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R E P O R T
OF
THE EXAMINATION
OF
THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
IN
THE CITY OF ROXBURY,
FOR
THE YEAR 1853.



ROXBURY :
THOMAS PRINCE, CITY PRINTER.
1853.

CITY OF ROXBURY.

IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE, April 27, 1853.

The following persons were appointed as the Annual Examining Committee for the Grammar, Primary, and Intermediate Schools.

Grammar Schools.—Messrs. Peirce, Wayland, Morse, Jones and Streeter.

Primary and Intermediate Schools.—Messrs. Leach, Otis, Ryder, Crafts, Cummings and Bugbee.

JUNE 1, 1853.

The Chairman and other members of the Examining Committees submitted Reports upon the condition of the various departments of the several schools, which Reports were accepted. And it was ordered, that two thousand copies be printed and distributed to the citizens.

JOSHUA SEAVER, *Secretary.*

R E P O R T .

SUPERVISION OF SCHOOLS.

OUR city has not a more important or sacred interest than the care and culture of the three thousand young minds between the ages of five and fifteen years, in the various schools. Its future wealth, intelligence, social order and public virtue will be determined by the success of her educators in prosecuting the duties of their office. It ought never to be forgotten that we hold in our hands, in an important degree, the destinies of the next generation. Without any power of resistance on their part, the young are irresistibly moulded by surrounding influences into the characters and habits which will grace or disgrace their manhood. These influences are very considerably within our control, and if faithfully guarded we may decide, with a great degree of certainty, the future. When it is considered that a large portion of the youth in our public schools receive all their mental and moral instruction here, and leave them to enter at once upon the active pursuits of life, and upon the trial of their principles, their importance cannot be over estimated, and the responsibility of their proper support and superintendence cannot be exaggerated. A large amount of money is annually required to provide public instruction, but if judiciously expended, it becomes an economical investment, saving to the city larger outlays in other directions, and returning, in a few years, compound interest, in

the form of permanent wealth and public reputation. The money expended upon the schools may be regarded as so much transferred from appropriations to the police, and to the poor-house. It is undoubtedly the fact that the wisest measures have not always been taken in the selection of sites for the school edifices, and in their construction, and that these errors in judgment may have unnecessarily increased the expenditures for instruction; but such results cannot be avoided under the present system of superintending the schools, and are not of a very serious moment when compared with the vital educational interests which are to be provided for. It is worthy, however, of our consideration, whether it would not be judicious even as a mere question of economy, to establish the office of Superintendent of schools, and call to its duties an intelligent and experienced educator, who shall bring to their discharge the accumulated wisdom of years, and devote to them all his time and abilities.

It is easy to conceive how, during the past four or five years, the whole expense of such an officer might have been saved to the city, in the construction and arrangement of buildings. The members of the School Committee being almost necessarily local in their observations, cannot form an unbiassed opinion of the comparative wants of the different wards; and, besides, they have not time to give adequate attention to the numerous details relating to the construction of a school building. A Superintendent can make himself equally familiar with the whole field, can point out the most favorable locations, and prepare exact specifications as to size and internal arrangement. With an annual outlay of between thirty and forty thousand dollars, if there were no other than financial reasons, would there not seem to be a demand for such an officer? But there are other and more peremptory and important reasons calling for such a superintendency. With thirty Primary schools, three Grammar schools, and two High schools indirectly connected with our Common school organization, we can hardly expect to secure, under our present system of supervision, ho-

mogeneity in instruction, and equal progress in all departments. It can be readily seen that one strong, experienced mind, whose whole powers can be devoted to the service, can accomplish infinitely more than can be attained by the occasional and limited visits of different members of a large committee. But it is the testimony of experience that some of the schools receive not even the slight attention of occasional calls. Quarterly reports suggest important improvements and notice serious evils, but no active measures are taken to secure the one or counteract the other. The same state of things continues; the duties of the school may be mechanically attended to, bad habits are confirmed, and poorly trained children continue to present themselves for admission into our Grammar schools, when they have reached the proper age.

In a number of cities and towns in our Commonwealth, some of them numbering a smaller population than our own, this office has been instituted, and in every case with success. It has been found both a measure of economy, and a means of elevating essentially the tone of instruction in the schools. In a report just made by the School Committee of the town of Danvers, where a Superintendent of schools has been appointed during the year, they say, "Notwithstanding the period of time has been so brief, and that there are inconveniences and obstacles always attendant upon the first operation of a new system which impede its progress, but which experience obviates or removes, the Committee have seen enough to consider it demonstrated, that the change adopted by the town in the supervision of the schools was most judicious and wise, and one which will be more beneficial the longer it is continued." Says Dr. Wayland of Providence, R. I., in reference to the establishment of this office in that city: "In this community there is, so far as I know, but one opinion as to the necessity of this office to the efficiency of our school system. Before the present system was adopted, our schools were, I believe, decidedly inferior to those of other towns, in New England, of our population and wealth. Since its adoption we have

improved so rapidly, that for years we have challenged competition with any other city. The most essential respect in which we have differed from our neighbors is, I think, in the office of Superintendent; and to this I impute the advantages we have enjoyed." Such an appointment does not supersede the office or labors of the School Committee; the Superintendent is their organ, annually elected by them as are the teachers in the schools, giving direction and efficiency to their deliberations.

VISITING THE SCHOOLS.

Connected with the supervision of the schools is an important service which can only be rendered by the voluntary action of our citizens, — we refer to occasional visits to the schools, by parents and others, during their sessions. Such interviews would render valuable service both in disciplining and instructing the pupils. The parents would obtain an understanding of the measures used by the teachers to secure the studiousness of the pupils and to counteract any wrong habits, and would be prepared to add their own coöperation; while the scholars will be led to submit more patiently to the requirements of the teachers when thus sanctioned by the presence of the parents. There would be a greater amount of confidence felt in the schools, as there would be a greater occasion for it, could this object be attained. At present, the schools are rarely visited except when some act of discipline has, perhaps, enraged the child, irritated the parents, and disturbed the equanimity of the teacher.

We do not allow the arrangement of our grounds, the building of our houses, the discharge of domestic offices, to go on without careful personal supervision, and it is delegating too important an interest into foreign hands to commit our children to the care of strangers without some personal knowledge of their plans and abilities. Very few of the cases of misunderstanding and irritation would occur if a comparatively familiar relation existed between the parent and the teachers of the schools.

TEACHERS.

After all our supervision, and visiting, and systematising, nearly all will depend upon the qualities and qualifications of the teachers. The best theory of education is the best educated and self-disciplined teacher. The best plan of instruction, is the process which the intelligent teacher finds, by experiment, to be the most successful in arousing and developing the faculties of the pupil. There are two objects to be sought in a rudimental education.

1st, To convey valuable information to the pupil, through text books and oral communications—to judiciously store his memory with the “seeds of things”; with principles and facts that will be indispensable to his further progress in science and art, but not to overburden and oppress him by their undigested abundance; and,

2d, To develop and discipline his own mental powers. Here the real power and tact of the teacher will be seen, or the lack of them be made painfully obvious. It is worthy of consideration that success in securing the latter object, always secures success in reference to the former; for in proportion as the mind is developed and strengthened, its power of assimilating and retaining principles is increased. It is not saying in reference to our schools what is not, perhaps, in an equal degree as true of others, that this is the great lack. The pupils do not think for themselves, and they are unaccustomed to express their own conceptions in language of their own choosing. When questions are asked involving the principles discussed in their lessons, but not admitting of the verbal answer with which the memory has been burdened, a painful embarrassment, or an utter mental blankness is exhibited. It would be well if a system of mental gymnastics, somewhat analogous to the physical manipulations now practiced, could be introduced into the schools. There cannot be a more enlivening element than thought: it would conquer the stupor of weariness, the fatigue of heat, and the *ennui* of monotony. No lesson,

whether in reading or science should be considered as recited, until it is evidently fully comprehended, its ideas re-cast in the child's own mind, and expressed in his language. This course will awaken thought, secure precision, and a facility in expressing thought in chaste and grammatical language.

There is an important topic now exciting the attention of the friends of the young, and to which, we are happy to know, more attention is given by practical teachers — we refer to the effect, upon the education and discipline of the pupil, of the character and manners of the teacher. A superior education and a vivacious manner are not now considered the only indispensable qualifications of a good teacher. It has been found that the temper and the habits of the teacher are among the more powerful educational elements. “What he *says*, and above all what he *does*, is graving itself on the tenacious memory of childhood. His inconsistencies, partialities, ill-temper, tyranny, or selfishness, leave lasting traces,” and the nobler elements of a magnanimous character will not fail of reproducing themselves in the sensitive nature of the young. During a large proportion of his active hours, the pupil is in the presence of one, whose social position, strength of character, superior abilities, and constant discipline, render him an object of the utmost attention and interest. He cannot raise his eye without observing him, and when his eye is not raised, he is involuntarily and powerfully impressed by his presence and pervading spirit. Every act and habit of the instructor is swelled into importance as associated with his position. The tide of his emotions, and thoughts, and habits, flows back upon these expanding capacities, filling them, and leaving its deposits there, as the tide-wave of the ocean urges its way into all the bays and indentations of the coast, and leaves its marks upon the yielding shores. A very serious responsibility thus rests upon the teacher.

All the courteous, and generous, and noble, and moral, and religious impressions of home may be distorted or effaced by the more powerful and continually repeated

impressions of the school room ; or the lack of these, in the families of the ignorant and vicious, may be greatly compensated by the more healthful atmosphere of the child's daily home for six hours. It is this involuntary influence which gives the teacher so favorable an opportunity of developing and moulding the moral faculties of his pupils while he is engaged in his daily offices of instruction ; not so much by direct precepts, as by the force of his own character, and the powerful moral atmosphere he sheds throughout the school room is this to be attained. "The secret of the art of training up the rising generation to virtuous characters, consists not in the power of the teacher to indoctrinate them with correct theories of moral duty, and to urge upon them arguments for their support, but in inducing, through his personal influence and example, a habit of *right action*, in all the pursuits, occupations and pleasures of childhood."

By a native and cultivated nobleness of manner on the part of the teacher ; by continued appeals to this trait of character, and to high Christian motives ; and by conducting the daily discipline upon the presumption, manifest to all the keen-eyed and quickly impressed youths of the school that they are ingenuous and truthful, these noble and enobling virtues may be developed into maturity and into self-determining power.

EVENING SCHOOLS.

During the past winter a free evening school has been held in the City Hall under the charge of Mr Ritchie, the City Missionary. An average of nearly two hundred pupils were in attendance during its session. No one can fail to perceive the value and importance of the instruction thus bestowed ; especially in our community, where so many have become residents who have not enjoyed the advantages of our common school system, and where the pressure of poverty so early draws away many of our youth from the day school. Quite a large portion of the members of the evening school had been formerly, for longer

or shorter periods, connected with our Grammar School, but had failed even to acquire some of the simple rudiments of an English education. It may be well to consider here the question, if it be not expedient to afford a different style of training to this large class of boys in our Grammar schools who will remain there but a short period and whose whole preparation for active life will be limited to these few years, from that bestowed upon lads who will pass through all the divisions, and probably through the High School also. Would not such a course of instruction as we find in country schools, during the winter sessions, afford them facilities to obtain as extended an acquaintance with the rudiments of knowledge as is practicable. In all the larger school houses in Boston one room is set apart for the instruction of this class. They are here pressed forward in the most important branches, such as Reading, Writing, plain Spelling, written Arithmetic, and the simplest outlines of Geography, as rapidly as their powers of acquisition will admit. We learn that the experiment has been attended with the best results. The evening schools embrace another class, — those who are quite mature in years, but who have not yet acquired the first rudiments of knowledge. It is not merely a dictate of charity, but a suggestion of worldly prudence and economy, to bestow an education, and quicken the intellectual and moral faculties of all classes composing our population. The city has given during the present year \$200, and the use of the hall. This amount could be considerably increased, with great profit, both to the pupils and to the city. Two such schools at least are needed, and a small amount might be judiciously expended for assistants in the work of instruction. All our sister cities are encouraging and aiding in sustaining these schools.

There are certain obvious reasons, why their somewhat voluntary character should be continued, and why the supervision of the School Committee over them should be of the same nature. Let the city, however, become an annual and generous subscriber to their funds, and there will be no lack of competent men to enter upon this truly

benevolent and useful field of effort. The following interesting communication has been received from Mr. Ritchie, in reference to these schools.

Roxbury, June 1st, 1853.

DEAR SIR,

The Evening school has been maintained in Roxbury four winters. In the winter of 1851-52, two schools were in operation, one at the City Hall, and one at Roxbury Point. During that season there were about three hundred pupils. Usually the number has been between two and three hundred. If there were sufficient accommodations, I think four hundred pupils might be gathered of those desirous to perfect themselves in elementary education. Two schools, one near Tremont street, and one near Roxbury Point, would accommodate those who would attend. Hitherto, each school has been kept but two evenings in the week. If they could be so constituted as to be open four evenings each week, the beneficial results to the greater part of the pupils, would be more than doubled. Some could not be excused from their work shops so often as four times a week. These could attend as often as possible. At these schools hundreds have gained information which otherwise might not have been opened to them. The average attendance has been much better than was expected. The instruction has been mainly confined to the elements of English education. More than one hundred adult persons have commenced with their letters, and can now read and write. I think there can be no dispute as to the advantages of these schools.

As to the probable cost of maintaining them, it cannot amount to much. The same rooms used for other schools will answer for these. It will be necessary to warm and light them. This may cost \$1 50 each evening, or \$12 a week for both schools.

In twenty weeks this would amount to	\$240 00
Two superintendents of the schools, \$100 each,	200 00
Two assistants, \$75 each,	140 00
Care of rooms and incidental expenses,	110 00
	<hr/>
	\$700 00

I think the schools might be for the present conducted by the city, at an expense of \$700, or one school with accommodations for two hundred and fifty pupils, might be kept at a cost of about \$500. Such an arrangement as that above indicated, would offer opportunities for gentlemen and ladies to volunteer their services as teachers in the schools.

I wish that you might make some suggestions that would bring this whole matter up for consideration. The subject is exciting much interest in other places. It can be more useful nowhere than here.

Very truly yours,

JAMES RITCHIE.

TRUANCY.

During the past year, the Act of the Legislature in reference to habitual truancy has been accepted by the city authorities, and two officers in connection with the Marshal of the city, were appointed to carry out its provisions. In the eastern portion of the city, under the charge of Mr. W. D. Cook, the duties of the office have been most efficiently discharged, and every instance of perverse absence from school has been corrected, or the penalties of the statute administered. Seven boys have been sent to the State Reform School at Westboro', and two to Brook Farm. In all these instances the boys had fallen into the habit of petty larceny in addition to truancy. The Principal of the Dearborn School has found in Mr. Cook, an intelligent, pains-taking and cheerful assistant in the labor of securing the punctual attendance of his pupils.

In the other district, through some misunderstanding on the part of the officer, the same result has not been secured, and serious complaints have been made in reference to the vagrancy of boys who should be found in the schools. We understand that immediate measures are to be taken to correct this evil.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

The majority of the Primary school edifices are convenient, comfortably arranged for the pupils, and, generally, well adapted to the purposes for which they were built. A few still remain, a shame to the community, badly ventilated, with uncomfortable seats, injuring the physical health of the pupil, while they afford poor opportunities for the development of his mind. The call for increased accommodations is both imperative, and, from various causes, unusually large at the present time. By the burning of the building in Ward Two, two schools were deprived of their rooms. At this time the crowded state of the schools called for the erection of another edifice in that part of the city. It

is proposed to erect a brick building upon the city land sufficiently large to meet the present and prospective wants of the vicinity for Primary school accommodations. An additional school house is needed, at as early a date as it can be provided, in Ward One; and the preliminary measures have been taken to secure it.

In Appleton place there is a demand for a building; and in some location near the junction of St. James and Warren streets there has existed for a long period the necessity for a Primary school house. All these calls upon the purse of the city cannot be answered at once; but as rapidly as is practicable they must be met. Here, also, the important aid that a Superintendent of schools could afford, in deciding upon the comparative claims of the different localities, and in preparing plans for the different edifices, can be seen.

The Dudley Grammar School has for more than a year been unable to accommodate the applicants for seats, and a division of the school now meets in a hired room. As this want will be increased annually by the girls sent from all the Primary schools, active measures must be taken at once to make permanent provision for their accommodation.

The Washington school is also full. By changing the arrangements of the present edifice, building out the wings, and dividing the rooms, its capacity may be greatly increased, each division may be instructed in a separate room, and one male teacher, only, (the principal,) be required to superintend the school. By such a change, the expense of which would be comparatively small, the necessity of a new Grammar school house for boys will be postponed for several years, a great economy in the cost of instruction, and better success, through the means of separate rooms, will be secured, as well as a more perfect system of classification from the increased number of pupils that can be accommodated.

In the Dearborn School, a room yet remains unoccupied; it is thought, however, that there will be a demand for it in the district during the coming year. The school yard is in a most uncomfortable state — unpleasant to the eye and an

inconvenient play ground for the boys. It will, we trust, be soon graded and in the coming fall be shaded and adorned by suitable forest trees

CHANGE OF ORGANIZATION.

A question has been started of late in the Board as to the expediency of changing its organization, so far as to have the Mayor of the city, *ex officio*, chairman of the School Committee. While this matter was under consideration, it was understood that a petition had been presented from the Board of Aldermen and Common Council, to the Legislature for the above, and for still further changes. As the subject had not been fully discussed, and serious objections were raised to a part of the proposed alteration, it only remained for this Board to protest against the granting of the petition, in order to secure further space for deliberation.

There are obvious reasons, showing the importance of an intimate relation between this and the other Boards in the city government, and rendering the presence of the Mayor of the city desirable at the meetings of the School Committee. A larger representation from the public authorities seems unnecessary, as the objects to be secured can be fully attained through the presence and influence of the Mayor. And it is but justice to the citizens that those expressly appointed to the care of the schools, should perform the appropriate functions of their office. We would therefore recommend to the city government to petition the next Legislature for such a change in the charter of the city, as will constitute the Mayor, *ex officio*, chairman of this Board.

B. K. PEIRCE,

Chairman of Ex. Com. of Grammar Schools.

DUDLEY SCHOOL.

J. PLYMPTON, *Principal*.

The Committee to whom was allotted the examination of the Dudley School, are happy to be able to express their satisfaction with its results. While there is an evident difference in the appearance of the divisions composing the school, there is no one which does not present evidences of diligence on the part of the teacher, and some of them exhibit an earnestness and skill in the instructor deserving special commendation. In no portion of the school is there more evidence of progress than in the first division. The Principal and his intelligent Assistant have labored zealously to bestow upon their pupils the benefits of their attainments and experience, and, what is even more to be desired, to develop their own powers, and to secure habits of thought and a facility of expression. Although the average age of the scholars is no higher, the standard of attainments is much in advance of the division two years ago. The examination in History and Geography, the latter of which, may be considered the *experimentum crucis*, was peculiarly satisfactory. Evidently the teacher has discovered the secret of success in teaching these studies, and nothing but a further prosecution of the same plan is necessary to secure a most desirable familiarity with these important branches. If the same system of instruction in these studies were introduced into the lower divisions, the same success might be expected. We commend the experiment to the well-qualified and inquiring teachers in these divisions. Under the text-book process of teaching Geography, no one can feel the truth more than themselves, that all the time employed is well nigh thrown away. By oral instruction, by the use of the globe and the map, by selecting a few local centres, and securing distinct impressions of the relative positions of the most important places upon the earth, and by the drawing of outline maps, solid and valuable geo-

graphical information may be conveyed to the pupils. In reading there is considerable difference in the proficiency of the divisions; some of the lower, reading comparatively better than the more advanced. The reading in the first division was excellent; in some of the others, there is an unpleasant monotonousness, and apparent want of understanding the idea of the writer. Of course where the thought of the subject is not comprehended, there must be a failure in attempting to convey the sense to others.

There are two ends to be had in view in forming a good style of reading.

1st—To convey the exact meaning of the author; and
2nd—To vary the style of reading and the tones of the voice in accordance with the different descriptions of literature perused. It is a good device, often, to introduce a different book from the regular text-book—some simple newspaper narrative perhaps—as a test of the child's ability, and to break up any tendency to a rhetorical tone.

In penmanship and in composition the school fully sustains the reputation it has enjoyed in these departments. We were peculiarly pleased with the specimens of original drawing exhibited by the pupils; at once, complimentary to Mr. Whitaker, their teacher, and to their own diligence and taste. The singing we did not hear, but we learned that Mr. Southard, the master of music, had given general satisfaction in this graceful art.

As a whole,—in discipline, life and attainments, the Committee feel authorized to assure the parents and citizens generally that the Dudley School is deserving of their confidence, and that it is, in a good degree meeting the requirements of its important office.

B. K. PEIRCE.

H. G. MORSE.

WASHINGTON SCHOOL.

G. M. WESTON, *Principal*.

The Committee deem it proper to state a few facts, at the commencement of their report upon this school. Mr. Reed its former principal has lately retired from the office, which he held for many years, and been succeeded by Mr. Weston, a gentleman, we are told, of much experience in teaching, and who comes among us with a disposition to devote himself faithfully to his responsible duties. His entrance upon office, however, was at an unfortunate time, owing to the unseasonable period, chosen by the late principal, for leaving, which was nearly at the close of the term. At such a time, little or nothing could be done by his successor, to prepare the first Division for the inspection of the Committee. His reasons for vacating office at so untoward a moment, we neither know, nor do we wish to inquire into them.

Another change has been made in this school: we refer to the third division, in which Mr. Brown has been superseded by Miss Page. The former, though giving entire satisfaction, was thought to be occupying a situation which could be equally well filled by a female teacher, who would perform the required duties, at quite a saving to the city; and this expectation, we have reason to believe will be fully realized.

We proceed next to give the results of the Examination. And it is proper to state, that of the Committee appointed for this purpose, one was prevented by professional duties from examining more than the first and fourth divisions, leaving all the others to his coadjutor, who generously consented to this accession of labor. According to his report he awards to the 2d, 3d, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th divisions, especially to the 2d, the quality of *excellent*; by which he means, that in the studies to which he called their attention, he thinks them respectively entitled to this meed of praise, *as a whole*, though there were in all, individual and marked exceptions, which, were there room for minute

specifications, he should have placed in a far lower grade. To be enabled to report so favorably, even with this drawback just mentioned, is matter of gratulation; and it is made, with the more pleasure, on account of the high estimate, formed by the Committee, of the teachers of this school, and of the diligence and fidelity with which they are endeavoring to fulfil their important trust.

Respecting the first and fourth divisions, the examiner is not able to report quite as favorably. The minutes made by him, at the time of examination, are, that two classes in the first division were, in Arithmetic good, and the third class only fair. The whole division in Reading, and in Grammar good. The fourth division in Reading, Arithmetic, and Geography, and Definitions, were far from excellent. No blame is cast, or intended to be cast, upon the teacher, whom we regard as ranking high in her profession, but the same division is not always filled by a succession of equally bright scholars—and then the same talent and labor devoted to their instruction, will not produce equally cheering results.

The general order of this school is good; the discipline efficient; the prevailing tone, studious. The degree of regularity and punctuality is highly respectable, but admits of great improvement, which can be made only by the sincere coöperation of parents. An average daily absence of 34, is more than ought to occur in a school of 380 pupils. Such an amount of delinquent attendance is tantamount to the dismissal every day of an entire division.

The Committee will now offer some miscellaneous remarks, which have been suggested to them in the discharge of their duties as examiners. And first, with regard to Penmanship. This important branch of education we think far behind what might reasonably be expected. Wherever the fault lies, the results are not satisfactory. Even in the first division, in which boys have been, on an average, five and a half years employed in learning this art, their chirography is, to say the best, awkward and imperfect; nor did we find scarcely an instance of plain, legible, much less, beautiful writing. And yet these boys have received

the highest advantages of this school, and most of them are to have no other, preparatory to the business of life. As we descend to other divisions, the like deficiencies are found, and call for improvement.

Another remark suggested to the Committee, is the great advantage that would be derived from making teaching less a matter of rote and memory, and more a matter of mental excitement in the pupil, the calling forth of his powers of reasoning and discrimination, and the obliging him to use and apply his knowledge. Instances were found—and they are not peculiar to this school—in which a boy, in the midst of a glib recitation of the words of the book, if called upon to tell the meaning of what is so fluently uttered, would be instantly at a stand, and by his mute surprise, show that there was but one faculty, which he was in the habit of exercising. What is needed, we suppose, is the direct action of the mind of the teacher upon the pupil's, by means of questions, examples, illustrations; thus throwing a boy more upon his own resources, and compelling him to think, and to use his own faculties. This might be done in geography, arithmetic, reading, definitions, and especially in the higher branches. Without such training, a boy may learn verbatim all that is in a book, and yet not be educated, i. e. not have his mind drawn out and exercised in the knowledge contained in that book.

Another remark suggested to the Committee, pertains to the rule of advancement in our Grammar schools, which we believe to be, at present, that all those who enter any division, are to remain with it to the end of the year, and then rise to the one above it. We doubt the wisdom of this plan. In every division are found boys, more richly endowed by nature, than others; of brighter faculties, and greater facility of acquisition. These, of course, outstrip their comrades, and are qualified in a few months, for the next higher grade of instruction. And if not advanced, they show a manifest disinclination for study, and fall into indolent habits. For nothing breeds laziness more surely, than a compulsory routine of easy effort. And hence many parents complain that

their boys have not enough to do, to task their energies ; but are kept plodding along, at a pace, which is fatal to scholar-like spirit and enterprise. A wiser policy, we think would be, to allow every boy, of superior ability and diligence, to advance to the next division, just so soon as in the judgment of the principal, he is qualified. The effect would be to provoke to emulation, those who, now through a large part of the year, are dreaming over tasks too easy and insufficient to awaken them to full mental activity.

Another remark suggested to the Committee, is the necessity of greater attention being paid to morals in this school. It is within the personal knowledge of the writer, that he seldom or never passes the play-ground, when filled with boys, without hearing language of obscenity and profaneness, utterly shocking to those of any refinement. Nor is it different elsewhere. In almost every case, of boys recognized as belonging to this school, assembled to play at marbles, or ball, or merely conversing together, he has been pained by overhearing the same filthy and profane style of talking. To such an extent has this evil now grown, that it keeps many of our most respectable families from sending their children, where they are exposed to such pollution. We feel, therefore, bound to call attention to this evil. As the public guardians of our schools, and concerned to promote their moral, as well as intellectual character, we are constrained to urge a reform in this respect. And we are happy to say, that the new principal of this school, deeply impressed with the evil to which we have alluded, has entered upon his duties, with the full determination of doing all in his power to effect a favorable change. In his efforts, to this end, we bespeak for him the utmost coöperation of the Committee ; and have entire confidence that, though the attempt may be difficult, yet if persevered in with vigor and energy, albeit with mildness, it will be successful, and change the whole moral tone of this otherwise flourishing school.

JOHN WAYLAND.

JOHN JONES.

DEARBORN SCHOOL.

W. H. LONG, *Principal.*

This school was organized in March, 1852, and Mr. W. H. Long appointed principal. The corps of teachers consists of the principal and four female assistants; and, as we are to judge of their faithfulness to the trusts committed to them, by the general appearance of the pupils, we may safely assert that they have been untiring in their efforts to advance the interests of the school. In the recitations in the different branches, there appeared a uniform degree of excellence, denoting that no one particular study was made more prominent than another, but that it was the endeavor of the teachers to give the pupils thorough and systematic instruction in each and every branch of study. The writing books were neat, and marked improvement was noticed in many of them. The appearance of many of the drawing books indicated that some of the pupils are possessed of a decided taste for this useful branch—but the course of instruction having been commenced so recently it is hardly proper to fix any standard by which to judge of their proficiency.

Some very fine specimens of map drawing were exhibited which presented the physical features of different countries very correctly.

It may be proper to notice (although not constituting a part of the annual examination) the public exhibition given by the pupils, at the close of the term, consisting of Declamations, Recitations in the various studies, and Singing, at which were present members of the Committee and parents and friends of the scholars. The exercises were interesting, and spirited, and gave great pleasure to the large audience present. The Declamation and Singing were specially excellent, and due credit should be awarded the teacher of music, Mr. Southard, for his efficient and thorough instruction in this pleasing exercise.

The Dearborn school house is admirably constructed for the convenience, and comfort of the scholars, there being a separate room for each division, and a spacious hall in the second story for the assembling of all the scholars as occasion may require. We conceive this arrangement to be a great improvement upon the plan of some other of our school houses where two or three teachers are necessarily engaged in hearing recitations at the same time. The advantages of having a separate room for each division can hardly be overestimated.

JOS. H. STREETER.

ENGLISH HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS.

S. M. WESTON, *Principal*.

EXAMINED MAY 19-20, 1853.

This school is under the conjoint direction of the Trustees of the School Fund and the School Committee. The whole of the income from the funds of the Trustees is appropriated to the support of the two High schools. The Latin School is under their entire supervision. Of course the larger the income from the funds of the Trustees, the less the expense of the English High School to the city,—all other things being equal.

As the best interests of our city called for an English High School, and as such an establishment, in the judgment of many, was required by the Statute of the Commonwealth, the members of the School Committee were pleased to enter into this arrangement with the Trustees.

The school commenced with thirty boys, on the first of September last, under the charge of the present principal.

There are now connected with it twenty-eight boys, — two having left during the year on account of sickness; of these six are between sixteen and seventeen years of age, eight between fifteen and sixteen, six between fourteen and fifteen, seven between thirteen and fourteen, and one is between twelve and thirteen.

As was anticipated in the beginning, the present accommodations for the school are barely sufficient for one Division, whereas the course of instruction covering three years, contemplates three Divisions. No building could be had, suitably located, that would answer the wants of the school; an arrangement was therefore entered into between the City and Trustees, by which the latter are to erect a proper building upon their land now occupied in part by the Latin School House. That building it is expected, will be ready for use by the first of September next, at which time the second Division will enter.

Candidates for admission to the English High School are examined during the last week of the Summer term of the Grammar schools. They must be twelve years of age and pass a successful examination upon such questions, as in the judgment of the Committee, it is proper to put them. There is but one examination of candidates during the year.

The Committee are happy to express their renewed confidence in the efficiency of the English High School. Mr. Weston has proved himself to be such a teacher as was needed for that responsible position, and under his judicious but thorough training, the scholars have made great progress, notwithstanding the many inconveniences under which they have labored.

The following studies have been attended to during the three terms of the first year now passed; Review of the preparatory studies in the Grammar schools; Ancient Geography; General History; Algebra; French. Some attention has also been given to the rules of spelling, and punctuation; Composition and Declamation have had their appropriate share of time.—The recitations in History, were,

with very few exceptions, prepared out of school. Given in connection with maps drawn from memory upon the black-board by the scholars, they formed not only a profitable but highly agreeable exercise. The Committee would especially recommend this plan of teaching History. It not only locates events, but becomes a powerful aid to the memory through the force of association. The general promptness of the scholars in History, speaks well for the manner in which they have spent their time out of school. Indeed, the scholars, with very few exceptions, have shown a commendable interest in their studies from the very first; and it affords the Committee great pleasure to bear testimony to their general good behavior, as well as prompt and regular attendance upon school.

The discipline of the school is worthy of special commendation. It is rigid but in no sense tyrannical. The moral sense of the scholar is largely addressed, with the purpose of inspiring self-respect, and in this regard we think the teacher has been very successful.

There is every reason to believe that this school, will ere long, occupy a prominent place among the English High Schools of our State.

W. H. RYDER.

J. S. SHAILER.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

THERE are under the supervision of the School Committee of Roxbury, one Intermediate and thirty Primary schools, containing about 1400 scholars. Most of these schools, upon examination, have been found to be in a satisfactory condition; and when compared with the standard of former years, or with schools of a similar grade in other places, the Committee would be hardly justified in complaining of their want of thoroughness and efficiency.

The teachers, with but few exceptions, have labored with zeal and fidelity, and with their present mode of teaching, and their limited experience, have accomplished all that could reasonably be expected. But the cause of education should be progressive: its course should ever be onward. The enquiry should be, not only what *has been*, but what *can* be accomplished. And all who share the responsibilities of caring for our common schools, should earnestly press the enquiries, — by what means, or by what agencies, can our schools be elevated and their efficiency increased; and in what way can the greatest amount of knowledge be imparted in the shortest time, and at the least expense. Few questions, at the present time, are worthy of more serious consideration than these.

We propose to make a few suggestions in regard to

modes and methods of teaching, by which, we think, greater thoroughness and efficiency can be secured. The remarks we propose to make, are not *especially* applicable to Roxbury, but to all schools of a similar grade. We remark, first, in regard to

READING.

Much of the reading in Primary schools is unconnected and mechanical. The children, when reading, appear to be under restraint. They seldom speak with the same ease, freedom and grace, and with the same natural tones with which they converse. This, without doubt, must be attributed to defective early instruction, either in the school room, or at home, or to both. If we carefully examine into the manner in which children are taught, we shall find, with but few exceptions, that they learn the names of the letters before they are at all acquainted with the sounds they represent, and they almost universally utter these sounds with the rising inflection of the voice; as, a', b', c', etc. Thus a forced and unnatural habit of pronouncing words and sentences is early formed, which is corrected with great difficulty in after life. Now we would suggest that children first be taught, as far as practicable, to utter the sounds, after the teacher, with natural and conversational tones, before learning the names of the letters that represent these sounds. This can easily be done by the whole class in concert. As soon as the pupils can enunciate with distinctness and accuracy, any of these sounds, let the teacher write the letters representing them on the black-board, or point to them on a printed card. By proceeding in this way, and by selecting at first, the simplest sounds, and those which are the least difficult to utter, pupils will readily acquire an easy and natural mode of utterance. And as the pupil advances, he should be taught, in connection with his usual reading lessons, to pronounce such words and sentences as he has been accustomed to hear in conversation.

We would make another suggestion, in reference to forming habits of *distinct articulation*. This can be done most effectually, by writing lists of words on the black-board, and requiring the pupil to pronounce them without spelling, slowly and with distinctness. It may be well at first, to select the words from the lessons they are about to read. Afterwards, words may be selected that contain some syllable of difficult utterance. At last, long and difficult words may be selected, upon which there should be a daily drill exercise. In this way, an easy, graceful and distinct utterance can be acquired. As soon as the pupils can read sentences with any degree of fluency, they should be required, at the close of each recitation, to state in their own language, what they had been reading about. In this way they can be taught to connect ideas with the sounds of words, which is almost universally neglected.

Spelling should always be connected with reading, so that the sounds of words and their correct spelling, should be associated in the mind of the pupil. There should also be a separate exercise in spelling, in which the attention of the pupil should be directed to the classes of words, which contain one or more silent letters, and to those in which, different combinations of letters represent nearly, or exactly, the same sound. In this last exercise, the progress of the pupil must necessarily be very slow.

GEOGRAPHY.

No branch of study is taught in our Primary schools, with less satisfactory results than geography. In a majority of cases we doubt whether any definite, precise and accurate knowledge of geography is obtained by the pupils. While they can point out on the map the names of important places, they have not the least conception either of the direction or the relative situation of these places. When a class commences the study of geography, the first step is to

ascertain, from each pupil what knowledge he has of the earth from personal observation, what places he has seen, and what ideas he has of locality. This must form the basis of all future knowledge. They must then form a correct idea of direction, and be able to designate accurately any point of the compass. The next idea for the pupil to acquire, is that of distance. Much time and skill on the part of the teacher will be requisite, to convey to the mind of the pupil clearly and distinctly these two ideas, which are fundamental in the study of geography. Questions like the following may be asked of each pupil. What direction does he live from the school house? How long time will be required to walk the distance between his home and the school house? What is the direction to the nearest town or city? &c. By travelling North, South, East or West, what places will he pass through? They should early acquire a knowledge of the form and magnitude of the earth. Various modes of illustration adapted to the different capacities of children will be requisite to convey to their minds correctly this important idea. The teacher may at first compare the earth to a small globe, and then by calling into exercise their imaginations, lead them by degrees to imagine one larger, and larger and larger, till they are able to form some conception of the form and size of the earth.

Next to the form and magnitude of the earth and the two great divisions of its surface, the pupil should be taught the use of latitude and longitude, and also how distances can be measured on the map or globe. The great outlines of one or more of the countries will next claim the attention of the teacher. The boundary of each country and of each subdivision should always be compared with a straight line, and the pupil be required to point out the deviations from the line in every point. By comparing the outlines of the several countries, and the coast of each to straight lines the pupil will obtain a correct idea of form. The three ideas of *direction*, *distance*, and *form*, constitute the basis of all geographical knowledge. And to these the pupil should be

taught always to refer. The names of important places should always be connected with the idea of direction and distance, not only from the place where the pupil resides, but also from other important places. The direction of one place from another, and the distance can easily be represented on a black-board, by means of lines, after adopting some scale of miles as a standard of measure. The pupil must learn the length of a degree of latitude, and the length of a degree of longitude, corresponding to each degree of latitude.

It will be found very convenient to have a rule, on which there is drawn a scale of miles to use on the black-board.

ARITHMETIC.

We would suggest, also, an improvement in the mode of teaching mental arithmetic. There should be more oral exercises, in which the whole school should engage. The teacher should guard particularly against allowing the pupil to acquire a mechanical manner of recitation, by following too closely the order of questions in the book. To remedy this, a great variety of questions should be asked in different forms. But more than all, the teacher must make constant use of the black-board in illustrating the past lessons, and in pointing out the connection between oral and written arithmetic. As soon as pupils can combine figures readily, and can add, subtract, multiply, and divide, they should be taught to do this on the slate, and on the black-board. Most pupils go through with their mental arithmetic, without acquiring but little preparation for written. All possible intellectual discipline should first be secured without the aid of slate or black-board, and then the several processes should be represented to the eye, to impress them more deeply on the mind. Intellectual and written arithmetic, ought never to be separated; they should be commenced and finished together.

There are many other subjects upon which the highest success of schools depend, which cannot now be treated of at length ; such as vivacity on the part of the teachers ; their entire self-control ; and an uniform kindness of manner, combined with decision and firmness in regard to the right. To acquire these important requisites, should be the aim of every teacher, who aspires to be eminently successful in one of the most honorable and important stations of life.

All which is respectfully submitted,

DANIEL LEACH,

Chairman Ex. Com. Primary Schools.

