

for food, the food of the mind. They are under the thralldom of a tyrant more inexorable than Nero, more relentless than Calligula. Despots may bind the body, but they cannot fetter the mind.

Where, we would ask, is the advantage of living in a land of freemen, if we have not the knowledge to think and act as freemen. What avails the glory and virtue of our institutions if we have not the mind, the intellect to appreciate them. What is it but mockery to guarantee rights and privileges to a people, and yet withhold the means and facilities for acquiring an education, to learn how to value and preserve such rights and privileges. But if it be admitted that there is a great necessity for action, immediate action, and that it is the duty of the Legislature to act—if “the State recognises it as a duty to educate her children,” what other duty, what other obligation, should deter her from it? Is there any thing more imperative than this? Is it seriously urged that the bond-holders, the Shylocks of Europe, are entitled to our favorable consideration, and that we must turn a deaf ear to the distressed claimants in our own State, our neighbors and friends. It is an unjust and unnatural sentiment.

The first step towards establishing an efficient system of education is to provide the necessary means; for systems without means are like characters traced in sand, or castles built in air. It is vain to talk of systems. Provide the means, and systems will soon follow; but no system will be efficient that has not the requisite funds to establish a free and general basis of common schools. The poor and rich must sit down together upon the same platform. The reproach, “charity scholar” must, be taken away. The pride and independence of our nature will not brook it. We had rather our children should remain in ignorance than be exposed to the taunt of these offensive words. Indeed there is something so humiliating in the sound of the words “*charity scholar*,” there is so little in them consonant with the genius of our institutions or with the spirit and progress of the age, that they fill the heart with anguish and disgust.

But how is a fund sufficient to establish a general system of free schools to be raised when the State is already groaning under the pressure of an enormous debt, and it is contended that our taxes, laid to meet the interest on that debt, and to defray the current expenses of the year are “as heavy now as can be comfortably borne.”

But let it be granted that it is the duty of the State first to provide the means necessary to meet her liabilities and the maintenance of her honor before she ought to grant any further sum to the perfecting of her school system; it becomes us then, in the first place, to inquire what amount will meet the annual obligations of the State, and then the amount raised by the present revenue laws. It appears from the report of the Treasurer in his estimate of “the probable further demands upon the Treasury for the ensuing year” that it will require \$912,000. He estimates the receipts into the treasury for the same time at \$1,218,000, leaving