

BALTIMORE, *January 26th*, 1865.

REV. L. VAN BOKKELEN,

*Superintendent of Public Instruction:*

DEAR SIR:—As you are engaged in the important work of preparing a system of Public School Instruction for the State of Maryland, will you pardon me for asking your attention to a subject which for several years has claimed my regard? It is stated in the thirty-fourth annual report of the Commissioners of Public Schools in Baltimore, that “more than *nineteen-twentieths* of the pupils who pass through the Public Schools, *get all the School Instruction they ever receive* in the Primary and Grammar departments;” and the inference is drawn by the Commissioners, from this fact, “that the Studies of the departments under consideration, must therefore *be adapted to their immediate practical needs.*” But the question occurs to my mind, are the branches usually taught in those departments—(Reading, Writing, Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, History and Natural Philosophy)—indispensable as they doubtless are, sufficient for the “*practical needs*” of the pupils? Ought not their *only opportunity* for education to have a more direct bearing upon the duties of *actual life*? In other words, ought there not to be in our Public Schools a due proportion of *industrial* as well as of *intellectual* training? I have been a manager of the House of Refuge for the past eight years, where it is well known that the boys are taught to work at various trades, and the girls are instructed in all the various employments of housewifery, in addition to the ordinary exercises of the Schools. I am satisfied that under this training they are better fitted for their future position as working men and women, than they could possibly be under the other system. Why should we not afford to honest children the same advantages we give to young criminals? It may not be practical or advisable perhaps in the case of *boys*, whose usual trades require a long apprenticeship, and constant practice under the eye of a competent master, to make them skillful workmen; but I am sure that even in the short time spent at School by the majority of *girls*, much may be done to render them proficient in the duties of their future sphere—HOME.

The family has well been called “God’s University,” the School in which He has ordained that man shall be chiefly trained for happiness and usefulness on earth, and immortal bliss in heaven. *Woman* is its divinely appointed Teacher,