has not a right to claim. To withhold Education would be