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OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1847.

AUGUSTA:

WM. T. JOHNSON,.....PRINTER TO THE STATE

1848.

FIRST REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF EDUCATION

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

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BOARD OF EDUCATION.

ALTHOUGH we do not understand the law under which we act to require us to make our annual report until the month of April, 1848, we yet deem it advisable, at this first meeting of the legislature after our organization, to lay before that body some account of our doings, and to suggest such alterations in the laws, and such new provisions, as seem to us necessary for beginning that improvement in the public school system of the state, to effect which we suppose the act to have been passed. We therefore present to you, to be laid before the legislature, this first report of the board of education of the state of Maine.

Pursuant to the statute passed July 27th, 1846, the members elect of the board of education met at the senate chamber in Augusta on the sixteenth day of December, A. D. 1846, and, after having been duly qualified, organized by the election of Hon. Stephen

Emery, of Oxford county, chairman, and Rev. William T. Savage, of Aroostook county, clerk. It appearing that, at the conventions in the counties of Lincoln and Washington, a majority of the towns in those counties were not represented, and that therefore two vacancies existed in the board, the Hon. Benjamin Randall, of Bath, and Aaron Hayden, Esq., of Eastport, were elected to fill those vacancies, having been recommended by the conventions of the counties respectively in which they reside. The board, in farther pursuance of the statute, proceeded to the election of a secretary, and made choice, unanimously, of William G. Crosby, Esq., of Belfast, to fill that office, who, having signified his acceptance, was qualified, and entered upon the discharge of its duties.

Having spent several days in discussing the various topics connected with the system of public school education in this state, particularly those mentioned in the statute by which we were constituted; having communicated freely to each other our views upon these topics, and the information which we respectively possessed on the state of public school education in the several localities where we reside; and having examined, as accurately as our means would permit, the ground set apart for our labors, we proceeded to assign the consideration of the various topics connected with the subject to committees of the board. We also requested the secretary of the board to prepare and issue to the various school committees, throughout the state, blank forms of returns, containing such inquiries touching the present state of the public schools as would be likely to obtain the information which seemed at that time most needed. We

also requested him to prepare a plan, in detail, for teachers' institutes, to be held in the several counties of the state, together with an estimate of the expense necessarily attending them, to be laid before the legislature.

The first session of the board terminated on the twenty-first day of December, 1846; the first Wednesday of May having been assigned for the next meeting.

Pursuant to this assignment, the board assembled at Augusta on Wednesday, the fifth of May, 1847, and, a quorum being present, proceeded to the despatch of business. Mr. Savage having resigned the office of clerk, Mr. Drinkwater, of Hancock county, was elected to that office. The several committees having reported upon the subjects assigned to them, and their reports having been fully discussed by the board, resolves, containing the results of their deliberations, and the opinions of the board, so far as they could be so expressed, were passed. The secretary of the board, having taken measures to comply with our request relative to obtaining information of the condition of public schools in the state, having prepared a plan for the establishment of teachers' institutes, and having attended the meetings and taken part in the discussions of the board, made his report, containing the result of his investigations and his views, together with those of the board, so far as they coincide with his own, upon the various subjects discussed. This report, having received our unanimous approbation, is herewith transmitted; and we most earnestly recommend to the legislature the passage of laws in accordance with his suggestions, and the appro-

priation of the sums necessary to carry into successful operation the measures in that report advised.

We do not intend, in this report, to go over the ground so fully and ably occupied by the secretary, but shall content ourselves with bringing to the notice of the legislature such matters as seem to us of immediate importance, and more properly within our province.

We cannot doubt, for a moment, that the act "to establish a board of education" was intended to evince, on the part of the legislature, a determination to do all that might seem necessary or expedient for the thorough and radical improvement of the system of public school education in this state.

The act was not the result of a temporary excitement, expending its force in the creation of a body whose duty is to inquire and report what ought to be done, without the expectation, on the part of those who passed the act, that their successors would do those things which the information thus obtained should show to be necessary, to make the system what the honor of the state, the welfare of the coming generations, and the stability of our free institutions require that it should be. On the contrary, we believe that act was produced by the settled conviction, forced upon the minds of all thinking men, that, in the numerous objects of material importance, which, from the peculiar position of this as a newly-settled and growing state, had engrossed our attention, an institution, which our forefathers justly considered as only second in importance to the institutions of religion, had been suffered to fall into decay, and had ceased to exert that happy influence upon the minds and hearts

of the people which of right belonged to it, without which all the elements of material prosperity were in vain scattered in rich profusion around us; that while, by our academies and colleges, the children of those who, in the distribution of this world's goods, had received a competency or an abundance, were obtaining the incalculable advantages of a thorough education, the children of the people,—those who were so soon to hold in their hands the destiny of the country,—those on whom the state must depend for its defense in war, its prosperity in peace,—were suffered to grow up, if not in absolute ignorance, yet with such slender means of improving the mind and heart, that prudent men might well tremble, when they thought how soon our destinies must be committed to their hands. Under this conviction the first step was taken, that, after a thorough investigation of the evils to be remedied, future legislatures might apply the remedies where they should seem to be most needed.

While we feel highly honored that so sublime a work has been assigned to us, we cannot but deeply feel the difficulty and the delicacy of the task of originating and suggesting measures to restore the institution committed to our care to its former vigor and efficiency. Having, however, accepted the offices to which we were elected, we cannot forget that we have thereby become the sworn trustees of the rights and destiny of those who now, indeed, cannot speak for themselves, but whom the fast-coming future will place in a position to call us to a strict account. Under the deep impression of this responsibility, we must plainly, though respectfully, state to the

authorities of the state our opinion of the duties which now devolve upon them. The existence of this board, and, indeed, the whole system of public education, is in the hands of the legislature. They can by their breath destroy both. But, if they mean that the board shall continue and be efficient, and that the system shall exist and be improved, they cannot do otherwise than enact those laws, and make those appropriations, without which any real and permanent improvement is impossible.

The first subject which demands the attention of the legislature is the appropriation of the permanent school fund in accordance with the spirit of the legislation by which it was created. This fund amounts now to nearly the sum of eighty-six thousand dollars. It has been for many years accumulating, during which time the state has had the use of it, without accounting for a cent of interest. Justice requires that the arrears of interest be accounted for. But, if the legislature are not prepared to do this now, let them at least put it at interest, and appropriate the future income to the improvement of common schools. This may be done by setting apart the amount in stock of the United States of which the state is owner. If, however, the state prefers to be itself the debtor of the schools, let them set aside annually an amount equal to the interest of this fund, and apply it to their benefit. The statute by which the fund was created provides, that the income shall be divided among the towns according to population. We believe that, for the present at least, the legislature would be complying with the spirit of the law, and confer a greater benefit on common schools, by applying this income to

the general improvement of the system; unless they should be willing to apply it as at first intended, and make appropriations for general improvements from the other revenues of the state.

The only two new objects, for which we this year recommend appropriations, are for teachers' institutes, and for the promotion of education in the new settlements, particularly in plantations where the state is proprietor of the soil.

The subject of teachers' institutes has received the particular and thorough examination of the board, and we are unanimous in the opinion that their immediate establishment is indispensable to the beginning of the reform which the law under which we act contemplates. The details of the plan for these institutes, their object and necessity, are fully set forth in the report of the secretary. We shall not further dwell upon the subject, than most earnestly to recommend them to the patronage of the legislature. The appropriation asked, is two hundred dollars for each county, and the legislature may be assured that the amount appropriated will be expended with the strictest economy. The money necessary for their support may very properly be taken from the income of the permanent school fund.

No want is more severely felt throughout the state than that of well constructed school houses. The secretary will prepare a report upon this subject, accompanied with suitable plans. We recommend that this report when made, be printed and circulated as widely as possible, and that a number of copies be preserved for future distribution under the direction of the board.

The secretary will also communicate to the legisla-

ture, a system of registers and returns for towns, districts, and school teachers, with proper laws for insuring their use, all which we recommend to the favorable consideration of the legislature.

Education in the new settlements is especially brought under our consideration. The hardy pioneers, who are reclaiming our wilderness and making it rich to us, not only in material products, but in men on whom in future the state will so much depend, labor under difficulties with regard to education, which make them very properly an object of anxiety to the legislature. Situated so far from those portions of the state where academies, high schools, and colleges have been established by the former bounty of the state and of individuals, they find it impossible with their limited means to induce competent teachers to go so far from their homes. Teachers' institutes are of great service in preparing those to teach who have already the requisite knowledge of the subjects to be taught, but here the preliminary process of preparing pupils for the institutes must be performed. Although we do not consider the establishment of academies in general as a matter for our consideration, we know at present of no better way to supply this want than by their aid. We therefore recommend that the state allow the establishment of two academies or high schools, in convenient places in the northern part of the state, and that they be aided by such grants from the state as have been made to academies in other sections, with the express provision that they be in part devoted to preparing teachers for the public schools.

In the new settlements, on lands owned in whole or in part by the state, it is but just that the state, as proprie-

tor, should bear a part of the expense of educating the youth, by whom its lands are made every day more valuable. A memorial will be presented to the legislature, under the sanction of the board, on that subject, which we commend to their favorable consideration. It seems hardly just that any appropriation for this purpose should be made a charge on the income of the permanent school fund. It would come more properly from the revenue derived from the public lands. The report of the committee of the board, on education in the new settlements, is herewith transmitted, and will be found to contain in full, the statements and arguments on the two last named subjects.

The reports of the committees of the board, on the subjects of moral instruction and the general nature and requisites of the education and qualifications of teachers, not looking to any immediate legislation, but containing arguments and suggestions of great importance, are herewith transmitted.

The secretary of the board, being fully possessed of the views of the board on the subject of the legislation relating to public schools now required, has been requested to appear before the appropriate committees of the legislature, and may be considered as fully authorized to represent us in regard to those matters.

In concluding this first report, we cannot but congratulate the legislature and the people of this state, that a reform so much needed has at last been commenced, and must be allowed to express the earnest hope that a work, fraught with so much blessing to the community, may be neither defeated nor hindered by any want of zeal, discretion, or liberality in any persons who

have powers or duties in connection with it. All which is respectfully submitted.

STEPHEN EMERY,
HORACE PIPER,
PHILIP EASTMAN,
BENJAMIN RANDALL,
A. F. DRINKWATER,
AARON HAYDEN,
R. H. VOSE,
SAMUEL TAYLOR, JR.,
EBENEZER KNOWLTON,
DAVID WORCESTER,
OLIVER L. CURRIER,
SAMUEL ADLAM,
WILLIAM T. SAVAGE.

To the Governor of the State of Maine.

Augusta, May 14, 1847.

FIRST REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

To the Board of Education:

GENTLEMEN:—The act of July 27, 1846, establishing the board of education, does not by its terms require a report from the secretary of the board; but as the information I have collected, during the few months which have elapsed since I entered upon the discharge of the duties of my office, may have a tendency to aid you in your deliberations, I herewith submit a report of my doings, and the result of my investigations.

In compliance with the requirements of the act referred to, I have availed myself of every opportunity which has presented, "to consult with superintending school committees, school agents, and other authorities and inhabitants of the state," as well as with teachers, and the friends of popular education at home and abroad, for the purpose of ascertaining the full extent of the existing defects in the practical operation of our common school system, and the means best adapted to remedy those defects and promote its welfare and improvement. At the earliest practicable period after the meeting of the board for organization, I caused blank forms of inquiry, with an accompanying circular, to be issued, and transmitted

to the school committees of the several towns and plantations throughout the state, for the purpose of ascertaining from those most immediately acquainted, and therefore best informed, the present condition of our public schools, the wants most deeply felt, the most prominent defects, and such other facts, as, in my opinion, might serve to promote the object for which this board was established. Taking into consideration the indifference upon the subject of common school education, which has hitherto prevailed, the brief period which elapsed between the issuing of the blanks and the time fixed for their return, and the further fact, that in furnishing the information asked for, committees were subjected to much inconvenience and labor, for which the law provides no compensation, you cannot fail to be gratified at learning, that returns have been received from two hundred and eleven towns and plantations, containing under the census of 1840, about one half the whole population of the state. The result of those inquiries, in a digested form, I herewith submit under their respective titles, with a few remarks applicable to each, which may not be considered wholly inappropriate.

School Districts.

The whole number of school districts in the towns and plantations from which returns have been received, is two thousand two hundred and eighty-three. Regarding these as a fair specimen of the whole, there are in the state, not far from four thousand five hundred school districts. The number in the towns heard from, ranges from one to twenty-nine. The average number in the several counties is as follows, viz. :

Counties.	Average No. in each town.
York,	15
Cumberland,	14
Lincoln,	12
Hancock,	10
Washington,	6
Kennebec,	15
Oxford,	10
Somerset,	13
Penobscot,	9
Waldo,	12
Piscataquis,	8
Franklin,	13
Aroostook,	4

From a comparison of the returns, it is very apparent that population, valuation and extent of territory, furnish no data from which to form an estimate of the number of school districts in any town. While one town with a population of 1,400, contains twenty-seven districts, another, with a population of 8,600 contains but five. Of two towns, each containing about the same number of inhabitants, and of about the same territorial extent, one contains eight districts, and the other twenty-two.

The whole number of schools in the towns heard from, in which the number of scholars does not exceed 10, is	116
From 10 to 20,	322
" 20 to 30,	540
" 30 to 40,	514
" 40 to 50,	311
" 50 to 60,	166
" 60 to 70,	67

It is unnecessary to pursue the examination; sufficient evidence is already disclosed to establish the fact, that the frequent complaint of the multiplicity of small school districts, is not without foundation. The evils attending the minute subdivision of school districts, are too obvious to require a particular notice. It will be sufficient for the present to remark, that the consequences which inevitably follow in their train, are incompetent teachers, short schools, and dilapidated school houses:—my authority for the assertion, is to be found in the returns received from those towns in which the evil most extensively prevails. Our system of free schools, which contemplates the bringing of the means of acquiring an education within the reach of every child in the community, requires the division of towns into school districts, and the authority necessary to effect that object is conferred by law. In the exercise of that authority, however, too much importance has been attached to the prevailing notion, that the school-house must be brought near to every man's door. The school and its teachings, if they are what they should be, should indeed be brought home to every fireside, there to exert a purifying and hallowing influence. But there is reason to fear that the moral is too often lost sight of, in the excess of anxiety to provide for what is regarded as the physical welfare of the child. Such, indeed, must almost unavoidably be the fruit springing from the seed sown by the inexperienced and unskillful teacher, whose services alone, the small district, with its limited means, can command. No greater error ever gained possession of the public mind, than that the health and comfort of the child require that the school-house should be near at hand. Motion is the

natural impulse of childhood; its temporal well-being demands it; to arrest it is a violation of the law of its nature; and that is a mistaken kindness, which would confine it within the precincts of home, or shorten its morning, noonday, or evening stroll. Another prolific source of this evil is to be found in the jealousies and animosities, which steal in and mar the harmony which should ever exist among neighbors, members of the same district;—a state of things which would be less lamentable, was not this sin of the fathers, most emphatically and literally, visited upon the unoffending children. The only remedy for this disease which is corrupting the very life blood of the system,—or rather exhausting its vitality —is in the hands of those under whose supervision the subject more immediately comes. The inhabitants of towns where the evil exists, must apply the remedy. They must be brought to feel that it is a matter in which the whole body, not merely the diseased limb, has a vital interest. The progress of the contagion must be stayed, and so far as practicable, and as soon as possible, the error of the past must be rectified by a consolidation of small and feeble districts, or by a dismemberment and annexation of the parts to those which are large and strong. If a result so desirable cannot be effected by the force of public opinion, and a sense of duty and of right, the interference of legislation must be invoked for the protection of the weak and helpless, from the injustice and oppression of the strong and powerful.

Compensation of Teachers.

The average compensation of teachers in the towns from which returns have been received, and which may

be regarded as a fair specimen of the wages paid throughout the state, is as follows, viz.:

Counties.	Males, per month.	Females, per week.
York,	$16 90	$1 62
Cumberland,	17 14	1 56
Lincoln,	13 53	1 46
Hancock,	18 73	1 55
Washington,	21 30	2 08
Kennebec,	16 33	1 33
Oxford,	13 21	1 10
Somerset,	14 22	1 32
Penobscot,	17 49	1 44
Waldo,	16 44	1 23
Piscataquis,	13 90	1 33
Franklin,	13 23	1 21
Aroostook,	17 87	1 60

It will be borne in mind, that in the above computation are included most of the large and wealthy towns in the state, and in which the largest wages are paid. Leaving these out of the computation, a comparison of the wages paid in a majority of the towns from which returns have been received, would show an average of about $15 40 paid per month, to male, and $1 20 per week, to female teachers, in addition to board. The facts disclosed by the foregoing abstract, furnish abundant cause for the lack of competent teachers, of which so much complaint has been made of late; but the complaint comes with an ill grace from those whose liberality is exhausted in the payment of fifteen dollars, or less, by the month, for the services of the man upon whom they impose the arduous and responsible duty of educating the hearts and intel-

lects of their children. It need not be matter of astonishment that the number of properly qualified teachers is annually diminishing, and the ranks filling up with the inexperienced, and otherwise incompetent. It will continue to be so, so long as the great law of cause and effect holds good, unless greater inducement is held out to those who are qualified, by nature and education, to engage in the calling, by a more generous compensation for their services. Teachers are not required, nor should it be expected of them, to make greater sacrifices in the cause of philanthropy, than other classes in society. Their time is money, as much as that of their employers, and they are as richly entitled to a fair and honorable compensation for their labors. Actuated by the same motives with other human beings, they will, as a general rule, seek for that employment which affords the largest pecuniary reward, or, at least, that which holds out the promise of an adequate reward. If they cannot find it in the school-house, they will seek it in the field, the forest, the workshop, the factory, or the counting-room. The necessary consequence of the policy which has hitherto prevailed, to a great extent, in the meagre appropriations for the support of schools, and the payment of teachers' wages, will be, that those best qualified to teach will find more eligible locations in our cities and thriving villages, or turn their whole attention to some other calling, leaving their places to be filled by those whose qualifications are graduated upon the same scale with the compensation. Trade, commerce, the learned professions and the mechanic arts, are inviting upon every side to their embrace, the energy and intellect of the state, and there is just reason to fear, that unless measures are

adopted to encourage and sustain the true teacher, our children must ere long go uneducated, in the true sense of the word, or seek for education from some other source than the public school. The first effectual step towards the attainment of an object so desirable, must be the abandonment of that suicidal policy, which recommends the employment of "cheap schoolmasters," for the sake of "long schools." The second, and without it the first will be of but temporary benefit, must be an advance in the compensation of those who are qualified and competent. Such a measure would operate as a powerful inducement to those who are already qualified, to continue in the calling, and as a stimulus to those who are not, to fit themselves for the faithful and efficient discharge of its duties.

Length of Schools.

The average number of weeks during which schools have been in operation during the school year last past, is as follows, viz.:

Counties.	Summer term.	Winter term.
York,	13 weeks, 4 days,	11 weeks, 4 days.
Cumberland,	11 " 1 day,	10 " 3 "
Lincoln,	11 " 3 days,	13 " 3 "
Hancock,	11 " 5 "	8 " 2 "
Washington,	11 "	11 " 4 "
Kennebec,	10 " 2 "	9 " 4 "
Oxford,	9 "	9 "
Somerset,	9 " 4 "	8 " 4 "
Penobscot,	12 " 3 "	11 " 4 "
Waldo,	11 " 1 day,	9 " 3 "
Piscataquis,	8 " 5 days,	9 "

Counties.	Summer term.	Winter term.
Franklin,	9 weeks, 2 days,	9 weeks 3 days.
Aroostook,	10 " 3 "	10 " 3 "

Attendance.

The whole number of children and youth between the ages of 4 and 21, residing in the towns and plantations from which returns have been received, according to the returns of May 1, 1846, was . . 121,992

The number attending the public schools during the *summer* term of the school year 1846–7, was 57,542

Being less than the whole number, . . 64,450

Whole number of scholars, - . . . 121,992

Number attending public schools during the *winter* term, was 70,647

Being less than the whole number, . . 51,345

The whole number of children attending academies and private schools during the whole, or a portion of the same year, in the towns and plantations from which returns have been received, was . . 3,498

From the whole number of children, . . 121,992

subtract those in attendance at public schools in summer, . . . 57,542

and those in attendance at academies and private schools, . . . 3,498

61,040

and we have as the result, that there were . 60,952 who were not in attendance at any school during the past summer.

From the whole number of children,		121,992
subtract those in attendance at public schools in winter, ...	70,647	
and those in attendance at academies and private schools, . . .	3,498	
	———	74,145
and we have as the result, that there were . who were not in attendance at any school during the past winter.		47,847

It is to be remembered, that in the foregoing calculations the tale is but half told;—that the returns upon which they are based, are but from about one half the towns and population in the state, and we have the astounding disclosure that there were, during the past summer, about one hundred and twenty-two thousand children, and during the past winter, about ninety-five thousand, who did not darken the door of a school-house. But the apologist, if any there can be found, for such apparent dereliction of duty on the part of parents and guardians, upon whom rests the obligation of seeing that their children avail themselves of the privileges afforded by the free school, may say that the evil is not so great as at first sight it appears to be;—that a large portion of the absentees from school, consists of those who have arrived at the age of sixteen, at which period of life, especially with that class of the community which is denominated the *poorer* class, a school education usually terminates. Admitting that it is so—a lamentable fact if it be one—after making a liberal allowance for those who come within this description, there are yet thousands who are unaccounted for; whose interest, future happiness and

welfare, demand their presence at the school-house, but who are sought for there in vain.

Where were they—the future men and women, fathers and mothers, citizens, jurors, voters, sovereigns of the state? Were they under the watchful eye of parents and guardians, engaged in useful occupations, training for usefulness and respectability, qualifying themselves for the discharge of those duties which are soon to devolve upon them in the varied relations of life? or were they not rather rambling about the fields and highways—basking in the sunshine, loitering at the corners of the streets and in the purlieus of the dram-shop, studying the vocabulary of the profligate and the blasphemer, training themselves for scenes of riot and plunder, qualifying themselves for the prison and the poor-house? To those whose lot is cast in the peaceful quiet of the country town, these inquiries may seem the offspring of a diseased imagination;—but to those who have been eye witnesses of the progress of vice and crime in our cities and seaport villages, they are full of fearful import. Should the inquiries which have been thus far instituted, be productive of no other good than that which it is to be ardently hoped will follow from an accurate knowledge of the extent of this evil, I should feel that our labors had not been in vain. The existence of the evil established, its dangerous tendencies, not only to the individual, but to the peace and welfare of the community, will be admitted. Whether it is within the scope or power of legislation to apply a remedy, is a question which I submit to the law-making power. But be that as it may, let the philanthropist, the legislator, the patriot, look at the fearful picture here presented, and say, whether

he can justify himself in the sight of God, in sitting any longer with folded arms, when there is such a field for effort before him, such a work to do, and so much left undone.

School Money.

The statute makes it the duty of every town to raise and expend, annually, for the maintenance of public schools, "a sum of money, not less than forty cents for each inhabitant; the number to be computed according to the last census of the state, under which the representation thereof in the legislature shall have been apportioned." The information upon this subject contained in the returns received, is of such a character as to authorize the inference, that this provision of the statute had been almost uniformly construed to be a limitation of the *power*, as well as the *obligation* of towns, in raising money for the support of schools. While in some few towns the appropriations for this object indicate the prevalence of a right spirit, of sound views, of a wise and liberal policy, in a large majority the appropriation does not exceed the minimum sum fixed by law, or the excess, if any, is but of a few dollars or cents. I regret that the necessity exists of communicating to this board, the fact, disreputable alike to those most immediately interested, and to the state of which they constitute a component part, that, as appears from the returns, there are not a few towns, in which the amount of money raised and appropriated for the support of public schools, falls short of the statute minimum. The facts, that so few towns raise any considerable amount beyond what the law requires of them, that many fail to comply with that require-

ment, moderate in its demands as it is, and that a large majority content themselves with a mere observance of its letter, furnish abundant evidence of the necessity of compulsory legislation. It is to be hoped however, that as the public mind becomes enlightened, and aroused to the importance of a more enlarged and general diffusion of the blessings and privileges of education, that a wiser and more liberal policy will prevail—that the public school will become the recipient of a larger share of the public bounty, and thereby be enabled more effectually to meet and answer the public wants. Should a change of legislation upon this subject ever be made, the suggestion may not be unworthy of consideration, that ample justice would be meted out to the rising generation, by making the number of children in each town at the time the school money is raised, the criterion by which the amount is to be determined, rather than the population of the town at a time long anterior. It has been well said, that the money expended in the support of town schools, is so much saved from the support of town paupers;—that the expenditures of the school-house diminish those of the poor-house. The remark grew out of a close observation of the intimate connection between ignorance and abject poverty—a connection, not necessary and inevitable, but of so frequent occurrence as almost to justify the belief that it is so. Interest, then, unites with duty in the demand for a more liberal appropriation for the support of schools. No surer guarantee for the protection of personal rights can be found, than in the intelligence of the people. It gives an increased value to property—to labor which is the foundation of property—places mankind more upon an equality

in the business transactions of life, removes those heart-burnings and jealousies of which ignorance is the prolific mother, and in various ways promotes the well-being of all who come within the reach of its influence. Liberality in the expenditure of school money is true economy. It is money invested at a high rate of interest;—it is the safest policy of insurance against the dangers of petty pilfering, and tumultuous outbreak;—it is mightier for the prevention of crime, than prison bolts or bars.

Text Books.

The multiplicity of text books in use in our common schools, is an evil of no ordinary magnitude. The mere fact that the market is so amply stocked with works from different authors, treating of the various branches taught in schools, is not to be regarded as an evil of itself, but, on the contrary, may be regarded as a favorable symptom. It furnishes evidence that there is a demand for improvement, and that intellect is at work, endeavoring to meet the demand. I am not aware that competition in the manufacture of school books is undesirable. Its natural tendency is towards improvement; and, although the investment may not be a profitable one to the producer, the interests of the consumer are not the more likely to be prejudiced thereby. An opportunity is afforded of making a selection from a larger assortment; and it would be strange indeed, if, in so great a variety, there were not to be found many works, upon each of the various branches, of genuine merit. But the introduction, into the same school, of a multiplicity of text books, treating of the same subject, is a serious evil, and, in its consequences, most destructive to the pros-

perity of the school. Classification,—without which it is in vain to look for that regularity, order, and improvement, which are most desirable,—is thereby rendered almost impossible, and the time of teacher and scholar frittered away. In the same proportion that the number of classes is increased, is the labor of the teacher rendered more arduous, and the opportunity for improvement of the scholar diminished. But little more time is necessarily consumed in giving instruction to ten scholars, when embraced in one class, than to one alone; and, as the daily instruction is limited to a few hours, before and after noon, it necessarily follows, that but a tenth part of the time which is devoted to a class of that number, can be devoted to each one, if not classed. That this evil should prevail so extensively is indeed surprising, when the fact is taken into consideration, that legislation, in anticipation of its existence, has provided an adequate remedy. The power is conferred upon superintending school committees of determining and prescribing what books shall be used in the respective schools under their charge; and, had this power but been faithfully and fearlessly exercised, our ears would not have been visited with the complaints which are ringing in them from every part of the state. And would school committees, now, but take into their own hands and exercise the authority which has been delegated to them, occasion for complaint, on account of the multiplicity of text books, would soon cease.

The solicitations that the members of the board of education, in their official capacity, would assume an advisory character in this matter, are numerous. It would be an assumption for which no authority can be

found in the law establishing the board; and although, in many instances, it might be acceptable, perhaps serviceable, in many more it would be regarded as a work of supererogation,—an attempt on the part of the board to extend its jurisdiction beyond its constitutional limits. It has even been urged upon the board to recommend a uniform series of text books for use throughout the state. Admitting that they have the authority so to do,—which, it is very apparent from an examination of the law, they have not,—it is, to my mind, very questionable whether such a step would be advisable, whether it would be beneficial to the schools, and whether it would not lead to injurious results. If the schools throughout the state were all of the same character,—if the teachers and scholars in them all were possessed of the same natural or acquired capacity,—the recommendation and introduction of one and the same series of text books, might be, to say the least, harmless, perhaps advantageous. But we have not yet arrived at that happy condition, and it is to be feared that a long time must elapse before we shall, unless it be through the agency of some mental machinery, the discovery of which is yet to be made. Scholars and teachers must continue to be, as they ever have been, widely different in their intellectual capacities and acquirements; and while a series of books, which might be recommended for general adoption, might be peculiarly adapted to the wants and condition of one class of schools, or to a portion of the scholars attending them, it might be wholly unfit for all others, and its indiscriminate introduction be fatally destructive to the true interests of all connected with them. The recommendation, then, of a uniform series for all the schools

in the state, would be a dangerous experiment; and, if the recommendation embraced several, as adapted to schools of different classes, the determination of the question to which class each school belonged, and the selection of the books for use in such school, would remain where it is, with the committee in each town. Upon a careful review of the whole subject, I know of no better method which can be adopted, than to leave the performance of this duty where the law has left it, in the hands of the superintending school committees; at the same time availing ourselves of every favorable opportunity to urge upon committees the importance of discharging this duty, and upon parents the manifold advantages and benefits which will follow from acquiescence in their decisions. That committees, however, may have the full benefit of any superior advantages, which the members of this board may be supposed to have had, of forming an opinion as to the relative merits of the various text books now in use, and their adaptation to schools of different grades, I recommend that each member of the board shall assume the responsibility of acting as the adviser, in this particular, of the several school committees in the county which he represents, shall attend their several autumnal county conventions, and render all the assistance in his power, in the selection of such books as, upon consultation, shall seem best adapted to the wants of the schools under their charge. With this recommendation, I have no doubt, the members of this board will cheerfully comply.

Education in New Settlements.

The best methods of aiding and promoting education in the new settlements in the state, is one of the subjects submitted to the consideration of the board. It is one upon which diversity of opinion might reasonably be expected, and the question presented by it is not free from many and serious embarrassments. I am not prepared, without further reflection and investigation, to express an opinion as to the *best* method of effecting an object so desirable, but, at the same time, do not hesitate to express my hearty concurrence, in the views presented in the memorial of this board to the legislature upon the subject. It is a matter peculiarly within their province, and it is most earnestly to be hoped, that the aid and encouragement which are so much needed, will not be withheld.

Qualifications of Teachers.

The very able report of the committee to whom this subject was referred by the board, at its last meeting, would seem to render any remarks from me unnecessary. I submit, however, a few, of a general character, which may not be regarded as entirely out of place. In the examination for the causes of the failure of our common school system in its practical operation, the want of thoroughly qualified teachers presents itself as one of the most prominent. For the skillful performance of every work, we look for skill and fidelity in the workmen employed. Men do not, as a general rule, confide the management of their causes to the hands of the pettifogger, nor the healing of their bodies to the care of the empiric. The farmer looks not for a fruitful harvest, unless his soil

is well tilled, nor the merchant for a rich return, unless his outward cargo is well selected. Industry and frugality may make good the loss sustained from the unskillful management of a cause in court, but how shall the loss of a virtuous and manly education in childhood be retrieved! Time may heal the injury which ignorance has inflicted upon the body—but who shall "minister to the mind diseased." The hand of the reaper may gather a rich harvest next year, from the fallow field of this—but when, and what, shall be the harvest of an uncultivated intellect! The evening of the year may bring back to port, richly freighted, the bark which left in its morning, unwisely ladened and unskillfully manned—but what return shall the evening of life bring for the perverted opportunies, and the unskillful teachings of its morning hours! If it be true—and who doubts it?—that the child is father to the man—that the seed sown in childhood yields the fruit which must be gathered in manhood and old age—that as we sow, so shall we reap,—is it not the all-important question for the generations which are to succeed us, "Who shall be our teachers?" If it be true—and who doubts it?—that the great business of a parent's life should be the education of his children, does it not become those of us who sustain that relation, to look well to the character and qualifications of those to whom we entrust them in their early years? If it be true—and who doubts it?—that the children of this people are to be the arbiters of the nation's destiny, is it not the dictate of wisdom, of prudence, to demand of those who are to form and frame them for their high destination, that they be *capable*—that they be *honest?*

These are inquiries well worthy of serious consideration, and to be answered to our own hearts.

To the want of thoroughly qualified teachers, more than to any other cause, is to be attributed the failure of our free schools in meeting the wishes and the wants of the people. This opinion is not the result of my own unaided observation and reflection. It is the declaration of one hundred and twenty-five school committees, out of the two hundred and eleven from whom returns have been received. That can be no imaginary evil, whose existence is so universally conceded;—that can be no small evil whose influence is so widely felt. I rejoice in the faith that for it there is a remedy, which an enlarged philanthropy, and a sound state policy, will in due time apply. To that subject I will more particularly invite attention, under the following title:

Normal Schools and Teachers' Institutes.

It is made a part of the duty of this board, directly, or through the agency of the secretary, to inquire and report upon the advantages of normal schools, or schools for the education of teachers. A system, which provides the means for qualifying the individuals composing any one of the various classes or occupations in society for the intelligent and faithful performance of their duties, cannot be otherwise than advantageous to the individual, and the community at large. Of this character is the normal school. Entertaining, as I do, the highest regard for this institution, and believing it to be the most efficient method ever adopted for training and qualifying a class of teachers to become the educators of the hearts

and intellects of the young, yet I cannot refrain from expressing my conviction, that the time for the establishment of such an institution in this state, at the public expense, has not yet arrived; and, should a wise course of legislation be adopted and pursued, and the inducement of an adequate compensation be afforded to those already qualified, or who may hereafter qualify themselves, for the business of teaching, the necessity for such an institution may never exist. The demand now is for an *immediate* supply of competent teachers in our public schools, and it is too urgent to admit of delay. The questions which press themselves upon our consideration are, how shall that demand be answered? and from what source shall that supply come? There are now in our state from four to five thousand, who are employed, during some portion of each year, as teachers. In that number are to be found many eminently qualified for the calling, by education and experience; and a much larger number, of the right material, and possessed of the right spirit, whose deficiencies are the consequence, not of a lack of native talent, or a good education as men and women, but of inexperience, and ignorance of what may with propriety be styled the *art of teaching*. It is from this source that the supply of teachers must come, to meet and answer the immediate demand; and the instrumentality, by which they are to be fitted and qualified to discharge the duties of their calling, acceptably to their employers and profitably to the children and youth intrusted to their care, is the *Teachers' Institute*.

The earliest account of these institutes which I have been able to obtain, goes back as far as 1839, when a "teachers' class" was convened, at Hartford, by the

procurement of Henry Barnard, Esq., a distinguished friend of the cause of popular education, and now commissioner of public schools in the state of Rhode Island. The object of that convention was, to adopt his language, "to show the practicability of making some provision for the better qualification of common school teachers, by giving them an opportunity to revise and extend their knowledge of the studies usually pursued in district schools, and of the best methods of school arrangement, instruction, and government, under the recitations and lectures of experienced and well-known teachers and educators." Teachers' institutes, as now organized and conducted, are regarded as having their origin in the state of New York, in the year 1843. Since that time, they have been introduced into the states of Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan; and such has been the success attending them, that, in each of the states enumerated, their number has been annually increasing. They are usually convened in spring or autumn, before, and as preparatory to, the summer and winter schools, at such point in each county as will afford the greatest facilities for the attendance of teachers, and continue for such length of time as circumstances, and the wishes of those present, may require. The institutes heretofore held have varied in length from one to six weeks. In Massachusetts, where provision is made by law for their support, they are not organized for a less term than ten days, but the limit to which they may extend is not fixed,—this depending upon the interest manifested, the wishes and convenience of those in attendance. Sessions of the institute are called by the

board of education, or by their secretary, or by such person as they may designate, and, during their continuance, are under the direction of the person appointed, who stands in the same relation to the institute in which a teacher stands to his school. Skillful and experienced teachers are employed, and, under their supervision, the members of the institute are formed into classes, and go through the drill and routine of the school-room. Instruction is given in the general principles of school government, of discipline, classification, and the most approved methods of teaching in the various branches usually taught in public schools. In fact, the institute is, for the time being, a model school, where the young teachers are presented with the living illustration of a school as it should be,—of what each one should endeavor to make his own,—and affords to them a practical exemplification of the principles of government and teaching. It is theory reduced to practice. The exercises during the day are interspersed with discussions, and the evenings devoted to lectures upon subjects connected with education. The expenses attending an institute consist chiefly of the compensation paid to the teachers who attend for the purpose of giving instruction, for room rent, fuel, and lights: the lectures are usually gratuitous. In Massachusetts, these expenses are defrayed by the state, the governor being authorized to draw for the same immediately upon the treasurer, but not to an amount exceeding two hundred dollars for the expenses of any one institute. In New Hampshire, by virtue of an act passed at the last session of its legislature, authority is given to the several towns throughout the state, to raise, at a legal meeting for that purpose, in

addition to the amount required to be raised for the support of common schools, a sum not exceeding five per cent. of such amount, to be applied to the support of a teachers' institute within the limits of the county in which the towns raising the money are situated. Of the practical operation of that provision I am not yet apprised; but the uncertainty attending this mode of raising the necessary funds, the strong probability that, under its operation, the expenses would be very unequally borne by different towns, render the plan, to my mind, somewhat objectionable. The existence or duration of so powerful an agency for the improvement of the educational character of teachers of our public schools, as the teachers' institute, should not be left to chance or caprice. The success which has hitherto attended these associations has more than realized the most ardent expectations of their friends and founders. Testimonials to this point are abundant. The committee on teachers' institutes, in the New York state school convention, held in 1845, commended the establishment of them in the strongest terms, and spoke of them as "having, during the preceding year, enlightened the head and increased the zeal of more than two thousand teachers in the state." Of the results attending an institute held in Cheshire county, New Hampshire, it is said, "that those teachers who attended the institute have almost universally been successful in their schools, and those who had taught before have had greater success since than previously. They are evidently more systematic and thorough in their instructions; they manifest a deeper interest in their work. The interest already awakened in its behalf is such, that no fears are entertained that it will not be sustained,—at

least until something better shall be substituted." During the past year, six institutes were held in Massachusetts, under the patronage and endowment of the state; of all of which, the secretary of the board of education of that commonwealth says, in his last annual report, "that the collective expressions of opinion made by the members at the close of their several meetings, and the private declarations of those whom I have since seen or heard from, give evidence of highly satisfactory results." Of the same encouraging character is all the information which I have been able to obtain, in relation to the practical effect of teachers' institutes.

In view, then, of the want, so widely felt, of teachers for our public schools more thoroughly indoctrinated in the art of teaching,—of the necessity of prompt, immediate action,—and of the beneficial results which, I doubt not, would follow from the establishment of teachers' institutes in the several counties throughout the state, I would suggest to this board the expediency and propriety of memorializing the legislature in their behalf. If there is, in reality, a disposition to carry on the great enterprise which has just been commenced, to a successful issue,—if the state would do honor to itself, and justice to the children of the people,—that memorial cannot fail to meet with a favorable reception.

School Laws.

The want of efficiency in our system of public instruction, arises not so much from any inherent defect in the law, as in the mode of its administration. It has its defects, it is true, and where is the legislation which has not? But the best laws are of no avail, so long as they

are permitted to remain a dead letter upon the statute book, and until those whose duty it is to administer and enforce the law as it stands, shall evince a stronger disposition to enter heartily upon the performance of that duty, I shall content myself with calling attention to some of its most obvious defects, and suggesting some amendments, which, in my opinion, are desirable at the present time.

The eleventh section of Chap. 17, of the revised statutes, makes it the duty of the selectmen of the town to furnish necessary school books, under certain circumstances. I am of opinion that the transfer of that duty to the superintending school committee, within whose province the subject matter seems more peculiarly to come, would secure a more prompt and faithful observance of this very salutary requirement.

By the twenty-eighth section of the same chapter, authority is given to the inhabitants of school districts, to raise money for the erection of school-houses and other purposes, but not for the support of schools. There are many districts, where a strong desire is felt to improve the character of the public schools, and where it would be done, but for want of legal authority to raise the money necessary to effect the object. A disposition so laudable should be encouraged, and I am unable to perceive that any injury would result from legislation which should confer upon inhabitants of school districts, authority to raise money for the support of schools within their own limits, in addition to the amount raised by law, to be appropriated in the same manner as if raised by the town; with the restrictions, that the money so raised shall be assessed only upon the property of those resident

within the district, and that in amount, it shall not exceed one half the amount so appropriated by the district, from the money raised by the town.

The object of the provisions contained in sections thirty-seven and thirty-eight of the same chapter, would be better attained, by substituting for them a provision, that the superintending school committee shall determine, what proportion of the moneys in any district shall be appropriated for the support of schools to be kept by females, and shall certify the same to the district agent, who shall expend the money accordingly: provided, that any district, at a regular meeting, may, by vote, direct the amount to be so appropriated, and such vote shall take the place, and be in force, instead of the direction or certificate of the committee.

The interests of the public schools in those places where there are several grades, would be better protected, by inserting in section forty-three of the same chapter, after the words "schools," that whenever there are schools of different grades in a town, the person employed shall furnish a certificate from the committee, that he is qualified to teach a school, of the grade for which he applies.

The forty-first section of the same chapter, makes it the duty of the superintending school committee, to make returns of certain facts to the selectmen, from which returns the selectmen are required, by section fifty-one, to make out a statement, annually, and transmit the same to the secretary of state. This duty may as well be performed by one board of officers, and oftentimes more faithfully, than when the action of two is required; and, as the most important facts, contained in the return of

the selectmen, are derived from the return of the committee, I am of opinion that it would be a decided change for the better, if the law should be so amended as that the entire duty of making the returns should devolve upon the committee. These returns are, by the law as it now is, required to be made on or before the twentieth day of January, in each year: the change in the session of the legislature renders a change of the law, in this particular, desirable. Among the facts which are required to be embraced in the returns referred to, are some which can be ascertained only from the teachers of the schools; such as the average attendance of scholars, &c.; but it is left entirely optional with teachers, to furnish, or withhold, that information. A remedy for this defect may be provided, by requiring teachers, as a part of their duty, to furnish the information, and for that purpose to keep a school register. Such is the mode adopted in other states, and it has been found upon trial, to be productive of much good.

The returns to which I have referred, constitute the basis for the distribution of the bank tax, and no town is entitled to its proportion, unless its return is "seasonably made." (Section 53 and 54.) There has been a failure, at least for a few years last past, on the part of more or less towns, to make their returns; but the legislature has kindly taken care of those who were too negligent to take care of themselves, by passing a resolve, that in all cases where no return had been received from any town, for the current year, the return last made should be the rule for such town's proportion of the tax. In this way, an inducement to the neglect of duty has been held out to some towns, and manifest injustice done to others.

Towns, whose population has increased, by neglecting to make their returns, are accessory to a fraud upon their children, depriving them, by their negligence in this particular, of the full portion of the tax to which they are legally entitled. Other towns, whose population has diminished, by reason of a division, the incorporation of a new town, or the annexation of a part to some other, by neglecting to make their annual returns, receive a much larger proportion of the tax than they are entitled to, and thus appropriate to themselves that which legally belongs to others.

The statute of 1844, chapter 106, authorizes school districts, to expend a portion of their money in the purchase of books, for a district library. The small amount of school money in a majority of the districts, divided and subdivided as they have been, has rendered it inexpedient to divert any portion of it from the ordinary purposes of the school; and for this reason, but little progress has been made in the formation of school libraries. And such must continue to be the case, until more liberal appropriations are made for the support of schools. In the mean time, I would recommend that the provisions of the statute be extended so far as to embrace school apparatus, in the purchase of which, but a small amount of the money would necessarily be consumed, and the want of which, judging from the returns, is widely felt. The united voice of all intelligent and experienced teachers throughout the state, is in favor of the use of simple school apparatus, such as the blackboard, outline maps, globes, &c., as the most efficient and expeditious mode of communicating instruction to both young and old. It is important that school districts should be invested with

the power of availing themselves of these, and similar advantages.

I have been gratified, as you will without doubt be, at receiving the information, that there are towns in the state where the disposition exists, to afford assistance to the small and remote districts within their limits, in the erection of suitable and commodious school-houses. The law does not authorize the raising of money by the town, for that purpose; but I am unable to perceive any good and sufficient reason why, without jeoparding any rights, the power so to do may not be conferred.

It would be an economy of time and money, if authority could be conferred upon the inhabitants of towns, where the school district comprises the whole town, to transact all business relating to schools and school-houses, at any regularly called town meeting.

In an enumeration of the defects, or rather abuses, in the practical operation of our free school system, indifference to the health and comfort of their children on the part of parents, in the construction of school-houses, unfaithfulness on the part of superintending school committees and school agents, and irregularity of attendance at school on the part of scholars, are not to be overlooked. To the first named, I propose to call the attention of the public, in a supplementary report:—for the last, I am unable to perceive any remedy, except that which is to be found in arousing parents and guardians to a sense of their duty, and adopting measures to make the school-room a scene of pleasure rather than of pain, to their children. The law makes it the imperative duty of the committee, to visit and inspect all the public schools within their precinct, at least twice during every term.

The beneficial influence, upon teachers and scholars, of an observance of this requirement of the law, where it has been observed, has been felt and acknowledged. Yet the returns disclose the fact, that in but twenty-three out of two hundred and nine towns, has this provision of the law been complied with. For the unfaithfulness of school committees, the remedy is to be found in the election of those who will discharge their duty faithfully and fearlessly:—those who attach more importance to the obligation of their oath of office than to popular favor, or even the expressed will of their constituents, when that expression is an indirect attempt to violate the law of the land. An apology, to some extent, for the remissness of duty on the part of committees, may be found in the neglect of agents to give the notice required by statute. Upon the classification of schools and pupils, moral culture, the introduction of vocal music, book-keeping, human anatomy and physiology, as branches of common school instruction, subjects which are presented and ably discussed, in the resolutions and reports appended to the reports of the board, I forbear at this time to remark. With a brief history of our common school system, the causes which have mainly contributed to bring it into its present condition, and the most obvious method for its restoration to life and health, I conclude my report.

The great truths are too firmly seated to be overthrown by a slight effort, that "national greatness must spring out of the nation's mind, from its intellectual power and moral energy;"—that in the intelligence of the people, lies the only safety and prosperity of the republic—that health, intelligence and virtue, constitute the only solid basis upon which to rear the superstructure of

human happiness, and that they are the result of physical, moral, and intellectual education. These truths are not now enunciated for the first time;—they are not the discovery of this age, or of this generation. Long years before they had become an article in the political creed of republics, the far reaching intellect of statesmen and philosophers—the great, the wise, and the good—recognized their existence, and foretold their advent with power. For the 17th century, and the "New World," were reserved the privilege and glory of creating a body for this living soul. The pilgrim fathers,—when, in voluntary exile from the pleasant land of their nativity, they sought and found upon the bleak shores of New England, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences—achieved a victory in the cause of civil and religious liberty, for which they merit a world's gratitude. Their sound and wholesome legislation, stringent as some of its provisions might seem to us in these latter days, constituted the foundation of an imperishable monument to their memory;—but its crowning glory was the establishment of *free schools* for the children of the people. The germ of a republic had taken root in their hearts, and it is not too much to believe, that, with prophetic vision, they foresaw the coming of that day when the people should be the sovereign. Not only did they foresee, but wisely prepared for the emergency, by adopting the only proper and efficient mode of qualifying the people for the exercise of the power of sovereignty. One of their earliest acts of legislation, was a law making it obligatory upon parents and masters, "to teach their children and apprentices, so much learning as may enable them perfectly to read the

English tongue, and knowledge of the capital laws." In furtherance of this object, the general court of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, *to the end that learning might not be buried in the graves of their forefathers, in church and commonwealth*, provided by law for the support of public schools, and the instruction of such children as should resort to them, in reading and writing, making it further obligatory upon towns containing one hundred householders, to maintain and support, in addition to the primary school as it may be termed; a grammar school, the teacher of which should be competent "to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university;"—and all at the public expense. This year and month complete the second century since the passage of that act; the first, providing for the education of the people at the public charge, which ever illumined the statute-book of any christian nation or people. Then and there, in the wilderness, was laid the corner-stone of our free school system. It was an epoch in the history of mankind:—the commencement of a new order of things;—the first genuine development of the democratic principle; the prelude to that sublime anthem, which, in little more than a century afterwards, to the wonder of the nations, went up to heaven from the united voices of three millions of freemen!

The people of Massachusetts, true to their trust, engrafted the principle upon their Constitution, in 1780, and gave it a permanent place in their statute-book. Upon the separation of Maine from the mother commonwealth, the interests of the coming generations and the state, were not forgotten in the joy which hailed the rising of a new star above the political horizon, and the

framers of our Constitution, recognizing the great truth, that "a general diffusion of the advantages of education is essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people," not only vested in the legislative power the authority, but imposed upon it the duty, of requiring that suitable provisions should be made for the support of free schools. Accordingly, among the first acts passed at the first session of our legislature, was one providing for the general education of children and youth, at the expense of the towns, in which, from time to time, they might have their residence. That act, amended in some particulars by the subsequent acts of 1834 and 1841, is now the law of our land.

The first public appropriation for the support of free schools, was made by an act of the legislature in 1828, by virtue of which, twenty townships of land were set apart, to constitute a permanent fund for the benefit of town and district schools; the proceeds of sales to be put at interest, in such manner as the legislature should from time to time determine, and the income thereof to be annually divided among the several towns in the state, according to the number of children therein, commencing at a time to be thereafter prescribed by the legislature. Nearly twenty years have elapsed since the passage of that act: the permanent fund now amounts to the sum of nearly eighty-six thousand dollars, but no portion of it has yet been put at interest, and the children of the state have received no benefit from it. The tax accruing from the several banks to the state, and which was appropriated, by the act of 1833, to the support of public schools, has not been diverted from its legitimate channel, or permitted to stagnate in the treasury. Although but a small

stream, it has gone forth annually, on its errand of beneficence, bearing upon its bosom to many a drooping district, the heart-cheering assurance of a more bounteous supply, in due time, from the same fountain filled to overflowing. The only remaining appropriation, with the exception of some few of a local character, which has been made by the state for the purpose of promoting the welfare of our public schools, was at the last session of the legislature, and in the establishment of a board of education. Whatever may be the fate of that board as now constituted, whether its efforts may or may not be successful, that the period had arrived, when the honor and welfare of the state demanded the creation of such an agency, no sober and reflecting mind can doubt. While our sister states around us, true to their own best interests, and mindful of their obligations to the present and coming generations, were establishing boards of education, creating the officers of commissioners and superintendents of common schools, making the education of the people a department in their government, it would indeed have been mortifying and humiliating to our state pride, had Maine alone of the New England sisterhood, proved recreant to the faith of her fathers. Her future historian will pause in his review of her efforts to develop the mental and material resources within her borders, to wonder that the step last taken was delayed so long.

In this brief history of our common school system, there is to be found much for which we have reason to be grateful. That the founders of the commonwealth from which we sprang were led to establish the system,—that the framers of our own constitution made provision

for its continuance and support by means of legislative action,—that our legislators have not deemed it undeserving their repeated favor,—are all causes for congratulation. But, at the same time, that, in view of the importance of the subject, and the magnitude of the interests involved, so little has been accomplished, compared with what might and should have been, is cause for humiliation and regret. But to look mournfully into the past is profitless, unless the retrospect teaches us wisely to improve the present. There is, however, one source of satisfaction, which comes in like a sunbeam to relieve the darkness of the picture which truth and duty constrain us to present,—the consciousness that, with all its imperfections, the free school has been to us of priceless value. In the examination of its defects, the good which it has accomplished is not to be overlooked. Better, far better that it should be as it is, than cease to be. What we, as a people, might have been, without it, may be read in the annals of departed national greatness; and dark will that day be in our own, when the fire is extinguished for the last time on the hearthstone of the district school-house.

The existence of many and serious evils in the administration of our common school system—evils which are sapping its foundation—being conceded, the inquiry naturally arises, what is the cause? The cause is to be found in the ignorance and indifference of the community—ignorance of their rights, powers, and duties, indifference to their true interests. In every body of men there are to be found many—that there are many such in the matter under consideration, my own experience long since taught me—who, to pursue the right,

need but to know it. Many, who admit the importance of correct mental and moral training in early life, but, having erected a school-house, employed a teacher, provided their children with books, and sent them to school, suppose that they have done all which can be done. That their object is not attained they are quick to discover, but they are prone to attribute the failure to any cause but the true one. Their children do not come home to them, as they could wish, vigorous in mind and body, laden with the stores of intellectual and moral culture; but it never occurs to them, that they have the power to do any thing towards effecting a change for the better, and, as a consequence, they do nothing. But the great, the paramount cause, is to be found in the want of interest in our free schools,—the almost universal indifference—the deathlike lethargy which has fallen upon the great mass of the community. Legislators are too ardently engaged in the great work of developing the natural resources of the state, to devote much thought to the consideration of ways and means for the development of its mental and moral resources. Capitalists, concentrating their energies upon the construction of railroads and manufactories, have turned aside from the humble, and, of old, well-trodden highway of knowledge, and heed but little the moral and intellectual machinery, which is in operation all around them. Philosophers, intent upon the discovery of new and more brilliant lights in the natural, intellectual, and moral systems, have no eye or thought for the lesser lights, which glimmer in the district school-house. The aged, whose children have passed beyond the period of childhood and youth, whose interest in the things of earth is becoming weaker and weaker day by

day,—the young, buoyant with life and energy, to whom the future is a cloudless prospect,—see, in the education of the rising generation, or its neglect, little or nothing to excite their hopes or fears. The rich, compelled to seek for their children, in the private school or academy, that which they in vain sought for in the public school, feel but little sympathy for a system which they are compelled to support, but which has totally failed to meet their wants. The poor, even, strange as it may appear, fail to appreciate the privilege and opportunity afforded them, of bestowing upon their children a virtuous and manly education, and yield grudgingly even the time which is necessarily consumed in the effort to acquire it. Parents, who, at home, carefully watch, lest an impure word or act should defile the innocency of their children, —lest the breath of heaven should visit them too roughly, —seldom, if ever, visit the school-room, to learn how their morals and their health are cared for there ;—while children, wearied of the task, in which no one, save their teacher, manifests the slightest interest, look forward to the period of their liberation from the thraldom of school, as the brighest day in life's calendar. Justice to that portion of the community who regard the cause of popular education in its true light, as the cause of God and humanity, and who gladly avail themselves of every fitting opportunity to promote its interest, requires me to add, that this fatal indifference, wide spread and pernicious in its influences as it is, is not universal:—but the labors of the few can avail but little, so long as the public mind lies torpid under the influence of this chilling apathy.

Such being the existing evils in the present administration of our common school system, and their promi-

nent causes, the important questions present themselves, "Where, and what are the remedies?" The answer is obvious. The remedy is with the people. Every class in society must be made to understand the relation which the common school sustains to the welfare and happiness of the whole;—parents must be led to feel, and manifest, a livelier interest in the education of their children;—old and badly constructed school-houses must be remodeled, or removed to make room for new and more commodious ones, constructed with reference to the convenience, comfort and health of teacher and scholar;—small school districts must be consolidated, and large ones kept as they are, unless the most urgent necessity requires a division; a greater uniformity in text books in the same town, and more especially the same district, must be attained, and in intimate connection with this, a judicious classification of scholars;—there must be more fidelity and efficiency on the part of school committees and agents;—there must be a more liberal appropriation and expenditure of money for the support of schools, on the part of towns, and the bounty of the state must not be withheld;—and lastly, the standard of teachers' qualifications, moral and intellectual, must be raised, and the blind policy of "cheap schoolmasters," "long schools," abandoned. By the aid of these instrumentalities, the common school may be made to answer the purpose for which it was designed. By what process they are to be brought into action, is the only remaining question.

"The voice of the people is the voice of God," is a maxim remarkable for its antiquity, and to be venerated, so long as that voice speaks the language of truth and right. That voice must find an utterance in the cause

of popular education. The fulcrum upon which to rest the mighty moral and intellectual lever, by which the character of the present and succeeding generations is to be raised, is the *will of the people.* That stand-point the friends of education must gain, or all their efforts will be comparatively fruitless. The heart of the people must be touched,—the intellect enlightened, the moral sense aroused, and this work which should be done to-day, must not be deferred till tomorrow. Every year is adding at least ten thousand to the number of native born citizens of our state, and every week is bringing to our shores, flocks of emigrants, whose children, with our own, are in a few years to occupy our places, stand in our halls of legislation, and in their turn control the destinies of the republic. If its integrity is to be preserved —if the civil and political institutions which we so justly prize and cherish, are to be transmitted unimpaired to posterity, those children must be educated. The note of alarm cannot be sounded too loudly nor too long;—the work of preparation cannot be commenced too soon. There is danger in delay.

The success which has thus far attended the recent effort in this state, to direct attention to the most prominent defects in the administration of our common school system, and arouse the public mind to a consciousness of the necessity of reform, of prompt and efficient action, affords matter for congratulation. To the faithful few, who, for years past, through good and evil report, have manfully upheld the good cause, too great a share of praise cannot be awarded. It was from their unwearied efforts that the friends of education in convention at Augusta, in the month of January, 1846, derived en-

couragement and assurance to address the representatives of the people in behalf of the free school. The promptness with which the memorial of that covention was met and answered, the unanimity with which the bill reported in compliance with the prayer of the memorialists, passed the legislature, reflect honor alike upon the individuals composing it, and the state whose interests they represented, and is a happy augury for the future. But having done so much, the danger that individual effort may be relaxed, that to this board may be confided the achievement of that reform which can be effected only by the co-operation of the people, is neither to be overlooked nor concealed. Against this error, which, if persisted in, cannot but prove fatal to the cause in which we are engaged, the voice of earnest expostulation must be raised; and the assurance again and again reiterated, that be the members of this board faithful and indefatigable as they may, though they offer up their time and substance as a sacrifice, though they speak with the tongues of men and angels, yet that without the co-operation of the people, their labors in this behalf must be in vain. The people must come to the rescue! The legislator, the capitalist, the man of letters, must enlist for life, and take their places in the ranks of the great army of progress. And where, if not there, should they be found? How can the legislator more faithfully subserve the interests of his constituents, and more effectually protect their rights, than by providing the means of education for their children? What surer guarantee can the capitalist find for the security of his investments, than is to be found in the sense of a community morally and intellectually enlightened? And how can the man of

letters more faithfully fulfill his mission, than in teaching the people? The press—than which there is no mightier agent in giving a character to the age—the press must speak! speak too, not in the low mutterings of the distant thunder which tells of danger remote, but in the crashing peal which breaks over our heads. The pulpit must speak! Its voice of warning and of exhortation must be lifted up;—this "bread of life" must cease to be the "shew bread" of the sanctuary—it must be broken for the people. In the council chamber of the state, in the halls of legislation, in the lyceum, in the scenes of social intercourse and public debate, in the house of God, and in the village school house, must the voices of true hearted men be heard, until, touched by the electric spark, the dark and lowering cloud which now hangs over us shall burst, and its waters descend, to refresh and fertilize a parched and barren soil:—until this people, this whole people, shall be aroused to a consciousness of their duties and their dangers. Then, and not until then, will the free school of Maine fulfill its mission.

WM. G. CROSBY, *Secretary of the Board of Education.*

AUGUSTA, May 25, 1847.

REPORT

OF THE

Committee upon Education in New Settlements.

THE committee to whom was referred the topic of "education in the new settlements," have bestowed upon it their deliberate attention, and beg leave to submit their report—arriving at the following conclusions:

That the newly settled portions of the state do not enjoy adequate advantages of common school education—that to secure these advantages they need assistance from abroad—and that the application of the necessary aid is practicable.

Your committee are convinced that the legislature looked upon this subject in its true light when they made it the duty of the board of education "to consider the best methods of aiding and promoting education in the new settlements." Thus assuming and declaring that in those new parts of the state, there is *need* of aiding and promoting education. The researches of your committee fully sustain the correctness of this view.

The parts of the state designated as "the new settlements," are situated chiefly, though not entirely, in the northern part of the counties of Franklin, Somerset, Piscataquis and Penobscot, and in the whole of Aroostook. This last named county contains a surface of more than 6,000 square miles, an area larger than that of the state of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Over this territory is scattered a population of 10,000 souls, and of these a large proportion are children and youth. Yet of the 4,000 square miles in this county now surveyed into townships, only or about 300 square miles can be found the free common schools which are the boast and glory of New England; while of its 10,000 citizens, less than 4,000 enjoy the blessings which such schools are designed to confer. The remaining 6,000, that is, three-fifths of the whole population, are almost entirely unprovided for by the guardian care of the state. Private schools are indeed found in some of the larger unincorporated settlements. But from the nature of the case, the advantages of these cannot be enjoyed by the poor, and will not be sought by the indifferent. They are of course, inadequate to the wants of the inhabitants.

This general view is sustained by particular facts, showing the effects upon the community of this educational destination. In a plantation adjoining the shire-town of the county above referred to, there are 75 scholars, but there never was a public school kept in it. Sometimes short private schools have been kept in summer, but youth there have grown up to manhood and have entered upon married life, who have yet been unable to read or write. In another plantation six miles from the above, there have been kept the past year,

neither public nor private schools. Of the 92 scholars in this plantation, probably one-half are unable to read or write. On direct inquiry, 25 persons between the ages of 15 and 21, were ascertained to be unable to read or write. Just beyond the bounds of this plantation resides one family containing 9 children, 8 of whom can neither read nor write. This state of things is found on all of the principal thoroughfares of the county!

Your committee desire to be understood, that the facts now presented are not isolated ones. Similar facts, with a greater or less degree of shading, may be found in the new settlements of the state at large. "In this plantation," writes one school committee, "are 126 scholars, 26 only of whom have attended school, a private school kept by a female, last winter." Thus leaving 100 scholars, that is, about four-fifths of the whole number, who have not entered the school-house, summer or winter. Another school committee states as follows: "In this plantation are 60 scholars, and we never had a school of any kind, public or private."

The constitution of Maine declares that "a general diffusion of the advantages of education is essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people." The ignorant man cannot be a freeman. He bows down his head like an ox, in subjection to others, or else, like the wild animal of the forest, he is the sport of untamed and unregulated powers and impulses within. Much less can he be an American freeman. He cannot understand the great practical ideas of the sovereignty of the people and the equality of conditions, peculiar to our form of government, neither can he rightly discharge the duties resting on every citizen, growing out of them. Vested,

equally with the most intelligent citizen with the right of making all laws, of managing all public affairs, of controlling all social action, he is incompetent to fill his responsible position. If he act for himself at all, he must carry the darkness of ignorance or the caprice of self-will, when light should shine and patriotism should govern.

In view of these statements and facts, the committee would respectfully submit to the board, their opinion, that the newly settled parts of the state are not in possession of adequate advantages of common school education—and that the political and social, as well as the economical and moral interests of the state, require such advantages to be extended to the children and youth there, as soon as possible.

Your committee would further submit, that in order to secure to the new settlements the necessary educational advantages, assistance is needed from abroad—because sufficient available help cannot be found within themselves. The ordinary exigencies of settlers in a new country, make heavy drafts upon their energies, drafts unfavorable to the proper mental culture of their families. They must cut down the forests, clear the soil, make the roads, turn the wilderness into fruitful fields, and draw their own support therefrom; while generally, their isolated situation cuts them off from the animating impulses which might be imparted by others.

But in addition to these, there are other disadvantages peculiar to our new settlements. On its newer parts, this state borders very largely upon foreign provinces, in which free schools do not exist. And as emigration is always to a greater or less degree taking place, there is a constant influx of ignorance and educational indiffer-

ence within the bounds of the state. Especially does this current flow in upon us from the valley of the St. John. At the same time, the migrating population from the older parts of the state takes its course northward and eastward, and meets the inward current. Agitations and eddyings result from the conflict. When these have subsided and the waters become quick, it is found, in the new settlement, that intelligence and ignorance are placed side by side; deep solicitude for the young and profound neglect for them, reside upon contiguous farms, and lodge in neighboring dwellings. Under these circumstances, the board will readily see that if the new settlements are left to accomplish the work alone, the establishment of schools must be difficult, and the progress of education slow. In the meanwhile, as little or nothing is done, whole families lose the favorable season for mental culture, and grow up ignorant alike of their capabilities, their duties, and their true happiness. Aid is needed from abroad to give energy and direction to the educational forces on the field, and, like the reserve corps on the field of battle, to prevent a drawn conflict, and win a decisive victory.

In bringing to the attention of the board the more difficult subject of the aid appropriate to be applied to meet the existing want, the committee would point out the necessity of securing the establishment and support of such teachers' seminaries, as shall be sufficient to furnish teachers for the common schools existing or to be established in the new parts of the state.

The want of qualified teachers, constitutes an obstacle to education well nigh universal, in the new settlements. In the northern section of this state, there is not, and

never has been, an institution of any kind from which this want could be supplied. The welfare of the children there, imperatively demands the establishment of teachers' seminaries. Greatly conducive to the same end, more speedy in its operation, will be the establishment of the teachers' institute already resolved upon by the board.

To meet the destitution existing in the new settlements, it is necessary also to raise a greater amount of money for establishing and supporting common schools therein. The only funds at present available for this object in the places not incorporated for municipal purposes, are the proceeds of the bank tax, amounting the past year to just 12 cents for each scholar; a sum not sufficient to procure mittens to save his fingers from the frost for a winter, much less to purchase the educational privileges which he needs for a year.

The incorporated towns are required by law, in addition to other funds available for school purposes, to raise by tax, 40 cents for each inhabitant. No judicious person will consider this sum too great for the support of schools. Your committee submit it as their opinion, that an equal sum should be raised for the support of schools in the settlements yet incorporated for municipal purposes. And in view of the already mentioned exigencies of the settlers—in view also of the proprietorship of the state in the soil on which many of the settlers reside, they think that the state, like other proprietors, should assist in educating the children in its new settlements. And they suggest it as in their view just and proper that there should be appropriated from the public treasury to this object, a sum equal to that which the settlers themselves shall appropriate thereto, until the amount shall reach 40 cents for each inhabitant.

With such provision made for supplying teachers, and for raising funds for their support, your committee would rely for the rest upon the moral influence of the board, and of the friends of education in the new settlements, and upon the never-ceasing, all-powerful working of time to carry knowledge and mental culture to the most distant and destitute settlement and log cabin of our state.

With the expression of these views, the committee in conclusion, would recommend the adoption by the board of the following resolutions.

Resolved, As the opinion of the board of education, that two academies, or teachers' seminaries, should be established in the northern part of this state, at which teachers may be qualified and prepared to meet the wants of common schools in the new settlements. And that these institutions, like other academies, should be endowed by grant from the state.

Resolved, That the board memorialize the legislature to appropriate for the establishment and support of common schools in the new settlements of the state, upon townships of which the state is proprietor, a sum in addition to the avails of the bank tax, equal to that which shall be appropriated by the settlers themselves, to that purpose, till the amount shall reach the sum of 40 cents for each inhabitant.

All which is respectfully submitted.

WM. T. SAVAGE, *per order.*

REPORT

OF THE

Committee on Qualification and Education of Teachers.

THE committee to whom was referred the subject of the "qualification and education of teachers," have had the same under consideration, and now ask leave to submit the following thoughts by way of report.

If by qualification is meant fitness for their employment on the part of those employed in the common schools, and by education, how they may best be fitted and prepared for the rightful and proper discharge of the duties of their profession, then indeed the subject assumes an importance which may well claim the attention, not only of this board, but of the friends of public instruction throughout the state.

What then are the requisite qualifications of a good school teacher? Fully to answer this question is no less than to unfold the whole science and philosophy of the human mind. To penetrate the depths of human motives of action, and to pick and cull from them those which may be safely cherished and encouraged; and to distinguish

from them, such as should be left to wither and die for want of nutriment—this it is not expected to accomplish.

But undoubtedly the teacher should be qualified for his duties in reference to the character of his employment, and in order to determine what the character of his qualifications should be, it is necessary first to examine and see, if we can, to what use these qualifications are to be applied.

What then is the character of the work which the teacher is to perform? Is he to cultivate the soil, to fell the trees of the forest? To plow or to sow, to reap and to mow? Is he to chisel the quarried marble, to develop its latent beauties and excellencies? Is he to blow the bellows, or smite the anvil? Is he to direct the ship across the trackless waste of waters, or to calculate the changes of the rolling year, and mark the orbits of the heavenly bodies? No, not these; these are not his exclusive work, though he may qualify others for these, among many other employments. His, is more than all these put together. His work is the cultivation of the human mind, the immortal mind. He is to cultivate the intellectual soil of the youth. To weed it of every noxious growth. To plant there the seeds of learning and wisdom, whose fruits shall not only afford a rich harvest to the individual who bears them, but which shall be productive of the greatest good of the greatest number. And to do this, he has not only to study and learn the character of the soil in one particular locality, but of every variety of soil, in every variety of location and climate. And all this he is to do, at the same time that he is to guard and protect the young plants from being consumed and destroyed by outward vicious influences, and

to prevent their being overshadowed and overrun by weeds of indigenous growth. He must discriminate closely and wisely, and be able rightly to adapt his seed to the different soils. A mistake in this particular, would not only jeopard the crop in respect to quantity and quality, but might so injure the soil itself that it would never after produce good fruit or abundantly. Having been so sapped and weakened as to lose much of its natural, inherent, fructifying qualities, it can never after be raised to a healthful state, so exact and nice a work it is properly to dress and seed the youthful mind. The teachers' work requires a knowledge not only of the intellects of his pupils, and of their capacity for intellectual culture, but he must know and understand the strength or weakness of their moral faculties and propensities; for his work also embraces the cultivation of these. And it stops not here. He must attend, and be qualified to attend to the physical education of his pupils. Their health is to be regarded. And they must receive from the schoolmaster, such treatment at least, as will not injure their health. And he is to advise them as to the best mode and means of restoring and preserving it so far as their habits contracted at school may affect it. The teacher's work ends not here. His own conduct and example before his pupils must be such as can be approved. Hence he is to labor incessantly at the great task of self-instruction and self-examination. Personal pride is to be humbled, ambition curbed, selfishness reproved, and all that great family of temptations which constantly beset the human mind, are to be resisted, which will require strength and constant labor to perform.

Such are some of the duties, such is some of the work,

and such its character, to be fulfilled and performed by the educator of youth. In view of them, what then ought his qualifications to be? They must undoubtedly be such as the nature of his employment requires. A judicious writer on this subject has well remarked, that "no school system can be worth any thing, without a full supply of well qualified teachers." But he has omitted to give us a specification of those qualifications. Here is the difficulty. It is difficult to specify them, for several reasons. One is, because they are innumerable. And another is, because of the ever varying demand for these rare gifts, to suit the wants of so great a variety of tempers, morals, passions, propensities, and intellects, as are to be found in every school.

The teacher's instructions to be useful must be exactly suited to the mind of each pupil, and to his capacity to receive instruction. In this connection it may not be improper also to add, that considering the character of our free institutions, and the free toleration of religion and politics, the school teacher at the same time that he may freely enjoy his own peculiar political and religious views, should be wholly devoted to his calling, and entirely free from sectarian influences in his intercourse with his pupils; leaving them to choose for themselves in these matters, after they shall have arrived to that age, and acquired that knowledge of the world and of the opinions of men in it, which may enable them to judge rightly of what is truth, and what is error, in connection with men's political and religious opinions. But at the same time the school teacher should be a true patriot and christian.

The school teacher must also be a person of profound

learning and deep scientific attainments. Not superficial, or wanting in a knowledge of any thing useful for children to know, or which they ought to learn. He should be judicious as well as learned. His judgment should be quick, strong, and well directed, enabling him to decide the most difficult point, within the sphere of his duties, with exceeding accuracy. His perception should be keen and quick, so that he may never be taken by surprise. He should be upright in his morals, and love his calling. He should be apt to teach, and love to cultivate the principles of virtue and religion.

He should possess strength to govern, and power to lead the idle and disobedient to industry and willing obedience. He should be meek and humble, yet bold and firm, not ostentatious or vain. His knowledge of human nature should, if possible, be unbounded. He should be industrious, loving labor for the sake of the good he can do, as well as to secure a competency. He should be honest, faithful and kind; temperate, patient and just. He should be courteous to his inferiors, as well as his equals and superiors. In fact he should be to his pupils, what Christ was to his followers, a pattern and example. Such is a brief outline of the qualifications deemed important and indispensable prerequisites in the school teacher. In view of them may it not be asked, with propriety, who is sufficient for these things? Who among us is worthy to be selected for the high and responsible duties of school master, with any hope of success. And when it is considered that many hundreds of teachers are annually required in the public schools of this state, who can wonder, that with the limited means afforded them to improve their qualifications, many of the schools should

be supplied with incompetent teachers. Is it not the greater wonder, that so many among us have been found, who can teach at all? And yet at the present moment there is so great a degree of apathy among us on this subject, and so great a want of just conceptions among the people of the existing evil, and of the necessity for improvement, that it is deemed hazardous to propose a plan, looking to the establishment of an institution for the education of teachers. Such an institution is undoubtedly what is most needed to effect this object.

Yet the teachers are not in fault in the matter of unsuitable qualifications, for these are as high as the people have called for. And it may not be expected that they will improve their qualifications until the people call for such improvement. What then is wanting, seems to be, an increased interest and solicitude on the part of those most interested, that the teachers be every way qualified and fitted for their high profession. To effect this, seems to be the great work before us at the present moment. For as soon as the people, or those who have the immediate care and oversight of the schools, shall call for higher qualifications in their teachers, it is believed an inducement will be presented to the teachers themselves, to improve their qualifications.

But it may not be expected that this call will be made, and this demand arise, until those from whom it must come, shall feel, deeply feel the need of improvement. How then shall they be made sensible of this? Surely in this country in no other way than by diffusing light and knowledge on the subject among the masses. For as soon as sufficient light and knowledge is diffused, an interest in the subject will be felt, a deep interest will be

produced, which will create a demand, throughout the length and breadth of the state, calling for teachers whose qualifications shall answer the demand. Then we may look for an effort on the part of those interested, to meet the call. The people must first know what they need, and then they will ask for it, and not till then. The enlightened, and the friends of common schools, must move in this matter.

And here the question arises, how shall they move? The answer is by speaking, writing, and printing. The press must be secured in the work, an agent must be placed in the field who shall visit every part of the state, unless we have such agent in the secretary of this board. A teachers' institute must be formed in each county, on the plan perhaps of those of New York and Massachusetts, and other states, which will secure the aid of the teachers themselves. Public lecturers may be employed, and the people called together and enlightened on the subject. Thus a demand may be created, a loud call will go forth for teachers, well qualified for their business. Then, and not till then, can any great measure for the establishment of schools for the education of teachers be proposed with any hope of success. Looking then to a general diffusion of information among parents and guardians, and those who have the care of the schools, including superintendents, as the first great step to be taken in this state for the improvement of the teachers' qualifications, we come next to consider, whether effectual aid may not be drawn from an association of teachers in each county under the name of "teachers' institutes." These associations must undoubtedly, for the present, be voluntary, unless it may be deemed advisable to go so far as

to ask of the legislature a small appropriation from the state treasury, towards defraying the incidental expenses of instructors, whom it may be deemed suitable to employ in those institutes, and for apparatus, libraries, fuel, &c..

In these periodical meetings, the teachers will find an opportunity to learn the experience of each other, and to listen to such lectures, as may be provided, and to participate in such exercises as may be instituted for the inculcation of knowledge in every department of school instruction, discipline, and government. These teachers coming from every part of the county, and spending several weeks together, will be likely to adopt similar views and opinions in respect to what is wanting, and what is required in their qualifications, and the best modes of managing and conducting a school. And much will therefore be gained in the matter of uniformity of method and discipline in school. And returning as they will do, refreshed and enlightened, they will carry back to their patrons and pupils, additional evidence of their zeal in the business of their profession. And thus being the means of disseminating among people much information, they will secure the confidence of the public in their ability to instruct the public schools.

By establishing teachers' institutes, the superintendents of the several towns in each county would have an opportunity to become acquainted with each other, and with the methods adopted by each in the examination of teachers, and thus be able to select and adopt the most approved.

The examination of teachers in each town should be made the occasion of affording them as much information as possible in relation to their newly-assumed duties.

Plans and modes of examination should be fixed upon and adopted, and these should be made known to the public: thus raising to view the standard of the teachers' qualifications. "As is the teacher, so is the school," is a motto of those who have studied most to devise a plan for the improvement of the public schools. Concentrating and uniting the wisdom of each county will do much to aid the teachers in coming at the best mode of accomplishing the work of preparing themselves for their duties. Already the teachers cry out for aid, in a voice of supplication. Shall they cry in vain? Let those answer on whom rests the responsibility. Let the legislature do its duty by granting an appropriation for the establishment and support of a teachers' institute in every county of the state. Obstacles in the way of accomplishing a result so desirable, undoubtedly there are. These must be overcome or removed, though much wisdom and patience will be required to effect their removal. Is it objected, that a far greater amount is now by law annually drawn from the pockets of the people, for educational purposes, than they are well able to pay, and therefore it is inexpedient to ask for more, until this is better expended?

This objection, at first view, seems to have force in it. But, upon examination, it appears less and less forcible, until at last it entirely disappears. Raise as little as you will, unless that sum be judiciously expended, the public loss will be proportionably great. What would be thought of a farmer, who, after having purchased a valuable and good farm at a very great expense, and stocked it well, should place upon it, to manage and cultivate it, a youthful and inexperienced lad of sixteen or eighteen, who

had never seen an ox or a plow, and who knew nothing of the business of agriculture; and, at the end of the year, he should be heard complaining that his farm and stock had proved unprofitable, having yielded little or no income, and that briars and thorns had sprung up and choked the plants that otherwise would have grown and flourished there? Could it be said that such a man had acted the part of wisdom? On the contrary, would not his folly be apparent? Yet such is the suicidal policy of the people of this state, in the expenditure of the ample funds raised for the support of schools.

Let the people believe and understand, that it is as necessary that their school teachers should be trained for their office, as it is that their tailors and cobblers should serve an apprenticeship before they can be trusted to make a coat or a shoe, or as it is that their minister, lawyer, and physician should each have their school for preparation,—and we shall have no further difficulty in the matter of erecting schools for the qualification and education of teachers.

A very excellent writer has remarked that "we need not look long or go far to find those who take to themselves the name and the office of teacher, who have no fair claim to them." "Education is a great work, and the educator must be trained for his office." "He is to educate the faculties: and how can he do it, if he neither understands what they are, nor how they are to be exercised?" "Education is a serious matter—a deep concern." "He who would undertake to measure it must have some length of fathom to his line. The teacher is to communicate instruction on a great variety of topics, some of them profound and intricate. How can he

enrich and fertilize the minds of others, while his own is little better than an uncultivated field—a barren waste? Teaching should be made a profession."

By the laws of Prussia, school-masters are regarded as servants of the state. As such, they have the claim to a retiring pension in their old age. And, in every department, a society, which the law recommends rather than enjoins, has been formed, for the relief of the widows and orphans of school-masters. Make school-teaching a profession, and there would be a constant accumulation of knowledge from experience, and the business would become respectable, and the teacher would be respected. And, until the teacher shall be respected by the parents and others among whom he labors, he cannot be useful. One great reason why no more improvement has been made in the business, is because there have been no instructions from the past. Nothing has been preserved in the experience of those who have gone before us. And each youthful teacher, as he commences his high duties of instruction and government, is left without precedents or examples to guide his steps, and, consequently, he assumes for himself his own modes of government and discipline, which are often of the worst and weakest sort. Such will continue to be the case, and such the evils and deficiencies in the teacher's qualifications, until his business is made a profession. By the light of experience and experiment, much might be done towards maturing and perfecting a system of instruction and discipline.

What good reason can be assigned why something ought not to be done by the state for the encouragement of those who are willing to engage in the work of public

instruction as teachers? Would it not be for the public interest to give such encouragement? Is this the reason why it is withheld? Is it less important that the public schools be well supplied with suitably qualified teachers, than that a bounty should be given to the man or boy who kills a crow or a bear, thus encouraging cruelty and the love of it? Is it less important that teachers' institutes be established and endowed in each county, than that a cattle show and fair should be held annually in the same? Is the proper cultivation of the intellectual soil of the children and youth of the state, of less consequence than the cultivation of the earth? Is it of greater importance to pay a bounty of several hundreds of thousands of dollars upon wheat and corn, than to afford to the teachers of the public schools an opportunity to qualify themselves for the important duties of cultivating the seeds of learning and wisdom, of virtue and truth, of love and benevolence in the minds of the children of the state? These are questions worthy of consideration. For it is believed if the interest of the sums recently paid from the state treasury, thereby incurring a heavy state debt for agricultural bounties, could be annually appropriated for the education of teachers, it would answer the present demand, and do much to remedy existing evil. Indeed it would be more than it is hoped to obtain. Is there not a strange inconsistency apparent in the conduct of the legislative counsels of the state? This, however, is believed to be attributable to the want of knowledge among the people; for the legislature will mould the character of its legislation to suit the popular will. Hence we say, let light break forth to illuminate the darkness of men's minds. The press must be brought to the aid of

the school-master. Through its influence much may be done to disseminate correct views of school discipline and government, and every corner of our great and growing state may be reached by the swift winged messengers of the press. And why should not its influence be invoked in this cause? Why is it that the press has hitherto been overlooked in aid of this most important of all subjects that can engage the attention of a free people? Manifestly it is because the people have not called for its aid. Every other cause finds its advocates through the press.

Another, and very important step might be taken to improve the qualifications of teachers. It is believed that a great portion of the best qualified teachers are annually excluded from schools, and the same supplied by incompetent ones, in consequence of the neglect of superintendents to examine applicants for certificates of qualification. Every teacher, before he goes into a school, should be subjected to a thorough and rigid examination. It is admitted that in many towns the examiners themselves cannot be said to be thorough scholars. And if not, it may be asked, how the teachers are to receive at their hands a thorough examination? The stream cannot rise higher than its fountain.

All this is undoubtedly true. Yet in many towns it is not so. Many examiners possess abundant qualifications for the proper and faithful discharge of their duties, yet neglect them. And it has often happened that in towns where the means exist for determining the suitableness of the teachers' qualifications, the very poorest teachers may be found employed. To remedy this evil in a great measure, let superintendents do their duties. Let every

teacher be examined. Let method be adopted and practiced upon in the examination. And let each board of examiners make themselves acquainted with the most approved methods of examination, and the result would be found in the fact that far better teachers would find their way into the public schools.

Another consideration, in this connection, ought not to be overlooked or forgotten. The compensation which any man expects to receive for his services, will have an essential and important bearing in his mind, in determining his choice of employments. And since, from what has been said, and from the experience of every observing man, it is apparent that the schools are to be supplied with competent teachers from that class of our citizens the most worthy and talented, it cannot be expected to secure their services without offering them an inducement to engage in the work of teaching, by way of compensation, which will equal, at least, what they can obtain in other callings. And that inducement must continue, and remain permanently in view. For, as soon as a judicious and anxious teacher finds his expenses exceeding his incomes in his business, he will very properly abandon it, and cast about for some more lucrative employment. He leaves his school because he is starved out, and not because he dislikes his business.

In this manner the school is deprived of the services of a good teacher; and others, seeing the rock on which he split, and seeing his labors unrewarded, change their purposes, and seek some other means of obtaining that reward which their favorite employment will not afford. And thus the way is opened for the schools to be supplied with poor teachers, because good ones are not well sup-

ported. But it is admitted a difficulty arises here. For how shall the wages of the teacher remain in any degree permanent, while the size of school districts remains so small, and under the present system of distributing the public school funds? But this subject has been assigned to other and abler hands, and therefore it is not approached.

Again: another and very serious evil attends the present system of qualifying teachers. It is the system of flattery practiced by preceptors and others. It consists in granting complimentary certificates to their pupils, wherein it is certified that the bearer has attended under their instruction for a certain length of time, and that he is "well qualified to teach," &c. These certificates are granted, in most cases, without any regard to the qualifications of the individual; no responsibility, or accountability being felt by the individual granting the certificate; but the holder feels flattered by it, and is emboldened to push out into the country in pursuit of a town school. And thus, swarms of these young and inexperienced persons, for they cannot be called teachers, are annually thrown out to try their luck at their new calling. The agents to whom they apply for employment, seeing the certificate from their teacher, are induced to employ them, when in reality they do not possess a single qualification for the business they undertake. And their connection with the schools is often a serious evil. Our laws are very severe against counterfeiting the current money or coin of the state. Why should they not be equally severe against counterfeiting the school teachers of the country? Is it less important that none but genuine school teachers should circulate among the people,

than that a few spurious bills or coin should be prohibited from passing from hand to hand among us?

And not only preceptors of academies, but other persons of far less ability to judge of the suitableness of an individual to teach school, are carrying out this evil practice, by granting like certificates. It is well known that the state is full of private schools every fall, set up in almost every village, and at the corner of almost every cross road, by under-graduates, professional students, and others, on their own responsibility, taking tuition of their pupils by the week as their compensation.

These schools are often advertised, by the individual getting them up, as a *high school.* And, at the close, the pupils all, or nearly all, come out with a certificate that the bearer is well qualified to teach school, &c., signed by "A. B., Principal of C. D. High School." And the holder or bearer really thinks he is indeed a "school-master," and, as evidence of it, presents his certificate from the "high school teacher," when, perhaps, in fact, he cannot maintain a respectable place in the classes in his own native school.

Every tin pedler, before he is permitted to offer his wares for sale, is required to procure a license for his business. Why, we ask, is it not as important to the public interest that a man should be required to show some sort of a license for his business, before he is permitted to peddle school-masters at this rate?

Having thus briefly hinted at some of the means within the reach of the school teacher to improve his fitness for the discharge of his duties, it may be remarked that, after all that can be done by the united energies of all these means, much will remain to be accomplished by the

light of experience, and by constant, persevering labor and toil.

Practical teachers, those who are disposed to become wise by experience and practice, may be more safely relied on than any others, to guide the way of the inexperienced and the young. It is therefore believed that, before teaching can be made a profession, it must be treated as an art and science. But time alone can accomplish this.

First, then, let the public mind be enlightened through the press, and by public addresses and lectures. Second, let a teachers' institute be organized, and endowed to a certain extent, in each county, under the direction of the secretary of the board of education. Third, let superintendents do their duty by examining teachers, in all cases, before granting a certificate of qualification; and, to this end, let each board of superintending school committee, immediately after their election and qualification in the month of March or April, annually, meet and organize the board, and adopt that method of examination which to them may seem most advisable, and recommend and publish their list of school-books.

And, when these measures have done their work upon the public mind, it may be hoped the time will have arrived when a state institution for the qualification and education of teachers may be established and amply endowed, which shall be to the moral and intellectual resources of the state what the heart is to the human frame—its motive power, the seat of life and action.

O. L. CURRIER,

Committee on the subject of the qualification and education of teachers.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON MORAL INSTRUCTION.

THE committee to whom was entrusted the subject of moral education, beg leave to report:

That it was a prominent object of the framers of our laws, to have the principles of morality fully taught in our public schools; and that this branch of education was deemed by them of indispensable necessity, not only to the welfare of individuals, but also to the security of the state.

Hence the law makes it the duty of all instructors, "to take diligent care, and to exert their best endeavors, to impress on the minds of the children and youth committed to their care and instruction, the principles of morality and justice, and a sacred regard to truth; love to their country, humanity, and universal benevolence; and all the virtues which are the ornaments of society."

The law not only enjoins that these duties shall be taught, but also that every teacher shall, as far as possible, lead those under his care, to see the importance of them. Hence it adds, "and it shall be the duty of such

instructors to endeavor to lead those under their care, as their ages and capacities will admit, into a particular understanding of the tendency of the before-mentioned virtues, to preserve and perfect a republican constitution, and secure the blessings of liberty, as well as to promote their future happiness; and the tendency of the opposite vices, to slavery, degradation, and ruin."

No language can be more unequivocal and decisive than this; and in view of this provision of the law, we ask, can any teacher omit the moral education of those placed under his care, without violating the most solemn responsibilities, and putting to hazard the highest interests of individuals and of the community?

That, however, such instruction is not universally, and, we must add, generally given, is too plain to be denied. In some instances, so far from the morals of those who attend our public schools being improved, there is to fear that they have become worse. This may be expected where many meet together, some of whom have their morals entirely neglected at home; unless the utmost care is taken by suitable instruction, to prevent their corrupting each other.

Not unfrequently has the modesty of young children, and even of those of riper years, been seriously injured, by the want of suitable appendages to the school-houses; but on this we need not enlarge, as it will probably be alluded to in another report.

In other cases, positive injury is done by the teacher. We would not intimate that the cases are numerous; we are satisfied that they are not, but occasionally is found a teacher of immoral character; one whose habits and language, and general conduct, must produce a most dele-

terious influence on the tender minds of susceptible, imitative youth. And worse yet, sometimes is found a teacher, who, destitute of any elevated sense of propriety, introduces, or allows to be introduced, books of the most debasing tendency. Conduct so base cannot receive a reprehension too severe. He, who is guilty of it, poisons the water at its very fountains; he blasts the dearest hopes; is a traitor to the most sacred trusts; he robs the community of the pay he takes for worse than useless services, and leaves the slime of his own corruptions on hearts it was his duty to purify. Well may the frowns of a deeply injured people, as well as the displeasure of the Almighty rest upon him.

The people of this state are so fully impressed with the importance of knowledge, that, for many years it has, in our common schools, practically, received almost exclusive attention. The best books for teaching, and the best methods of acquiring the elements of science, have been earnestly sought. But to secure the proper ends of education, all the faculties must be simultaneously and equally cultivated. If we cultivate the intellectual powers, while, by unrestrained indulgence, vicious propensities acquire strength, a most fearful responsibility is incurred. The lion enchained, is let loose. The power to do evil is increased, and the tendency too. What must be the result? Instead of upright and useful citizens, our youth will go out with knowledge, indeed, but not with a knowledge of their duties, or a disposition to perform them; law will not be reverenced, while the rights of others will be trodden under foot. Fraud, dishonesty, injustice, like plague spots, spread through the body. Selfish and ungoverned passions come into col-

lision with each other; the peace, the harmony of society, is broken up; want of confidence, a painful sense of insecurity, disorder, discord, violence, succeed; while personal and social degradation complete the scene. As law is the only security of our rights, and as under our institutions law is merely the expression of the people's will, and can be enforced only when in harmony with their feelings; it follows, that should ours become a vicious people, all our security will be gone, and our property, reputation, and even life itself, will be held at the mercy of excited and unbridled passions. Every thing will then be gone.

Those who framed our institutions were aware of this. They saw that if these institutions were ever destroyed it would be thus, and only thus be done. They knew that if that temple of our liberties, which they reared, should ever be thrown down, it would be by the hands of an ignorant and morally debased people; all history declaring that none but a moral, can be a free people: and that only by a virtuous community can be secured the blessings of liberty, or the enjoyment of a republican constitution. And hence, with an earnestness of expression, to which our statute book every where else is a stranger, they made it the duty of every instructor in the state, from the lowest to the highest, in private institutions as well as public, whatever else they may teach or neglect to teach, most assiduously to attend to the moral instruction of those placed under their care.

It may be objected, that the thorough course of moral instruction enjoined by the law, would interfere with other studies. This, we think is a mistake. Those teachers who most successfully enforce the precepts of morality,

are, usually, the most successful in promoting the intellectual advancement of their scholars. And the reason is evident. Morality is the parent of order; and order is indispensable to intellectual success.

Beside, morality need not be taught by lengthy, formal lectures: it should rather be the element in which the scholars should live, and move, and have their being. It should be seen in the elevated, and pure, and amiable example of the teacher. It should pervade every book they read. Every character brought before them, every incident that occurs, may afford opportunity for brief but profitable remark. Let the teacher highly appreciate moral excellence,—let his feelings be warmly interested in the moral advancement of his scholars,—and he will easily and pleasantly, because spontaneously, make his school the school of virtue, as well as of knowledge.

In addition to the careful exclusion of all books from the school, except those of a pure and elevated character, the bible, as containing the purest morality, sanctioned by the highest authority, and exhibiting the only perfect example of whatever is excellent and lovely, and of good report, should daily be read in our schools: thus rendering our youth familiar with its truths, and impressing its precepts and principles on their hearts.

It will be evident, when we consider the objects contemplated by our laws in the education of youth, that it requires choice men to be instructors—men ripe in virtue as they should be thorough in scholarship—as capable of moulding the heart as of directing the understanding. Nor can we deny, that, tried by the law, the only proper standard, many who have engaged in this work would be required to resign. Nor would this be a calamity. Our

most precious treasure is our youth; and on their moral and intellectual character the most valuable interests depend: we cannot give them up into unskillful and unworthy hands. The office of teacher is one of the most important that man can assume; and those who sustain it should, by their learning, and wisdom, and virtue, command the respect of an intelligent community; such that youth and age may alike reverence, while the state may regard them as the most honorable and useful of its members.

Since, contrary to law, the moral education of the young has, in our schools, been neglected, so as to produce wide-spread dissatisfaction and complaint, what, it may be asked, are the remedies we should apply?

In the lectures delivered, addresses made, and resolutions passed, in meetings on education, instead of intellectual instruction being almost exclusively pressed on the attention, let this subject be distinctly presented, and receive that notice which its paramount importance demands.

From the teachers' institutes, which we hope may be established by the legislature, we have reason to expect much. There the qualifications of teachers, their duties, and the best manner of performing them, will be fully insisted upon; and there it will doubtless be shown, that, if any are unable or unwilling to impart such moral instruction as the law requires, it will be their duty to relinquish an office for which they are unqualified or indisposed.

Before the needed improvement can be made, superintending committees must, on this subject, feel their responsibilities. To them is committed the trust of see-

ing the provisions of the law faithfully carried out; and a part of their duties is to see that teachers are morally as well as intellectually qualified for their work, and that they impart moral as well as intellectual instruction to those placed under their care. When examining teachers, they should endeavor to impress this on their minds, and point out to them that, if they neglect the moral culture of their school, they will fail to meet the responsibilities which they assume, and defeat, to a considerable extent, the most important end for which they are employed.

No one should be ignorant of the duties he is called to perform; and yet we fear, that, to a great extent, teachers are unacquainted with the requirements of the law concerning moral instruction. We would recommend, therefore, that a copy of the forty-seventh section of the seventeenth chapter of the revised statutes be given to every teacher, when he receives a certificate from the superintending committee.

But chiefly to the teachers themselves must we look. Let them be worthy of their office; let them resolve to do their *whole* duty. Let them consider that to their care, mind—intelligent, moral, deathless mind—is intrusted. How vast their responsibilities! how important their work! How much the character of our youth, the happiness of the community, the welfare of the state, depend on them! Let it be their aim to live in the grateful and affectionate remembrance of those placed under their care; to secure the approbation of their own conscience, and the favor of God.

SAMUEL ADLAM,
Per order of committee.

REPORT

OF THE

Committee on the Classification of Schools and Pupils.

It is admitted by all, that no part in the system of public education is of greater importance, than that which relates to the economy of time and money; the giving the best possible education in the shortest time, and with the least expense. It is with a view to this subject, that we shall proceed to lay before you the result of our consideration of the subject referred to us. The principle of dividing labor, which, in the mechanic arts has produced so great an improvement in quality, and at the same time such a diminution in the price of the various products of manufacture, loses nothing in value or importance, when applied to the process by which the ignorant child is formed into the educated man. But while we are so ready to admit the importance of this subject, we cannot for a moment hide from our view the immense practical difficulties which are to be overcome in this state, before we can arrive at results at all in accordance with our wishes.

The sparseness of population—the minute division of the towns into districts—the small amount of money appropriated to the several districts, which brings into direct conflict with each other the two very desirable objects of long schools and good schools—the great variety of school books in every branch of study, so nearly equal in point of merit that great dissatisfaction is produced at every attempt to prescribe one rather than the other, while the necessity for uniformity in order to classification renders such a decision necessary. All go far to render any attempt at a proper classification, either of schools or pupils, almost hopeless, and we are compelled to content ourselves with the hope that what we do will begin improvements in this matter, which may hereafter lead to a state of things more in accordance with the desires of the friends of education than what we at present see. Our duty as a "board of education," which is, among other things, to attempt an improvement of the system of popular education—seems to enjoin upon us to examine and act upon every subject, with a view to giving an answer to two questions—1st, What is necessary to produce such a system as the wants of the people and the principles of our government require?—2d, What is the first practical and practicable step towards that result? We propose as briefly as possible to consider the matter committed to us, in reference to these two questions.

Probably the best system of classification of schools, excluding what are usually called infant schools, (the necessity for which ought as much as possible to be removed by *home* education,) in towns of three thousand or more inhabitants, would be, into three grades of Eng-

lish schools, which we will denominate primary, intermediate, and high, schools. In the primary schools, children of both sexes under the age of eight years would be taught by mistresses. The studies would be the elements of the principal branches—reading and spelling; oral arithmetic, so far as the nature and relations of numbers to each other are concerned; writing, or rather drawing on the black board or on the slate, so far as to give a free use of the hand, and a proper conception and execution of the forms of letters and figures; geography, in relation to the general structure and form of the earth; its principal divisions; in relation to territory, government and religion, together with a somewhat particular account of our own country. The instruction in this school should be almost entirely oral. The mind of the child at that age is not sufficiently mature to enable it to derive any advantage from the process of studying and writing lessons, but it is just in that state when facts and principles communicated to it in a clear and simple manner, by teachers who understand how and what knowledge should be imparted, make an indelible impression.

In these schools the pupil would be prepared for the second, or intermediate grade. In this, the studies would be reading, spelling, and defining; arithmetic, both oral and written; writing; grammar; geography, connected with a general history of the various nations and governments of the world, and a particular history of the nature, form, and principles of the government of the United States, and of the several states; book-keeping, so far as is necessary for persons not engaged in mercantile pursuits, as farmers, mechanics, &c. Pupils in this

school would be between the ages of eight and twelve, though in the present state of education, some might be as old as fourteen years.

The third, or high school, would contain the pupils who have a good knowledge of the ordinary English branches, and in it they would complete an English education; Latin and Greek might be taught if desirable. The English studies would be history, ancient geography, natural philosophy, chemistry, geology and natural history with particular reference to agriculture; descriptive astronomy, algebra, geometry, surveying, navigation, penmanship and book-keeping, together with an advance in the studies taught in the intermediate schools. In towns or districts where the number of scholars is sufficient, the sexes in the intermediate schools should be divided, and taught respectively by an instructor of their own sex. In the high school, it would probably be much better and cheaper to have the sexes in different rooms in the same building, under the direction of a male principal, the female pupils being under the immediate instruction and government of a female.

For such a system of schools as this, it will be seen at once that very few of the districts or towns in the state are as yet prepared. Our population is not compact enough to furnish, within convenient limits, a sufficient number of pupils, nor will our people bear the tax necessary to support the three grades. We have described them rather as something which time and zealous efforts may hereafter accomplish, than as results which we hope immediately to produce.

But there is another classification of schools, which we think, with such change in the size of school districts as

we may reasonably hope an enlightened public sentiment and some slight modification in the law will very soon produce, together with a proper improvement of the privileges of uniting districts, afforded by the present laws of the state, can very soon be put into practical operation. This plan contemplates the instruction of children under ten years of age in the district schools, by females, where they would be taught reading, in a book equal to Worcester's Third Book; spelling; arithmetic, in the fundamental rules of simple and compound numbers, fractions and decimals, and in reduction; oral grammar; writing on the slate and black-board; geography and history, to a limited extent. From this they would pass by examination to the other school, where they would be instructed in all the branches of an English education, necessary for ordinary business. Such a system as this could, we think, without much increase of taxation, be established in every district where there are three hundred between the ages of four and twenty-one years, or by the union of districts in such way as to include that number within such territorial limits, that those over ten years could attend the union school if kept near the centre.

This would enable districts of the minimum number 300, to keep a union school for a period of four months in each year, at an expense of thirty-two dollars per month, and four primary schools for three months each, at an expense of twelve dollars per month, each, and this would be within the compass of the present tax. The plan contemplates that pupils of both sexes should attend the union school, and that, if there were more than fifty scholars, a female assistant should be employed. This

would not involve an increase of tax, because the school would not exceed fifty, unless there were more than 300 pupils in the district, and in that case, of course, there would be more money upon the same proportional tax. Where the school could be divided, it would undoubtedly be better that the sexes be separated ; but they should, if possible, be in the same building, because then a female assistant only would be necessary to conduct the exercises in the female department, and the whole would be under the direction of a master. Supposing that four contiguous districts united in a school of this kind, they might admit scholars from the other districts, charging them a reasonable proportion of the expense. Upon the plan here suggested, it is believed one or more of the higher grade of schools might be established in every town in the state, containing 1500 inhabitants, and perhaps in some towns even smaller than that.

In regard to the classification of pupils, your committee believe the details must in a great degree be left to the school committees and teachers ;—some general principles, however, may be presented.

1. All scholars in the same stage of advancement in any branch of study, should be in the same class, and therefore the text books must be uniform.

2. There should be two classes in each principal study ;—not more than this, because it would take too much time,—not less than two, because the variety in talents, opportunity, and attainment, will not permit it, and the stimulus of a desire to pass from the lower to the higher class, will be found of great service in inducing industry and attention. To render possible this classification, great constancy and punctuality in attendance

will be required, and some alteration in the law giving committees power to regulate this matter, may be necessary.

Such, are in brief, the views of the committee on the subject referred to them, and we have avoided as much as possible occupying the ground allotted to the other committees. Thus, in the statement of studies, we have not intended to designate all the studies to be attended to, lest we should seem to assume the duties of the committee on branches and modes of study. In reference to the arrangement of districts, and the change of laws to meet the exigencies of the case, we trust to those who have that matter in charge. We trust also, that what we have said, if it does not point out what ought to be, and can be done, will lead to such discussion as may lead to the discovery of what is really the best practicable improvement. All which is respectfully submitted.

A. HAYDEN,
D. WORCESTER,
SAMUEL TAYLOR, Jr. } *Committee.*

REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF EDUCATION

UPON THE

SUBJECT OF SCHOOL-HOUSES.

THE board of education, at their meeting for organization, in December last, directed the issuing of blank forms of inquiry, addressed to the superintending school committees of the several towns and plantations in the state, for the purpose of obtaining certain statistics relating to the public schools, and other information which they deemed of importance in the prosecution of their labors. One of the inquiries was, "What defects are there in the present system of common school education, and the management of common schools, so far as your observation and experience extend?" The inquiry was not intended to call attention to this subject; but it is worthy of note, and of most serious consideration, that a majority of the returns speak of ill-constructed school-

houses as one of the most prominent "defects in the practical operation of the law establishing common schools." The strength and uniformity of the language made use of, as well as the numerous applications to the members of the board, and their secretary, for information upon this subject, leave no room for doubt as to the existence of a wide-spread evil—an evil, the deleterious influence of which, unless it is reformed, and that speedily, is not to be confined to the present generation, but must be entailed upon posterity. In remarking upon this subject, as long ago as 1832, it was said by the board of censors of the American Institute of Instruction, that "if we were called upon to name the most prominent defect in the schools of our country,—that which contributes most, directly and indirectly, to retard the progress of public education, and which most loudly calls for a prompt and thorough reform,—it would be the want of spacious and convenient school-houses." From every indication, there is reason to believe that the remark is as applicable to our school-houses, in their present condition, as it was when made. For the purpose of contributing, in some small degree, towards effecting a reform for which so urgent a necessity exists, and rendering some assistance, in the way of counsel, to those who are about erecting new school-houses, or remodelling old ones, this report is prepared, under the direction of the board. It makes no claim to originality of thought or language; it is, in fact, a mere compilation of the thoughts and language of others who have given the subject a careful investigation, whose opinions are the result of close observation and long experience, and are therefore entitled to our confidence and respect.

To save the necessity of giving credit, upon almost every page of this report, for borrowed language, as well as ideas, it may here be remarked, that the principal sources from which the information herewith communicated has been compiled, are, the reports upon the subject of school-houses, by Hon. Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, Esq., and "The School-master," by Mr. George B. Emerson;—gentlemen to whom, for their efforts in the cause, a large debt of gratitude is due from the friends of education,—a debt which can be discharged in no manner more acceptable to them, than by entering into their labors, and adopting and reducing to practice their very valuable suggestions.

The prevailing defects in the construction of school-houses are, want of a proper regard to health, convenience, and comfort, in the choice of location, exterior and interior construction, and improper or imperfect methods of lighting, warming, and ventilating. In the attempt to suggest remedies for these defects, it is not pretended that the best possible are presented, or a perfect model described. The great variety of schools, diversity in the territorial extent, population, and pecuniary means of school districts, place uniformity in this matter entirely out of the question. It is intended merely to call attention to the essentials, furnish some variety of plans, and leave the subject to the good sense of those who may be called upon to exercise it. The subject will be best considered under distinct heads.

Location and Construction.

To secure improvement on the part of those who attend school, it must be made a place of pleasant rather

than painful associations. It is not to be forgotten that children have eyes to see with, tastes to be gratified, and minds susceptible of pleasant and unpleasant associations, as well as their elders. If the parent has a taste to gratify in the location, construction, and adornments of his dwelling-house, the child has no less in those of the school-house; and, as this taste is gratified or disregarded, it may be to him a palace or a prison. If its exterior is uninviting, its interior possesses few charms for him as a child, and is likely to be the source of any but pleasant reminiscences in manhood and old age. The latter is no trifling consideration, when it is borne in mind that, next to home, the school-house is the place most intimately associated with the recollections of childhood, and that upon the recollections of the past depends, mainly, the happiness of the present.

The location of the school-house should not be on a bleak and barren height; for so exposed, it becomes difficult to preserve the proper degree of temperature. It should not be upon a sandy and unsheltered plain; for the children are thereby exposed to the annoyances of extreme heat and dust. It should not be upon low, damp ground; for exposure to the exhalations which are constantly rising from such a soil, have a tendency to bring on a variety of diseases. It should not be close upon the highway; for the two-fold reason, that when in school, the attention of the scholars is diverted from their books, and when out of school, in the ardor of play, their lives and limbs are endangered by the passing carts and carriages. But it should be in some quiet, retired spot, away from the noise of trade and the highway, shielded, if possible, by trees, from the heat of summer, and the

wind of winter, and out of the sight and influence of every thing which might serve to distract the attention, or sully the innocence of childhood. The grounds about it should be sufficiently extensive, to afford room for healthful play and exercise, that there may not be the temptation, which necessity sometimes holds out, to encroach upon the lands of individuals, or the public highway. The building should be constructed in a workmanlike manner, and of well seasoned materials, and for economy, as well as appearance, covered with a substantial coat of paint. A well proportioned, neat, well painted school-house, gives a character to the district in which it is located, adds to the respectability of its members, and increases the value of every farm within its limits. It is an indication not only to the passer by, but to such as are looking around for a place of permanent residence, that there a healthy moral atmosphere prevails. There should be a cellar, or if none, a compactly laid and well jointed underpinning, sufficient to prevent the passage, under the building, of any more air than is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the floor timbers. An eminent physician, writing upon this subject, remarks as follows: "I have said that school-houses should have cellars under them. The floor of a building without a cellar is always cold, and often damp; this tends to keep the feet of scholars cold, while the head, in a region of air much warmer, will be kept hot. This is both unnatural and unhealthful. The feet should always be kept warm, and the head cool. In school-rooms heated by stoves, the feet are very liable to be cold, while the upper stratum of air, kept hot and dry by a long reach of pipe, produces a very unpleasant and

unfavorable state of the head;—headache, vertigo, and syncope, often take place in such a room."

Size.

This must depend in a great measure upon the number of scholars to be accommodated, but there are some few general rules applicable to school-houses of every dimension. *First;* there should be an entry of suitable dimensions to furnish a sufficient passage-way, and room for the deposit of hats, &c., upon hooks or pegs fastened to its walls. A separate entry for each sex is very desirable, and should be dispensed with only when it is rendered absolutely necessary by the lack of means to defray the expense; much confusion and rudeness may be thus prevented, and orderly habits promoted. *Second;* the school-room should be large enough to allow each scholar a suitable quantity of air; to pass to and from his seat without interfering with any one; to occupy his seat without any sense of confinement; to enable the teacher to pass conveniently round among his scholars. *Third;* in every district where the means will admit of it, in addition to the large room, there should be one or more recitation rooms; a portion of the same may be used for apparatus, library, or other purposes. *Fourth;* there should be an open space large enough to admit of recitation seats, and afford ample room for classes to pass and repass, without interfering with each other. *Fifth;* the height of the building should be such as a correct taste dictates, and the height of the school-*room* not less than ten feet; a greater height would be preferable.

Light.

This is a subject of no inconsiderable importance, although it has received but little attention from the great mass of the community. It would be no trifling labor to convince the many who are suffering prematurely from impaired vision, that the evil is traceable to an improper use of the eyes in reading, when they were children. But such, beyond question, is the fact. A distinguished oculist, in a lecture delivered before the American Institute, in 1833, remarks as follows: "How much talent lies dormant by the morbidly sensitive eye-sight, occasioned by inordinate and untimely use of the eyes! This last mentioned evil is increasing to a fearful amount among the young. Accurate inquiries have convinced me, that a large number of these individuals must go back to the school-room to find the source of their infirmities."

This evil may be remedied, so far as the school-room is concerned, by a little attention to the position in which the windows are placed. They should be inserted upon two sides of the room only, and no more of them than are necessary to admit such a quantity of light as is grateful to the eye. There should be none on the side towards which the scholars face;—if indispensably necessary that there should be one there, it should be glazed with ground glass. The sudden transition of the eye from the page on which it has been fixed for any length of time, to the full glare of light from a window directly in front, is not only disagreeable, but not unfrequently productive of serious detriment to the organ of vision. Whenever they can be so arranged, the windows should

be on the east and west sides, on the right and left of scholars and teacher. Windows on the north admit too much cold in winter, and on the south, too intense a light at the hour when it is greatest. It has been recommended by some, to insert the windows at such a height from the floor, that scholars cannot look out, when their attention is attracted by any noise outside. This gives to the room a gloomy and prisonlike appearance, and unless the school-house is in the immediate vicinity of the highway or other buildings, the occasion for any such diversion of the mind from their books, would seldom occur ;—but even in such an unfortunate location, the same object would be attained, by the insertion of ground glass in the lower sash. The usual cheerful height of three and a half or four feet, is upon the whole, preferable. They should be furnished with blinds or curtains, that the light when too intense, may be partially excluded, and the upper sash so fitted that it may be lowered for the purpose of ventilating the room at recess; as a mode of ventilating during school hours it is objectionable, as the cold air is thereby made to fall directly on the head and neck, producing colds, catarrhs, and frequently other more serious diseases.

Internal Arrangement.

Mention has already been made of entries and recitation rooms, under the title "Size." The great loss of time in winter, especially in the morning, and where open fire-places are used for warming, occasioned by the use of wet, unseasoned fuel, cannot fail to suggest the expediency of providing a wood closet. In school-houses in which the entrance is at one door in the centre, with a

passage merely into side entries or dress-rooms, ample room for a wood closet may be found in the rear of the front entrance. In districts where the expense can be afforded, a wood-shed in the rear of the school-house may be preferable, answering the double purpose of a place of deposit for wood in winter, and a play-room in rainy weather, in summer: it would also serve as a screen to those conveniences which the common offices of nature require, and which ought to be provided wherever any respect is felt for the ordinary decencies of civilized life.

Floor. Some diversity of opinion has heretofore prevailed, upon the question whether a horizontal or inclined plane, is preferable. The better opinion seems to be in favor of the former, although a very slight inclination is not particularly objectionable. The feet are placed in a more natural position upon the horizontal floor; the smaller scholars being placed in front, a full view of the school at a glance is as readily obtained, more space for air is secured, and as the room is warmed downwards, the temperature is rendered more equable, than when one portion is elevated much above the other.

Teacher's stand. The arrangements for the teacher should be such as to enable him to see the whole school from his desk, at a single glance. In some school-houses he has been located in the rear of his scholars, but a position in front is decidedly preferable. The impression upon the mind of the scholar that the teacher's eye is upon him, is stronger when the teacher is in front of him: the old maxim, "out of sight, out of mind," is not wholly inapplicable to the school-room. The teacher's desk should be upon a platform, sufficiently elevated to give

him a view of the persons of all his scholars above their desks;—nine inches is the usual height. A chair and table, which may be moved at pleasure, are preferable to a permanent seat and desk. There should be suitable drawers to contain his books and papers, with locks and keys. If convenient, the platform may extend the whole width of the room, and upon the wall in the rear of it may be suspended, on one side of this table, the blackboard, and upon the other, room may be found for a library case, or outline maps.

Scholars' Desks and Seats. This subject cannot be better introduced than with the following remarks, from sources of the highest authority. Dr. Woodward, superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, in a communication appended to Mr. Mann's report, remarks:—"High and narrow seats are not only extremely uncomfortable for the young scholar, tending constantly to make him restless and noisy, disturbing his temper, and preventing his attention to his books, but they have also a direct tendency to produce deformity of his limbs. As the limbs of children are pliable or flexible, they are made to grow out of shape by such awkward and unnatural positions. Seats without backs have an equally unfavorable influence upon the spinal column. If no rest is afforded the backs of children while seated, they almost necessarily assume a bent and crooked position. Such a position, often assumed and long continued, tends to that deformity which has become extremely common with children in modern times, and leads to diseases of the spine in innumerable instances, especially with delicate female children."

Dr. J. V. C. Smith, of Boston, in his Anatomical

Class Book, says:—"There is a radical defect in the seats of our school-rooms. Malformation of the bones, narrow chests, coughs ending in consumption and death in middle life, besides a multitude of minor ills, have often had their origin in the school-room." Again: "To those wretched articles, viz., badly-constructed seats and writing-desks, are we to look, in some measure, for the cause of so many distortions of the bones, spinal diseases, chronic affections, now so prevalent throughout the country."

Dr. Warren, in his admirable lecture before the American Institute, in 1830, says:—"In the course of my observation, I have been able to satisfy myself that about one-half the young females, brought up as they are at present, undergo some visible and obvious change of structure; that a considerable number are the subjects of great and permanent deviations; and that not a few entirely lose their health, from the manner in which they are reared." And, among the causes leading to such results, he enumerates the unnatural elevation of the right shoulder, the habit of bending the neck, and the stooping posture of the body, when engaged in writing, or similar exercises, at school.

In some school-rooms, desks and seats are arranged for one scholar only, in others for two: they should never be for a larger number. They should be in parallel lines, and facing the teacher's stand. The aisles between them should be at least eighteen inches in width; twenty-four would be better. Each desk should be at least twenty-one inches long,—twenty-four would be better,—and eighteen inches in width. The forward part of the desk should be level for about three or four inches; the residue

should have a slight inclination of about one and a half inches in a foot. For the deposit of books, &c., there may be a shelf under the desk, or the desk may be a box, with a lid hung on hinges. To the latter mode there are many objections, and the former is, upon the whole, much preferable. In the plan of a desk described in Mr. Alcott's Prize Essay, the box or case for books is in the front or horizontal part of the desk, about eight inches in width, and deep enough to receive the largest sized atlases and slates, when deposited edgewise, with a lid on hinges, which, when shut, forms a part of the desk. Another mode is to make the desk a plain box, without any lid, but with an oblong opening at each end, large enough to admit books, slates, &c. Upon this plan, everything deposited or taken out of the desk is exposed to the view of the teacher. The first and last described plans are the cheapest, and as little objectionable as any. On the horizontal portion of the desk, along the line of the slope, it is well to have a groove, to prevent pens and pencils from rolling off, and an opening to receive an inkstand, if those of a uniform size can be conveniently introduced. The desk should not be so far from the seat as to require the body to be bent forward in a constrained manner, nor should it be so high as to require a painful elevation of the elbow or shoulder-blades when writing or ciphering.

The front of each desk may form the back of the seat before it, and should slope a little backward, so that the back of the child, when sitting upright, may be in the same easy and natural posture as when seated in a chair: there should be no such thing in the school-room as a seat without a back to it. It is well, also, to have the

seats themselves incline a little, the front part being a little the highest. The back should rise two inches above the level of the horizontal part of the desk behind it, to prevent books and other articles from falling off forward. As to the height of seats, no exact measurement can be given: they should vary with the varying heights of children. Perhaps no better rule can be given to the architect, than to call in children of different heights, while he is constructing seats and desks, and learn from them the height which is most comfortable. This one fact must be particularly remembered, that they can never be accepted as comfortable seats, unless constructed of such heights as that the feet of every child, when properly seated, should rest upon the floor.

The omission to make mention of the patent school chairs and stools, which are in use, to some extent, in different parts of the state, is not to be regarded as evidence that such modes of seating are condemned or disapproved. Convenience and comfort, united with economy, have been consulted, in the recommendations contained in this report, rather than luxurious ease.

Ventilation and Warming.

The best method of warming a room is by means of a furnace, placed in the cellar. The incumbrance of a stove and pipe, the dirt and dust of a fire-place, and the offensive odors of burnt air, are in this way avoided. As affording better opportunities for ventilation, it is also preferable to the modes most generally in use. This method of warming has already been extensively introduced in many of our large towns; and it is to be hoped that it will, ere long, find its way into many others. Any

directions which might be here given, for the construction of furnaces, would be unnecessary to those who are acquainted with their practical operation, and but an imperfect guide to those who are not, and for this reason are omitted.

Next in order is the open fire-place, once the only method known for warming a school-room, but now almost obsolete. It has given place to the stove, at the imperious dictate of *economy;* but, unless fuel is of more intrinsic value than health, it is very questionable whether obedience to that dictate was the part of wisdom. As it may be of some service to the few who still cling to the time-honored, "old-fashioned fire-place," in their conflict with the advocates of the stove, the following extract from the "School-master" is inserted:—"By a little pains in the construction, the advantages of the latter (the open fire-place) may be combined with the economy of the former, (the stove,) and the room be at the same time furnished with an ample supply of fresh, warm air from abroad. In a suitable position, near the door, let a common brick fire-place be built. Let this be enclosed, on the back and on each side, by a casing of brick, leaving between the fire-place and the casing, a space of four or five inches, which will be heated through the back and jambs. Into this space let air be admitted from beneath, by a box twenty-four inches wide and six or eight deep, leading from the external atmosphere by an opening beneath the front door, or at some other convenient place. The brick casing should be continued up as high as six or eight inches above the top of the fire-place, where it may open into the room by lateral orifices, to be commanded by

iron doors, through which the heated air will enter the room. If these are lower, part of the warm air will find its way into the fire-place. The brick chimney should rise at least two or three feet above the hollow back, and may be surmounted by a flat iron soap stone, or brick-top, with an opening for a smoke pipe, which may be thence conducted to any part of the room. The smoke-pipes should rise a foot, then pass to one side, and then over a passage to the opposite extremity of the room, where it should ascend perpendicularly and issue above the roof. The fire-place should be provided with iron doors, by which it may be completely closed. The advantages of this double fire-place are, 1. The fire being made against brick, imparts to the air of the apartment none of the deleterious qualities which are produced by a common iron stove, but gives the pleasant air of an open fire-place; 2. None of the heat of the fuel will be lost, as the smoke-pipe may be extended far enough to communicate nearly all the heat contained in the smoke; 3. The current of air heated within the hollow back, and constantly pouring into the room, will diffuse an equable heat throughout every part; 4. The pressure of the air of the room will be constantly outward, little cold will enter by cracks and windows, and the fire-place will have no tendency to smoke; 5. By means of the iron doors, the fire may be completely controlled,—increased or diminished at pleasure, with the advantages of an air-tight stove. For that purpose, there must be a valve or slide near the bottom of one of the doors." The open stove approaches somewhat to the fire-place, is preferable in point of economy, and if furnished with a door, or doors, and sufficient length of funnel, unites many of the good

qualities of the fire-place and stove, without being subject to many of the objections which are often urged against each, and especially the last named.

The close stove, however, is in almost universal use in our school-houses throughout the state, and probably will continue to be so, until the furnace takes its place. The effort then should be, to obviate, as far as possible, the objections to its use, as furnishing none of the means of ventilation which the open fire-place and furnace afford. The plan proposed by Mr. Mann, is as follows: "If a common stove must be used for warming the room, then let it be enclosed in a case of sheet iron, rising from the floor on three sides of the stove and bending over it; not, however, so as to *close* over its top, but leaving an opening in the case, greater or less, according to the size of the stove and of the room. The sides of the case should be two or three inches from the sides of the stove. The stove should stand on legs a few inches from the floor, and fresh air should be introduced from out-of-doors, and conducted under the stove in a tube or trough, which, as it rises around the stove, will be warmed and enter the room through the opening in the case at the top. A slide in the tube, or trough, will regulate the quantity of air to be admitted. The sensations experienced in a room into which the external air is directly introduced and warmed in its passage, belong to a class entirely distinct from those engendered by air warmed in the ordinary way. They will be grateful to the pupils, and will promote elasticity and vigor of mind."

The only perfect mode of ventilation is that which provides for the escape of the impure air, at both top and bottom of the room, and the introduction of a current of

fresh air from the outside: in winter, this current should be warmed before entering the room, as it may be where the furnace, or the sheet iron case to the close stove, or the double fire-place, is used. Both of these processes should be going on at the same time. If neither of the above modes can be conveniently adopted, and it is difficult to conceive of any obstacle so serious as to be insurmountable, it is important to ascertain the next best. Various plans have been suggested and adopted, a synopsis of which is herewith submitted.

1. Let an opening be made both at the top and bottom of the room, of not less than 12 inches square, and furnished with a slide of wood or metal, by means of which they may be wholly or partially closed. If possible, these openings should be connected with the smoke-flue, or chimney. By the opening near the ceiling the warmer impurites will pass off; by the opening near the floor into the smoke-flue, the colder impurities will be drawn in, to supply the current of heated air and smoke, ascending the chimney. When the smoke-flue, or chimney, extends from the floor of the school-room, this method may be very easily adopted.

2. In those school-houses which were originally constructed with a chimney and open fire-place, but which has been closed up and the stove substituted, a most effectual ventilation may be secured by partially opening the fire-place near the hearth, with a slide fitted to it for opening and closing;—this opening should be two feet long, and eight inches high; above this, and near the ceiling, let another be made into the chimney, of 12 inches square, and also furnished with a slide.

3. Let two or more apertures be made in the ceiling;

two of them, 12 inches square, would probably be sufficient for a school-room, of the dimensions 24 by 28. If the house is of one story, they will open into the attic, and the air may be let off, either through fan windows at the ends, or sky-lights; or an opening can be made into the chimney, and a flue carried up to its top, in which case the floor in the attic under the flue, should be secured against the cinders which might possibly fall. If the house is of two stories, the apertures in the lower story should be in the side walls, near the ceiling, and so ascend by flues through the walls of the second story, until they open into the attic;—they should be fitted with sliding dampers. For closing the apertures in the ceiling, on the upper side, let a trap door be hung, to be raised by a cord, running over a pulley and coming down into the room. The trap-door should be prevented from opening to a greater angle than eighty degrees, so that when the cord is loosened, it will fall of its own weight, and close the orifice: it can be opened more or less, as the temperature of the weather demands. In this way, the vitiated air which rises toward the top of the room will escape. To secure the escape of that which has a tendency downwards, similar apertures may be made in the side walls, near the floor, with a flue ascending to the attic; or the space intervening between the outer and inner boards, if the house be of wood, may serve the purpose of a flue.

No notice has thus far been taken of the various injurious and expensive plans for securing proper ventilation, which have been invented, for the reason that the introduction of them into any of our school-houses, except those in large towns, is not to be looked for, at least, for

the present; and in such places, the necessary information can be readily attained by personal inspection of the various models, which is, of course, far preferable to any description which could here be given. A description of some approved methods may be found in the first volume of the "Common School Journal," in the "School and the School-master," and in the report of the committee on the "Ventilation of School-Houses," recently published in Boston.

The importance of a proper ventilation, not merely of school-rooms, but of dwelling houses, and places of public resort, has been strangely overlooked, or underrated. The following extract from the report of Mr. Barnard, presents the subject in its true light, and is commended to the careful consideration of all who are not deaf to the teachings of experience, or willfully bent upon the violation of the laws of life and health. "We do not appreciate the magnitude of the evils produced by breathing frequently, even for a short period at any one time, a vitiated atmosphere, because the ultimate results are remote, and the accumulation of repeated exposures. Besides, the immediate effects may be not only slight, but may apparently disappear on our breathing again a free and pure air, so that we forget to appreciate the temporary inconvenience or suffering, and to refer them to their true cause. How often do we retire at night, perfectly well, and rise in the morning unrefreshed by sleep, with an aching head, a feverish skin, and a sick stomach, without reflecting that those symptoms of a diseased system, are the necessary effects of breathing the atmosphere of a chamber, narrow in its dimensions, closed against any fresh supply from without, and not unlikely

made still more close by a contained bed, and exhausted of even its small quantity of oxygen, by a burning fire or lamp? These same causes, a little longer in operation, or a little more active, would produce death as surely, although not as suddenly, as a pan of ignited charcoal in the room. Who has not noticed that the fainting and sickness which so often visit persons, and especially females of delicate health, in crowded churches and lecture-rooms, only occur after the air has become over heated and vitiated, by having been a long time breathed, and that an exposure to the open air generally restores the irregular or suspended circulation of the blood? In the relief and newness of life which we experience on emerging from such places of crowded resort, we forget that the weariness and languor, both of mind and body which we suffered within, were mainly the depressing effects of the imperfectly vitalized blood, and that the relief is simply the renovated life and vigor, which the same blood, purified of its carbon by coming in contact with the oxygen of the air, imparts to the whole system, and especially to the brain. But in spite of our forgetfulness of the cause, or the apparent disappearance of the temporary inconvenience and distress, which should warn us to beware of a repetition of the same offence against the laws of comfort and health, repeated exposures are sure to induce or develope any tendency to disease, especially of a pulmonary or nervous character, in our constitutions, and to undermine slowly the firmest health. Who can look round on a work-shop of fifteen or twenty females, breathing the same unrenewed atmosphere, and sitting pent up, in a position which overstrains the free play of the lungs, and not feel, that disease, and in all probability, disease

in the form of that fell destroyer of our fair country-women, consumption, will select from among those industrious girls, its ill starred victims? The languor, debility, loss of appetite, difficulty of breathing, coughs, distortion of the frame, (fallen away from the roundness natural to youth and health,) nervous irritability, and chronic affections of various kinds, so common among females in factories, even in our own healthy New England, or those who have retired from such factories to their own homes to die, or wear out a dying life all their days, are the natural fruits of an exposure, day after day, to an atmosphere constantly becoming more impure from the vitiated breath of forty or fifty persons, and rendered still more unfit for respiration by dust and minute particles floating in it, tending to irritate the already inflamed and sensitive membrane which incloses the air cells of the lungs. To this exposure in the work-room, should be added the want of cheerful exercise, and innocent recreation in the open air, and the custom of herding together at night, in the small, unventilated sleeping apartments of our factory boarding-houses.

"In the school-room the same poisonous process goes on day after day, and if the work is less summary it is in the end more extensively fatal, than in the Black Hole of Calcutta. Every man and woman who received any portion of their early education in the common school, can testify to the narrow dimensions, and low ceiling of the school-rooms, and to the discomfort arising from the close, stagnant, offensive atmosphere, which they were obliged to breathe. Who does not remember the comparative freshness and vigor of mind and body, with which the morning's study and recitations were began,

and the languor and wearines of body, the confusion of mind, the dry skin, the flushed cheek, the aching head, the sickening sensations, the unnatural demand for drink, the thousand excuses to get out of doors, which came along in succession as the day advanced, and especially in a winter's afternoon, when the overheated and unrenewed atmosphere had become obvious to every sense? These were nature's signals of distress, and who can forget the delicious sensations with which her holy breath, when admitted on the occasional opening of the door, would visit the brow and face, and be felt all along the revitalized blood, or the newness of life with which nerve, muscle and mind, were endued by free exercise in the open air at the recess, and the close of the school? Let any one who is sceptical on this point, visit the school of his own district, where his own children are perhaps condemned to a shorter allowance of pure air than the criminals of the state, and he cannot fail to see in the pale and wearied countenances of the pupils, the languor and weariness manifested, especially by the younger children, and exhaustion and irritability of the teacher, a demonstration that the atmosphere of the room is no longer such as the comfort, health, and cheerful labor of both teacher and pupils require. In this way the seeds of disease are sown broadcast among the young, and especially among teachers of delicate health. 'In looking back,' says the venerable Dr. Woodbridge, in a communication on school-houses, to the American Institute of Instruction, 'upon the languor of fifty years of labor as a teacher, reiterated with many a weary day, I attribute a great portion of it to *mephetic air;* nor can I doubt that it has compelled many worthy and promising teach-

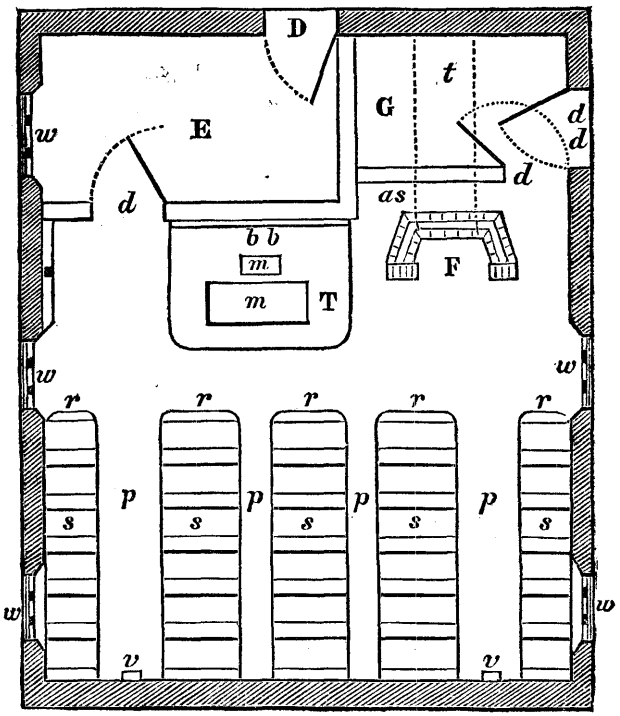
ers to quit the employment. Neither can I doubt, that it has been the *great cause* of their subsequently sickly habits and untimely decease.' "

Plans of School-Houses.

Within the last ten years much time and ingenuity have been expended by practical teachers and architects, in devising plans for school-houses of various descriptions, adapted to the various wants of large and small, poor and wealthy, school districts. Without undertaking to present models for universal adoption, it has been thought advisable to add to this report, a few plans and specifications, which, if not of the highest order in architecture, may serve as useful suggestions and guides to those who are about to erect or remodel their school-houses. In making the selection, economy, and the wants of the many rather than the few, have been kept constantly in view.

FIGURE 1.

School for forty-eight pupils.

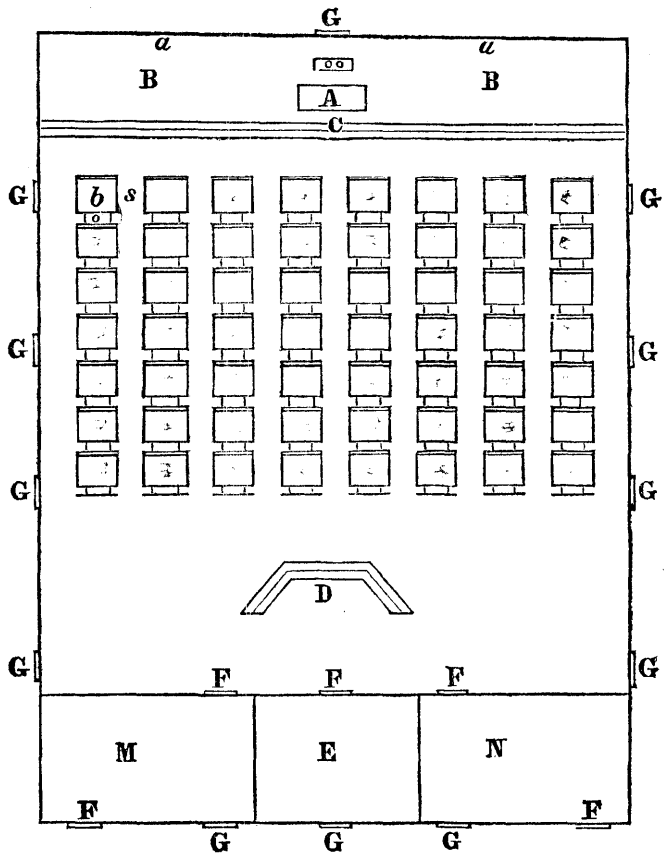


[24 feet by 28, outside.] [Scale 8 feet to the inch.]

D.—Entrance door.
E.—Entry: the walls furnished with pegs and hooks.
F.—Fireplace, as described in report.
G.—Dress room for girls, or recitation, or wood room.
T.—Teacher's platform.
a.—Apparatus shelves.
t.—Air tube beneath the floor.
d.—Doors.
dd.—Door, the upper half glass.
bb.—Black board.
m.—Teacher's table and seat.
p.—Passages.
r.—Recitation seats.
s.—Scholars' seats and desks.
v.—Ventilators.
w.—Windows.
as.—Air space behind the fireplace.

REMARKS.—Objection is sometimes made to wall-seats. If this feature in the above plan is objectionable, it may be removed by changing the location of the desks, having none but double ones, and bringing two of the passage-ways next to the walls. The building may be enlarged to accommodate any number of scholars, without interfering with the general arrangement of the interior. An addition of 2½ feet in length will furnish room for an additional range of desks and seats.

FIGURE 2.

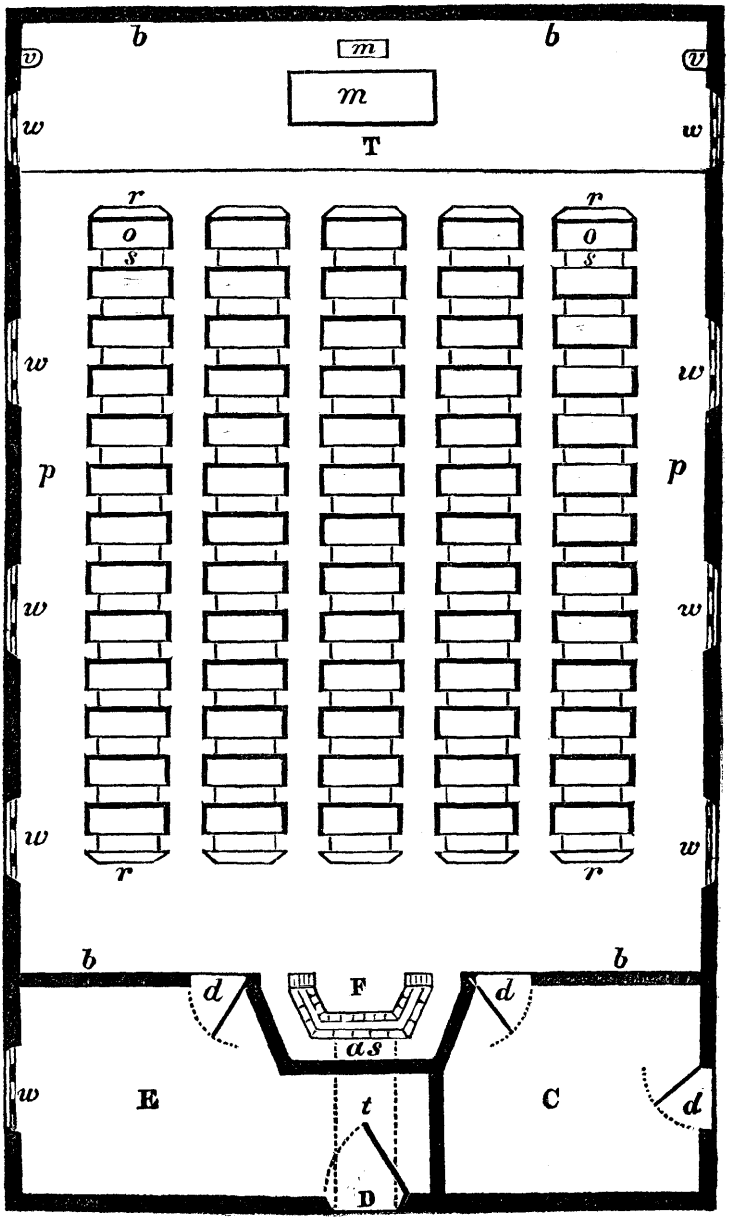


A.—Teacher's desk.
B B.—Teacher's platform, from one to two feet in height.
C.—Step for ascending platform.
D.—Fireplace or stove, with air tube, as in Fig. 1.
E.—Recitation room.
F F F F F.—Doors into boys' and girls' entries, from entries to school room, and from school room to recitation room.
G.—Windows: the one in rear of platform to be of ground glass.
M.—Boys' entry.
N.—Girls' entry: both furnished with hooks for hats, &c.
b.—Scholars' single desks.
o.—Scholars' seats.
oo.—Teacher's seat.
s.—Passage ways.
a.a.—Black-boards and outline maps.

REMARKS.—The foregoing plan may be enlarged as the number of scholars may require. The room, to accommodate fifty-six pupils, each with a separate desk and seat, and from eight to sixteen small children with seats for two, should be 40 feet long by 30 wide. The teacher's platform occupies one end of the room, towards which all the scholars face when in their seats. Moveable recitation seats may be placed upon the platform to front the black-boards. Each scholar is provided with a seat and desk (each 2 feet by 14 inches); the front of one desk constitutes the back of the seat beyond. The aisles on each side of the room are 2 feet wide, and those between the ranges of desks 18 inches. The area in the rear of the desks may be furnished with recitation seats, if necessary, and with black-boards between the windows. If the building is two stories in height, the ascent may be from the boys' and girls' entries.

FIGURE 3.

School for one hundred and thirty pupils.



[51 by 31 outside.] [Scale 8 feet to the inch.]

D.—Entrance door.
E.—Entry.
F.—Fireplace, with air tube, or stove.
C.—Wood closet, or recitation room, or girls' room.
T.—Teacher's platform.
b.b.—Black-boards, &c.
t.—Air tube.
d.—Doors.
m.—Master's table and seat.
p.—Passages.
r.—Recitation seats.
o.—Scholars' desks.
s.—Scholars' seats.
v.v.—Ventilators.
w.—Windows.
a.s.—Air space behind fireplace.

REMARKS.—The foregoing plan may also be enlarged, as far as may be necessary to accommodate a larger school. If the house is two stories the ascent may be through the room marked C.

FIGURE 4.

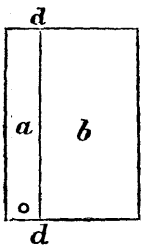


FIGURE 4.—Top of desk.
a.—Horizontal part, about 3 inches in width.
b.—Residue of the top, slopes about 1½ inch in a foot.
o.—An opening to receive an inkstand, when those of a uniform size are used.
d.d.—A groove, to prevent pens and pencils from rolling off.

FIGURE 5.

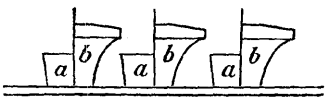
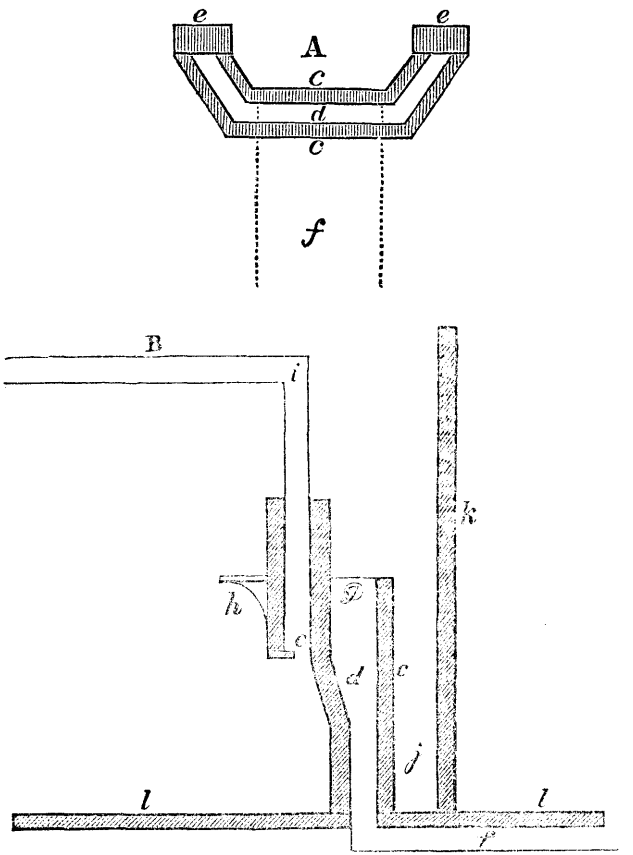


FIGURE 5.—End view of pupils' desks and seats.
a.—Pupils' seats.
b.—Shape of the board or plank which forms the side and support of the desks.

FIGURE 6.

Fireplace.



[Scale 4 feet to the inch.]

FIGURE 6.—Plan of fireplace referred to in the report, a description of which is contained in the extract from "The School-master."

A.—Horizontal section.

B.—Perpendicular section.

c.—Brick walls, 4 inches thick.

d.—Air space between the walls.

e.—Solid fronts of masonry.

f.—Air box for supply of fresh air, extending beneath the floor to the front door.

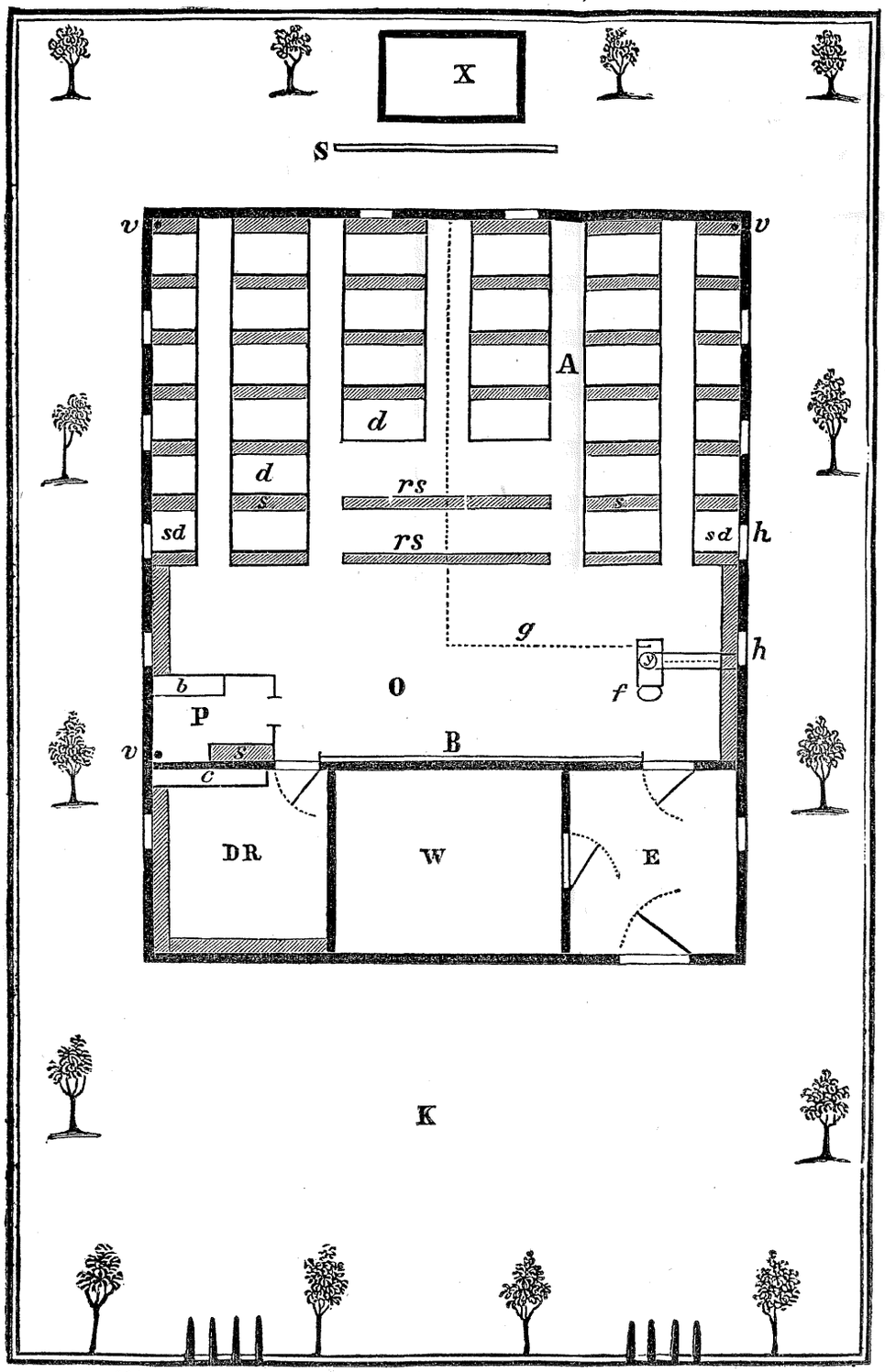
g.—Openings on the sides of the fireplace for the heated air to pass into the room.

h.—Front of the fireplace, and mantel piece.
i.—Iron smoke-flue, 8 inches diameter.
j.—Space between the fireplace and wall.
k.—Partition wall.
l.—Floor.

The following plans and designs are furnished by Horace Piper, Esq., member of the board from the county of York. Mr. Piper's practical experience as a teacher, has afforded him abundant opportunity for becoming acquainted with the subject, and his views, as expressed in his plans, are entitled to the highest consideration. A school-room constructed upon the plan, Fig. 1, would probably be less expensive than either of the foregoing, and would be particularly adapted to the wants of our smaller school districts, with their limited means; to the favorable consideration of all, however, it is cheerfully commended.

*

Figure 1.--School-house for one school, 28 feet by 36.



E.—Entry, 8 by 8.
W.—Wood room.
D R.—Dress room, private recitation room, &c., 8 by 8.
c.—Cupboard for apparatus.
B.—Black-board, 5 by 15, immovable, and finished in the wall.
P.—Teacher's platform or desk, 4 by 5, raised 8 inches.
b.—Teacher's writing desk.
f.—Stove.
O.—Area, 10 wide.
g.—Stove pipe, falling into chimney horizontally—the chimney being dropped below the ceiling.
s.—Seats, 3 feet 8 inches long and 11 inches wide.
d.—Double desks or benches, 3 feet 8 inches long.
sd.—Single desks or benches, 2 feet long.
rs.—Recitation seats, 9 feet long.
A.—Aisles, 1 foot 8 inches wide.
h.—Windows.
S.—Screen.
X.—Privy.
y.—Cold air shaft, at least 14 inches square, made of brick or stone and lime, and brought in through the underpinning under the stove. A cast-iron register should be used to regulate its passage through the floor.
v.—Ventilators in the ceiling, 10 inches square, opening into the attic. Registers of iron, or slides of wood, may be used to close them. Shafts may be inserted near these in the wall, opening at the bottom, if it is desired to ventilate from the floor also.
K.—Play ground, at *least* 4 rods by 8, ornamented with trees.

REMARKS.—Let the floor be horizontal. If a fire-place is wished for, or a space behind the seats, or additional apparatus or recitation rooms, the building may be lengthened on the back part a few feet, making a space for fire-place in the middle, and two rooms, one on each side.

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FIGURE 2.

A School-house for two Schools, 28 by 38.

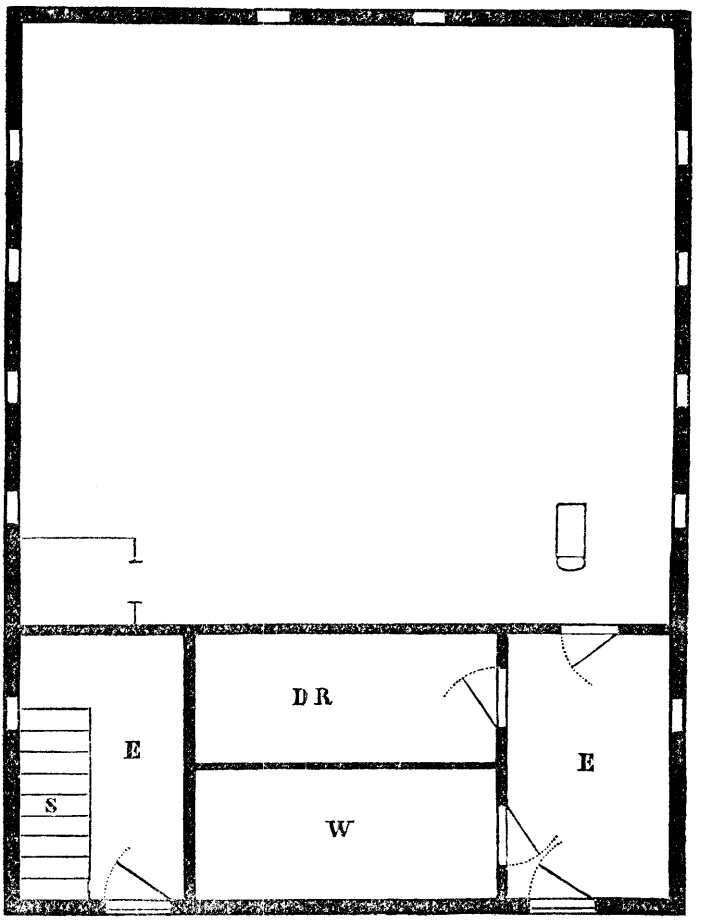


FIGURE 2—represents the lower story.

E.—Entry, 8 by 10 feet.
W.—Wood room.
D R.—Dress room.
S.—Stairs leading to the upper story.

REMARKS.—In other respects the same as Fig. 1. Ventilators must be inserted in the wall to carry the air above the upper room.

FIGURE 3.

A School-house for two Schools, 28 by 38.

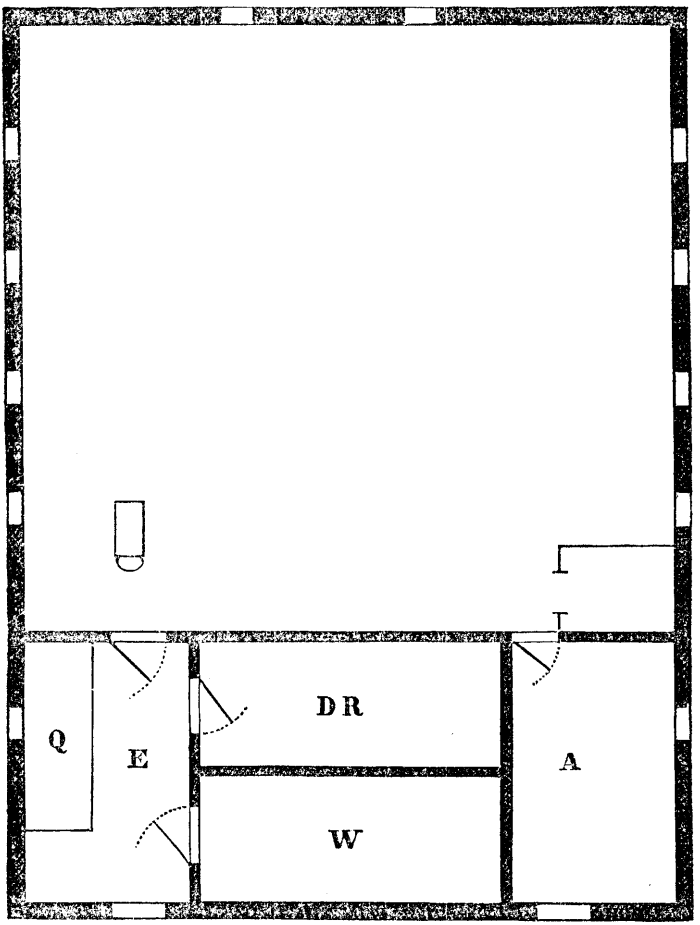
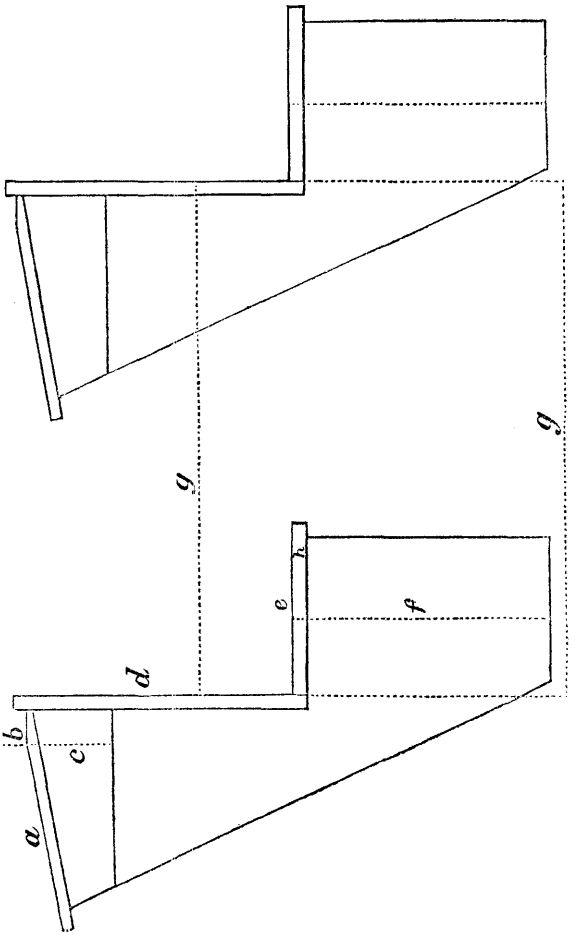


FIGURE 3—represents the upper story.

E.—Entry, 8 by 10 feet.
W.—Wood room.
D R.—Dress room.
Q.—Stairway.
A.—Private recitation room, apparatus cupboard, &c.

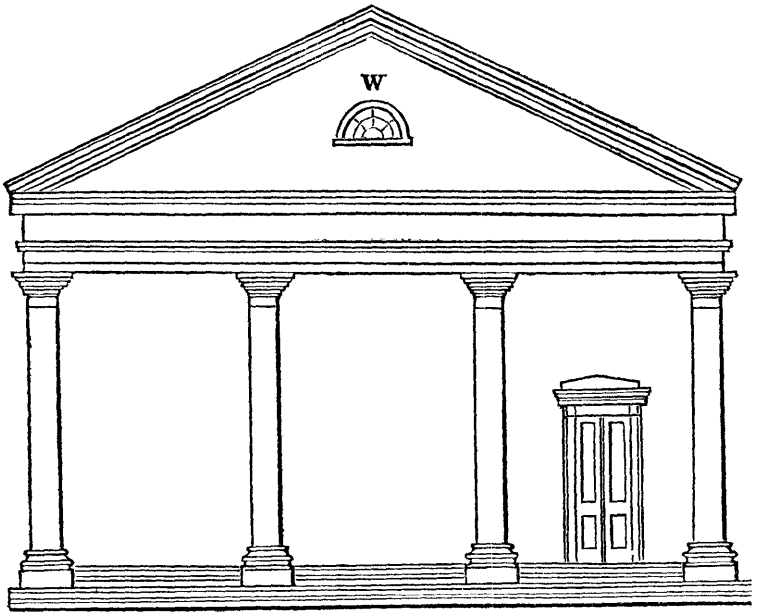
REMARKS.—In other respects the same as Fig. 1. It would be well to lengthen the house the thickness of the chimney, so as to have it between the walls.



a.—Width of inclined plane of the bench, 12 inches.
b.—Width of horizontal plane, 2 inches.
c.—Depth of box, 5 inches.
d.—Width of the board or back above the seat, 18 inches.
e.—Width of the seat, 11 inches.
f.—Height of seat, 17¼ inches.
g.—Space allotted to seat and bench, 2 feet 8 inches.
h.—Thickness of seat, 1¼ inch.

Each bench below the upper one may be shortened 3-5 of an inch, and each seat 1-5, making in six benches a difference of 3 inches between the upper and lower bench, and one in the seat.

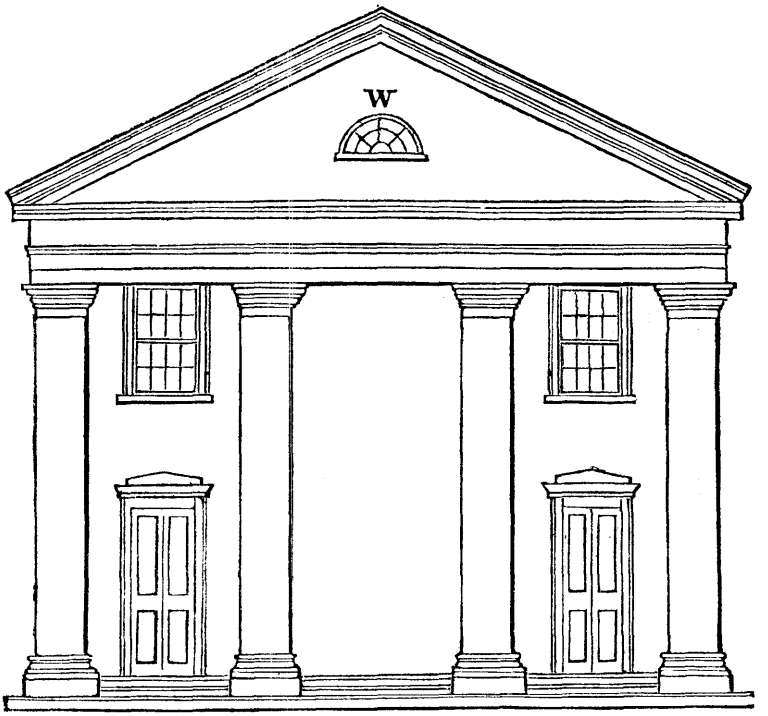
Front elevation of School-house represented by Fig. 1--28 feet by 36.



W.—Window in the attic covered by a blind and opened by a pulley, to promote ventilation.

Height of ceiling above the floor, 10 or 12 feet.

Front elevation of School-house represented by Fig. 2 and Fig. 3--28 feet by 38.



W.—Window in the attic covered by a blind and opened by a pulley, to promote ventilation.

ABSTRACT

FROM THE RECORDS OF THE

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

THE committee to whom was referred the subject of "vocal music, as a branch of common school instruction," report the following resolution:

Resolved, That the board of education recommend the introduction of vocal music as a branch of instruction in our common schools, whenever and wherever it may be convenient, for the following reasons, viz.:

1. Because it has a salutary bearing on physical education.

2. Because it is valuable as a branch of intellectual study.

3. Because its immediate effects are favorable to propriety of deportment in school, and come in aid of the government and discipline of school, while at the same time it cheers and facilitates the progress of the scholar, in other branches less attractive.

4. Because, in its bearing on after life, it furnishes an amusement, innocent, pure, refining, and elevated, con-

tributing to make home happy, and supplying the place of other amusements, of questionable, or of decidedly objectionable character.

5. Because it will supply the want of choirs in our houses of public worship, on the Sabbath, and tend to bring about a state of things, when a whole congregation may, with one heart, and one voice, unite in ascriptions of praise to the Author of all good.

The foregoing resolution was adopted.

Text Books.

The committee to whom was referred the subject of text books, report the following resolution:

Resolved, That it be recommended to the members of the board of the several counties, to confer at their annual meetings, with the school committees of the towns of the same, on the subject of text books, and express their views as to what, in their opinion, are the best books to be used.

The foregoing resolution was adopted.

Qualifications and Education of Teachers.

The committee to whom was referred the subject of the "qualifications and education of teachers," report the following resolves:

Resolved, That the public mind be enlightened on the subject of the deficiencies in the qualifications and education of teachers, by public addresses and lectures, and through the press, as the first great step to be taken in this state, towards increasing the demand for better teachers.

Resolved, That a teachers' institute should be organized and endowed to a certain extent in each county, under the direction of the secretary of the board.

The foregoing resolutions were adopted.

School Libraries and Apparatus.

The committee to whom was referred the subject of "school libraries and school apparatus," report the following resolutions:

Resolved, That district school libraries are of vital importance to the successful operation of the common school system in this state, and should be introduced into all the schools, at the earliest convenience. They should embrace, at least, works on the following subjects, viz., 1. Education; 2. History; 3. Biography; 4. Travels; 5. Popular treatises on science.

Resolved, That apparatus is considered an essential appendage to schools, and absolutely necessary to illustrate many of the branches, required by the statute law of the state, to be taught in them. It should embrace the following, viz,; 1. Black-board, outline maps, and charts; 2. Geometrical solids; 3. Terrestrial and celestial globes, tellerian and planetarium, to which other apparatus pertaining to philosophy, chemistry, &c., may be added.

The foregoing resolutions were adopted.

Introduction of new branches of Instruction.

Resolved, That the science of government is a matter of great importance to be attended to in the schools of this state, and that accordingly the board recommend it

to the favorable attention of all school committees and teachers.

Resolved, That human anatomy and physiology, by which the laws of health, so essential to our happiness and existence, and to the strength and vigor of our successors, are explained, should form an important part of our common school education.