THE LANCASTERIAN SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS OF NEW YORK CITY

BY

JOHN FRANKLIN REIGART

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, IN THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

PUBLISHED BY

Teachers College, Columbia University

NEW YORK CITY

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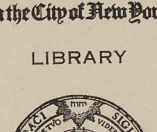

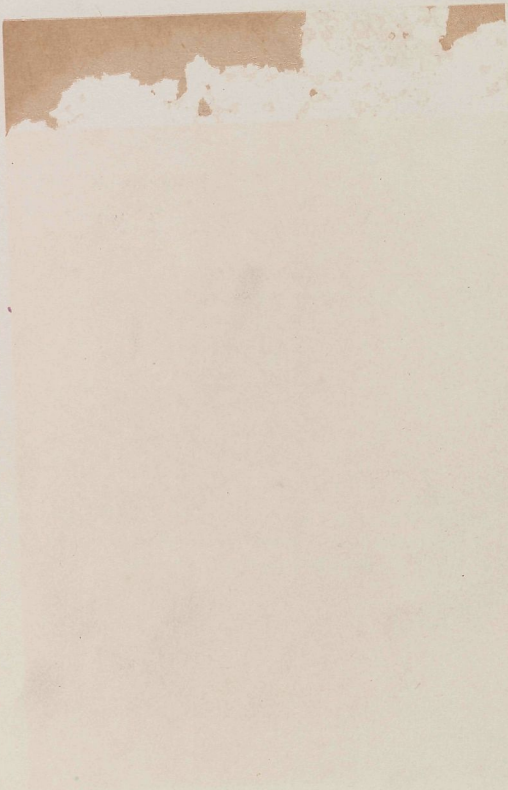

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I

INTRODUCTION

The present school system of the city of New York is the result of growth and unification extending over a period of nearly a century, from the organization of the Free School Society in 1805 to the reorganization of the schools of the greater city in 1902. During nearly half of that period public elementary education was administered by a corporation not responsible to the people. From the establishment of the Board of Education in 1842 to its absorption of the Public School Society in 1853, two distinct systems existed. The formation of the greater city of New York in 1898 involved great extension and new readjustment. To the school system of the former city of New York, now the Borough of Manhattan and the Borough of the Bronx, there were added two city school systems, those of Brooklyn and Long Island City, and thirty-five school districts in the Borough of Queens and twenty-nine in the Borough of Richmond. Complete unification of these diverse elements was not accomplished until the charter of 1901 went into effect.

Present System

In 1805, for a population of more than 75,000, the only facilities for elementary education were provided by private, church, and charity schools, with one hundred and forty-one teachers, of whom one hundred and six were men and thirty-five were women. A school for colored children, the African Free School, had been opened in 1787 by the Manumission Society; and a school for girls, in 1801, by the Association of Women Friends for the Relief of the Poor, generally known as the Female Association. The schools of these associations were later taken over by the Public School Society; those of the Manumission Society in 1834, and of the Female Association in 1845.

Education in New York, 1805

The purpose of the Free School Society, of which De Witt Clinton was the first president and the largest contributor, was, as stated in their first address to the public, "to extend the means of education to such poor children as do not belong to, or are not provided for, by any religious society." The first school was opened in 1806. In 1826, owing to the desire

Free School Society

to admit pay pupils, the name of the association was changed to the Public School Society. At this time the schools of the Society numbered twenty-one, with 6007 pupils, while the number of children between the ages of five and fifteen, who attended no school whatever, was estimated at 20,000. Bourne, in his "History of the Public School Society," p. 121, presents the condition of the schools of the city in 1826 in the following table:

Schools	Principal Teachers	Assistants	Pupils
430 Private	432	259	15,320
3 Incorporated	6	23	1,081
19 Charity	25	5	2,544
11 Public	21	24	6,007
463 Total	484	311	24,952

Infant Schools and Primary Departments

The Lancasterian system of instruction was introduced in the first public school and was maintained throughout the existence of the Public School Society. But New York was not unaffected by the Pestalozzian movement, particularly by the form under which it became most popular in England as Infant Schools. In 1828 permission was granted to the Infant School Society, organized in the previous year, to organize schools in the basements of certain public school buildings. These schools were open to children from two to six years of age, and retained until dark the children of parents who were occupied during the day. After the model of these Infant Schools, the Public School Society in 1830 formed Primary Departments and, in 1832, Primary Schools. There were now three classes of schools: (1) Public Schools, having the more advanced boys and girls in separate departments; (2) Primary Departments, developed from the Infant Schools; and (3) Primary Schools, admitting boys from four to six years of age, and girls of four years and over.

Saturday and Evening Schools

A plan for evening schools for apprentices and others was put in operation in 1833, but was relinquished after three or four years owing to "smallness of numbers and the great difficulties in regard to discipline." The real causes of failure were no doubt that teachers were forced to serve without pay and that there was no organization of authority. (Evening schools were afterwards successfully inaugurated by the Board of Education in 1847.) Saturday and evening schools for the instruction of monitors, established

in 1834 and 1835, were more successful, as attendance was compulsory. These schools were known as "Normal Schools" though no professional instruction was given.

In its inception the Free School Society was non-sectarian, but not unmindful of the importance of religious training. The Bible was read daily in the schools. Tuesday afternoons were set apart for instruction in the catechisms of the various denominations. On Sundays the children assembled at the schools and then proceeded, under the care of monitors, to the churches to which they belonged. As the society successfully opposed attempts of various denominations to share in the school money, it was open to attack in case any sectarian bias was shown in its schools. Such bias in favor of Protestantism was claimed by the Catholics on the basis of objectionable passages in text-books and library books. Other denominations also opposed the Society's maintenance of a monopoly of public education in the city.

Religion and the Schools

Another reason for lack of confidence in the existing system of schools was the failure to provide adequate facilities for a rapidly growing population and to secure school attendance. Several attempts had been made to reach the "idle and vicious." In 1828, Mr. Samuel W. Seton was employed as "visitor" to hunt up vagrant children and their parents, and to canvass among those who did not go to school. Persuasion not being effective, the Common Council in 1832 ordered that the Commissioner of the Alms House deny "public favor" to all parents who did not send to school children between the ages of five and twelve. In his annual message for 1842 Governor Seward stated that 20,000 children of school age received no instruction in the city of New York, while the number in the remainder of the state did not exceed 9000.

School Attendance

With the establishment of the first Board of Education in 1842, the Public School Society no longer possessed a monopoly in public education. The new schools were called Ward Schools, each ward being practically a school district. The monitorial system was not adopted, a larger proportion of class rooms and teachers was provided and higher salaries were paid. In less than ten years the attendance of the Ward Schools surpassed the attendance of the schools of the society, whose growth was checked by a law forbidding it to establish

Board of Education, 1842

any new school without the consent of the Board of Education, and by the refusal of the Board to furnish all the money needed to make up deficits.

The anomalous situation of two systems of public schools existing side by side came to an end in 1853, when the Public School Society ceased to exist, and its schools, with an attendance of about 20,000 and property estimated at about half a million, were turned over to the Board of Education. During the forty-eight years of its history the Society had, as it claimed, educated 600,000 pupils and trained 1200 teachers.

Consolidation of the Two Systems, 1853

At first the public schools were supported by voluntary subscription, with no fees from pupils, and no financial aid from the city or state. The contributions for the first year amounted to $6501. The pay system was introduced in 1826, but proved unsuccessful and, after a trial of six years, was relinquished. Nor was the subscription plan by any means adequate to maintain the public schools. As early as 1807 a grant of $500 was made by the city; and by the state $4000 was appropriated for building, and $1000 annually to be paid out of the liquor tax. From 1815 the Society received its share of the State Common School Fund, amounting at that time to $3700, and from 1819 one half of the tax on lottery licenses, amounting to $1000. The request for a tax of one-half mill was met by the Legislature in 1829 by the grant of a tax of one-eighth mill, which in 1831 was raised to one-half mill. Governor Seward, in his annual message for 1842, stated that the trustees of the Society were the dispensers of an average annual sum of $35,000 from the Common School Fund and $95,000 from a tax on real and personal estates of the city. Expenditures rapidly increased under the Board of Education. After 1871 school buildings were paid for by the issue of city bonds. For the maintenance of schools, the Legislature fixed, in 1901, a four mill tax, which, however, two years later, was reduced to three mills. This rate proved to be insufficient, unless supplemented by appropriations by the Board of Estimate, to meet the cost of higher salaries and the great expansion of school activities, a sum amounting to about $40,000,000 a year, nearly one-fourth of the city budget.

Financial Support

That the education of the poor was a proper object of private philanthropy, rather than a matter of direct public responsibility,

Philanthropy and Economy

was quite in accord with the educational and political ideas prevalent at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Direct control of public schools and greatly increased expenditures were manifestations of the broader view of municipal functions which developed about the middle of the century. In 1842 the Croton water supply was provided, in 1851 Central Park was purchased; in 1845 the Police Department was established, in 1865 the paid Fire Department, and in 1866 the Board of Health. The per capita expenditures doubled each decade from 1850 to 1870.

The trustees of the Public School Society never had the funds or the public opinion to support any expensive undertaking. They lacked the money to establish a much desired high school or to support evening schools. Their finest school house, called a "model building," cost $17,000 for ground, building, and furnishing. The salaries of teachers were considerably less than those of the Ward Schools. The cost of tuition and supplies per pupil was, in 1823, as low as $1.80.

The Lancasterian System

It was, in great measure, due to the "limited state of funds" that the society introduced in their first school, in 1806, the monitorial system, at that time in vogue in England and on the continent through the adaptation and popularization of mutual instruction by Bell and Lancaster. As Bell's system was pushed by the Church of England and associated with its religious propaganda, while Lancaster's was non-sectarian and supported by non-conformists, particularly by the Friends, the latter form was naturally the one to enlist the interest of the trustees of the Free School Society, among whom Friends were the dominant influence. For the details of the plan the Society was indebted to its first secretary, Benjamin Perkins, who visited Lancaster in London and published, in 1807, the first American edition of the "Improvements in Education." Through the agency of the British and Foreign School Society a trained teacher was brought over from England in 1818. Lancaster himself arrived later in the year. Though necessarily modified by the adoption of the Infant School system, and by the introduction of higher branches of study, the monitorial system retained the official sanction of the society. To the city of New York belongs the distinction of the introduction of the system in America and its most consistent support.

Extension of Monitorial System

The influence of the New York Public Schools and of the New York Monitorial High School, founded by John Griscom (1825–1831), was a marked factor in the foundation of monitorial schools throughout the country. With the zealous and powerful advocacy of Governor Clinton, the schools of New York, as later the schools of Quincy under Col. Parker and those of Gary under Superintendent Wirt, evoked widespread discussion, adulation, criticism, and imitation.

Completeness of the Experiment

Seldom has any educational experiment had a trial so complete and adequate, and few have resulted in so signal a failure. A self-perpetuating body of most enlightened and distinguished citizens, holding a monopoly in public education in the metropolis, adopted a system which seemed to promise "a new era in education," maintained this system as nearly as possible "in its original purity," and retained towards it an unshaken confidence even after its mechanical nature and its educational inadequacy had become almost universally recognized.

II

RISE OF THE LANCASTERIAN SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION

While the unparalleled growth of the New York School system under the Free School Society to 1826, the Public School Society to 1853, and the Board of Education of the greater city to 1905 has been duly recorded,[1][2][3] the historian of a school system, engaged in tracing the development of organization and administration, finds but small space for the description of methods of instruction and discipline. Yet the changes that have taken place in teaching are as striking and significant to the student of education as the remarkable increase in numbers and material equipment. Simultaneous and draft instruction has been replaced by the lessons of the class room, the child monitor by the trained teacher, parrot-like dictation and interrogation by intelligent teaching, the constraint of the gallery by the freedom of the kindergarten, a program of monotony and dullness by the modern enriched curriculum.

Educational Progress in New York

It is the purpose of this investigation to trace the part played by that system of instruction which was adopted at the foundation of the New York Free Schools, and which, with modifications, was in use for half a century—the system of monitorial instruction known as the Lancasterian. This plan of instruction, now almost forgotten, was, with its rival, but similar system, that of Dr. Andrew Bell, the most popular means of elementary education during the first half of the nineteenth century. It formed the basis for the most extravagant hopes for the improvement of mankind. The *Westminster Review* of January, 1824, estimated the improvement made in the art of teaching as "of more importance to the advancement of knowl-

This Study Limited to Lancasterian System

Vogue of the Lancasterian System

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[1] Bourne, Wm. Oland, Public School Society of New York, New York, 1870.

[2] Boese, Thomas, Public Education in the City of New York, New York, 1869.

[3] Palmer, A. Emerson, The New York Public School, New York, 1905.

edge than any discovery that has been made since the invention of the alphabet itself." Governor De Witt Clinton, in his message to the New York Legislature in 1818, drew a parallel between the establishment of the Lancasterian system and the introduction of labor-saving machinery. To the trustees of the Lancaster School of Georgetown, D. C., the system appeared as a sign from God, "that he had not forgotten to be gracious."[1] Lancaster had the good fortune to secure the patronage or arouse the interest of the powerful and learned of his time. Sydney Smith called George III's support of Lancaster the brightest passage in the history of his long reign.[2] James Mill, Jeremy Bentham, the Duke of Bedford, Sydney Smith, De Witt Clinton, and Thomas Jefferson were advocates of the system. The extension of the system can be traced in the reports of the British and Foreign School Society. It became the basis for elementary education in England; it was adopted as the national system of Ireland; was used in Scotland, especially in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and in the British Colonies, India, West Indies, Canada and Africa. It was more or less employed in all the countries of Europe except Turkey. It was widely used in the United States and South America. Lancaster scarcely exceeds the facts in his claim: "The system spread from Thames to Ganges; it has encircled the equator; it has encompassed the poles."[3] In New York City, from 1806 to 1853, 600,000 children were instructed in Lancasterian schools.[4]

Extension of the System

America seemed to be the most favorable field for Lancaster's system. In the words of DeWitt Clinton, "His tree of knowledge is indeed transplanted to a more fertile soil and a more congenial clime. It has flourished with uncommon vigor and beauty; its luxuriant and wide-spreading branches afford shelter to all who require it; its ambrosial fragrance fills the land, and its head reaches the heavens!"[5]

Origin of the System

Lancaster, at the age of twenty, in the year 1798 opened in his father's house in Southwark, London, a school for poor children.

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[1] Report of Georgetown, D. C., Lancaster School, 1812.

[2] *Edinburgh Review*, XVII, 69.

[3] Lancaster, Epitome, p. 9.

[4] Report of Public School Society, 1853.

[5] Clinton, DeWitt, address to the Free School Society, New York, 1809.

Lacking education, except the most rudimentary, he was equipped with a zeal which led him at the early age of eight to devote himself to the good of humanity and at fourteen to start for Jamaica to teach the blacks. "He had many of the qualifications of a great teacher—zeal, self-confidence, ingenuity in devising methods, intuitive insight into the nature of children, an ardent love for them, and rare power of managing them. He threw himself into the work of his new school with characteristic enthusiasm. For the good or delight of his pupils no labour was too severe and no sacrifice too onerous. For them he spent body, mind, and estate (and as much of the estate of other people as they could be induced to part with); on holidays he led large parties of them for excursions into the suburbs; on Sundays, from forty to sixty of them, bringing their own bread and butter, used to take tea with him; and during the severe winter of 1799–1800 he fed and clothed some sixty or eighty of them." First School

". . . To a school where there was much to receive and little to pay, and where the master was the embodiment of kindness and generosity, the children came in crowds, and one room after another grew too small."[1] Though aided by the subscriptions of his neighbors and fellow Quakers, Lancaster was nearly overwhelmed by his success in attracting pupils. Necessity led him to utilize the boys who knew a little in teaching the boys who knew less. "Lancaster was a born organizer of children. He left nothing to chance or caprice. To him we owe the pregnant mottoes: 'A place for everything and everything in its place,' and 'Let every child at every moment have something to do and a motive for doing it.' Each act of school-life was regulated by a well-considered series of signals and commands, and there were many labor-saving devices."[2] Order

The government of the school was almost automatic. "Little was left for the master to do except to organize, to reward, to punish, and to inspire. The very essence of the system was the monitor. When a child was admitted, a monitor assigned him his class; while he remained, a monitor taught him (with nine other pupils); when he was absent, one monitor ascertained the fact, and another found out the reason; a monitor examined him peri- Monitors

[1] Salmon, Joseph Lancaster, p. 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

odically, and when he made progress, a monitor promoted him; a monitor ruled the writing paper; a monitor made or mended the pens; a monitor had charge of the slates and books; and a monitor general looked after all the other monitors. Every monitor wore a leather ticket, gilt, and lettered 'Monitor of the First Class,' 'Reading Monitor of the Second Class,' etc."[1] The discipline of the school was based upon emulation and shame. Place-taking and prizes were utilized to an extravagant degree. The rod, of which Lancaster had a perfect horror, was replaced by what in many cases seem to be even more questionable devices; boys were labeled with badges of disgrace, shackled, suspended in a sack or basket, tied to desks or posts; while the incorrigible were sometimes tied up in a blanket, and left to sleep at night on the floor in the school-house.

Discipline

"The same desire to economise, which was the first motive for the use of monitors, was also the first motive for changes in methods of instruction. It was to avoid the cost of reading-books that Lancaster introduced reading-sheets; it was to avoid the cost of paper, pens, and ink that he introduced slates; it was to avoid the cost of the arithmetic text-books and the 'cyphering' books into which it was the custom to copy all worked 'sums' that he introduced his wonderful 'plan whereby any child who can read may teach arithmetic with the utmost certainty.'"[2]

Economy in Instruction

Lancaster's School Described by Sidney Smith

The *Edinburgh Review*, an ardent and influential advocate of Lancaster's methods, contains the following description of the new system, "The first or lower class of children are taught to write the printed alphabet, and to name the letters when they see them. The same with the figures used in arithmetic. One day the boy traces the form of the letter, or figure; the next he tells the name, when he sees the letter. These two methods assist each other. When he is required to write H, for example, the shape of the letter which he saw yesterday assists his manual execution—when he is required to say how that letter is named, the shape of the letter reminds him of his manual execution; and the manual execution has associated itself with the name. In the same manner he learns syllables and words; writing them one day—reading them the next. The same process for writing the common epistolary character, and for reading it.

Reading and Writing

[1] Salmon, Joseph Lancaster, p. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

"(A) This progress made, the class go up to the master to read—a class consisting perhaps of 30. While one boy is reading, the word, e. g. Ab-so-lu-ti-on, is given out with a loud voice by the monitor, and written down by all the other 29 boys, who are provided with slates for the purpose; which writing is looked over by monitors, and then another word called, and so on; whoever writes a word, spells it of course at the same time, and spells it with much more attention than in the common way. So that there is always one boy reading, and twenty-nine writing and spelling at the same time; whereas, in the ancient method, the other twenty-nine did nothing.

"(B) The first and second classes write in sand; the middle classes on slates; only a few of the upper boys on paper with ink. This is a great saving point of expense,—in books the saving is still greater. Twenty or thirty boys stand around a card suspended on a nail, making a semicircle. On this card are printed the letters in very large characters;—these letters the boys are to name, at the request of the monitor. When one spelling class have said their lessons in this manner, they are despatched off to some other occupation, and another spelling class succeeds. In this way one book or card may serve for two hundred boys, who would, according to the common method, have had a book each. In the same manner, syllables and reading lessons are printed on cards and used with the same beneficial economy.

"(C) In arithmetic, the monitor dictates a sum, ex. gr. in addition, which all the boys write down on their slates, for example,

7	2	4	Arithmetic
3	7	8	
9	4	6	

He then tells them, aloud, how to add the sum. First column—6 and 8 are 14, and 4 are 18; set down 8 and carry 1 to the next column; and so on. In this manner, the class acquire facility of writing figures, and placing them; and, by practising what the monitor dictates, insensibly acquire facility in adding. Again they are placed around arithmetical cards, in the same manner as in paragraph (B), and required to add up the columns. This method evinces what progress they have made from the preceding method of dictating; and the two methods are always used alternately.

"It is obvious that a school like this of Mr. Lancaster's, consisting of from 700 to 1000 boys, would soon fall into decay, without

very close attention to order and method. In this part of his system,

Order

Mr. Lancaster has been as eminently successful as in any other; contriving to make the method and arrangement, so necessary to his institution, a source of amusement to the children. In coming into school, in going out, and in moving in their classes from one part of the school to another, the children move in a kind of measured pace, and in known places, according to their number, of which every boy has one. Upon the first institution of the school, there was a great loss and confusion of hats. After every boy has taken his place there, they all stand up expecting the word of command, 'Sling your hats!' upon which they immediately suspend their hats round their necks by a string provided for that purpose. When the young children write in sand, they all look attentively to their monitor, waiting for the word, and instantly fall to work, with military precision, upon receiving it. All these little inventions keep children in a constant state of activity, prevent the listlessness so observable in all other institutions for education, and evince (trifling as they appear to be) a very original and observing mind in him who invented them.

"The boys assembled round their reading or arithmetical cards take places as in common schools. The boy who is at the head of

Rewards

the class wears a ticket, with some suitable inscription, and has a prize of a little picture. The ticket-bearer yields his badge of honor to whoever can excel him; and the desire of obtaining and fear of losing the mark of distinction, create, as may easily be conceived, no common degree of enterprize and exertion. Boys have a prize when they are moved from one class to another, as the monitor has also from whose class they are removed. Mr. Lancaster has established a sort of paper currency of tickets. These tickets are given for merit—two tickets are worth a paper kite; three worth a ball; four worth a wooden horse, etc.

"It is no unusual thing with me to deliver one or two hundred prizes at the same time. And at such times the countenances of the whole school exhibit a most pleasing scene of delight; as the boys who obtain prizes commonly walk around the school in procession, holding the prizes in their hands, with a herald proclaiming before them, 'These good boys have obtained prizes for going into another class.' The honor of this has an effect as powerful, if not more so, than the prizes themselves.

"A large collection of toys, bats, balls, pictures, kites, is suspended above the master's head beaming glory and pleasure upon the school

beneath. Mr. Lancaster has also, as another incentive, an order of merit. No boys are admitted to this order but those who distinguish themselves by attention to their studies, and by their endeavours to check vice. The distinguishing badge is a silver medal and plated chain hanging from the neck. The superior class has a fixed place in the school; any class that can excel it may eject them from this place and occupy it themselves. Every member, both of the attacking and defending classes, feels of course the most lively interest in the issue of the contest.

"Mr. Lancaster punishes by shame rather than pain; varying the means of exciting shame, because, as he justly observes, any mode of punishment long continued loses its effect.

"The boys in the school appointed to teach others are called monitors; they are in the proportion of about one monitor to ten boys. So that, for the whole school of one thousand boys, there is only one master; the rest of the teaching is all done by the boys themselves. Besides the teaching monitors, there are general monitors, such as, inspectors of slates, inspectors of absentees, etc."[1]

Monitors

Reasons for the Introduction of the Lancasterian System in New York

That without royal patronage or the stimulus of religious controversy, America should rival England in the adoption and extension of so mechanical a system of instruction as the one just described would seem incomprehensible at this date were it not for the evidence of the extremely inferior and inadequate school facilities in our cities before the introduction of the Lancasterian system. To supply instruction to the thousands of neglected children there was at hand a ready-made plan, remarkably cheap in operation, and, with all its faults, apparently superior in method and discipline to the schools of the day. "Previous to the establishment of the Free School Society in 1806, there were but five charity schools in the City of New York, and these were small and for the exclusive benefit of the children of members of the several religious sects supporting them. The children of a large portion of the poor population were constantly left a prey to all the evils of ignorance and idleness, and were growing

Lack of Schools for the Poor

[1] Sydney Smith, *Edinburgh Review*, 1807, Vol. XI, pp. 62–65.

up in habits calculated to fit them for the tenantry of pauper and prison establishments."[1]

For children of the better classes the educational opportunities were but little superior. Washington Irving, "in his fourth year was sent to a school in Ann Street between William and Gold, kept by Miss Ann Kilmaster. Here he continued upwards of two years, making very little progress beyond the alphabet. From Miss Kilmaster's he was transferred, toward the close of 1789, to a school for both sexes kept by Benjamin Romaine, at 198 Fulton Street. Romaine had been a soldier in the revolution, and was a thorough disciplinarian."[2] The common type of illiterate and unprincipled teachers in New York during the first quarter of the century is pictured in the pages of the *Academician*. "We need not expect a salutary change in our instructors and system of education as long as the business is run as an auxiliary to the acquirement of a particular profession." . . . "Not one in a thousand who is a preceptor from necessity, and has a particular post of honor in view bestows the attention which is requisite in the art of teaching, as he is too much occupied in preparing himself for his intended business."[3] A lack of professional standards is indicated by the practice of teachers going around "*to beg scholars*," "Sir, if you will send your children to me I will teach them better than any other person, and for less, I will take them for two dollars, or for nothing rather than they should go to Mr. ———."[4] "The effects of low and illiterate preceptors are most severely felt in this city. The minds of their pupils, left unexercised, are open to all the vices prevalent among the most worthless part of the community. The children have nothing to do but run in the streets, upon the dismission of schools. In the morning they return to lounge out their time in indolence and ignorance. Hence is the contempt in which some schools are held. Children make no improvement. Parents are so thoughtless as to commit their children to the care of illiterate and daring imposters."[5]

Dame Schools

Ex-Soldiers as Teachers

Teaching not a Profession

Imposters

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[1] Report, New York Free School Society, 1823.

[2] Pierre M. Irving, Life and Letters of Washington Irving, 1871, Chap. II, p. 11.

[3] *Academician*, 1818, pp. 37–38.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1818, p. 208.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

The methods of teaching may be inferred from the character of the teacher. "The vague and ill devised methods of teaching in general are fraught with the most serious evils. . . . Our youths are made to languish over books of *words* accompanied only by the midnight lamp, without explanation or oral instruction, and compelled to recite these words, not understood, verbatim, on entering school the next morning. This, although a popular method, is one of the most inconsistent, absurd requisitions that was ever forced on human beings."[1]

Methods Memoriter

That New York was not unique among our great cities for its inadequate and inferior educational opportunities during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and that the conditions here were fairly typical, is evidenced by comparison with Boston schools of the same period. Primary schools were not established until 1818. To that time the alphabet and reading were taught in dame schools or at home. No pupils were admitted to the Grammar School unless they could read. Writing was taught in separate schools. In 1800 the free schools taught 900 pupils and private schools 500; in 1817, the public schools, 2365, and the private, 4132. It was estimated that 529 children of school age were not in school.[2]

Conditions in Other Cities

Schools in Boston

Many of the teachers were old soldiers. Henry K. Oliver says that his first school in Boston, in 1805, was kept by man, wife, and widowed daughter; poor people, who were patronized to save them from deeper want. "By him was I taught my a, b, c, d, e, f, g, my a, b, abs and my e, b, ebs, after the old, old, way, in an old book in his old hand, and pointing with an old pin to the old letters on the old page, and making each of us chicks repeat their several names till we could tell them at sight, though we did not know what it was all for."[3] The A, B, C's were taught forward and back. Dilworth's Speller was the principal text, the Psalter, the only reading book.[4] "There were no schools systematically graded, there were no blackboards, no globes, or other ordinary school apparatus in schools I attended. I never saw a full-sized map or illustration pictures. There was no Warren

Teachers and Methods

[1] *Academician*, Vol. I, p. 244.
[2] *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 19, p. 470.
[3] Oliver, H. K., American Institute of Instruction, Lectures, 1871.
[4] *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 13, pp. 737–752.

Colburn arithmetic. The method of teaching the science of number was utterly unscientific. No recitation rooms were attached to general school rooms. In this room we sat, studied, idled, recited, were flogged as the case may be."[1]

Loss of Time

Boston Primary Schools, containing fifty to sixty children, were taught on an individual basis, with consequent loss of time. "Let an observer enter any of these not taught on the monitorial plan, and he will see five or ten children around the teacher receiving her immediate attention, and all the rest more or less orderly according to the dispositions of the children, and the efficiency of the instructor, but mostly idle and languid. A calculation of the time assigned to the actual instruction of each scholar . . . will give six minutes as the total average."[2] Conditions in the Latin School were not much better. "Nobody can be ignorant of the vast amount of time squandered at school, during the time scholars are not saying, and perhaps not even pretending to learn, their lessons. The best regulated schools we have ever seen, in other countries or in this, appropriate but a very trivial portion of time to the actual business of tuition. . . . The Boston Latin School, one of the best taught in the country, is an undisputed example of unusual success in the common methods of teaching. But in lower forms, boys who have been to a lesson or two in Latin are then dismissed to Writing School for work which could have been done in unoccupied time in Latin School."[3]

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[1] Oliver, H. K., *op. cit.*

[2] *American Journal of Education*, 1828, Vol. III, p. 289.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 288. Review of Boston School Committee Report on Monitorial Instruction.

III

INTRODUCTION OF THE LANCASTERIAN SYSTEM INTO NEW YORK

It was but natural that the public spirited men who formed the New York Free School Society in 1805 should be influenced by the much heralded work of their fellow Quaker in London. The Lancasterian system was put into operation in their first school, opened 1806, and in every succeeding school. It remained the official system of the schools of the Society until 1853 when the Board of Education assumed control of all the public schools.

Adopted by Free School Society

As the New York Free School was the first to employ the Lancasterian system in America, it has been assumed that the first teacher employed by the society, William Smith, must have learned the system in England.[1] But there is no record to this effect. The method of introduction was no doubt as stated by Lancaster himself in the Baltimore edition of his "Lancasterian System of Education."[2] "In 1802, a Friend by the name of Perkins, from the city of New York, visited Joseph Lancaster in London, and published an edition of his first book upon his return to America. This induced a private teacher to attempt the plan, and B. Perkins continued to give his advice grounded on what he had witnessed in practice. Such a degree of success attended this early effort that, in process of time, about three thousand children have been educated in schools in that city. Without undervaluing the aid given to the cause by private individuals, the governor, DeWitt Clinton, has fully established his reputation, as the first public man who *officially* rendered services to the introduction of a system of which he is a steady friend and supporter." The Benjamin D. Perkins here referred to was the first secretary of the Free School Society,

Method of Instruction

[1] Palmer, A. Emerson, New York Public Schools, p. 9.

[2] Lancaster, Joseph, The Lancasterian System of Education with improvements by its founder, Lancaster Institute, Baltimore, Md., Wm. Ogden Niles, printer, 1821, p. xiv.

was recognized as their main authority on Lancaster's methods, and was the publisher of the New York edition of Lancaster's "Improvements in Education."[1] The first report of the Free School Society tends to confirm Lancaster's statement: "The limited state of funds rendering the utmost economy necessary, the celebrated system of Lancaster recommended itself to their notice as particularly adapted to the occasion. Every inquiry respecting it tended to increase an inclination to make an experiment of it. Happily a teacher who had already adopted it with success and who in other respects appeared well qualified for the undertaking was found."[2]

Relation to London Schools

The trustees took every means to maintain the purity of their chosen system. In 1818, they imported a teacher, Charles Picton, from the parent school in London; in 1820, they issued a new manual based on that of the British and Foreign School Society for 1816; and in 1818, they welcomed the author of the system, Joseph Lancaster. "His arrival, about the year 1820, created a sensation among the friends of useful knowledge. Lancaster, by many years' service abroad and by the discussion which arose from his system of instruction, had rendered his name quite familiar at the time of his appearance in New York. It was conceded that he had effected a substantial advance in the means of enlightening the masses, and at a pecuniary expense well worth the action of the economical teacher. The patrons of the common schools, such men as Clinton, Griscom, Eddy and Wood, felt the duty obligatory to pay deference to the philosophical stranger, and give countenance to his suggestions. But he had little to offer that was new, the Lancasterian plan had been already widely tested; it had its friends and opponents."[3] . . . "The very Quakerism of Lancaster had tended vastly to promote the diffusion of his system, and the encouragement of his plans, and the support he received ought to have secured at least his temporal independence. But with increased fiscal means his expenditures had increased and the philanthropic man, deserting the rigid and frugal habits of his sect, involved himself in many obligations, and now sought the chances of redemption by

Lancaster in New York City

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[1] Collins and Perkins, 1807.

[2] Sketch of the New York Free School, in Lancaster's Improvements in Education, New York, 1807, p. xxi.

[3] Francis, John W., Old New York, 1866, pp. 185–187.

his transatlantic residence. There was, however, little to do by Lancaster or for him. Within a short time he became an object of eleemosynary relief; yet his Quaker disciples, with characteristic benevolence, were not behindhand in contributions. While, however, he could enumerate DeWitt Clinton within his charity circle of friends, he felt protected. The latter years of his life gave unmistakable evidence of hard times with him. I have rarely seen an object of deeper commiseration among individuals who, according to the world's decision, had made a mark. He who had once figured in England in his chariot and six, felt the want of means to purchase a crutch. An accident terminated his life in New York in 1839. I have indicated that Clinton was especially kind toward Lancaster. It was that sort of kindness that arose from the consideration of the good he had done, and could in no wise originate from a contemplation of the man himself. He was now a mass of obesity, unwieldy, and of feeble articulation, such as we occasionally see in individuals of objectionable habits, loaded with adipose deposits, 'an aggravated agglomeration of superabundant redundancies.'"[1]

Lancaster's Decline

Personal Appearance

Lancaster himself considered his presence in the United States as an affair of national significance. After official receptions in New York, Albany, and Philadelphia, he visited Congress on the 26th of of January, 1819, when the House of Representatives passed a resolution: "That Joseph Lancaster, the friend of learning and of man be admitted to a seat within the Hall."[2] In a series of letters addressed to President Monroe, Henry Clay, Speaker of the House, and Representative Bassett, Lancaster develops his ideas for advancing the "general prosperity of this country" by means of the application of his system to higher as well as elementary education and to the education of the Indians. These letters, found in the Astor Library, constitute no doubt the missing pamphlet referred to by Salmon:[3] "Letters on national subjects, auxiliary to universal education and scientific knowledge; addressed to Burwell Bassett, late member of the House of Representatives; Henry Clay, Speaker of the House of Representatives; and James Monroe, President of the United States of America. By

Plans for a National System

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 187.
[2] Epitome, p. 11.
[3] Salmon, Joseph Lancaster, p. 5.

Joseph Lancaster, founder of the Lancasterian System of Education."[1]

The first letter is headed "National Institutions" and is addressed to Burwell Bassett, and the Friends of American Education, dated, Norfolk, Virginia, 11th month, 20th, 1819. The author desires to express his gratitude for the honors conferred by Congress by "proving that the general prosperity of this country has been a subject of consideration ever since I landed." The measure advocated for the advancement of art, science and national resources is the foundation of a Washington National Museum. This museum should form a *register* of national resources, botanical, mineral, geological; and contain a collection of designs and engravings. Patriotism should lead to generous donations. A small tax on sea-captains, merchants and travelers who neglect to bring specimens would secure a constant flow of gifts, and at the same time stimulate the spirit of patriotism. Through exchanges, state and college museums would be extended to every corner of the land, in extending scientific education, promoting agriculture, and aiding the arts and industries.

The second letter dated, "Washington, 22d of 12th month, 1819," addressed to "Henry Clay, Speaker of the House of Representatives, U. S. A.," begins with a series of references to Cyrus, Solon, Lycurgus, Socrates, Moses, and Numa Pompilius. "These references are made to *revive* in thy classic mind, the charm of connection which may be found in the sentiments of great men, on subjects relating to the rise, progress or ruin of national character." Then follows a tribute to the greatness of America, a prophecy of a still greater nation extending to the Pacific, and a suggestion that this is the *critical* moment for extending education and banishing ignorance. "Perhaps the period is already at hand, when the weight of the instructed mind in the nation will be estimated by the statemen as part of its effective strength." As a postscript are inserted the following verses on the Lancasterian system of education recited at a lecture in Congress Hall.

Universal Education

[1] Washington City, printed for the author by Jacob Gideon, Jr., 1820, pp. 60.

LANCASTERIAN SYSTEM AS "THE GENEROUS PLAN"

The Lion o'er his wild domains
Rules by the terror of his eye—
The eagle of the rock maintains
By force his empire in the sky.

The Shark, the tyrant of the flood,
Pursues his prey with quenchless rage.
Parent and young, unweaned from blood,
Are still the same from age to age.

Of all that live, and move and breathe,
Man only rises o'er his birth,
He looks around, above, beneath,
At once the heir of Heaven and earth.

Force, cunning, speed, which nature gave
The various tribes throughout her plan,
Life to enjoy—from death to save—
These are the lowest powers of man.

From strength to strength he travels on;
He leaves the lingering Brute behind
And when a few short years are gone,
He soars, a disembodied mind.

Destined his future course sublime
Through nobler, brighter paths to run;
With him, the final end of time,
Is but eternity begun.

What guides him in his high persuit,
Opens, illumines, cheers his way?
Discerns th' immortal from the brute,
God's image from the mould of clay?

'Tis knowledge, knowledge of the soul,
Is power and liberty and peace;
And, while the celestial ages roll,
The joys of knowledge shall increase.

Aid, then, the gen'rous plan
Which spreads the light with universal beams;
And through the human desert leads
Truth's living, pure, perpetual streams.

Behold a new creation rise!
New spirit breathed into the clod—
Behold the voice of wisdom cries:
"Man, know thyself, and *Fear thy God.*"

MONTGOMERY.

The third letter is addressed to "James Monroe, President of the United States of America, Washington, 22d of 1st month, 1820." The education of the Indians is the principal topic of this letter. Though Lancaster disclaims any personal acquaintance with the Indians, he ventures to urge the Lancasterian system of instruction as the solution of the Indian problem. It must be acknowledged that many practical suggestions are found in this letter. Indian teachers should be utilized, mechanical and agricultural schools should be established, practical instruction should be associated with theoretical, pictures should be largely employed, education should be social.

Indian Education

The fourth and final letter is addressed to Burwell Bassett, dated "Lancasterian Institute, Baltimore, 29th of 2nd month, 1820." Scotland is cited as an example of the value of universal education. The Lancasterian system offers the means of universal education in America. The new institute at Baltimore is described as an application of the system to higher education.

Higher Education

New York was the scene of Lancaster's last, as well as his first, educational effort in America. His various attempts at educational leadership in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Venezuela, and Canada are described in the Epitome, and summarized by Salmon.[1] He died in New York in 1838, having been fatally injured in crossing Grand Street after a visit to School No. 7, in Chrystie Street. The critical value of Lancaster's visits may be indicated by his comments entered in school minute books. "Ninth month, 6.—Joseph Lancaster visited this school, and was most highly pleased with the exemplary behavior and order of the very interesting boys and youth who assemble here for instruction. In this school he has found, felt, and seen abundance to delight a father's eye and gratify the best feelings of a father's heart. If he is to take youth like these as a specimen of American native character, truly he may congratulate the citizens of New York and the American nation, that they possess youth of such high hopes and favorable capacity. May they ever do the same honor to their teachers and parents, and the same credit to these schools, and may the love and peace of God dwell with them, and they all become as diamonds of the purest water, enclosed within the pearl of greatest price."[2]

Lancaster as an Inspector

[1] Salmon, Joseph Lancaster, Chap. II.

[2] Bourne, History of the Public School Society, p. 697.

"Ninth month, 6.—Joseph Lancaster. The most delightful conduct and mental attention, good behavior and wise deportment of the highly estimable children and youth in this school, merit from me a tribute of respect which seems almost inexpressible. I have often been highly delighted and gratified with schools, but never more so than in my visit to this school. I congratulate their parents, friends, and teachers on the principles of good conduct, the love of learning, and also rectitude and virtue which I am satisfied are among them. There now are children and youth in this school who do the highest credit to themselves, to their teachers, and to these institutions that the most excellent conduct can do. May they go on and increase and prosper, till heaven shall rejoice and earth be glad for them; till knowledge shall abound in perfection among them, and they grow up to maturity, like their Redeemer, in favor with God and man.

"Ninth month, 25.—Joseph Lancaster. School much increased. We love to see bees in swarms; it is a sure sign there will be more honey. Found the pupils as busy as bees in their writing with minds intent on working up as much improvement as possible."[1]

[1] *Ibid.*

IV

ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW YORK LANCASTERIAN SCHOOLS, SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

When the New York Free School Society was in a position to erect school buildings the Lancasterian arrangement was followed. School Number 1 was erected in 1809, and was one hundred and twenty feet in length and fifty feet in width, capable of accommodating five hundred children in the main room. School Number 2, erected in 1811, was eighty feet long and forty feet wide and accommodated three hundred children in the upper school. Each of these buildings had on a lower story living apartments and a school room accommodating one hundred and fifty. These rooms were occupied by girls' schools, also on the Lancasterian plan, conducted by the Female Association.

Buildings of Free School Society

Girls and Boys

After the development of the Infant School in 1830 the typical New York school building consisted of three stories. The Infant and Primary rooms were on the ground floor, the former fitted with seats rising in tiers, the gallery as it it was called, seating two hundred children; the latter furnished with rows of forms facing the teacher's desk which was placed in the center of the room. The second floor was for the girls' school, the third for the boys'; the plan was the same for both, one large room with two or three recitation rooms. Simultaneous instruction and monitorial methods were still dominant, and led to the retention of the Lancasterian type of building.[1]

Infant Schools

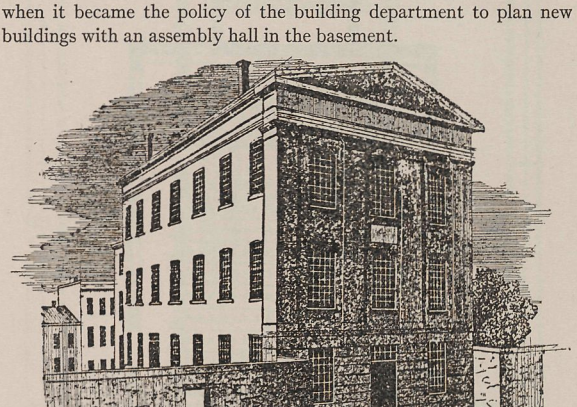
School buildings erected by the Board of Education after the new school law of 1842, were made to conform to the model of the old monitorial schools. The County Superintendent of Common Schools, in a report to the Board of Education,[2] urges that buildings be divided into class rooms, or that at least folding doors, such as were then in use in the primary

Under Board of Education

[1] Manual, Public School Society, 1850, pp. 123–133.

[2] Document No. 5, 1846.

department, should be used in the regular schools. The gallery may still be seen in some of the older buildings in New York. The large room has been divided into class rooms, in some cases by curtains only, generally by sliding doors. After practically all traces of the Lancasterian methods had vanished, the large rooms with sliding doors were retained as a feature in the new buildings, until lately, when it became the policy of the building department to plan new buildings with an assembly hall in the basement.



PUBLIC SCHOOL NO. 17

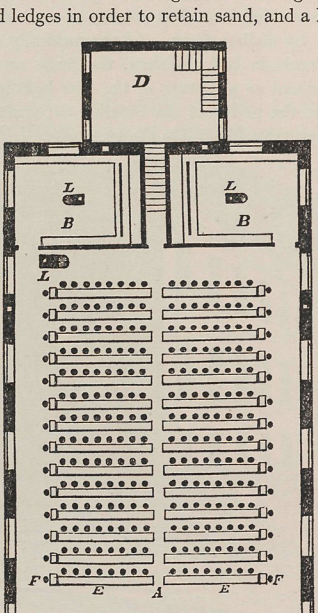
The building is 80 by 42 feet front. The buildings erected since this, have some slight deviation from these plans, principally by introducing additional and larger class rooms.

From Manual of the Public School Society, New York, 1850, p. 123

The school room on the monitorial plan was in the form of a parallelogram, the length being about twice the width. At one end was a platform with a teacher's desk, flanked on each side by a small desk for the principal monitors. The middle of the room was occupied with the forms, a passage being left between the ends of the forms and the walls at least six feet broad, where the children formed half circles for reading.

The School Room

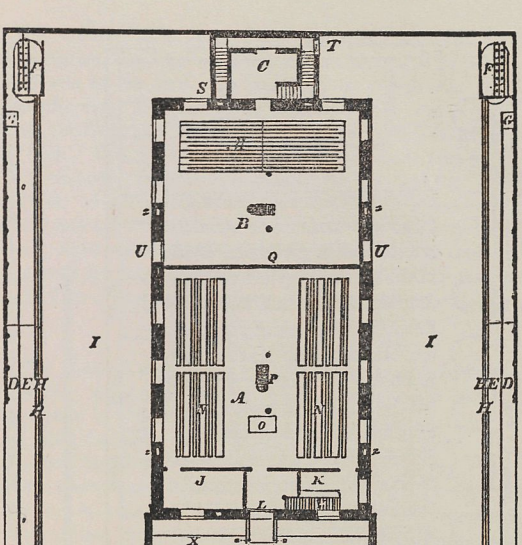
Each form seated from ten to twenty. The forms nearest the teacher's desk were intended for the beginners forming the sand class. These desks had ledges in order to retain sand, and a hole at the end



PLAN OF GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT
From Manual of the Public School Society, New York, 1850

of each desk to permit the excess of sand to fall into a drawer. The remaining desks were slightly inclined planes, from six to seven inches in width. Only the desks of the eighth class were supplied with inkstands made of lead and firmly fixed into the

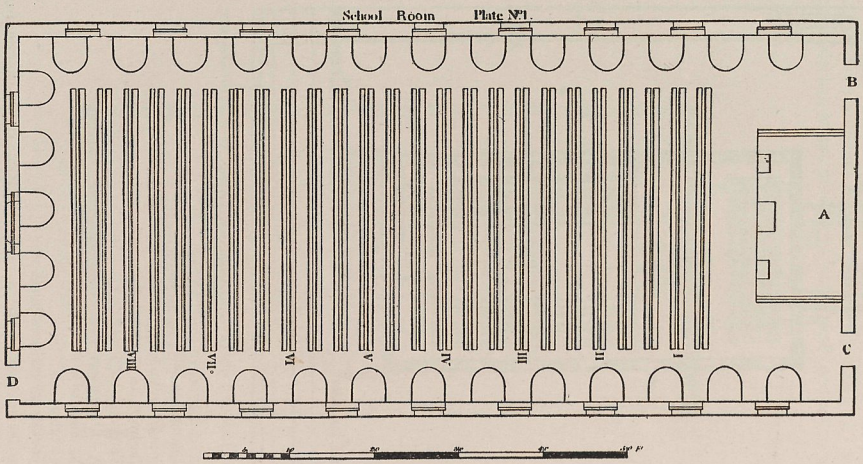
Forms



GROUND PLAN OF PRIMARY DEPARTMENT, YARDS, WOOD-HOUSES, ETC.

A—Primary School room—39 by 38 feet.
B—Infant School room—39 by 30 feet.
C—Room in Stair building for brooms, brushes, pails, &c.
J—Boys' Wardrobe, 16½ by 8 feet.
K—Girls' Wardrobe, 12½ by 8 feet.
M—Gallery, 32 by 11 feet—seats for 200 children.
N, N—Desks, each 16½ feet long—each 12 or 13 scholars.
O—Teacher's table.
L—Front doorway, or main entrance.
The stations for the classes, when reading, is in the centre passage, fronting the desks.
All doors open outward.

From Manual of the Public School Society, New York, 1850



PLAN OF SCHOOL ROOM

From Manual of the Free School Society, New York, 1820

desks. On the floor of the passage was a series of semi-circles marking the situation of groups which spelled out their reading lessons from the charts on the wall. To this form of groups was given the name of drafts. The alphabet wheel was a device for displaying letters to the sand class which faced the teacher's desk. This wheel was a circular board about four feet in diameter on which were painted the letters of the alphabet. A circular desk with an oblong opening permitted only one letter to be seen at a time.[1] In all except the highest classes, slates were used instead of paper; when not in use they hung upon nails fixed to the desks. For many years after the founding of the Free School Society slates were imported from England.

Semi-circles

Alphabet Wheel

Organization of the School

"The master," says Lancaster, "should be a silent bystander and inspector. What a master says should be done; but if he teaches on this system he will find the authority is not personal,—that when the pupils, as well as the schoolmaster, understand how to act and learn on this system, the system, not the master's vague, discretionary, uncertain judgment, will be in practice. A command will be obeyed by any boy, because it is a command, and the whole school will obey the common, known commands of the school from being merely known as such, let who will give them. In a common school the authority of the master is personal, and the rod is his sceptre. His absence is the immediate signal for confusion and in his absence, his assistants will rarely be minded. But in a school properly regulated and conducted on my plan, when the master leaves school, the business will go on as well in his absence as in his presence, because the authority is not personal. This mode of insuring obedience is a novelty in the history of education."[2] That this plan of rendering the teacher unnecessary was realized in the schools of the New York Society is evidenced by numerous entries in the minute book of School No. 2, showing the school to be in operation in the absence of the teacher. There was complete reduction to system.

The Teacher

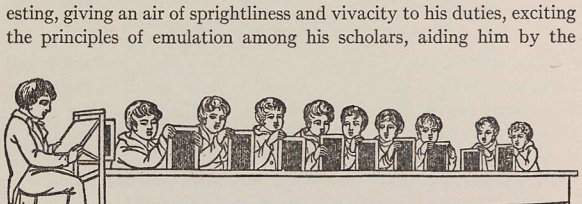
The apparent success of the system in New York is attested in the Report on Monitorial Instruction to the Boston School Committee:

[1] Manual of the New York Free Schools, 1820.

[2] British System of Education, p. 45.

"The advantages of the monitorial system in comparison with the old system, may briefly be thus stated. To the student it makes learning less irksome, by simplifying and facilitating his progress, it gives to instruction more interest, by alternation and variety of exercise, in which physical and intellectual action are combined; it keeps attention awake and interested, by permitting no moment of idleness or listlessness; its effects on the habits, character and intelligence of youth are highly beneficial; disposing their minds to industry, to readiness of attention, and to subordination thereby creating in early life, a love of order, preparation for business, and acquaintance with the relative obligations and duties both of pupils and instructor. To the master also, it renders teaching less irksome and more interesting, giving an air of sprightliness and vivacity to his duties, exciting the principles of emulation among his scholars, aiding him by the

Order



MONITOR'S SEAT AND DESK

From Manual of the Free School Society, 1820

number of assistants he can thus employ, and, by relieving him from the constant necessity of direct supervision of every individual, capacitates him to concentrate his mind and efforts on doings and objects of the most importance, difficulty, and responsibility. To all which it may be added, though a consideration less important yet not to be overlooked, that it is an immense saving both of time and money, in consequence of the far greater numbers which can be taught as well by this mode, as a smaller number can by the former. It will be sufficient under this head to state that in New York, masters, in three distinct schools, teach fifteen hundred and forty-seven boys, being an average of upwards of five hundred each.

Economy

In our schools the same number of boys require seven schools and fifteen instructors. In New York a female teaches a school, on this principle, of four hundred. In our schools the average number to an instructress is fifty-six. The success and progressive advancement in those schools, is asserted by men deemed competent judges, to be not less than ours."[1]

Efficiency

The manual of the Lancasterian system, issued by the Free School Society in 1820, contains twelve pages on the duties of the monitors. The manual of the New York Public School Society, as late as 1850, devotes eight pages to this topic. Monitors were either subordinate or general. The former undertook the instruction of the separate classes and maintained order amongst the pupils instructed. The latter took no part in the instruction of the pupils, but maintained order throughout the school. In 1820 the monitors were classified as follows:

Monitors in 1820

I. Subordinate Monitors
   1. Monitors of classes
   2. Assistant monitors of classes
   3. Monitors of reading
   4. Draught monitors
   5. Monitors of arithmetic
   6. Monitors of writing

II. General Monitors
   1. General monitors of order
   2. Monitor general of reading
   3. Monitor general of arithmetic
   4. Monitor general of writing

Besides the above there were other officers, such as Dictator, Lesson fixers, Monitor of books, Librarian.

When the Manual of 1850 was prepared, some modifications had been made in the monitorial system. In 1833, the course of study had been extended to include astronomy, algebra, geometry, trigonometry and book-keeping; salaries were raised, assistant teachers appointed, and recitation rooms provided.[2] The system of mutual instruction was retained, and the school taught in drafts by monitors, but this plan was now supplemented by class-room instruction and examinations by principal and teachers.[3] According to the Manual of 1850 there were:

Assistant Teachers

Monitors in 1850

[1] Report on Monitorial Instruction to the Boston School Committee, 1828.
[2] 28th Annual Report of Public School Society, 1833.
[3] 37th Annual Report of Public School Society, 1842, p. 32.

I. Monitors of instruction
   1. Monitor general of reading
   2. Monitor general of dictation
   3. Monitor general of arithmetic
   4. Monitor general of writing
   5. Draft monitors of reading and ciphering

II. Monitors of mechanical operations of the school
   1. Book monitors
   2. Street and yard monitors
   3. Monitors of ventilation
   4. Fuel and fire monitors

Teachers were advised to "further promote the well being of the school by extending the management by monitors to minor matters," recording tardy scholars, providing water, etc.[1]

The later organization of the schools and the relation of the teacher and monitors are described in the annual report of the society for 1842: "There are in each school a principal, assistant and two junior teachers, denominated first and second monitors; the first being in some cases a 'passed monitor.' The principal and assistant alternately have the general government of the school in the main room, and teach divisions in the recitation or class rooms, while the monitors have charge of a division in the recitation rooms, or assist in the main room. Two sets of teaching monitors are chosen monthly from the advanced classes, who are employed in teaching the lower divisions in reading, spelling, definitions, arithmetic and sometimes geography; the teaching monitors who have performed these duties, are received into the recitation room for their own instruction; the classes also which they have taught are in larger divisions, at stated times, personally instructed by the principal, assistant, and paid monitors; part of them in the recitation rooms, and part in the main room; the whole school thus in four or five large divisions receiving extended instruction, and undergoing a review of the lessons taught them by the monitors. This is sometimes varied by the practice of having part of them thus engaged in the class rooms, while those occupying the main room are engaged in some general exercise, as writing copies on slates or simultaneous instruction in geography on the blank maps of the hemispheres on the walls of the school room."[2]

The growing distrust of the monitorial system is shown in several of the reports of the Public School Society. "The trustees have long been aware that, however peculiarly appropriate the monitorial system may be, and is, to

Limitations of Monitorial System

[1] Manual of the Public School Society, 1850, pp. 73–75.

[2] 37th Annual Report, Public School Society, 1842, pp. 46–47.

a school of several hundred children under charge of a single teacher, conducted with primary reference to a very limited expenditure, and confined in its course to the rudiments of knowledge—to give adequate and appropriate instruction to all the scholars required the employment of additional teachers, and especially so if a new liberal course of study were introduced. . . . The trustees have decided to employ a well qualified assistant teacher in each of the Public Schools, and to introduce several new branches of study."[1]

"By modifications adopted in the revised system of mutual instruction, that only right principle of teaching, 'mind acting on mind' is brought effectually into operation on all pupils, for although this is somewhat operative under the course of monitorial teaching by the Lancasterian and Madras systems, yet not sufficiently so to give confidence to either as a thorough system of instruction, their mechanical processes doing well, only to a limited extent; the varied plans, however, of Dr. Bell for the extension of mutual instruction, being more in the spirit of the science of teaching than those of Lancaster, may favorably except the Madras System, from the full force of this observation, while both wrought into one, with modifications, may effect improved results. They are thus modified in the Public Schools, by which like advantages are given to all, by personal instruction from the teachers, and the review of monitor's work, checking neglect, and prompting him to efficiency in his duties."[2]

Classification of Pupils

Promotion by Subjects

Though Lancaster mechanized the process of instruction, he developed a flexible plan of grading and promotion. Indeed the mechanical nature of the Lancasterian plan of instruction readily permitted an extremely flexible plan of grading and promotion. Pupils were classified separately for reading and arithmetic and were promoted whenever proficient in the work of a class. To recommend for promotion was the work of the monitors. The annual reports of the Free School Society and of the Public School Society give statistics of promotion. One of the last tables of this kind appears in the 42nd report, 1848, page 11:

[1] 28th Annual Report, 1833.

[2] 42d Annual Report, 1848, p. 43.

"Children promoted:

3878 from the 1st to the 2nd class
3423 from the 2nd to the 3rd class
3748 from the 3rd to the 4th class
3286 from the 4th to the 5th class
2000 from the 5th to the 6th class
2427 from the 6th to the 7th class
1808 from the 7th to the 8th class
1123 from the 8th to the 9th class
3230 to writing on paper
3906 to addition and subtraction
3024 to multiplication and division
1934 to compound of first four rules
1216 to reduction
1996 to proportion
1516 to practice
1588 to interest

N. B The first class learns the alphabet; the ninth class is the highest reading class. Of the children in the Public as distinguished from the Primary Schools and Primary Departments there are now—

8742 learning Geography
5493 learning Grammar
66 learning Book-keeping
1242 learning History
3040 learning Astronomy
461 learning Algebra
59 learning Geometry"[1]

Fixed Grading in 1855

With the decline of the monitorial system this flexible system of grading and promotion was gradually replaced by the present class system. In the Ward Schools of 1855 the classes were as follows:

Primary Schools

Class 5, alphabet and its combinations into words and syllables; lessons on objects and common things. Class 4, read and spell print, definitions, Roman numbers, tables in addition. Class 3, simple rules in arithmetic including multiplication; reading continued; slate writing. Class 2, arithmetic through simple subtraction; geography commenced; writing and drawing on slate and blackboard. Class 1, tables of weight, measures, etc.; simple division; mental arithmetic; geography; elementary science and vocal music.

Class 5, review geography, etc. Class 4, grammar commenced; fractions. Class 3, United States history. Class 2, mineralogy,

[1] 42d Annual Report, Public School Society, 1848, p. 11.

chemistry, geology. Class 1, algebra, geometry, natural history, general history and book-keeping.[1] The grading of the Public Schools in 1867 was as follows:

Grammar Schools

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Fifth Grade—Alphabet Class—alphabet and elementary sounds; counting and adding by ones and twos. Lessons in common objects.

Primary Schools in 1867

Fourth Grade—Primer Class—reading and spelling from charts, blackboards and primers; elementary sounds. Adding by twos, threes, fours and fives; also taking away ones, twos and threes from greater numbers. Tables. Lessons in morals and manners.

Third Grade—The last half of the First and first half of the Second Reader. Simple definitions; also spelling by elementary sounds; use of common marks in sentences read. Roman numbers through C, D and M. Numeration through 100,000,000; addition through examples of six or seven short columns; tables through 6 times 12.

Second Grade—Second Reader. Spelling—meaning of words; their use in short sentences; punctuation continued. Through subtraction and multiplication by one figure; tables through 12 times 12. Drawing and writing on slates—from copies on blackboard. Morals and manners continued.

First Grade—Reading. Lessons same grade as the last half of Second Reader. Spelling and definition—use of words in oral sentences. Through multiplication and division by two figures; simple applications. Tables—divisions, time, weights and measures and Federal money. Geography—outline maps—the hemispheres, North and South America; definitions and description.[2]

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS

Sixth Grade—Third Reader. Arithmetic—through simple rules and Federal money—practical applications. Outlines of North America including United States.

Grammar Schools in 1867

Fifth Grade—Reading similar to sixth. Arithmetic—through common fractions; practical applications and analysis. Full knowledge of the United States and other divisions of North America.

Fourth Grade—Fourth Reader. Spelling and definitions, pre-

[1] Report of New York City Superintendent of Common Schools, 1855.

[2] Boese, Public Education in the City of New York, 1869, pp. 134–5.

fixes. Arithmetic through decimal fractions, exercises in calculation. Geography—South America. Grammar commenced.

Third Grade—Fourth Reader. Spelling and definitions from the reading lessons, instruction in prefixes of derivative words. Arithmetic—through the compound rules and reduction. Geography both local and descriptive, through Europe. English grammar—the analysis and parsing of sentences with simple phrase or clause adjuncts. United States History—early discoveries and colonial.

Second Grade—Fifth Reader. Spelling—definitions, from the reading lesson, etymology. Arithmetic—through percentage. Geography—local and descriptive, through Asia, Africa and Oceanica. English Grammar—analysis and parsing, correction of false syntax. History—war of the Revolution. Algebra (boys only)—through fractions.

First Grade—Reading, spelling and etymology continued. Arithmetic—problems in interest, discount, etc., (boys, through evolution). Geography reviewed, with outlines in physical geography. English grammar continued. History—outlines completed and reviewed. Astronomy.[1]

School Sessions

Vacations

The long vacations of the present were unknown in the schools of the Free School Society and the Public School Society. The authorized holidays were the first of January, the first of May, the fourth of July, and the twenty-fifth of December.[2] Saturday was a half holiday, afterwards an entire holiday.[3] The reading of the minutes of the school committees reveals the fact that in the early days of the schools the length of the summer vacation was contingent upon the cleaning and whitewashing of the schoolhouse or a visitation of cholera or other epidemics. The official summer vacation in 1826 and later was three weeks in August.[4]

School Hours

The hours of daily sessions varied in winter and summer. In 1807 they were eight to twelve and three to six, from May to November; nine to twelve, and two to five from December to April.[5] According to the by-laws of 1826 and 1836, the hours were nine to twelve, and two to five, from March to November; and nine to three, with a half hour at noon from December to February.

[1] Boese, Public Education in the City of New York, 1869, pp. 137–140.
[2] By-laws of the Public School Society, 1826–1836.
[3] [4] *Ibid.*
[5] Sketch of New York Free School, 1807.

Order of Exercises in Grammar Schools

A definite assignment of time for the daily exercises is not given in the early manuals of the society; but, as the Manual of 1820, in most particulars, closely follows the Manual of the British and Foreign School Society of 1816, which does contain a daily program, it is possible by a comparison of the two manuals to gain a general idea of the daily routine in a New York school of about 1820.

In 1820 the Society required the teacher to hold a class for monitors from six to eight or from seven to nine A. M. At 8.45 the Monitor General of Order opens the doors for the monitors, and at 9, admits the children. After the reading of the Scriptures, the Monitor General of Order calls over the names of the monitors and appoints others in place of absentees. He directs the monitors to give out pencils to the boys of their classes. The next command is "Clean slates." After the slates are sufficiently cleaned, the Monitor General gives a signal to leave off by blowing his whistle. The pupils then put their hands behind them. The next command is "Monitors inspect." The monitors examine the slates of their classes, and then stand on their benches to show the Monitor General that the inspection is finished.

9 A. M. Admission Scriptures

9.10 Preparation for Dictation

At the command, "Monitors begin," the monitor of the eighth class dictates a word; then the monitors of the seventh, sixth, fifth, fourth, third and second in succession. The class monitors mark their class registers and bring the lists to the Monitor General, who enters the numbers in the school register. At the close of the muster, the direction of the school is taken by the Monitor General of Reading, who appoints the reading monitors for the day, hangs up his charts or reading boards, by which the children are to form semi-circles, and directs the drafts (groups) to their places. Each draft is under the charge of a monitor of reading. Classes one to four always read the large boards composing part of the spelling book. Classes five to eight read boards of connected reading in the morning, and spelling lessons in the afternoon.

Dictation

9.30 Muster

Reading

At the direction, "Monitors repeat," the Reading Monitors take down the boards and question their pupils.

10.00 Review

The pupils are lined up against the wall and the Monitor-General of Reading distributes merit tickets to each one who wears the badge designating him to be first in the class.

10.15 Rewards

10.30 Writing Arithmetic

Classes 1 to 5 have writing until the end of the session. Classes 6 to 8 have arithmetic. The time is divided between slate work at the desks and work in drafts. The Monitor-General of Arithmetic directs the movements of the drafts, and distributes the reward tickets.

11.45 Dismissal

Orders for closing are given by the Monitor-General of Order, who distributes merit tickets to those who have behaved well, and detains those who have behaved badly. The orders of dismissal are: *Look, Out, Front, Put on hats, Hands down, Look, Go.* Each class marches out with the class monitor at the head.

2 P. M.	Dictation
2.30	Muster, Reading
3.00	Review
3.15	Close of Reading
3.15	Writing

ORDER OF EXERCISES IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL, ABOUT 1850

9 A. M. Reading of the Scriptures, not to exceed five minutes. Reading of Rules and Persuasive Charge. Inspection of pupils for cleanliness.

9.30 Reading and spelling in drafts. These exercises are conducted by the Draft Monitors under the direction of the Assistant Teacher and the Monitor-General of the Reading. The drafts contain six children. Large lesson charts are used.

10.00 Dictation. This is conducted by the Assistant Teacher or by the Monitor-General of Dictation. The school is prepared by the following orders: *Attention, Take Slates, Clean Slates, Hands Fixed, Take Pencils.* The dictator then names the words on the board; those who are to write the word repeat it in concert. The teacher then names the letters; these are repeated by the class, and after the children name the letters as pointed out by the teacher, they are told to write. The teacher then passes to the other classes in succession, and leaves the correction of mistakes to the monitors. With due rapidity each class may spell eighteen words during the half hour.

10.30 Recess and oral instruction. The pupils are permitted to go to the playground where they are allowed free play or "little amusing games of exercise under the direction of the teacher."[1]

[1] Manual, 1850, p. 121.

The oral instruction consists of lessons on common things—object lessons.

Reading and spelling in drafts.	11.00
Writing copies, drawing, etc. Slates are generally used for writing in the Primary School, though writing in sand is followed to some extent as late as 1842.[1] One side of the slate is ruled with horizontal lines, and also oblique guide lines. The copy consists of a printed alphabet board.[2] The procedure is similar to that of the dictation exercises. Every thing is done in order, and all details are attended to by monitors.	11.30
Recess for lunch.	12.00
Oral instructions in tables and common things. Various methods are employed according to the class—the numeral frame, the blackboard, charts and dictation.	12.30
Reading and spelling in drafts.	1 P. M.
Dictation for writing on slates.	1.30
Reading and spelling in drafts.	2.00
Dictation.	2.30

In addition to the above program the principal or teacher may be engaged in giving instructions to the monitors or in teaching a class.

In 1852 the program of a Primary School under the Public School Society remained practically the same:

Reading of the Scriptures and other exercises	9 A. M.
Read and spell (Monitors)	9.30
Dictation (Slates)	10.00
Recess and oral instruction	10.30
Read and spell in drafts	11.00
Writing copies and drawing	11.30
Recess for lunch	12.00
Oral instruction in tables and common things	12.30
Read and spell in drafts	1.00
Dictation (Slates)	1.30
Read and spell in drafts	2.00
Dictation[3]	2.30

According to the Manual of 1850, page 90, the order of exercises of the upper schools (the last three classes of the nine courses) was as follows:

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[1] 37th Report of Public School Society, p. 43. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Report, New York City Superintendent of Common Schools, 1852.

Time	*Monday*	*Tuesday*	*Wednesday*	*Thursday*	*Friday*
9.00		Read and prepare for exercises			
9.05		Astronomy		Astronomy	
	Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography
10.00	Arithmetic	Arithmetic	Arithmetic	Arithmetic	Arithmetic
10.45	Recess.	Take attendance and ventilate thoroughly			
11.00	Dictation	Dictation	Dictation	Dictation	Dictation
11.45	Writing on paper	Compo-sition	Writing on paper	Compo-sition	Writing on paper
12.30	Recess—Dinner				
1.00	Grammar	Drawing	Grammar	Drawing	Grammar
2.00	Reading	Reading History	Reading	Reading History	Reading
2.45		Absentees sent for; closing school			
3.00					

V

METHODS OF TEACHING

Reading

In reading, the school was divided into eight classes: 1st class learning the alphabet; 2nd class, words and syllables of two letters; 3rd class, words and syllables of three letters; 4th class, words and syllables of four letters; 5th class, reading lesson of one syllable; 6th class, reading lesson of two syllables; 7th class, the Testament; 8th class, the Bible.[1]

Eight Classes for Reading

The only business of the first class was to learn the letters of the alphabet. Two methods were employed: (1) Writing from dictation. The children were seated on the forms belonging to the first class; opposite them was a large board or alphabet wheel which displayed the letters to be written. Roman characters were used. At the dictation of the monitor the letter was traced, with a short stick, in the sand. The monitor examined the work and smoothed out that which was badly done. To facilitate learning a beginner was placed next to a child who had made some progress. (2) Reading from boards. The children stood in semicircles and named the letters pointed out by the monitors. If a mistake was made a change of place occurred.

Alphabet Class

Reading and Writing Combined

The steps employed in learning the alphabet are thus described in an early account of the New York Free Schools:

"Ten children can be accommodated at this table; each scholar has a stick given to him about the thickness of a quill, and four inches long, with which he is to write the letters on the sand. The alphabet is divided into three parts, viz., the perpendicular letters, I H T L E F i and l, form the first lesson; the triangular letters, A V W M N Z K Y X v w k y z and x form the second; and the circular letters, O U C J G D P B R Q S, a b o d p q g c m n h t u r s f and j, form the third class. These are in succession placed before the class, which is under the direction of a

Sand Table

[1] Manual of the Lancasterian System, New York, 1820, p. 20.

monitor, who, with an audible voice, desires them to form the first letter; each scholar now makes his best effort, which, perhaps, is a very awkward one; but the monitor pointing out the defects and occasionally printing the letter for them, teaches them to retrace it; after repeated trials upon the same letter, the class is soon able to form it readily, and with neatness. The next letters of the lesson are in succession placed before them, and taught in the same manner. It may be necessary to observe, that on no account whatever must a pupil pass on to another letter, until he is able to print the first with neatness. In being thus exercised in forming the letters, the pupil will in a short time know them; and he is not only enabled to print letters, but also learns them sooner than in the usual mode of teaching. If the class is continual in its application to forming letters on the sand, it will be found that the employment will be insipid and burdensome. It should therefore be varied by having the class several times a day called from their seats and formed into a circle around a lesson, which is printed in large letters, and suspended from the wall, in such a manner that the whole class can view it. The monitor then points to the first letter, and asks aloud, 'What letter is that?' The boy at the head of the class answers first, when, if he should make a mistake, the question is put to the second boy, and so on until some one in the class answers aright; in which case the boy takes precedency in the class. This exercise soon perfects them in the knowledge of their letters and is also a pleasing relaxation."[1]

Letter Board

Place Taking

In 1842 these methods were still considered "very intellectual." "The alphabet is taught by varied methods; by the printed lesson sheet, by single letters on binder's boards, and by tracing the letters in white sand, lightly covering a part of the writing desk painted black for the purpose. This is called the sand desk. This method, beside being a useful one in varying the exercises of the abcedarians, is well calculated to aid mental development, calling into exercise analysis and comparison, and is a very intellectual method of teaching the alphabet."[2]

Alphabet Method Intellectual

"The children having learned their letters are removed to a higher class by the inspecting monitor, and are taught to spell and read

[1] Account of Free School Society, 1814, pp. 51–52.

[2] 37th Annual Report, Public School Society, 1842, p. 42.

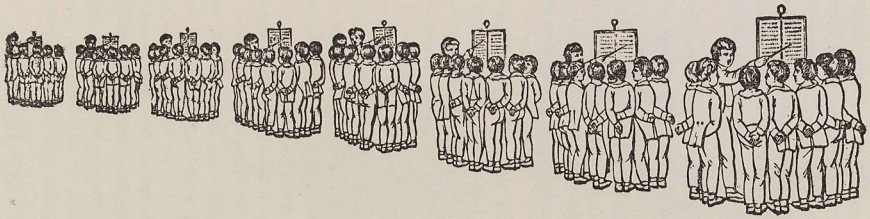


Plate of School when in Draughts.

From Manual of the Free School Society, 1820

One Syllable Class

monosyllables. This class also makes use of the sand writing. The monitors direct the pupils to make two letters, b-a, and teach them that b-a spells ba. In the circles the class is drilled in pronouncing the words previously written in the sand. When a class has arrived at the dignity of a word of two syllables, slates are substituted for sand. Later the expert syllabic readers are introduced to the Testament."

Slates

There was nothing incidental about the teaching of reading and writing—it was the sole occupation of the younger children. "While the children are too young, or too inexperienced to be taught Arithmetic, their spelling, reading, and writing should continue without any intermission."[2] This constituted the school work for the six-year-old children until the influence of the Pestalozzian movement was brought to bear in the foundation of the Infant School.

Lack of Variety

Books were used in only the two highest classes of the primary schools. For the others, Lancaster's economical plan of wall charts was employed. According to the minutes of the committee for Public School No. 2, classes visited read the New Testament (John 15 was read in 1824 by children six and eight years of age), Isaiah, Parnell's Hermit, Goldsmith's Traveler, Gray's Elegy and Murray's English Reader.

Reading Material

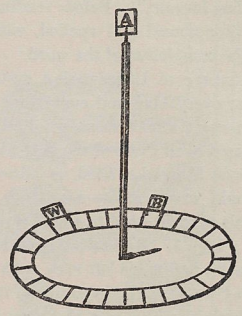
According to the Manual of 1850, the alphabet was taught in connection with reading. Although the sand writing of the lowest classes had given way to the use of slates, the general method does not seem to have departed very widely from the earlier Lancasterian form. The three lowest classes were taught from lesson cards, twenty-four lessons of spelling and easy reading. The first four cards had the alphabet on the margin. "The syllables and words comprising these first lessons are to be spelled by pointing out the letters on the margin, and naming them, and then pronouncing or reading the syllables or words in the reading lesson, when pointed out."[3] This was done in drafts according to the monitorial plan. "The lively, natural and intelligible popular tales of Miss Edgeworth are especially

Similar Methods in 1850

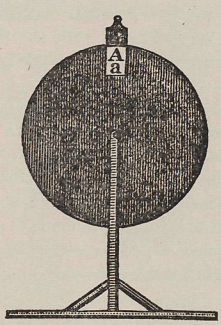
[1] Account of Free School Society, 1814, pp. 52, 55.

[2] *Ibid.*

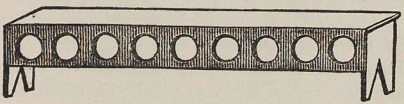
[3] Manual, 1850, p. 21.



Moveable Stand.



Alphabet-Wheel.



Bench with holes for Hats.

From Manual of the Free School Society, 1820

useful as early reading lessons."[1] Before reading a lesson all difficult words are to be pronounced and spelled, with repronunciation of the syllables until the completion of the word.

Nearly half a century of Lancasterian system with Lancaster's motto, "A place for everything and everything in its place," prominently displayed in every school room, resulted in mechanical refinements which surpassed even those of the noted founder of the system. For example, see Book Manual of 1850, as follows:

"The pupil should stand erect—his heels near together,—toes turned out,—and his eyes directed to the face of the person speaking to him. Fig. 1. Represents the Book-Monitor with a pile of books across his left arm, with the backs from him, and with the top of the page to the right hand.

Book Manual

"Fig. 2. The Book-Monitor, with the right hand hands the book to the pupil, who receives it with the right hand, with the back of the book to the left, and then passes it into the left hand, where it is held with the back upwards, and with the thumb extended at an angle of forty-five degrees with the edge of the book (as in Fig. 2), until a further order is given.

"Fig. 3. When the page is given out, the book is turned by the thumb on the side; and, while held with both hands, is turned with the back downwards, with the thumbs meeting across the leaves, at a point judged to be nearest the place to be found. On opening the book the left hand slides down to the bottom, and thence to the middle where the thumb and little finger are made to press on the two opposite pages. If the pupil should have thus lit upon the page sought for, he lets fall the right hand by the side, and his position is that of Fig. 3.

"Fig. 4. But, if he has opened short of the page required the thumb of the right hand is to be placed near the upper corner of the page, as seen in fig. 4. while the forefinger lifts the leaves to bring into view the number of the page. If he finds that he has not raised enough, the forefinger and thumb hold those already raised, while the second finger lifts the leaves, and brings them within grasp of the thumb and finger. When the page required is found, all the fingers are to be passed under the leaves, and the whole turned at once. Should the pupil, on the contrary, have opened too far, and be obliged to turn back, he places the right thumb, in like manner, on the left hand page, and the leaves are lifted as before described.

[1] Manual, 1850, p. 32.

BOOK MANUAL.

From Manual of the Public School Society, New York, 1845

"Fig. 5. Should the book be old, or so large as to be wearisome to hold, the right hand may sustain the left, as seen in fig. 5.

"Figs. 6, 7. While reading, as the eye rises to the top of the right hand page, the right hand is brought to the position seen in fig. 4, and, with the forefinger under the leaf, the hand is slid down to the lower corner, and retained there during the reading of this page, as seen in fig. 6. This also is the position in which the book is to be held when about to be closed; in doing which, the left hand, being carried up to the side, supports the book firmly and unmoved, while the right hand turns the part it supports over on the left thumb, as seen in fig. 7. The thumb will then be drawn out from between the leaves, and placed on the cover; when the right hand will fall by the side as seen in fig. 2.

"Fig. 8. But if the reading has ended, the right hand retains the book, and the left hand falls by the side, as seen in fig. 8. The book will now be in position to be handed to the Book-Monitor, who receives it in his right hand, and places it on his left arm, with the back towards his body. The books are now in the most suitable situation for being passed to the shelves or drawers, where, without being crowded, they should be placed with uniformity and care.

"In conclusion, it may be proper to remark, that however trivial these minute directions may appear to some minds, it will be found on experience, that books thus treated, may be made to last double the time that they will do, under the usual management in schools. Nor is this attainment of a correct and graceful mode of handling a book, the only benefit received by the pupil. The use of this manual is calculated to beget a love of order and propriety; and disposes him more readily to adopt the habit generally, of doing things in a methodical and systematic manner."[1]

An early number of the *Academician* gives an interesting instance of imitation of Lancasterian methods of teaching spelling and writing.

Imitation of Lancasterian Methods

"To accommodate our pupils with class telegraphs or tables on which they write their exercise, we have suspended against the wall in the school room large slates or boards, stained black, about four feet square on which they write with pencils or fine chalk. The classes composed of eight or ten each, after they have performed the regular duties of the school, assemble in a circular form around the

[1] Manual, Public School Society, 1850, pp. 97–98.

telegraphs and each one writes down his lesson before his class companions, who are always ready to criticise any fault or inaccuracy he may commit, and he who corrects the error takes the precedence. This group of inspectors detects and corrects all mistakes. It is impossible for any one to pass over his lesson carelessly, without being reminded of it and compelled to correct omissions. The 'Juvenile Expositor' furnishes them with ample exercises. Each pupil holding it in his hand, except the one who is to perform his lesson in writing in the presence of his class. In this manner they go through all their lessons, making alternately one writer, one class leader or dictator and eight or nine inspectors."[1]

An experience in the life of Rowland Hill will serve to illustrate the weak point in the teaching of reading on the Monitorial Plan: "I remember how, at the age of eight, I was myself set for a short time to teach some smaller children to read. The book we used was Mrs. Barbauld's "Early Lessons." We came to the word *mezereon*. I was ashamed to own that I did not know how it was pronounced. With great gravity I informed the class that this was a word that no one knew how to read. So far as I can remember there was no doubting Thomas present."[2]

Weakness of the Monitorial Plan

The educational results were as should have been anticipated. "Thousands of the children," said Commissioner Wood," leave school without being able to read or write. History and geography should be taught by reading books. Children read miserable twaddle. What I want to do is to make the children interested, I want the children to educate themselves. In our system of education we do not generate in the children a desire and love of self-culture. Without that they will go forth in the world without being educated and instructed at all."[3]

Results

Dictation

In the Lancasterian plans, dictation was employed in the teaching of spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic. The results of dictation were tested by *interrogation* in drafts. With the introduction of

[1] *Academican*, Vol. I, p. 114.

[2] Hill, G. B., Life of Rowland Hill, p. 54.

[3] Commissioner Wm. Wood, in address delivered at the organization meeting of the Department of Public Instruction, New York, 1871.

teachers, charts and books, the necessity for dictation would apparently diminish to a very considerable extent. But, as is the case with so many subjects in the schools, the disappearance of a practical value is the occasion for proclaiming an educational value. In 1850 dictation was required three half hours daily in the primary schools and forty minutes daily in the upper schools. The subjects for dictation were letters, syllables, words, occasionally entire sentences, bills and receipts. The words were spelled by the dictator.

Early Use

Dictation in 1850

As a statement of value from the standpoint of formal discipline the Manual of 1850 cannot be outdone: "Every teacher and assistant is called upon to make this exercise (Dictation) a matter of careful study, on account of its high utility, as a means of mental and physical culture. It awakens the attention, excites intellectual activity, and develops the dormant energies of children more effectually, and more agreeably, than can be done by any other school exercise whatever. You have in it—silence, the first requisite of good order, the erect, easy, and appropriate posture—the eye all alive to catch the first signal,—the muscles all set and braced, for the quick and exact movement. As the eye rests on the word on the board, the mind begins its operations; when it is pronounced, the ear lends its aid;—when each letter is enunciated, the analyzing process is required, and the memory is laid under contribution;—when the response of each falls upon his ear, another impulse is given; and, finally, there is the manual process of writing the word on the slate. In these successive steps, we find the eye, the ear, the tongue and the hand, aiding and impelling the mind through a series of exercises of the highest importance in expanding and training the intellect. During Dictation, when properly and energetically performed, (and it must be done with dispatch), the child can get no chance to play, sleep, be idle, or do mischief. The process is, itself, the best and most perfect drill for order."[1]

Formal Discipline

The mechanical appliances for dictation indicate the firm position held by Lancasterian devices for nearly half a century. The following is a list of words for the purpose of dictation:—"the Boards on which they are printed are $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch in thickness, all of the same width, but of four different lengths—each board has a brass socket inserted in the lower edge,

Dictation Boards

[1] Manual, Public School Society, 1850, pp. 25–26.

to prevent its wearing by moving on the pivot on which it is placed when in use. They are kept in a box 19¼ by 14¼ and 6 inches deep—on the sides of the box are grooves, for the purpose of separating the Boards, and preventing them from rubbing. The Dictation Boards are also used as writing copies.

"First Set

7 by 6

is		no		so		in	
it		go		sow		inn	
	sea		be		of		
	see		bee		off		

Second Set

8 by 6

dig	hot	boy	cat
fig	not	man	rat
tax	dog	bad	eye
wax	hog	lad	ear
ink	pen	son	sun

Third Set

11 by 6

pink		rain		cake	hand
rose		snow		bake	feet
pail		look		ship	ford
hail		gaze		boat	bird
	brave		head	Mary	
	cave		hair	girl	

Fourth Set

14 by 6

father	leaf	flour	calf
mother	leaves	flower	calves
jump	lard	brother	uncle
quick	follow	sister	aunt
beef	fifth	butter	cheese
mutton	ninth	cream	milk"[1]

Writing

In addition to the employment of writing in connection with reading and spelling, the children, under the direction of monitors, imitated copper-plate copies. The claim of the Manual of 1814 (p. 56) that the pupils attain a considerable degree of perfection by writing on slates, is open to question in view of Copies

[1] Manual, Public School Society, 1850, pp. 117–118.

a report of 1818. "The children are very deficient in writing and much more so than some years ago."[1] It does not seem that much progress had been made by 1825, when the committee of School Number 2 found it necessary to regrade the school "according to proficiency in writing." They found that "some boys in the upper classes though well advanced in reading and spelling were found unable to write with facility what was dictated to their class, so that their further improvement was much retarded."[2]

Poor Results

In 1850 writing in the primary schools was still confined to sand and to slates which were ruled horizontally and obliquely. The script characters were displayed on a large board. Copies were also written on the slates by the teacher. The slate work of the lowest classes continued to be in Roman characters. In the upper schools the more advanced pupils were promoted to writing on paper. The copies were taken from large copy boards, with the inscriptions of an edifying tendency: "Thou God seest me." "Religion is the foundation of peace." "Emulation is laudable." "Neglect no means of improvement."

Writing in 1850

Monitors were still in use to aid in the mechanical side, but the instruction was given by teachers. The principal change in method was the supplementing of dictation and imitation by interrogation.

"Q. What should be the form of those capital letters whose bottom curves turn to the left? ANS. A circular form.

Q. How high should the curves be formed? ANS. Half as high as the letter itself.

Q. What form should be given to those letters which end with a curve turning to the right? ANS. The form of capital O.

Q. How high should this curve be made? ANS. Half as high as the letter.

Q. With what characters should we commence the capitals F, H, K and T, etc.? ANS. A character similar to the semi-capital N.

Q. With what characters do we end the n, V, W? ANS. With a character similar to small i."[3]

Writing Taught by Questions

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[1] Report of Committee on New York Free School, 1818.

[2] Minutes of Committee of Public School Number 2, Apr. 26, 1825.

[3] Manual, 1850, p. 114.

Arithmetic

The classification for arithmetic was entirely independent of the classification for reading. Promotions also were independent. Year after year until 1848, the reports of the Free School Society state the number of promotions during the year from each of the nine reading classes, and in separate lists the promotions in arithmetic according to the following classes:

Grading and Promotion

(1) Addition and Subtraction
(2) Addition and Subtraction
(3) Multiplication and Division
(4) Compound of Four First Rules
(5) Reduction
(6) Rule of Three
(7) Practice
(8) Interest

The arithmetic classes did not include the younger children, who were occupied with only reading and writing, and spelling.

The teaching was entirely monitorial. Pupils first learned to copy figures from the blackboard. Addition was taught by the dictation of numbers to be added and also the answers. As the monitor read from his key and inspected the slates, the operation was deemed infallible. This new method of teaching arithmetic, Sydney Smith declares to be the greatest of Lancaster's improvements, and "applicable to the whole circle of human knowledge."[1] So completely was the plan elaborated that "any boy of eight years old who can barely read writing, and numerate well, is by means of the guide containing the sums, and the key thereto, qualified to teach the first four rules of arithmetic, simple and compound, if the key is correct, with as much accuracy as *Mathematicians* who have kept school for twenty years."[2]

Monitorial Method

"Another method of teaching the simple rules of arithmetic, and one which should be frequently resorted to, is in the use of the blackboard. The class having written the sum on their slates, and attended to casting it up, are now called up by the monitor to exercise in that manner. The same sum is written with chalk on the board, large enough to be seen by the whole class. The monitor points to the first columns, when the head boy adds aloud, 4 and 5 are 9 and 6 are 15 and 7 are 22, put down 2 and carry 2 to the next. The monitor stands by the board with a

Use of the Blackboard

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. 17, pp. 74–75.
[2] *Ibid.*

piece of chalk, and sets down the several products, as they are found by the boys who add the columns in their turn; and a new example is given when the first is well understood. When a boy in adding makes a mistake, the next boy or any boy in the class, who discovers it, should take precedency of him. This excites attention and laudable ambition."[1] "This account of the method of teaching addition will be sufficient in arithmetic; as the principle is applicable to all the other rules, and may with superior advantages, be adopted by every teacher."[2] Monitors were still employed in 1850 in teaching arithmetic, but under the supervision of the master. At this time the monitor was supposed to be able to explain the operations on the board.

At first glance nothing seems more inexplicable than the extravagant claims for the most wooden of all methods called educational. "We have seen a class of girls whose ages average not more than nine, by the force of memory and a few plain rules, multiply seven or eight figures by an equal number, enumerate, and announce accurately the product amounting to quintillions and then extract the square root of this product and state the root and the remainder without varying a figure from the truth."[3] The impression made upon a visitor to Lancaster's Borough Road School was that, "There is hardly anything in his school so calculated to produce an effect upon the spectator. The children seem to have caught the knowledge of arithmetic at once, without the usual process of learning."[4]

Results

The last sentence from Bernard suggests a clue to the superiority of the new method. Note the usual process of learning: "According to the notions that long and generally prevailed, it was deemed a sufficient foundation for knowledge in the sciences to teach children to repeat by rote the names and signs of numbers from one to one thousand or upward. They were then, though with some difficulty, taught to distinguish and to name the corresponding figures and to divide them into units, tens, thousands, etc. . . . The rules which

Earlier Methods in Arithmetic

[1] Lancaster, British System of Education, Washington, 1812, p. 44. This was the method employed in the schools of the Free School Society and, according to the Manual of 1814, p. 57, "it has been found very expeditious."

[2] Account of Free School Society, 1814, pp. 58–59.

[3] Griscom, Monitorial Instruction, p. 49.

[4] Bernard, New School, p. 96.

he was compelled to commit to memory successively at every step as he advanced, were composed in terms utterly beyond his comprehension; and as they were never explained to him, he gained nothing by repeating them but an exercise of the memory. Ideas upon the subject might be accidentally acquired, and where a notion of the advantages to be derived from the knowledge of arithmetic had been early impressed upon the mind, they would be sought for and obtained. But when there was no such stimulus to exertion, all must have been performed mechanically, and as whatever is not clearly understood is soon forgotten, we need not be surprised, that of the numbers who have been thus taught the art of ciphering without any clear notion respecting the principles on which they worked, so few should have retained any of the little they at school acquired."[1]

"The vague and ill devised methods of teaching in general, are fraught with the most serious evils. . . . Our youth are made to languish over books of words, accompanied only by the midnight lamp, without explanation or oral instruction, and compelled to recite these words, not understood, verbatim, on entering school the next morning. This although a popular method, is one the most inconsistent and absurd requisitions that was ever enforced on human beings."[2] "The pupil simply worried through his arithmetic, through rules and mechanical operations. There was no knowledge of the subject and no mental gain."[3]

It is not difficult to discover the superiority of Lancaster's method to the method in vogue at that time. Instead of the long preliminaries and the learning of numbers and rules the pupils were at once set to work in the operations of arithmetic. The children were given something to do, though they were left to the direction of the monitors who knew little more than themselves. The child had some opportunity of learning arithmetic. The inadequacy of the Lancasterian plan was discovered when comparison was made with the more intelligent methods of Pestalozzi and Warren Colburn.

Science and Object Teaching

The earlier Lancasterian schools do not appear to have had any provision for these subjects, which were not easily adapted to moni-

[1] *Academician*, 1818, Vol. I, pp. 281–282, from Hamilton's Hints.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

[3] Carter, Letters on the Free Schools of New England in *American Journal of Education*, 1827, Vol. II, p. 30.

School Museums

torial methods of instruction. However, in advance of any formal plans for teaching natural science, collections of objects were formed. Lancaster's interest in the subject is indicated by the fact that within a year after he came to America he proposed the foundation of a National Museum at Washington for extending scientific education, promoting agriculture, and aiding the arts and industries, thus anticipating the idea of the Smithsonian Institution and the Department of Agriculture. Lancaster proposed a tax on sea-captains, merchants and travelers who neglected to bring in specimens.[1] In a measure following his suggestion, the African Free School in 1828 issued a circular inviting "captains of vessels and other gentlemen traveling in our own or foreign countries to contribute to the school museum."[2]

Object teaching came in with the establishment of the Infant Schools in 1828. These schools followed the Pestalozzian rather than the Lancasterian model, and were taught by "females" with some monitorial assistance. The daily program provided for conversation about common objects; and reading was taught in association with objects and pictures. A visitor thus describes the instruction in Infant School No. 1: "Underneath the picture may be placed the letters c, a, t; the child is soon taught to spell cat, and thus at once learns its letters, the name of its favorite animal, and how to spell it. Thus I observed in the infant school, in children of about eighteen months old, one that could scarcely stand alone, who, on a picture of a cat being placed on the stand, would, as the monitor pointed with his stick, spell c, a, t. The same with dog, cow, horse, etc. up to elephant, crocodile, rhinoceros, and other animals of which they had only seen the pictures. It soon becomes easy to make them acquainted with the natural history of these animals, and an infant learns the difference between the names of an elephant and a phaeton, and how to spell them much sooner than some persons who ride in one of their own. Thus children acquire ideas of things along with their names. They are sensible of this acquisition and are delighted with it. Happiness and satisfaction are depicted on their countenances, and intelligence begins to mark their features. From objects near at hand, and within the range of sight, the transition is easy to objects remote, but still material.

Infant Schools

[1] Letters on National Subjects, Washington, 1820.

[2] Andrews, History of the African Free School, New York, 1830.

Thus an idea of a mountain, an island, an isthmus, etc. is more quickly and perfectly comprehended by an infant on inspecting figures, or with a picture, than it can be by a youth at an academy, assisted by all the definitions which the school can furnish, without a picture or model. By means of models the infant acquires ideas of astronomy and of all the other objects of the material creation."[1]

Astronomy was the first science to be introduced into the upper schools.[2] It is reported by Andrews that two of his boys, aged fifteen and thirteen years, calculated "correctly (according to the rules given for that purpose) the distance of each planet from the sun, its magnitude compared with that of the earth, and the degree of Light and Heat received at each planet."[3] The character of the instruction, apart from the mathematical side, may be inferred from the examination of a ten-year-old boy in 1826.

Astronomy

"Q. What is the earth? A. It is a planet, and the third, in the solar system.
Q. What surrounds the earth? A. The atmosphere.
Q. Of what does the earth consist? A. Of land and water.
Q. What shape has the earth? A. It is round.
Q. How do you know it is round? A. Because we can see the tops of ships' masts first at sea.
Q. Does the earth stand still or move? A. It moves on its axis, and has its motion round the sun.
Q. What takes place from these motions? A. Its motion round the sun produces the change of seasons, and its motion on its axis, the succession of day and night.
Q. If the earth turns round, why are we not turned heels up at midnight? A. Because the attraction of gravity draws all bodies towards the center of the earth.
Q. Does any other planet obey the laws of gravitation? A. Yes, Sir, Mars, as well as the other smaller planets, called asteroids, Jupiter, etc.
Q. Has the earth any satellite? A. Yes, the moon is the earth's satellite.
Q. Has any other planet a satellite, or moon? A. Yes, Saturn has seven and Jupiter has four, and they all gravitate towards their respective principals.
Q. Have we any antipodes? A. Yes, Sir, they are the people directly under us, they have their feet opposite to our feet."[4]

To relieve the monotony of the catechetical memoriter method of teaching astronomy, dramatization was introduced. "In astronomy,

[1] *American Journal of Education*, 1828, Vol. III, pp. 690–693.
[2] 28th Annual Report, Public School Society, 1833.
[3] History of the African Free School, p. 97.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 145–146.

Dramatization in Astronomy

the pupils may sometimes personate the sun, moon and earth,—so as to represent by their own positions and movements, many of its important phenomena; and at the same time, give the derivation of the scientific terms, such as *solstice*, *tropic*, and *equinoctial;*—while the teacher will often, in the midst of these illustrations, repeat the requisition of 'Spell it'—'Define it.'"[1]

Upon the suggestion of Mr. Josiah Holbrook, the trustees in 1844 approved a plan of instruction in "sensible objects" and the forming of collections. Not less than ten thousand elementary cabinets of geology were collected, assorted and labeled by the pupils.[2] The collection for the Primary Schools included quartz, feldspar, mica, granite, hornblend, sienite, pudding-stone, burr-stone, sand-stone, a crystal of quartz, granular lime-stone, compact lime, statuary marble, gypsum, hydraulic lime, rhombic spar, serpentine, precious serpentine, soap-stone, talc, asbestos, lava, pumice-stone, coral, organic-remains, iron ore, anthracite coal and bituminous coal.

The Holbrook Plan

In the Manual of 1850 the term "object lessons" is used with a remarkable extension in meaning, including the names of the letters, rules of grammar, the nature of the soul and the benevolence of the Creator. The author of this course must have been as devoid of humor and as innocent of the scientific spirit as Lancaster himself.

"The first lessons should be on things with which they are most familiar; letters and words, the things they wear, eat and use. For, although they are familiar with their names and uses, nevertheless they are quite ignorant of their nature and character. The acquirement, then, of such knowledge, will be a new and continual source of pleasure to them. Begin with letters, the signs of sounds: the human voice, the nature of speech, and construction of language by syllables, words and sentences. Make such lessons, as they are continued, a means of presenting the elementary stages of grammar: the names of all things as being nouns; the words that are added to them to express their kind and quality as being adjectives: requiring them to give an example of each;—all actions, as verbs,—those done to us as well as by us; pronouns, the little words taking the place of

Object lessons, or Instruction in Common Things

[1] 40th Annual Report, Public School Society, 1846, p. 28.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

nouns to prevent repetition; prepositions as words expressing the relation of things, etc., etc. These if illustrated by actions, as speaking, walking, and singing, and by significant motions, would never be forgotten; for instance, by motion of their hands *above* their heads, *below* their chins, *by* their side, *behind* their backs; and to make the preposition emphatic, say—above, below, by, on, behind, show the relation of my hands and head, my hands and side, etc. They would thus be prepared to understand the rules of grammar which say, 'Prepositions express some relation of different things,' and so on of other rules. Next proceed to form and structure of the body—speak of the soul, of the external senses, of the moral sense, —the social duties; with evidence of the benevolence of the Creator as blended with everything connected with animated nature. Such ideas should pervade these lessons generally. Proceed with the manner in which natural life is sustained; then the products of the Earth, edible substances; roots, grain, fruit, etc., and artificial things. The Earth's structure, the starry Heavens. Hints of all these in their order, if the lessons are short and simple, would soon impress their minds with a great amount of useful knowledge. The diligent teacher of these things, will find a satisfaction in knowing that the time they (sic) have devoted to these short oral lessons, has been profitably bestowed. Beside the common division of various substances into animal, vegetable, and mineral, they may be again divided into organic and inorganic. The first comprises those beings, which either have, or once had life, and the organs or instruments by which it is sustained,—such as the organs of breathing, for circulating blood or sap, and digesting food for the growth of every part. The second comprises those objects which never had life, or means of sustaining it. . . . The inorganic kingdom comprises minerals, metals, air and water. The first two are substances from the interior of the earth, though sometimes found on the surface; they are those dug from a pit in the earth, that is a mine,—hence called minerals. . . . All substances may also be classed as natural or artificial. The natural are creations or creatures of God, the creator. Artificial are such as made by the art of man, they are called manufactures, from manus, a hand and factum, to make. . . . Honey, wax, oil, etc. are natural substances. Paper, cloth, brick, etc. are manufactured or artificial substances. . . . Animals may be divided into mammals, those nourishing their young with milk. This class includes, 1st all animals with four feet, or quadru-

peds, . . . 2nd Quadrumana, or four handed as monkeys, etc., 3d Cetacea, or whale kind, 4th Bi-manus or two handed, as man. The next class are birds or bipeds, animals with two feet. These feed on seeds, and some of them on insects and on flesh. Next Reptiles. . . . Of this class are lizards, frogs, etc. Next fishes, or those which live in the water, having fins instead of hands or feet for motion. Then insects, or those divided into three parts, such as bugs, beetles, etc. Next vermes, or worms—which class are soft bodied animals destitute of limbs, some of them provided with shells, as polypus, etc. And lastly, Mollusca, as having no bones and being soft fleshed as oysters, clams, etc. This general classification of the animal kingdom, will excite a love of nature, so characteristic of the young, and which is desirable by all means to cultivate . . . will draw the mind from vain and trifling thoughts to those which are solid and useful."[1]

Lack of Child Study

This lavish feast to satisfy infant hunger for knowledge was no doubt the natural result of the prevailing tendency to systematize educational procedure and to rely for a knowledge of child nature upon the literature of the Infant School movement. The child was seen only from the adult point of view and through the medium of a distorted Pestalozzianism. The New York High School, opened in 1825, had an introductory class "to receive children of the earliest age, and to introduce them, by gentle steps and by allurements best suited to their infant tastes, to the portals of learning." Children were received "as soon as they can walk and pronounce with tolerable distinctness words which are repeated to them, and have sufficient vivacity to notice what is passing around them."[2]

Infant Training

This pseudo-Pestalozzianism invaded the sacred portals of the home and even there laid allurements for the youth of tenderest years. Little Edward Eustace, aged three, is brought in in the arms of his mother, who proceeds to illustrate her method: "Mrs. E.—'Now Edward, run and fetch mamma your stool. Show me what you can do with it.' Edward—'I can set it down, mamma, and lift it up.' Mrs. E.—'So you can! Do something more with it.' He turns it, drags it, slides it, leans it, etc. Between, over, under, before, behind, etc., are taught in the same

[1] Manual of 1850, pp. 54–57.

[2] Griscom, Monitorial Instruction, p. 43.

way."[1] Here is the life story of a bright boy nourished on the Infant School plan. Porter Brinsmade, born February 28, 1827, in Hartford, Connecticut. From the age of 4 months, his eyes were directed to surrounding objects, until names of articles became familiar. At ten months he learned the alphabet from blocks. (He could not utter the sounds, but would pick out the letters called for.) He took no delight in toys, but in pictures and books. Geography was a favorite study before his second birthday. Then he became interested in geometry. His mother devoted herself to him. Love of knowledge was a passion. He was often told that to his Father in Heaven he was indebted for what he most loved; and with an affecting earnestness, and graceful gesture of his little hand he would say "Thank God." Porter died at the age of 2 years, 5 months.[2]

Precocity Cultivated

By a system of exchange with the schools of other cities, the school collection was enlarged, an interest in collecting developed, and opportunity afforded for practice in correspondence. Some interesting letters are found in the Fortieth Report of the Public School Society, 1846.

Exchange of Specimens

NEW YORK, JULY 24th, 1845.

DEAR FRIENDS:

We, the girls of Public School No. 15, send you three sets of minerals; each containing six specimens. On Monday the 21st, between three and four hundred families connected with our school, were supplied with similar sets, which were collected by the boys, and labelled by the scholars of the several departments. The Mica was sent to us by the children of the Orphan Asylum at Bloomingdale. We are going to send some specimens to several primary schools, and try to interest them also. We take great pleasure in sending them to you; and hope that you will be pleased with them. We would have enclosed some geometrical diagrams if we had had sufficient time to prepare them; but we hope to have another opportunity of sending them.

Yours affectionately,

SUSAN A. BLACK, for the girls of P. S. No. 15

To the girls of Mr. Salisbury's School, Syracuse.

SYRACUSE, AUGUST 20th, 1845.

DEAR FRIENDS:

We hail you as sisters. We are glad a correspondence is now open between us, and we haste to acknowledge the reception of the box of minerals presented by you. In return we send you eighteen specimens of Plants gathered in the vicinity of our village. Our class in Botany numbers sixteen.

[1] *American Journal of Education*, 1829, Vol. IV, pp. 497–506.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1838, Vol. V, pp. 199–206.

We have analyzed fifty species of plants this term, and find ourselves increasingly interested in the pursuit of so pleasing and profitable study. We are exceedingly pleased with the minerals, and will gratefully receive any specimens of mapping, penciling, painting or geometrical diagrams with which you may favor us. While we thank you, we will endeavor in our response to return an ample equivalent. We love the study of Natural Science, —and are taught by our Teacher to regard the field of nature as our Heavenly Father's own library, from which, he would not only have us gather lessons of wisdom and instruction, but in which every object should seem to us to mirror forth his perfections, and enforce his claim upon the affections of our young hearts.

Hoping to hear from you again, we remain,

Yours affectionately,

ELIZA FRITCHER, on behalf of Girls' Public School No. 7, Syracuse.[1]

Exchange of Specimens and Letters a Means of Averting Civil War

During the early days of our public school system, as we have seen, every method or device employed seemed to give rise to the most extravagant expectations. The exchange of specimens and letters was no exception to this rule. In a letter of S. S. Randall, at one time deputy state superintendent of common schools for the State of New York, is an interesting anticipation of the school children of New York, by these letters and specimens, averting the civil war which was then imminent. "I should do equal injustice to my own feelings, and to the warm hearts and generous spirits of the children of Virginia, if I failed to express to you, my dear young friends, some of the reflections which this novel and interesting embassy from the children of the North to the South, has excited. In my judgment, it is destined, under the blessing of Divine Providence, to exert a stronger, more beneficial, and enduring influence upon the integrity and perpetuity of our glorious Union, than any, and perhaps than all other agencies combined. . . . And while the minds of good men in every section are seriously alarmed, lest in an evil and inconsiderate hour, some rash hand may be put forth to sunder the bonds of brotherhood, which have joined us together as one people, and are to us our only safeguard and highest treasure—the spectacle of forty thousand children from the Empire State in the North, extending the hand of fraternal amity and kind regards to their brethren and sisters of the 'Old Dominion' in the South, affords a sure guaranty for the indivisibility and perpetuity of the Union."[2]

[1] 40th Annual Report, Public School Society, 1846, pp. 30–31.

[2] 43d Annual Report, Public School Society, 1849, p. 32.

Manual Training

Although Lancaster was interested in some forms of manual training, especially in the making of straw hats and in sewing for girls,[1] no real plan of manual training except sewing for girls was developed in connection with the monitorial system, and no facilities were provided in the schools. In some of the schools an attempt was made "to encourage the scholars in the productions of their little works of art, and to excite some degree of competition." School fairs were held, at which were exhibited articles that the pupils made at home. "Much pleasure is afforded by the exhibitions of such first beginnings; among the articles produced by the boys, will be found wagons, carts of various descriptions, wheelbarrows, tables, chairs, benches, sleighs, candle stands, bedsteads, cradles, fire engines, hooks and ladders used at fires, with carriage for the same, ships, brigs, sloops, boats, houses, anchors, hammers, crowbars made of lead, specimens of carved wood, and in one instance a complete set of carpenter's tools, neatly fitted into a chest five inches long."[2]

No Manual Training

Home Work Encouraged

School Libraries

Only one month after the laying of the cornerstone for the new Henry Street building of School Number 2, in November, 1810, the sum of one hundred dollars was appropriated for the purchase of books for a circulating library attached to the school, and additions were requested from members of the Society.[3] This act was typical. It became the policy of the trustees to equip the schools with libraries. In 1818 it was decided to place books to the value of fifty dollars in each of the four schools then in operation, the use of the library to be limited to the best scholars, who should form a "Class of Merit."[4] Until about 1847 books were loaned only as a reward for good conduct and proficiency. Library opportunities were then extended to all, "as a happy means of reforming the vicious, careless and indolent."[5] To what extent these classes availed themselves of their new opportunities it is not possible to say.

Libraries in all Schools

Moral Influence

[1] Lancaster, Improvements in Education, 1807.

[2] Andrews, New York African Free School, 1830, pp. 109–110.

[3] Account of Free School Society, 1814, p. 15.

[4] Report of Committee on State of New York Free Schools, 1818, p. 8.

[5] 41st Annual Report, Public School Society, 1847.

In March, 1846, the number of readers was 4284, and the circulation 67,108. There were about 260 volumes in each building, a total of 5220 volumes. The Forty-first Annual Report of the Public School Society, 1847, contains an appendix on libraries. The catalogue of books is especially interesting to the student of children's literature, particularly as the comparative popularity of each book is indicated by the number of times it was drawn. Miss Sedgwick heads the list with 1247 readers for "Poor Rich Man and Rich Poor Man." Dana's "Two Years before the Mast" found 920 readers. The "Elephant in a Wild State" was not neglected by 698 adventurous pupils. "Sanford and Merton" was not then outgrown by American youth. Goldsmith's were the popular histories. Few school boys of to-day know the story of "Pitcairn's Island" then read by 526. Natural philosophy seemed to appeal to youths of more tender years than at the present day. A touching anecdote is related by Charles E. Andrews, teacher of the African Free School. "A little fellow, 10 years of age, belonging to the school, was asked among other things, by Doctor Samuel L. Mitchill of this city, whether any other planet beside the earth had a satellite or moon. He answered, 'Yes Sir, Saturn has seven, and Jupiter has four, and they all gravitate towards their respective principals.' He then asked how he came to know so much about these subjects. Answer: 'From reading books, sir, in the school library.'"[1]

Children's Reading in 1846

[1] Andrews, History of the African Free School, p. 104.

VI

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION

The non-sectarian character of the Lancasterian movement which aroused in England the bitter opposition of zealous partisans such as Mrs. Trimmer and the other supporters of Dr. Bell, served at first to strengthen the Free School movement in New York and later to facilitate the final merging into the Public School System. The act of incorporation of the Free School Society (1805) states that the society is instituted "for the establishment of a Free School for the education of the poor children who do not belong to, or are not provided for, by any religious society." The object, as stated, was to implant in the minds of such children the principles of religion and morality.

Non-sectarian Schools

Religious education was duly provided for in the Rules for the Government of the Schools:[1] (1) The reading of the Scriptures was required morning and evening. (Rule VI) (2) All scholars were directed to attend school on the first day of the week, "That they there be divided into classes, and proceed under charge of monitors, to such places of public worship as may be designated by the parents or guardians." (Rule VII). This is evidently Lancaster's solution of the problem of religious instruction: "On being admitted into school, the children of churchmen should be registered as such and the children of dissenters as such. That on Sundays they should assemble at the school in the morning and afternoon, previous to the hour for Divine Service, and the children of each denomination be conducted from thence to their respective places for worship."[2]

Reading of Scriptures

Sunday Attendance

The requirement of Sunday attendance and the marshaling of children to church apparently proved too great a burden to the school, for by 1819 the rules were modified; "It is expected that parents see

[1] Account of Free School Society, 1814.

[2] Lancaster, Instructions for Forming a Society for the Poor, p. vi.

that their children regularly attend some place of worship."[1] Efforts were made to hold parents to their duty. Reports of church or Sunday School attendance were made to the trustees. In 1828 the school visitor found that 1500 out of 1700 families sent their children to Sunday School.[2] The school buildings were used for Sunday Schools.

(3) Opportunity for denominational instruction was not limited to Sundays. Tuesday afternoons were devoted to instruction at school in the principles of the Christian religion. The several churches were invited to send suitable persons to catechise and instruct. (Rule X)[3] "An association of more than fifty ladies of the first position and character, and belonging to the different religious denominations in the city, volunteered their services, and they accordingly met at the schools to examine the children in their respective catechisms."[4] A suggestion as to the activity of this committee is found in the minutes of Public School Number 1; "On February 2nd, 1813, a committee of twenty-four ladies, of the Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, Associate Reformed, and Reformed Dutch Churches, attended to catechise the children. On the 9th, thirty, and on the 16th, forty ladies attended to give religious instruction. Bishop Hobart opened the exercises with prayer. One afternoon in the week was devoted to these religious services."[5]

Catechism

Committee of Ladies

In 1814, "the number of children educated in the peculiar tenets of each religious community" was:

"Presbyterians.....271	Baptists.....119
Episcopalians.....186	Dutch Church.....41
Methodists.....172	Roman Catholic.....9"[6]

In a memorial presented to the Legislature in the session of 1823 the trustees (pages 20–21) claimed that they were not neglectful in educating the children in the leading principles of the Christian faith. Four measures are mentioned:

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[1] Address to Parents, New York Free School Society, 1819.
[2] Seton, S. W., Report of School Visitor, 1829.
[3] Account of Free School Society, 1814.
[4] Bourne, Public School Society, p. 27.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 681.
[6] Ninth Annual Report, Free School Society, 1814.

1. Reading of the scriptures.
2. Enforcing of church attendance.
3. The trustees address the children upon their moral and religious duties.
4. The adoption of a non-sectarian catechism.

The Deputy Superintendent of Common Schools, William L. Stone, in his report to the Board of Education of the City and County of New York, 1843 (pages 9–10), was able to state concerning the common school law prohibiting sectarian doctrine, that "the fell spirit of sectarianism has never entered into the schools of the Public School Society. Catechisms and sectarian books are rigidly excluded." Sectarian instruction received a different interpretation by the Commissioners of School Monies in the Ninth Ward, who in this same year, 1843, caused the Board of Education to direct the omission of several selections from "Popular Lessons":

SON OF GOD

"The son of God who came from heaven
The erring world to save,
Who says, 'repent and be forgiven,
And live beyond the grave!'

By actions holy and serene
He won his father's love;
And though superior far to men
Was harmless as a dove.

He raised the dying from the bed;
He made the blind to see;
He made the tombs give up their dead,
And set the prisoner free!"[1]

RELIGIOUS READING—PUNISHMENT OF SIN

"If I do wrong, my troubled heart
Shall vainly seek the bed of rest;
Peace will from my pillow fly,
Sleep will shun my weary eye,
Angry foes will then proclaim,
All my folly and shame;
And my friends who once my love partook
Pass me with a stranger's look.

[1] New York Education Document No. 2, p. 11.

Fast my burning tears will flow,
Wearily my days will go;
And with cold and shuddering gloom
I shall see the opening tomb.
Parents will with bitter pain
See their labor spent in vain;
Will mourn the child they cannot save,
And seek shelter in the grave.
When the aim of death destroys
All my false and fatal joys,
In that hour of deep despair
God will not regard my prayer.
I shall see the blest afar,
Radiant as the morning star,
While with aching steps I go
To the darker realms of woe."[1]

Religious Exercises

An illustration of the religious exercises is given in the Manual of 1830. After the salutation of the teacher to the school, and expression of their dependence upon God for sparing them to meet again, the exercise proceeds:

"TEACHER. How shall we feel to our heavenly Father for these mercies? ANS. Truly thankful.

TEACHER. What example have we for this in the Holy Scriptures? ANS. Psalm c. 4, 5:'—Be thankful unto Him, and Bless His name, for the Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations.'

TEACHER. Children, who is good? ANS. The Lord is good.

TEACHER. To whom should we be thankful? ANS. Be thankful unto him.

TEACHER. Whose name should we bless? ANS. Bless His name.

TEACHER. What is said in this Psalm, of God's mercy? ANS. His mercy is everlasting.

TEACHER. What is said of God's truth? ANS. His truth endureth to all generations.

TEACHER. What is God's truth? ANS. His Holy Laws.

TEACHER. Psalm XXXIV. 11: 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.' My dear children, tell me, who has watched over you, and preserved your lives through the past night? ANS. Psalm III. 5: 'I laid me down, and slept. I waked for the Lord sustained me.'

TEACHER. Does God always see you? ANS. Proverbs XV. 3: 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place.'

TEACHER. Does God know your very thoughts? ANS. Psalm CXXXIX. 1, 20: 'Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.'

[1] New York Education Document No. 2.

TEACHER. Does God hear all you say? ANS. Psalm CXXXIX. 4: 'For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.'

TEACHER. Does God require the young to serve him? ANS. Ecclesiastes XII. 1: 'Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth.'"

The plan of instruction for 1842 says that the following rules are recited daily, after the reading of the scriptures. According to the Manual of 1850 the repetition is *occasional* only. After this exercise the scholars are personally inspected as to cleanliness, before repairing to their seats.

"1 st—I must be silent when the bell rings.
2nd—I must always mind my teachers.
3rd—I must come every day, and be here when school goes in.
4th—I must not be idle.
5th—I must not lie.
6th—I must not steal.
7th—I must not swear.
8th—I must not be angry.
9th—I must not strike or hurt any one in anger.
10th—I must be pleasant and kind to all.
11th—I must forgive all who offend or injure me.
12th—I must be clean in my clothes, my face, and my hands.
13th—I must be decent in all my ways.
14th—I must not destroy my books or lessons.
15th—I must not tear nor break any of the furniture of the school.
16th—I must remember these rules and try to keep every one of them."

In the Primary department, the following is added:

PERSUASIVE CHARGE

"TEACHER. My dear children, the intention of this school is to teach you to be good and useful while in this world,—that you may be happy[1] here and in the world to come.

TEACHER. What is the intention of this school? We therefore first teach you to 'remember your Creator in the days of your youth.' What do we first teach you?

TEACHER. It is our duty to teach you this, because we find it is written in the Holy Bible. Why is it our duty to teach you this?

TEACHER. The Bible directs us to 'train you up in the way you should go.' What good book directs us to train you up in the way you should go?

TEACHER. Therefore my children—You must obey your parents.

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[1] Happiness in this world is suggested in the Manual of 1850, not in the Manual of 1842.

SCHOOL. I must obey my parents.
TEACHER. You must obey your teachers.
SCHOOL. I must obey my teachers.
TEACHER. You must never tell a lie.
SCHOOL. I must never tell a lie.
TEACHER. You must never steal the smallest thing.
SCHOOL. I must never steal the smallest thing.
TEACHER. You must never swear.
SCHOOL. I must never swear.
TEACHER. 'God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.'
SCHOOL. 'God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.'
TEACHER. God always sees you. (Slowly, and in a soft tone.)
SCHOOL. God always sees me.
TEACHER. God hears all you say.
SCHOOL. God hears all I say.
TEACHER. God knows all you do.
SCHOOL. God knows all I do.
TEACHER. You should fear to offend him, for he is most holy.
SCHOOL. I should fear to offend him, for he is most holy.
TEACHER. You should depart from evil, and learn to do well.
SCHOOL. I should depart from evil, and learn to do well.
TEACHER. May all you, dear children, while attending this school, learn to be good and useful in this world.
SCHOOL. May we all while attending this school, learn to be good and useful in this world.
TEACHER. And with God's blessing, may you be happy in this world and in that which is to come.
SCHOOL. And with God's blessing, may we be happy in this world and that which is to come."[1]

The children then sing a hymn by Dr. Watts, as follows:

"Let children that would fear the Lord
Hear what their teachers say,
With reverence meet their parents' word,
And with delight obey.

Have we not heard what dreadful plagues
Are threatened by our Lord
To him who breaks his father's laws,
And mocks his mother's word?

[1] The Manual of 1850 says: "The pupils, at each repetition place the right hand, opened, upon the breast, which gesture seems to make the sentiment more impressive."

But those who worship God, and give
Their parents honor due,
Here on this earth they long shall live,
And live hereafter too."[1]

Moral Training

The moral aim of the Free School Society was pronounced. According to the act of incorporation, the purpose in its foundation was the implanting of the principles of religion and morality and the developing of habits of industry and virtue. The means to this end were religious instruction, the daily reading of the "Rules" and "Persuasive Charge," direct instruction in morals and manners, the library, circulars to parents, the school visitor, above all the monitorial organization of the schools and the system of rewards and punishments. That the ultimate aim was not lost sight of is evident by the references to social and moral improvement in various reports of the society. These reports further indicate some measure of success. How much it is necessary to discount these reports it is not possible to say, as we cannot estimate the amount of elimination of undesirable pupils. In a memorial presented in 1823 the trustees of the Free School Society report that of the fourteen thousand children who had been on their register, but one had been pointed out as having been arraigned in a criminal court, while without the provisions of these schools such children had been growing up in idleness and pernicious associations, and were on the way to "the Alms House, The Hospital, The Bridewell, The Penitentiary and the State Prison." The principal of the African Free School reports in 1830, that of the several thousand colored children educated in that school, only three had been convicted in the criminal courts.

Means Employed

In addition to the regular religious instruction, the recitations of the Rules and Persuasive Charge, and the addresses of the trustees, there was available a course of reading lessons prepared by the British and Foreign Society, including the following titles: "Of God Almighty"; "Of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"; "Of the Word of God"; "Of the Light, Spirit and Grace of God"; "Of Worship and Religion"; "Of Parents"; "Of Children"; "Of Master and Servants"; "Of Husbands and Wives";

Reading Lessons

[1] Bourne, History of the Public School Society, p. 644.

"Of Elders," etc., etc.[1] Much assistance in occasional lessons on manners was derived from a text-book published in New York, "The School of Good Manners,"[2] School exhibitions were the occasions for didactic efforts on the part of pupils.

A Moral Dialogue

"(William) Good morning, James, where are you going so early?

(James) I am going to school, William.

(William) To school! Why, do you go so soon as this? I am not going yet this long while.

(James) That may be your pleasure, William; this is mine.

(William) Not altogether *my* pleasure either, James; for I have been teasing my mother for my breakfast for some time, and she says, 'No hurry, child, no hurry'; and sends me to play a little longer.

(James) Well, I love to be obedient to my parents, and know it to be my duty; but I really think, that if I could not get my breakfast in time for early school, I should run off without it; for, half an hour's study over my sum or any other part of my exercises at school, is of more consequence to me than even my breakfast.

(William) I have tried that, James, but I find that if I adopt such a plan, I may go without, not only my *breakfast*, but my *dinner* also; for, although my parents are, perhaps, as kind and indulgent as any parents can be, in other respects; yet, in this, they seem to take but little concern. I have often thought it a great pity, that they have not to pay three or four dollars a quarter for my schooling, as our neighbor George's parents have to pay for his; I think, then, they would reckon every half hour that I were absent from school, a loss of *money* at least. They don't think of what Doctor Franklin says, that, 'Time is money,' nor do they consider that time spent at school is to me *more precious than money*.

(James) Why, William, you both please and distress me. I am pleased to find, that the late hours at which you are noted for going to school, is not your fault, and am, at the same time, greatly distressed to hear that your parents, being so much older, and who ought to—

(William) Stop, James! I can't hear a word against my dear parents, I can excuse them, because they have but little learning themselves, and don't know the value of it; nor do they know how much time it takes to make one a good scholar.

(James) But, pray William, does it not subject you to great trouble at school; when you attend late, what does the master say?

(William) Why he says a great deal, and I often wish my parents could hear what he says, I think they would be more particular about the passing hours of the day. He says, among other things, that he knows of several boys, that are now great truants who used to be good boys, but, owing to the want of care in their parents, have become very troublesome by absence from school.

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[1] 16th Annual Report, Free School Society.

[2] Andrews, History of African Free School, p. 112.

(James) I can't see how that can be; surely, their parents don't wish them to do so; they must be very much grieved, I should think, to see their children do what is so much to their own disadvantage, and be so troublesome to their teacher.

(William) That may be too, James, and yet, their parents may be frequently the real cause of their bad conduct, though insensible of it at the time.

(James) How so, William? Do be more particular.

(William) Well, I will. You must know, our school is governed by such regulations as must be strictly observed by all concerned, which not only ensure good order throughout the school, but which are calculated to bring us on, in our learning, with greater speed. Whenever a scholar distinguishes himself by orderly conduct, or by excelling in the performance of his exercises, he is noticed by the master, by Tickets of Reward; but, if any of us misbehave, or come late to school, we are fined and have to pay back our tickets. If we have none to pay with, we are necessarily punished. Now it is required that when a scholar has been detained till a late hour at home, or for a day or two, that he bring a note, or some of the family call and explain to the teacher, so that no fault may be laid to the charge of the supposed delinquent, all this, however, is neglected by many of our parents, and we are sent off without anything to excuse us, and we, being sometimes disbelieved by the master, are accordingly punished, and thereby discouraged.

(James) What you have said, William, I think of so much importance, that I shall endeavor to remember it, and profit by the information you have given me, and am glad to find you capable of entering so thoroughly into such an interesting subject."[1]

Address to Parents

As one means of securing the coöperation of the parents in the moral training of children, an address to parents was issued in 1819. This circular refers to the force of example, the importance of steady attendance, the need of industry and frugality, the improper use of spiritous liquors, necessity for cleanliness, observance of public worship on Sunday, religious instruction by parents, the reading of the Bible, the principles of Christianity, observance of the rules of the school, including church attendance.

Visits to Parents

Not satisfied with this impersonal method of reaching the home, the society enjoined upon the trustees the duty of visiting the parents in order to impress the duty of school and church attendance and to overcome the indifference of the parents to the welfare of their children. In 1827, the society appointed a school visitor, who gave his entire time to this work. "The trustees also called into requisition the aid of the visitors of

[1] Andrews, History of the African Free Schools, 1830, pp. 136–138.

the American Tract Society, whose regular monthly visits, in the distribution of tracts, were calculated to exert a valuable influence."[1]

Moral Training Through Monitorial Government

All other means of moral training were, in the Lancasterian schools, subordinate to the moral influence of the monitorial system. The plan seemed perfectly adapted to cultivate those habits which were most desirable in the recipients of charity—order, industry and obedience; and as the scope of the schools was enlarged, it was put forward as meeting the moral needs of all classes. "How well adapted is such a system to all the purposes of Common Schools, in a commonwealth! The economy of its expenditures gives facility to the extension of education, so vitally important in a Republican form of government. How suitable for the children of the people, is the training of the physical powers, conferring a heathful vigor to the body, while through the admirable feature of *mutual instruction*, from constant requisition on their mental resources, there is an energetic development of mind, which is characterized by a proper independence of thought and action, all the while guarded from any evil tendency, by the necessary vigilance and constant checks imposed by the monitorial management of the school, and continual attention to a strict drill conducive to habits of industry, order, and submission to the laws, so that the teacher's representative is not only cheerfully obeyed, but respected. These salutary influences, together with method and neatness in all the arrangements, not only give efficiency to instruction on this system, but by cultivating self-respect and habits of obedience, give peculiar moral advantages that meet the wants of Common Schools that are to educate those who are to sustain in turn our free institutions."[2] "But these benefits are slight, compared with its moral influence. In the old system, the relation in which he stood toward the master, necessarily exacted from him habits of submission, having for its object the will (often very arbitrary) of an individual, and fear generally for its motive, was of too servile a nature to exalt or develop the moral being. The submission under the Mutual Instruction System, is paid cheerfully, though to a child, often inferior in position and age; and is the expression of the purest and noblest feelings of

Obedience

[1] Bourne, Public School Society, p. 622.

[2] 42d Annual Report, Public School Society, 1848, p. 42.

our nature, love of order, respect for law, and a deep conviction of the power and rights of intellectual superiority. There are few, however humble, who have not, under their direction, at one period or other of life, one or more individuals, and thus are called upon to give proofs of good feeling, patience, just and discreet exercise of authority; under the old systems the child always called on to obey had no opportunity of practising these virtues. The system of Mutual Instruction, on the contrary, by alternately placing him in the position of teacher and of taught, of superiority and inferiority, naturally enforces the exercise of the qualities demanded by each, on one side the duties of humility and obedience, and on the other, the mildness, and impartiality, which ought always to be inseparable from the exercise of power."[1]

Sydney Smith was astonished and delighted to find Lancaster's school a "perfect machine," made pleasant and interesting by "an air of military arrangement."[2] An observer of the well-drilled infant department in School No. 1 was moved to tears, and his "heart beat as though it would burst from its narrow tenement."[3] When boys are occupied they can do no wrong,—"The grand moral advantage of this system is that it places and keeps boys in a condition in which there is little opportunity of doing wrong. Their attention is constantly fixed; they are never idle; they never deviate from a regular course, whence the habit is formed of doing every thing in its proper time and place."[4]

Order

Industry

A very different estimate of the value of the monitorial machinery was made by educators who were able to see below the surface. "In order to avoid expense, the National and Lancasterian Schools are taught by the boys themselves, the master being rather a governor than a teacher. This part of the system is admirably adapted to answer its purpose; but it has essential defects which render it unfit for general adoption. As the process of instruction is carried forward by boys, it becomes necessary to mark out the duties of the teacher with as much minuteness as those of the learner. Indeed, the duties of each must be made perfectly mechanical. There must be no doubt or hesitation on the part of the master or pupil, for doubt would produce delay and dispute,

Order
Mechanical

[1] Account of Free School Society, Wyse on Education Reform pp. 45–46.
[2] *Edinburgh Review*, 1807, p. 82.
[3] *American Journal Education*, 1828, Vol. III, p. 690.
[4] Quoted in Griscom's Monitorial Instruction, p. 145.

and consequently throw the whole machine into disorder. Hence there can be no appeal to the reasoning powers; for reasoning can never be reduced to a mechanism. From the necessity which exists that all the boys should move exactly together, individual order is as much to be discouraged as individual inertness. Every boy must conform to the average motion of the school. In short, the system has all the excellencies and all the defects of military discipline. It produces habits of attention, order, and subordination—most valuable qualities to the class of society whose interests it has in view."[1] "Some well meaning persons, but men who did not look below the surface of things, and were utter strangers to the subject of public instruction, having by chance visited some of those semi-barbarous manufacturing towns of England, where for want of anything better, they are too happy to have Lancasterian schools, mistook for a masterpiece of perfection, that which is only the infancy of the art of teaching and were even dazzled with the exhibition of vast numbers of children taught by one master, assisted by little monitors chosen from among the pupils themselves. Seeing children thus governed by children, they found a species of self-government, which they thought would be a useful preparation for the infusion of the democratic principle. . . . . Other persons were pleased with the system on account of its cheapness, and then the eye was caught by the mechanical order and precision in the school exercises. The children went through their evolutions, according to a signal given by a child, as the different parts of machinery in a factory are set in motion by a crank."[2]

The moral influence of the monitorial plan in the New York schools was summed up by the County Superintendent of New York County, William A. Walker, who refers to it "as a system of education; regarding its influences upon the mind and upon the heart both of the teacher, the pupil, and the community; its adaptation to the present state of the public mind and our social conditions; and even its relation to an enlightened economy, I am constrained to believe that it is radically and deplorably erroneous."[3]

Failure as Means of Moral Training

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[1] Hill, Plan of Government for Boys, London, 1822 (reprint 1894), pp. 204–205.

[2] Victor Cousin, On the State of Education in Holland, London, 1838, p. 33.

[3] Report of County Superintendent of Common Schools, New York, 1846.

Punishments and Rewards

In devising various forms of punishment, Lancaster showed marvelous ingenuity. Judged solely by the list of tortures, he would appear to take delight in the exercise of a fiendish malevolence toward youth. But Lancaster was most kind-hearted, and even his use of outlandish forms of punishment was due to his efforts to find substitutes for flogging towards which he had the greatest aversion. To what extent Lancaster's devices for punishment were employed in the New York schools it is not possible to say, since teachers and school trustees seldom manifest Lancaster's frankness in this direction. A hint, however, as to the type of punishment used is found in Hosack's "Life of DeWitt Clinton": "As no corporal punishment was permitted, it was found necessary to make an example of children by using a small apartment with barred windows, and styled the Bridewell, which answered the purpose. After one punishment the thought of it proved sufficient."[1] The tendency to substitute other inducements for the rod was certainly adopted by the Free School Society, and formed a contrast to the usual practice at that time.[2] Some quotations from the "Epitome," will indicate the "Instruments and Modes of Punishment," advocated by Lancaster.

Punishment

"On a *repeated* or *frequent offence*, after *admonition* has failed, the lad to whom the offender presents a card, places a wooden log round his neck, which serves as a pillory, and with this he is sent to his seat. This log may weigh from four to six pounds, some more and some less. The neck is not pinched or closely confined; . . . it is chiefly burthen-some by the manner in which it encumbers the neck, when the delinquent turns to the right or left. While it rests on his shoulders, the equilibrium is preserved; but on the least motion one way or the other, it is lost, and the log operates as a dead weight. Thus he is confined to sit in his proper position, and go on with his work.

Use of the Log

"When logs are unavailing, it is common to fasten the legs of the offender together with wooden schackles; one or more, according to the offence. The schackle is a piece of wood mostly a foot long, sometimes six or eight inches, and tied to each leg. When shackled, he cannot walk but in a very

Of Schackles

[1] Hosack's Life of DeWitt Clinton, p. 174.

[2] Lancaster, Epitome, p. 76.

slow measured pace; being obliged to take six steps when confined for two when at liberty. Thus accoutred, he is ordered to walk around the school room, till tired out . . . he is glad to sue for liberty, and promise his endeavor to behave more steadily in future; with this he is sent to his seat, and goes on with his work. Should not this punishment have the desired effect, the left hand is tied behind the back, or wooden schackles fastened from elbow to elbow, behind the back. Sometimes the legs are tied together. This is an excellent punishment for boys who offend by leaving their seats, and wander about the school room.

"Occasionally, boys are put in a sack, or in a basket, suspended to the roof of the school, in sight of all the pupils, who frequently smile at the bird in the cage. This punishment is one of the most terrible that can be inflicted on boys of sense and abilities. Above all, it is dreaded by the monitors; the name of it is sufficient, and therefore, it is but seldom resorted to on their account.

The Basket

"Frequently old offenders are yoked together, sometimes by a piece of wood that fastens around their necks; and thus confined, they parade the school, walking backwards . . . being obliged to pay very great attention to their footsteps, for fear of running against any object that might cause the yoke to hurt their necks, or to keep from falling down. Four or six can be yoked together in this way.

The Caravan

"Proclamation of the faults of an offender before the school. When a boy is disobedient to his parents, profane in his language, has committed any offence against morality, or is remarkable for slovenliness, it is usual for him to be dressed up with labels, describing his offence, and a tin or paper cap on his head. In that manner he walks around the school, two boys preceding him, and proclaiming his fault; varying the proclamation according to the different offences.

Labels

"When a boy comes to school with dirty face and hands, and it seems to be more the effect of habit than accident, a girl is appointed to wash his face in the sight of the whole school. This generally creates much diversion, especially when (as previously directed) she gives his cheek a few *gentle taps of correction* with her hand. One punishment of this kind has kept the boys' faces clean for two years.

Punishment for Dirty Face

"Few punishments are so effectual as confinement after school hours. It is, however, attended with one unpleasant circumstance.

Confinement after School Hours

In order to confine the boys in the school-rooms, after school hours, it is often needful that the master, or some proper substitute for him, should confine himself in school, to keep them in order. This inconvenience may be avoided by tying them to the desks, or putting them in logs, etc. in such a manner that they cannot loose themselves. These variations in the *modes of unavoidable punishment*, give it the continual force of novelty, whatever shape it may assume. Any single kind of punishment, continued constantly in use, becomes familiar, and loses its effect. Nothing but *variety* can continue the power of *novelty*. Happily in my institution, there are few occasions for punishment; and this conduces much to the pleasure it affords me. The advantage of various modes of correction is that they can be inflicted, so as to give much uneasiness to the delinquents, without disturbing the mind or temper of the master.

"The object of these different modes of procedure is to weary the culprit with the log; or by placing him in confinement of one kind or another, till he is humbled, and likely to remove the cause of complaint by better behavior in the future. When he finds how easily his punishments are repeated, . . . that he, himself is made the instrument, . . . and no respite or comfort for him, but by behaving well, it is more than probable that he will change for the better. It is also very seldom that a boy deserves both a log and a shackle at the same time. Most boys are wise enough, when under one punishment, not to transgress again immediately, lest it should be doubled. They are mostly so prudent as to behave quite well, in hopes of being set at liberty from the one they already suffer, which is mostly in a few minutes. It ought to be understood in school, that whatever mode of punishment a master may adopt, on a repetition of the fault, a repetition of the punishment will unavoidably ensue; this will prevent recurring too often to modes of punishment which are not effectual without interrupting the pupil's attention to business, as the log, the shackle, the badge of disgrace; . . . at the same time the offenders are the instruments of their own punishments. Lively, active tempered boys, are the most frequent transgressors of good order, and the most difficult to reduce to reason; the best way to reform them is by *making monitors of them.* It diverts the activity of their minds from mischief, by useful employment, which, at the same time adds greatly to their improvement. I have experienced correction of any kind only to be needful in proportion

as boys were under the influences of bad example at home. Nothing is, unhappily, more common than for parents to undo, by their bad example at home, all the good their children obtain at school.

"The following punishment is most tremendous; when a boy is found to deserve punishment, instead of recurring to the rod, make him a *bashaw of three tails*. The use of a famous coat, called a fool's coat, is well known in schools; let such a coat be suspended in public schools, the name of the offender printed in large letters, that the whole school may read, and fasten on it the words "Bashaw of three tails," also on the back of the coat, and three birchen rods suspended from the tail of the coat at due and regular distances. This punishment is excellent for the senior boys, and will not need many repetitions. Sometimes an idle boy may have a pillow fetched from a feather bed, and placed on the desk for him to lay his head on, as if asleep, in the face of the school. A boy wandering from his seat may be placed under a hen-coop. A go-cart is another excellent punishment for an idle boy, but rocking in a cradle is better. Exhibitions of this sort soon bring a large school into order."[1]

The following observations at the close of Lancaster's list of punishments show his hatred of the rod and his desire to mitigate the terrors of the schools of that day.

Lancaster's Hatred of the Rod

'"The Rewards and Punishments before Described, have been tried for Thirteen Years, among many Thousand Children, and have been Attended with Beneficial Effect.

"The reader must know, that there are in this *wicked world* many Knights of the Rod, who wish to perpetuate the reign of ignorance among the lower classes of society, whom they are pleased to consider '*doomed to drudgery of daily labor*,' and that '*learning to write and cypher*,' will render them 'discontented with their lot.' These plead with mighty virulence, for every mode of punishment that can embitter learning, and make school hateful to boys. The sinking empire of the rod is tottering daily to ruin; and many and bitter are the lamentations of its partizans. One of these hired advocates of ignorance, in silly phrensy, imagined that the apparatus of logs, shackles, caravans, etc. were all implements of slavery; and he had the temerity to misrepresent one of the greatest enemies of slavery, a Friend, a Quaker, as an abettor of cruelty; these

[1] Lancaster, Epitome, pp. 68–76.

things, which have been so seldom used, as hardly to be known among the HAPPY children in my school, and which, when resorted to, are described as answering their effects 'mostly in a few minutes,' froze his heart with horror, and almost frightened him out of his remaining senses. Neither he, nor any other CONSPIRATORS against the education of youth, consider the more degrading severity of the lash, which these punishments have for years contributed to annihilate. The guillotine in France, during the reign of terror, and the rod in the hands of the advocates of ignorance, are alike."[1]

It was to such a 'Knight of the Rod' that Washington Irving was sent from his sixth to his fourteenth year, 1789 to 1797, Benjamin Romaine, a soldier of the revolution, whose school was at 198 Fulton Street. "Another trait which was mentioned by a female schoolmate in after life, was his unwillingness to witness the chastisement of the other boys. The standing punishment inflicted on truants was horsing or hoisting, so called, and as the culprits had to be untrussed, it was always administered after school when the girls had been dismissed. But little Irving, she said, could not endure the spectacle; the sight of the unlucky urchin shrinking under the rod was too much for his nerves, and he finally insisted on leaving with the girls, and was permitted."[2]

Following the principles of Lancaster, the Public School Society discontinued, without entirely forbidding, corporal punishment and based their government upon rivalry, shame, and acquisitiveness; with the resort to expulsion in the case of incorrigible pupils. "The discipline of the school is enforced by shame, rather than by the infliction of pain."[3] According to DeWitt Clinton, "The punishments are varied with circumstances; and a judicious system of rewards, calculated to engage the infant mind in the discharge of its duty, forms the key-stone which binds together the whole edifice."[4]

Punishment in New York Public Schools

Events proved that the wise Clinton had overestimated the disciplinary effects of the system as well as the educational value of instruction by monitors. The finer feelings were blunted, evil passions aroused, the nervous systems of the young children subjected

Discredited Punishments

[1] Lancaster, Epitome, pp. 76–77.

[2] Irving, P. M., Life and Letters of Washington Irving, 1871, Chap. II, pp. 11–12. [3] By-laws of 1826, 1836, and 1841.

[4] DeWitt Clinton, Address, 1809.

to undue strain, and physical injuries sustained that were more objectionable than pain inflicted by the rod. The invention of the teacher was taxed to find newer and still newer substitutes for corporal punishment. Finally it become necessary to warn the teachers against the very measures that had earlier been cited as a proof of the humane spirit of the schools. "Yet every caution should be taken, lest resort be had to objectionable substitutes for the use of the rod; some of which may be equally painful to the corporal system—sometimes more injurious, and even dangerous, and not unfrequently hurtful from their moral effects—and, therefore, some of them certainly improper to be used. The sustaining of wearisome burdens, unnatural and long-continued attitudes of restraint, public exposures and badges of disgrace, are of this class of punishments. Some of these, with judicious modifications of the usual methods by which they are practiced, and having due regard to their moral effect on the delinquent, may be used, but only under careful limitations, and with great circumspection and judgment; for it requires a skilful, discreet, and conscientious teacher to use them safely and to advantage. It is ever to be borne in mind that they are best suited to little children, and to boys; and not adapted to the discipline of girls—in whom a nice sense of shame, and a delicate sensibility to reputation, should be carefully cherished. With them, such punishments tend to blunt those feelings which it is the teacher's duty most carefully to cultivate as among the best safe-guards to female character. Can punishments of this class, then, be safely ventured upon, without extreme vigilance on the part of the teacher? How hazardous in its moral effect to leave a child publicly exposed, and liable to be neglected by the teacher, till the current of feeling begins to turn! Observe, that this ebbing again of the passion must be nicely watched. It is only by a careful attention to this critical point, that punishment by public exposure can become, as it sometimes does, a powerful means of discipline, especially in the training of little children. But it becomes worse than useless, if not thus rightly used; for, be it remembered, that while the teacher may be here and there, the tide of feeling may change, and the first surge of its backward course excite pride, anger, and malevolence. And though this should be but a small degree, every moment's continuance of the punishment or exposure beyond the salutary point, inflicts a moral injury that surpasses tenfold any possible good which the teacher can hope to derive from it as a means of discipline. It also renders the punishment alto-

gether ineffectual for another occasion, thereby throwing the teacher into a new perplexity for other substitutes for corporal punishment."[1]

"The Keystone of the whole edifice," according to Clinton, was the system of rewards. Labels of honor, as well as those of disgrace were used, "To obtain the enviable epithet of 'Good Boy' or 'Good Girl' which, with much parade and solemnity, is conferred upon those who merit that distinction, is the general ambition."[2] More substantial gifts, such as balls, books, knives, scissors, combs, mittens and money were bestowed in redemption of tickets of merit. There was a complete system of payment and fines. The Monitor General received eight tickets daily; other monitors, two to four. The stick fixer on promotions received one. The teacher gave one thousand additional tickets per month. The tickets were valued at one eighth of a cent. The fines were: talking, four tickets; disobedience, eight tickets; truancy, twenty tickets; fighting, fifty tickets. The prizes were books, tops, marbles, etc.[3] This plan "was found to produce unhappy results; for, while it stimulated to exertion on the one hand, it promoted rivalry and mutual jealousy on the other;—and it moreover discouraged the unsuccessful, creating in them feelings of enmity and dislike towards their fellows and even their teachers."[4] To this conclusion the trustees of the schools were no doubt led by the discovery that the rewards fell into the hands of the strong and the cunning rather than the meritorious. In some cases the monthly distribution was anticipated by the stealing of the gifts from the master's desk.[5] The trustees reported an improved discipline in the schools, and incidentally a saving in expense, through the discontinuance of the system of tickets and gifts. For pecuniary rewards was substituted a form of certificate "which formed a valuable passport, introducing the holders of them, after leaving school, into desirable situations as clerks and apprentices."[6]

Rewards

Discontinuance of Gifts

Many features of the so-called self-government plans of to-day were anticipated in the New York schools nearly a century ago. It

[1] Manual, Public School Society, 1850, pp. 11–12.

[2] Sketch of New York Free School, prefix to Lancaster, Improvements in Education, New York, 1807, p. xxx.

[3] Manual of Free School Society, 1820.

[4] Report, Public School Society, 1847, pp. 8–9.

[5] Minutes of Public School No. 2.

[6] Report, Public School Society, 1847, p. 9.

Plans of Self-Government

is to be remembered that the monitorial system itself was initiated as a plan of self-government, that is, a government of the school by the pupils rather than by the teacher, and the moral effects claimed were the same as those claimed by modern advocates of the various forms of pupil government. "The boys who prove themselves worthy, are chosen to fill places of trust and authority over other boys; so that it may be safely affirmed that a boy educated agreeably to this system, cannot fail to be made practically acquainted with the elementary principles of civil government, and thereby preeminently qualified to become a good citizen."[1] John Griscom had no doubt that in a school of five hundred boys, well regulated under a plan of monitorial superintendence, there would be less quarreling, noise, turbulence, bad language, or ill manners of any kind, than is usually witnessed in a school of forty which has no other supervision than that of the teacher.[2]

The jury system; a form of currency used for rewards and fines, and convertible into cash; police and health officers; measures that are considered distinctive of the modern "school city," supplemented the monitorial system. The organization of the Class of Merit is thus described by Andrews in his "History of the African Free School," one of the Lancasterian schools under the care of the Public School Society: "This class is composed of such boys as are the best behaved, and most advanced in their learning; they are distinguished in school, by a medal suspended to the neck, on which are engraved the words 'Class of Merit.' This class has a regular meeting on the 1st Tuesday in each month, to transact business, and to hear the reports of standing and other Committees. It is allowed one hour each session to conduct its business. Its officers are a Chairman, Secretary, Register, and Treasurer. The class, by a vote, determines in what branch of learning a member shall excel, to entitle him to the Chair, at the next succeeding meeting—the teacher always deciding. . . . The class appoints a Committee at each stated meeting, whose duty it is to take notice of the general deportment of the members, when out of school, and to report to the class, if they discover anything in the conduct of a member, immoral or unbecoming, and the member so reported is dealt with in such manner by the

Jury System

Class of Merit

[1] New York Free School Society, 1824 (19th Report).

[2] American Lyceum National Convention, 1831, p. 40.

class, as the circumstance of the case may require, such as suspension, expulsion, or otherwise, (in such cases the teacher is always first consulted); even reproof by the Chairman has often been found to have a beneficial effect. Another Committee observes the appearance of the members in school, as it respects cleanliness, and report, if occasion require; and a third is called the Health Committee, who, on hearing of the sickness of any member, visit him and render services of kindness, and report on such subjects, every regular meeting. This little society operates in a small sphere, similarly to those institutions, established among men, which are intended to call into action the best feelings of the heart."[1]

[1] Andrews, New York African Free Schools, pp. 81–84.

VII

SCHOOL INSPECTION AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Examinations and Exhibitions

Weekly Examinations

Local school committees were required "to meet at their respective schools every Thursday afternoon from three to five o'clock, for the purpose of inspecting the schools, and examining the children in their learning."[1] The faithful performance of this exacting duty, as shown in the minutes of the committees, is indicative of the devotion to the cause of education of the active members of the Public School Society. Minutes of the Committee of the New York Public School No. 2, in Henry Street, cover a period of forty years. A few of the entries are copied as suggestive of the methods of inspection and examination. Under date of October 28, 1812: "Premiums were given to deserving monitors, in proportion to their tickets presented, for their attention to the silence and attention of their classes. The money amounting to two dollars and twenty five cents was furnished by the teacher." Under date of September 30, 1818: "Present, Whitehead Hicks. The school much in its usual order. The scholars' tickets were redeemed with suitable prizes furnished by the committee of supplies. The teacher reports that the monitors of the select class have regularly attended school since the last report."[2]

"New York Free School No. 2, December 2nd, 1818: Present, Whitehead Hicks. Examined the writing of some of the children, but principally devoted the time of this afternoon to the giving out of prizes, to those children who had tickets. The prizes were furnished by the committee of supplies, and highly calculated to be useful to the children, consisting of mittens, combs, scissors, etc. The teachers report that the monitors of the select class have attended the school regularly and also to the discharge of their duties since the last report. The number of children present 294."

"New York Free School, October 14, 1818: Present, Whitehead Hicks. Examined the writing generally and was satisfied with the

[1] By-laws of the Public School Society, 1826, p. 12.

[2] Minutes, Public School No. 2, 1811–1853.

performances of the scholars. The order of the school was satisfactory. Agreeable to the resolutions of the Board, ten dollars was presented to the Monitor General of Order (Walter Palmer), as a reward for his assiduity and attention to the discharge of the duties of his office. Ten dollars in clothing was also given to each of the monitors of the select class for the regular attendance in school, and discharge of their duties, during the last two quarters, ending the second of this month. The teachers of the Select Class report that the monitors have been regular in their attendance since the last report. The number of scholars present 289."[1]

"New York Free School, 2nd August, 1819: Present, Benjamin Marshall and, by his proxy, Lyman Spatoiss. Admitted two boys and and four girls; total six. School was dismissed to give the children an opportunity to witness the ascent of a balloon."

"New York Free School, December 16, 1824. Present, James Roosevelt and Jos. Grinnell. Agreeable to notice given last week, ten boys of the 9th class came foward as competitors for the prize of one dollar, to be awarded to the one that should speak a piece of poetry best. The committee had great enjoyment in hearing the whole number recite the piece and found it difficult to decide who performed best, after fully considering all circumstances the prize was awarded to Robert Hoey, and a small reward given to Richard Woolgar, John Crosley and S. Bloodgood. Much to the credit of the other Boys they were quiet and orderly while the competitors were reciting. A request was received from Susan Swain to hear her grandson recite the 17th Chap. of 1st Kings, which was attended to and he performed very well. The Girls' school is in good order."[2]

During the year covered by the 35th Annual Report of the Public School Society, 11,844 visits were made by the trustees. The annual examination, which was a great event in each Lancasterian school, was attended by the trustees, city officials, and the public generally. Such an event is recorded by Andrews: "The exercises of the examination were as follows: 1st, A class of six boys and six girls read the 53d Chapter of Isaiah. 2d, A lesson from the English Reader, by six boys and six girls. 3d, 'Creation,' spoken by a boy. 4th, Writing and ciphering books exhibited. 5th, Address to Susquehannah. 6th, A class of

Annual Examinations

[1] Minutes, Public School No. 2, 1811–1853.
[2] *Ibid.*

girls in addition. 7th, A class of boys in subtraction. 8th, A class of girls in compound multiplication. 9th, A class of boys in simple division. 10th, Do. in the Rule of Three. 11th, Exhibition of the the Sewing School, with the articles of their manufacture. 12th, CIII Psalm in concert. 13th, A recitation—subject, 'Africa.' 14th, Girls' arithmetical table class. 15th, Drawing upon the board, before the company, an accurate map of the United States, after which a critical examination in American Geography. 16th, Examination of a Grammar Class. 17th, The following table of promotions for the last year, was read by a lad, viz: . . . In conclusion, the following piece prepared for the occasion was spoken by a young pupil: 'I am a little fellow, and know but little.—This is my first appearance before you my friends, as a public speaker, and it becomes me to be the last, and say but little. All things must have a beginning and an end. I am come to begin my public speaking, and to end the present exercises, which I hope have been performed to your satisfaction. Before I take leave of this respectable audience, I feel a desire to bear my small testimony in favor of the advantages which are derived from a constant attendance at school, and a close application to study while in school, even by the youngest scholar. I am but seven years old, and I think I have learned considerable since last examination. I was then entirely ignorant of writing; I now present you with these humble specimens of my attainments in that art. I was then also unacquainted with the use of figures; I have since gone through simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; I have some knowledge also of the compound rules. I say not these things to magnify my little self into something great, but to the credit of the Lancasterian plan of instruction, and for the encouragement of all my little school-mates to improve the time while they have the advantage of an early education."'[1]

LINES

"On the manner of conducting a Monitorial School, spoken at a public Examination. (Taken from an English publication, altered).

'Before we take a pen in hand,
We learn to write upon the sand;
And when the alphabet we know,
We write on slates—six in a row.
An easy lesson is prepar'd,
As, AB, ab —ARD, ard.

[1] Andrews, History of African Free School, 1830, pp. 43–44.

And those who spell, or read, the best,
Have some reward above the rest.
When we in spelling well succeed
We do appointed lessons read.
The Holy Bible is the source
Of each gradationary course.
A semicircle draught of six,
Whose eyes must on the lesson fix;
With hands behind, attentive stand,
Read—till they hear a fresh command.
Our places, then, at desks, we take,
(For standing long, our legs would ache.)
Rehearse the Tables, Grammar too,
And many more things have to do.
Our monitor demands a "Look,"
"Clean slates," "Prepare," then takes his book,
Gives out a word, when all in class
Write, one each other to surpass.
Six words are written,—then "Show slates,"
(Which must be rang'd like rows of plates
On dresser shelves)—the slates are clean,
That words may be distinctly seen.

* * * * *

'When we can shape the letters well,
And do the rest in class excel,
With pen and ink in books we write,
And think we're almost men—or quite.
At times, through carelessness we blot,
A fine in tickets, then's our lot;
But if the book throughout is fair,
Reward in tickets then's our share.

* * * * *

'We chant the parts of speech, and tenses;
Or, in a slow, responsive air,
As monks and nuns would say a prayer;
Thus, by frequent repetition,
We gain this useful acquisition.
We mind our stops in every clause,

* * * * *

'We learn by Lindley Murray's rules,
'Our Regulations, wise and good,
Teach us to fear and serve our God;
T' attend the worship of the Lord,
And reverence his Holy Word.'"[1]

[1] Andrews, History of the African Free School, 1830, pp. 139–142.

Such exhibitions, in Lancasterian and other schools, were planned to display to an admiring community the remarkable work of the schools. But in the general chorus of praise, it is possible to find, here and there, a note of criticism. "Of all the plans which are adopted to wheedle a credulous community out of their money and their children out of their precious time, public exhibitions or plays are the most fascinating and deceptive. They interest the heart, and engross the whole attention of the youth, and after all that can possibly be acquired by them has been attained, it may be said truly, in regard to the pupils, that they have sustained a *heavy*, and, in many instances, an almost *irreparable* loss. Indeed from the moment that the teacher has concluded upon having an exhibition, every other part of the business of his school is in a great measure, if not altogether, neglected. From that time the important branches of orthography, reading, writing, grammar, geography, arithmetic, etc. are thrown aside as matters of trivial importance. And for what purpose it may be asked is all this mighty innovation introduced? Why is the whole system and arrangement of the school turned topsy-turvey, and all those studies which have been heretofore deemed useful, discontinued? The answer is, that children may be taught the art of spouting. Thus, teachers, instead of endeavoring to initiate their pupils into those branches of learning which serve as steps to raise them to a knowledge of the important art of composition, or of committing their own thoughts to writing in an orderly and accurate manner, cause them to murder, as it were, their precious time, in learning by *rote*, pieces which are far above their comprehension, and with the meaning of which, little or no pains are taken to make them acquainted."[1]

Criticism of Public Exhibitions

The Training of Teachers

Until the foundation of the Normal College in 1870, the only training for the teachers in the New York Public Schools was secured through the monitorial system. Monitors were drawn upon to open new schools in New York and other places. The first teacher of School No. 2 was John Missing, assistant in No. 1. Shepherd Johnson, a monitor in No. 1, took charge of No. 3. The experiment in New York aroused great interest throughout the country, various commit-

Monitors Become Teachers

[1] Juvenile Mirror and Teachers Manual, New York, 1812, pp. 267–268.

tees visited its schools, and many calls for teachers were received. "Henry Cooper and Francis Windsor, formerly scholars and monitors-general in School No. 1, have become teachers and are now actively engaged in that capacity; the first in Philadelphia, and the latter in Burlington, New Jersey, having a school under his direction composed of about 50 boys. It may be proper to remark that Francis Windsor is but fifteen years old."[1] With the arrival of Charles Picton who was trained in the Borough Road School in London, and who was brought to New York in 1818 to take charge of School No. 4, and to maintain the purity of the system, the trustees made an effort to extend their system of training. "With deep solicitude for diffusing the means of education among the poor, and for the general extension of the Lancasterian system throughout the country, the trustees invite all those persons who are desirous of obtaining a knowledge of this method of instruction to repair to the schools under their charge, where in the space of six or eight weeks, a competent knowledge of the Lancasterian Methods of instruction can be obtained without fee or reward."[2]

Training in Six Weeks

Mr. Picton, in a letter to the general committee of the British and Foreign School Society, February 10, 1819, reported eleven teachers trained in New York, during the previous year. They supplied schools in New York; Greenwich; Long Island; Schenectady; Mt. Holly, New Jersey; and Savannah, Ga.[3] Governor DeWitt Clinton, in his message to the Legislature in 1818, recommended that a sufficient number of teachers be trained to supply all our common schools, by sending intelligent young men to the Lancasterian Seminaries in New York, where they would be instructed gratuitously. Lancaster, who visited the New York schools before opening the Model School in Philadelphia, was evidently not pleased with the "mush-room" plan of training teachers in six weeks. He wrote that he "does not approve of idle innovations in the system. Mush-room teachers often attain a partial knowledge of the mechanism of tuition, and there they stop."[4] In order to provide for the monitors additional

[1] From letters of trustees of New York Free School Society to British and Foreign School Society. In report of British and Foreign School Society, 1823, p. 146.

[2] Letters from Board of Trustees of New York Free School Society, in Report of British and Foreign School Society, 1819.

[3] Report of British and Foreign School Society, 1819.

[4] Letter to Burwell Bassett, February 29, 1820.

Morning Schools for Monitors

instruction in arithmetic, English, grammar and geography, teachers were, for a time, required to hold a morning school from six to eight.[1] "In 1834, the number of Primaries having greatly increased, and occasioning the employment of very many monitors, who, from the elementary character of those schools, were cut off from the opportunity of further improvement, it was suggested by the Committee on Teachers, that this deficiency might be supplied by establishing a school for their especial benefit, to be held on the last day of the week. Such a school was then organized, when it was soon perceived that in its successful

Saturday and Evening Normal Schools

operations it might prove the foundation of a Normal School of peculiar excellence for training and supplying teachers for the institution, better fitted than any other for its purposes. The plan was accordingly extended, and another opened for the monitors of the male school, which from November to March should be held five evening sessions per week; and another for the improvement of the monitors of the Female Colored Schools, embracing several Primaries, in which were girls employed under the like disadvantages. A proposition was soon after carried into effect to receive and admit to the privileges of these schools such of the pupils of the 9th class of the upper schools as from peculiar intelligence, industry, and decided taste for the pursuits of learning, might be recommended by the teacher as solicitous of such advantages. These in the normal schools are denominated 'cadets'; and those qualified by advancement, and desirous of such a station, are appointed as monitors, under pay. When duly prepared for a limited examination before the committee, they are, if approved, promoted to the station of 'passed monitors,' and continuing their course of instruction, are in a regular progress of promotion to that of assistant teachers, after a full examination by the committee, and thence to the rank of principal, as vacancies occur. The normal schools now contain two hundred pupils, under the charge of nine teachers, and have already (1842) furnished the schools with a considerable number of teachers. The number of 'cadets' gradually increases and the attendance of the monitors, and the general interests of the establishment, are on the advance."[2] "The normal school for females was held on Saturday from nine A. M. to two P. M. The

[1] By-laws of the New York Free School Society, 1818.

[2] 42d Annual Report, Public School Society, 1848, p. 32.

studies were grammar, geography, astronomy, arithmetic, and natural philosophy, etc. The school for male pupils was held five evenings a week, and had the same studies with the addition of Latin."[1]

In an address at the opening of the Normal College building in 1873, Superintendent Henry Kiddle described the earlier provisions for training teachers. "Thirty-seven years ago the Public School Society adopted and applied the principle of normal instruction, in the special arrangement which it made for the inexperienced and untrained teachers employed in schools under its management. The Society was obliged to pay low salaries; it employed female teachers generally at $25 for the first year. It was impossible to secure trained teachers. The principal part of the work was performed by pupil teachers, that is, teachers five days in the week and pupils on the sixth. Considering the imperfections the results were remarkable."[2] According to Commissioner Isaac Bell the results were remarkable only in being entirely inadequate. "The committee formed supplementary classes in nearly all of the female departments of the public schools—many of them small and expensive; and although teachers were mainly appointed from them, there was no pretense even of imparting instruction in methods and principles of teaching. There was no training in government and discipline, and therefore thousands of children were compelled to suffer loss and injury before these teachers acquired the necessary tact and power to manage their classes."[3]

No Professional Training

[1] 43d Annual Report, Public School Society, 1849, p. 6.

[2] Address of Henry Kiddle at the opening of Normal College building, 1873.

[3] Commissioner Isaac Bell in address delivered at organization meeting of Department of Public Instruction, New York, 1871.

VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Lancasterian system of instruction was the official system of the New York Public Schools from their foundation in 1806 until 1853, when the schools of the Public School Society were taken over by the Board of Education. Until the establishment of ward schools in 1843, the system constituted a practical monopoly in the field of public education; it was supported mainly by taxes, administered by a self-perpetuating body of trustees. Teachers were forbidden to make any departure from the plans laid down in the by-laws and manuals. The system's final breakdown must, therefore, be ascribed not to any limitation in the experimental period or to unfavorable conditions, but to its inherent weakness.

Adequate Trial of Monitorial System

The adoption of this system by the Free School Society was due primarily to its cheapness, and to the impression made by the completeness of its organization. It appeared to be particularly adapted to charity schools such as were proposed by the society. The editor of the *Academician* considered that the Lancasterian system was adapted to charitable institutions where there were many pupils, but that the Pestalozzian plan was superior for the private schools, as it "addresses itself to the understanding and elicits thought."[1] One contributor to the *Academician* in 1818, whose observations are very clear and complete, had two children in Pestalozzi's school. The relative importance of the two systems is thus estimated: "Although we are willing to allow that children may teach children and thereby diffuse a limited knowledge of a few elementary branches of education among the poorer classes of the community, yet we are by no means convinced that the popular system now in vogue is destined to be the American National System. The pioneers Bell, Lancaster, and others are preparing the public mind for the introduction of a more philosophic and permanent system. The world is indebted to Lancaster

Reasons for Choice of the System

[1] *Academician*, 1818, Vol. I, p. 270.

for an improved organization of charity schools and the adaptation of his system to rigid economy, but the immortal Pestalozzi and his disciple Fellenberg have brought to perfection a system of mental culture, industry, and economy which, when known in all its details to the American people, will, we hesitate not to predict, be embraced and adopted in all places of systematic education."[1]

Blind Adherence to the System

The history of the Lancasterian movement in New York City and in the United States tends to confirm the position of the United States Commissioner of Education that we are not an inventive people in educational affairs. It required a trial of nearly half century to prove that the scheme of an ignorant, but talkative, London schoolmaster was a failure so far as practical results were concerned, and that it was without foundation in sound theory. In the field of education the critical as well as the inventive powers of the intellectual and public spirited leaders of the first half of the nineteenth century seemed to lie dormant. However much we may admire the philanthropic spirit of the devoted trustees of the Free School Society and the Public School Society, a study of their reports cannot fail to leave the impression that they were maintaining an institution with the machinery that their wisdom deemed appropriate. In the words of the secretary and historian of the society, "It was their constant aim to preserve in all its integrity a scheme of popular education rendered eminently honorable by the names of the distinguished men who had been interested in it from its inception, and to hand it down to their successors in a form massive and enduring, and as faultless as practical wisdom, enlightened philanthropy, and liberal endownment could make it."[2]

Decline of Public School Society

In tracing the decline of the Lancasterian system in New York it is necessary to distinguish between the failure of the system of instruction and that of the society which gave it support. The dissolution of the society was due mainly (1) to religious controversy, (2) to its undemocratic organization, and (3) to the evident failure of the system with which it was identified. If one private organization should receive public funds for the support of schools, why should similar support be denied to the schools under the care of the various churches? The history of the Public School Society is a series of

[1] *Academician*, 1818, Vol. I, p. 341.

[2] Bourne, History of the Public School Society, p. 527.

addresses to the public, appeals and remonstrances to the city council and the legislature, public debates, and contests at the polls to maintain their monopoly. The account of this controversy constitutes most of the material in Bourne's volume of 768 pages. A settlement was reached by the legislative prohibition of the extension of the Society's schools, thus forcing union with the Board of Education. The undemocratic organization of the schools in New York City was pointed out by Governor Seward in his message to the Legislature in 1842. "In the public school system of the city one hundred persons are trustees and inspectors, and, by continued consent of the Common Council, are the dispensers of an annual average sum of $35,000, received from the common school fund of the State, and a sum equal to $95,000, derived from an indiscriminating tax upon the real and personal estates of the city. They build school-houses chiefly from the public funds, they appoint and remove teachers, fix their compensation, and prescribe the moral, intellectual, and religious instruction which one eighth of the rising generation of the State shall be required to receive. Their powers, more effective and far-reaching than are exercised by the municipality of the city, are not derived from the community whose children are educated and whose property is taxed, nor even from the State, which is so great an almoner, and whose welfare is so deeply concerned, but from an incorporated and perpetual association, which grants upon pecuniary subscription, the privileges even of life-membership, and yet holds in fee-simple the public school edifices, valued at eight hundred thousand dollars. Lest there might be too much responsibility, even to the association, that body can elect only one half of the trustees, and those thus selected appoint their fifty associates."[1]

Educational Monopoly

A committee of the Legislature reported that "it can no longer be concealed or denied that the failure of the public schools to accomplish the object contemplated by their establishment, results, in a great degree, from a disinclination on the part of many parents to entrust these schools with the education of their children. The fact is, indeed, so abundantly shown in the number of petitions now before the Legislature for a change in the present system, that it requires no additional proof. During the last sixteen years, the Public School Society, as it appears

Distrust of the Society

[1] Bourne, History of the Public School Society, p. 498–499.

from its own admissions, has had to defend its monopoly against the struggles of discontented masses of the population. Evidence more conclusive and affecting is seen in the multitudes of children in the streets and on the wharves of the city, growing up to the rights and responsibilities of citizens, but strangers to the simplest elements of learning, and acquiring the education of vice. . . . There is something exceedingly incongruous with our republican habits of thinking, in the idea of taking the children of a population approaching half a million of souls, taxing them at the same time for the support and maintenance of the schools, and, when both the children and taxes are furnished, withdrawing both out of the hands of guardians and taxpayers, and handing them over to the management of an irresponsible private chartered company. Such a concentration of power into mammoth machinery of any description is odious to the feelings, and sometimes dangerous to the rights, of freemen."[1]

Decline of the Monitorial System

As has been already noted the monitorial system owed its long life in New York to the support of a powerful corporation and dated its downfall as an official system of instruction from the dissolution of the society to which it owed its support. Though the Public School Society never lost confidence in the system with which "Providence" had favored them, they were gradually compelled by circumstances to limit its field. It was difficult to secure a supply of monitors, and very few children remained in school after the age of eleven. Of those who were mature enough to become monitors, few could be induced to remain after their parents discovered that more money could be earned in other occupations. An attempt to hold monitors until twenty-one as apprentices was found to exceed the authority of the society. The manifest superiority for young children of the schools established by the Infant School Society in 1827, led to the withdrawal of the four lower classes of the monitorial school and the formation of primary schools and primary departments, and the substitution of women teachers for boy monitors. In the upper schools the introduction of astronomy, algebra, geometry, trigonometry and book-keeping necessitated the employment of more teachers. However, the mechanism of the monitorial plan was, as far as possible, retained, and defended on grounds of formal discipline. Notwith-

Teachers Supplant Monitors

[1] Bourne, History of the Public School Society, pp. 504–505.

standing the manifest failure to secure the confidence of the community and of the great numbers of children growing up in the streets as vagrants, the society continued to claim that their system was the true basis for free institutions and that the pupils were "guarded from any evil tendency by the necessary vigilance and constant checks imposed by the monitorial management of the school."[1]

One cannot but conclude that, in the effort to maintain a system, the Public School Society was led to overlook the real problems of education and to put forth false claims of efficiency—intellectual, moral and social—and to rely upon the weight of authority and a superficial display in examinations and school exhibitions. In the reports of the society one looks in vain for any evidence of real insight as to any phase of their vast undertaking. While enormous changes were taking place in the economic, social, and religious conditions of the population, the guardians of the youth and the future of the city, year after year in the same phrases proclaimed the saving virtue of the monitorial system. "Never was there a clearer case of an institution established for the noblest ends and administered by a body of eminent people in an almost faultless way at last becoming a practical hindrance to education."[2]

Failure of Benevolent Despotism in Education

As the trial of the Lancasterian system was world wide, and under all conditions the failure pronounced, the grand experiment in New York is not of special significance in the general verdict. What this experiment did especially exemplify is the insufficiency of benevolent despotism in the province of education.

Beneficial Results of the System

While it seems surprising that the monitorial system was so long maintained in New York, there is less occasion for criticism regarding the introduction of the system when there is taken into consideration the lack of educational facilities at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the crude methods employed, and public indifference towards the education of the masses in all the great cities of Europe and America. In London, Paris, and Berlin, as well as in New York and

[1] 42d Annual Report, Public School Society, 1848, p. 42.

[2] Reverend A. D. Mayo, In Report of United States Commissioner of Education, 1897–1898, p. 460.

Philadelphia, the only provision for the education of the poor was made by the churches or private philanthropy. It was not until the middle of the century that municipal organization included the modern plans of police and fire protection, street paving, cleaning, etc. No city in the earlier part of the century could have undertaken a system of public schools as maintained at present. It was largely through the cheapness of the monitorial plans that the community was gradually led to assume the expense of public education. In 1823, 4090 pupils were taught at an expense per pupil of $1.80.[1] Under the Board of Education, expenses based on average attendance rose to $12 in 1851 and $30.54 in 1867.[2]

Education of Community to Support of Schools

In place of the crippled soldier and the needy mistress of the Dame School the new system supplied young and enthusiastic teachers and monitors trained to control large groups of children. The training, however, can hardly be compared with that of the modern normal school. Six weeks practice as monitors was deemed sufficient to insure proficiency. In the so-called normal schools of the society none but academic subjects were taught, the professional training being secured solely from the routine of monitorial practice.

Training of Teachers

In contrast with the unorganized and uneconomical methods of the schools of the times, the Lancasterian school presented a model of system and order, and an organized scheme of classification and promotion. Besides, reading, spelling and writing were taught in the same schools and in intimate association. Beginners in arithmetic were not compelled to commit to memory meaningless definitions, though there was no provision for teaching the idea of number or an understanding of the mathematical processes. In contrasting the discipline of the modern schools with the brutality associated with the schoolmaster of a hundred years ago, great credit must be given to the monitorial system for the stress laid upon moral incentives rather than upon an indiscriminate use of corporal punishment.

Improved Organization

Milder Forms of Punishment

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[1] Report, Free School Society, 1824.

[2] New York Citizens Association, Report of Committee to Examine System of Public Instruction, 1869.

Evil Effects of the System

Like the history of many another educational reform the course of the Lancasterian movement in New York presents a period of vitality under the direction of enthusiastic reformers, then a stage of excess of formalism, and finally, after the loss of official recognition and support, a survival of phases, outgrown in theory, but maintained by tradition and custom. All the favorable comments upon the monitorial system apply to the first period. An estimate of the total influence of the system cannot but be unfavorable. Its consequences, direct and indirect, are still felt in the schools with respect to the ideals of the community and the standards of the teacher. Conformity to system and uniformity in school administration and method became a fetish. The faithful adherence to the manuals or the syllabi prepared by the school authorities rather than adaptation to the interests of the pupils and the community became the prime duty of the teacher. This traditional allegiance, the result of many years of an unquestioning routine, remains a serious obstacle to the success of progressive administrations.

Slavery to System

Upon the theory that the principal is not a teacher but an administrative officer, schools have become far larger than even the limit set by Lancaster, which was a thousand; and the principal remains what he was in the Lancasterian school, the director of the school organization, not the teacher and guide of each pupil.

School Organization

Though the teacher has long since supplanted the monitor, present practice has not entirely departed from the old monitorial ways, particularly in connection with studies susceptible to mechanical and memoriter methods of learning. The spell of Lancaster has hindered all reform movements. Pestalozzian methods which were supposed to be used in the infant schools were cast in the Lancasterian mould. The imparting of information rather than training in observation and eliciting of thought became the aim. There was developed a catechetical method of teaching which could readily be acquired by the monitor or by the unskilled teacher. With the introduction of the higher studies into the grammar grades, a similar adjustment was made to the capacity of the monitorial type of teacher. The chopping up of all subject matter into easy mechanical stages, and the estimation of pupils' attainments on the basis of memory became the almost universal practice.

Methods of Instruction

Even the teacher with the zeal of youth and trained by the modern methods of pedagogy is apt to be overpowered by having his attention directed to the practice of the schools as it *has been* rather than as it *may be.*

On the side of intellectual discipline the term monitor has disappeared and the old ideals are being slowly displaced, but on the side of moral discipline the monitorial system remains strongly intrenched. According to the Lancasterian system the chief virtue of the school was submission to authority. The method employed was that of military organization in the hands of the pupils themselves. Apart from obedience, order and cleanliness, the moral influence of the school was neutral or negative. So long as the government rested in the hands of the monitors, the teacher had no opportunity to inculcate higher moral standards than those of the youthful monitors, and considered himself free from responsibility. It is astonishing that after realizing the inadequacy of the monitorial system in instruction, both the community and the teacher should be indifferent to its results in the far more important field of morals. A careful study of the monitorial schools shows that the failure of the system was even more pronounced on the moral side than on the intellectual.

Discipline

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