

FRANCIS B. LIVESEY

**Answers the Independent's Inquiry and
Continues His Plan for the Abolition
of Public Schools**

(The letter below is self-explanatory. The Independent seldom has space for reprinting circulars, which accounts for the "refusal" of Mr. Livesey's former "voluntary offerings." Mr. Livesey apparently does not take kindly to any but "business propositions." Is his anti-school crusade a "business proposition?" Is his solicitude for the children as great as his desire to allow wealthy but childless people to escape the payment of school taxes? In any event, which appears more like a "business proposition?")

There is an old saying that it takes all kinds of people to make a world. As but few of The Independent's readers know of the vigorous campaign against the public schools being conducted by Mr. Livesey, we publish his letter in full—of course, repudiating in toto his attempt to break down the public school system, yet admitting that it has its defects.—Associate Editor.)

PUBLIC SCHOOL ABOLITION.

Editor Independent: In your issue of September 17, page 10, you chide me for not answering you. I humbly apologize and will here give my explanation in a dialogue:

Independent—Livesey dodges!

Livesey—Not when I think a thing means business in good faith. I stand as a target for the bullets of the world. Even pebbles tossed jestingly at me I have essayed to consider, until friends and foes, alike, protested. I consider yours rather in the nature of one of these pebbles.

Independent—Francis B. Livesey of Sykesville, Md., has been for a number of years circularizing the newspapers of the United States asking them to "read, print, circulate" his screeds against the public schools.

Livesey—My circulars on this line have been rather a recent feature. Thousands of letters and articles have been written by me for papers direct, and thousands of them have been published in the largest dailies as well as the smallest cross-roads papers.

Not long since I sent you one or more of these voluntary offerings, which you refused to publish, while you devoted some space to treating me—to put it mildly—in a very cool manner.

This treatment added a little to my indifference in not answering you at length, although just lately you had published a note from me. I suppose you see by this time that the public school question has a bearing on the problems of the day and must be reckoned with.

Independent—Some time ago The Independent suggested that it would be interesting to know where Mr. Livesey learned the vigorous English he uses in denouncing the public school system. He ignored the hint.

Livesey—Yes, as aforesaid, "the hint" I did not deem a business proposition.

Independent—Later, in answer to another batch of his circulars, the associate editor wrote him a personal letter making the same suggestion. To this Mr. Livesey replied:

Editor Independent: As Pitchfork Tillman got his vigorous English from the barn yard, so I got mine from behind the plow and "before the mast." Truly, Francis B. Livesey.

Livesey—Many leading writers are now acknowledging that intellectual vigor is best secured when founded upon physical vigor. Count Tolstoi is one who has made arduous manual labor a concomitant of his intellectual effort. So, in this light, my answer was both polite and comprehensive.

Independent—Now, The Independent believes that the best lecturers in behalf of "totalism" are those who have been through the mill of drunkenness and, by parity of reasoning, the best equipped assalant of our public school system should be one who has himself suffered from the debasing effects of it! Hence, its suggestion: It de-

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sired to know Mr. Livesey's qualifications.

Livesey—Ah, well, this is a horse of entirely another color! Literary style is one thing and life experience are another. See? I thoroughly agree with The Independent on this point, and say that every reformer should have experienced the ups and downs of everything connected with his reform.

I was sent only to the best private schools until about 17 years of age, although at one time I was taught at home. The whole of it was by the memorizing process, exactly as is practiced in the public schools. The whole of it was torture to me and has left its marks on my mind and body to this day.

Like all boys, I knew not what I suffered. I know now, and it is in this knowledge that I am now working to get the boys relieved, and not from any of the selfish motives, economical or religious, that are sometimes impugned to me.

The public school differs only from the private school in severity, and if I suffered all that I did from the latter, I can well believe that Edward Bok told the truth when he said that the public schools kill yearly 50,000 of the modern innocents and ruin double as many more or less for life.

I have also been intimate friends with many public school superintendents, principals, teachers and pupils, and from their own lips and pens have received my corroboration of public school conditions.

Ex-Supt. Henry E. Shepherd of Baltimore, for instance, has told me that I have not half told the public school situation and has authorized me to publish him to that effect.

When I was attending school my parents took me to Fowler and Wells, the eminent phrenologists, for examination. Prof. Fowler gave my parents a most emphatic warning that my mind must be kept back and my body brought forward—that they were killing me.

Not that I was precocious in the least, but that the system was injuring me. Perhaps his warning saved my life, as I was allowed to run the streets pretty freely about that time.

When I left school at 17 I was not as far advanced as the average 12-year-old public school boy, and after I became of age I found I really knew nothing.

I went to work with my hands and began to think: I finally had to go back to a primer and get my education all over again, digesting it as I went along. This took some years.

I was like one of the leading writers of the day who says: "I owe no college anything." This writer has been engaged on leading magazines and papers, and, after graduating from two colleges, said the above. So say I, I owe no school anything.

As it was with me, so it is with many a normal child. Bodily activity is the rule for childhood and mental activity for adult life—just the reverse of the present private school, public school and parochial school processes. They are all alike damnable and hellish and the nations most given to their acceptance are feeling in various ways the helish results.

I am not at present emphasizing the point against private and parochial schools because they are not being forced upon the people by compulsory school laws, as are the public schools. Neither are they compelling those who disbelieve in them to support them. Neither are they proving the steppingstones to state socialism by leading to state food, clothing, shelter, beer and tobacco as well as to a so-called education.

Every man and woman that sanctions the present school system has no claim to Christianity. Christ commanded no school. His enemies said to Him: "Whence knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Christ's source was my source.

Independent—It seems evident that Mr. Livesey has dodged.

Livesey—Does it seem evident now?

Independent—His handwriting bears earmarks which indicate that he may have learned to write in one of the very sort of schools he affects to despise. If so, he is qualified to denounce them.

Livesey—There are more things to be learned out of schools than in them. Nowadays, cooks, farmers and machinists are all expected to be turned out from the schools rather than from apprenticeships to the real things themselves. My little girls are learning to write without schools, and with no special, labored tasks.

How it is that men like Bolton Hall can plead for child liberty and allow or force child study, I cannot conceive.

Independent—But if he really learned the three R's behind the plow and before the mast, then The Independent insists that he has laid no foundation for expert testimony on the subject.

Livesey—As I have elucidated the

point here made, I will not repeat. The results attending my crusade, however, seem to prove that I have some "expert testimony" from somewhere.

School superintendents and teachers of public schools have directly acknowledged all my contentions. Many is the public school teacher I know who teaches only because unable to earn a livelihood in any other way. The editor of one of the very oldest and largest public school journals published my most ultra articles, acknowledged his agreement with me on every point, and laughed at his constituents when not one of them attempted to reply to me, but rather one of them came out in public indorsement of me.

But the fact is, Mr. Editor, I am getting somewhat beyond the little details of the anti-public school crusade.

We are now on the verge of revolution, either from the forces of labor, or the negro. Both are the products of the public school. Both have imbibed from it the idea that the world owes every man a living commensurate with his acquired public school ideals, rather than as a reward for labor.

When both labor and the negro find that they have been deceived they howl and they proceed by sharp practices and crime to gain what they have been disappointed in.

Things have got to such a pass with the negro that something like a majority of the people now want him deported. It seems not unlikely that he will be.

When these 10,000,000 negroes are sent back to Africa, or somewhere, then my public school abolition has a 10,000,000 slice cut from it at once.

Later, when the labor revolution comes, the country will see that all this state paternalism has been a mistake, and that it has given the masses a feeling of too much confidence and dependence, and must be revoked. And then the public schools will go their way, never to return.

I am always ready, Mr. Editor, to answer questions from friend or foe. But I am a busy man and questions must be put to me straight. I repeat, hints from an editor to answer him, after he has emphatically refused me publication, and denounced me at the same time, are not calculated to draw out even so spontaneous and dangerous a man as I am.

I welcome posers on my line, and the smarter the man they come from the easier I can answer them—a half-fool heeds complexity.

FRANCIS B. LIVESEY,
Sykesville, Md.

SPECIAL MARKET LETTER

FROM NYE & BUCHANAN CO., LIVE STOCK COMMISSION MERCHANTS, SO. OMAHA, NEB.

Cattle—Monday's heavy receipts were all day arriving. Tuesday's run was light owing to election and a steady to stronger market. Some of the common stuff is very slow sale. The demand for feeders is not so brisk but there is more demand for stockers, especially yearlings. Prices were weak to lower Wednesday.

We quote choice cornfed steers \$4.90 to \$5.25, fair to good shortfed \$4.50 to \$4.80, heavy western beef steers \$3.70 to \$3.90, choice heavy feeders \$3.50 to \$3.60, medium \$3.20 to \$3.40, common grades down to \$2.50, yearling steers, choice, \$3.50 to \$3.65; others \$3.10 to \$2.40. Good fat cows and heifers \$2.50 to \$2.80, stock heifers \$2.25 to \$2.40, canners \$1 to \$1.50; milkers and springers \$20 to \$25, steer calves \$3 to \$4; veal \$4 to \$5; grass bulls \$1.50 to \$2.

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Lambs	\$4.15-4.25	\$3.90-4.00
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Congratulations

Editor Independent: Accept my congratulations for the splendid work you are doing for the cause of genuine, popular and practical reform. Your paper should be an inspiration to every country paper in Nebraska that is not wearing the brass collar of a railroad corporation.
EDWIN S. EVANS,
Editor O'Neill (Neb.) Independent.