

vorably with that of other States who have taken this subject properly in hand.

We have, it is true, in the several counties of the State, something in the shape of a public school system; in scarcely any two of them, however, does the same system prevail. In some of them School Commissioners are elected by the people, in some they are appointed by the Orphans' Court, in others by the County Commissioners, and in others again these Courts or Commissioners perform such duties themselves. In some a stated annual amount is levied for school purposes, in others a fixed per centum on the property of the county, and in others again the tax payers themselves determine what ought to be levied. There is great reason to fear that beyond the receipt and distribution of the School Fund received from the State, there is in many of the counties but a very languid administration of this important interest. The very want of uniformity in the mode of that administration is not only in itself a most objectionable feature, but betokens, as it seems to me, an erroneous principle at the base of the system, in implying, as it does, that each county is alone interested in the educational condition of its own community.

Whilst the management of its subordinate details should be properly left to the local communities, the State herself should exercise such a general control over the subject by some efficient and uniform system as will protect the public interest from the consequences of any neglect on the part of any subordinate member.

I will only venture to suggest an outline for such a system which, however, I feel warranted in recommending to you after consultation with those who have given the subject their studious attention.

A General Superintendent should be appointed to assume the entire supervision of the Schools of the State, and of the subject of public education, at such a salary as will secure the services of a proper individual, who, besides the general supervision it will be his duty to exercise, may acquire such a knowledge of the wants and practical working of any system in operation, and impart such information to the Legislature at each session as will enable that Body to improve and perfect it. The want of such an officer is seriously felt in the schools of the State, and his appointment should be secured whether the entire perfection of a plan is now accomplished or not. School Commissioners in every county and the city of Baltimore should be selected in some uniform manner by some of the county authorities, who should take charge of the county schools, consult with and report to the General Super-