

information from all the counties, there is before us a report of the School Commissioners of Baltimore county, for 1858, which exhibits facts worthy of your calm consideration.

The School Commissioners of that county, the most populous and wealthy in the State, have rendered important service by the investigation which they have made. They say: "For the purpose of ascertaining the number of schoolable children in the county a circular was addressed to each teacher in the county, which elicited the following facts." There were in the county (exclusive of these in private schools) more than 80,000 children between the ages of 5 and 18 years; of these 3,652 attended school, leaving 4,348 to grow up in ignorance. Among these attending school, only 796 could be admitted as free scholars, because of the insufficiency of income, the entire amount from all sources being \$34,000, providing an average salary for teachers of \$293 per annum, or 94 cents per diem, being less than the wages of an ordinary mechanic. The condition of Baltimore county may be taken as a very fair representation of the condition of the schools in all the counties. From this it appears that if all the children who ought to attend school were enjoying the benefits of education, the means would be ridiculously feeble in comparison with the object to be attained.

From all that we can ascertain, the State imperatively demands a general system of education, and it is our duty to inquire what shall this be? How shall it be administered, and by what funds shall it be sustained?

To be effectually administered, it requires competent officers: a well instructed corps of teachers, with an able and enthusiastic State Superintendent at their head. There is much complaint of the difficulty in procuring suitable teachers, and often persons are employed who either are incompetent for their work or have no sympathy for or affinities with our domestic institutions. We need a plan by which to raise up for Maryland, a body of well disciplined teachers, male and female; not only familiar with the ordinary subjects of instruction, but qualified, by proper training, to impart knowledge. There is an art in teaching, which the wisest men do not always possess. The most accomplished scholars are often very inefficient instructors. An institution ought to be established for the express purpose of providing properly qualified male and female teachers. This system has been adopted in many States, and experience proves that it is the only true system. A Normal School is at the threshold of the educational temple. It, alone, can secure to the State able teachers, and without these, the best digested plan would be no better than a clock without a pendulum. We record the experience of all who have investigated the subject, when we say that a teacher of proper capacity and requirements, tho-