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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF MEDFORD, FOR 1846–47.

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF MEDFORD,

FOR 1846--47.

PUBLISHED BY VOTE OF THE TOWN, PASSED MARCH 9, 1847.

BOSTON:
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1847.

REPORT.

Your School Committee render thanks to God and congratulate their fellow-citizens, in view of the general health and unusual prosperity which have prevailed in our public schools during the year. Death has not entered there, and sickness has seldom occasioned so small a number of absences. Only one of the teachers, Mr. A. K. Hathaway, has been constrained by disease to resign his office; and to him we would here render grateful acknowledgments for his faithful services, our sympathy in his affliction, and our congratulation in the prospect of returning health.

If any of our schools have previously been in a more flourishing condition, their recent and thorough examination has convinced your Committee, that as a whole they have never furnished more evidence of good order, and of progress in study.

CHANGES IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

During the year, three changes which require notice, have occurred in the educational system of the town. The last Annual Report recommended the employment of female teachers in the Grammar Schools, whenever the Masters should resign their offices. The East School was then destitute of a Master; and in the West, the sickness of the Principal soon created a vacancy, and afforded an opportunity to try the experiment recommended. But it was not attempted without a fear in the Board lest the burden should prove too heavy for female strength, and the trials connected with it too numerous and severe for the delicate and refined sensibilities of woman's heart. But it has succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations of its advocates, and your Committee recommend its continuance.

The size of the Grammar Schools, and other considerations, seemed to require another change. It was found impossible to accommodate in these schools those young masters of riper years, who had usually attended them during the winter. Neither was there room for them in the High School. Several plans for their accommodation were proposed and examined, but it was finally resolved to create for them a new grade of mixed school, to be continued from Dec. 1st, 1846, to April 1st, 1847, taught by a competent Mast-

er, in the building formerly occupied by the High School. The result commends this plan to the favorable consideration of your future Committee.

It was also recommended in the last Annual Report to divide the East Primary School, and to place a part of it under a separate teacher in the school house in Cross street. For this purpose that building was repaired, at an expense of \$128. But a question of importance here arose. On what principle ought the division to be made? With regard to territorial limits, or to the age and attainments of the pupils? Ought another Primary School to be organized, as suggested in that Report, or a school of a different grade created? The latter was thought to possess the advantages which commonly attend division of labor, as the concentration of energy, the increase of skill, and greater perfectness in results. Encouraged also by the example of other towns, your Committee concluded to organize an Alphabet School, sustaining a similar relation to the East Primary as that does to the Grammar School. The experiment has been remarkably successful. This school embraces the scholars in that part of the town from four to six or seven years of age, a period when more physical exercise is necessary, when less is learned by study and more by imitation than at any other, when the most durable impressions are made by the looks, tones and deportment of the teacher, when character forms with rapidity, and when the

habits should be watched with maternal tenderness and solicitude. In reference to this important period, well has a recent poet said :—

“ Scratch the green rind of a sapling, or wantonly twist it in the soil,
The scarred and crooked oak will tell of thee for centuries to come.”

The object of this school is to give the twig a proper direction—to lay a firm foundation. It is what its name imports, to teach the alphabet, a branch of education which is second to no other in difficulty or importance, and which, more than most others, exercises the ingenuity and patience of the teacher, and when taught, as it should be, with distinct regard to the form, power, and name of the letters, awakens also the curiosity, imitation and interest of the pupil.

GRADES OF SCHOOLS AND BOOKS.

By these changes, we have now six grades of schools. The children enter the alphabet school at four years of age, where by much oral instruction and the use of Russell's primer and spelling book, and Bumstead's first and second books, they learn the alphabet and easy lessons in spelling and reading.

From this, they enter the Primary School, where they study Russell's or Fowle's Spelling Book, Bumstead's Second and Third Reading Books, Tower's Gradual Reader, Mitchell's smaller Geography, Emerson's First Arithmetic, and a part of Colburn's First Lessons.

Whenever their age and attainments will allow, they next enter the Grammar School, where they continue their spelling, reading, articulation, and mental arithmetic, and study Russell's Primary Reader, his Sequel to the same, his Introduction to the Common School Reader and Speaker, Porter's Rhetorical Reader, Woodbridge's or Worcester's Geography, Foster's System of Writing, the Grammar of Gould Brown, or of Wells, and commence Greenleaf's Arithmetic.

From this, when prepared, they enter the High School, where they continue daily exercises in spelling, reading, and writing, complete their arithmetic, and study Russell's Reader and Speaker, and his Elocutionist, review their geography, attend to composition and declamation, study the higher branches of English Grammar, Hall's United States, Worcester's History, Lincoln's Botany, Hitchcock's Geology, Parker's Natural Philosophy, Comstock's Chemistry, Tillinghast's Geometry, Day's Algebra and Mathematics, Wilkin's Astronomy, Burritt's Geography of the Heavens, Upham's Intellectual Philosophy, Wayland's Moral Science, Andrews' and Stoddard's Latin books, and the usual classics in preparation for college.

These schools constitute our regular educational system. In addition, we have two grades of *mixed schools*. The first partakes of the character of the Alphabet and Primary Schools, and the second of that of the Grammar and High Schools.

In all these schools, where the scholars are able to read with accuracy and ease, they read the Bible daily. No other book can supply its place in the education of the young, on account of the variety and chasteness of its style, the elevation and purity of its sentiments, and the importance and efficacy of its truths.*

The provision of books imposes a heavy tax on the community, and to lighten the burden of it, your Committee have made as few changes in them as the welfare of the schools would allow. They have introduced new books only when a majority of a class were to be supplied, and in such cases have generally made arrangements with the publishers to exchange the old books for new ones at a fair value, or have obtained the new, for a first supply, at a discount of one-third or one-half their retail price. Thus from twenty-five to fifty dollars were saved to our constituents in the introduction of one new book, during the year, in addition to all the benefits resulting from it to their children.

*On this point, Professor Greenleaf, of Cambridge, in a recent communication to the commissioners, appointed in relation to the erection of a State Manual Labor School, says: "For *Instruction*, I would have the *Bible* an indispensable daily reading book, to be read with the particular seriousness which is due to it as God's word and will. It is my firm belief, the result of more than thirty years' observation, that to the daily and reverent use of the Bible in our common schools, as the inspired revelation of the will of God, we are more indebted for all that is valuable in New England character, than to any other source whatever."

APPROPRIATIONS.

The Secretary of the Board of Education in the Commonwealth, has appended to his Abstract of School Returns, a table, showing the comparative amount of money appropriated by the different towns in the State, for the education of each child within its limits, between the ages of four and sixteen years. From this it appears that our town, the last year, occupied the fourth place. Those where the appropriations afforded each child a larger sum, were,

Brookline,	where it was	\$7,33,
Nantucket,	“ “ “	5,74,
Watertown,	“ “ “	5,52.

In Medford it amounted to \$5,48.

In three other towns, Chelsea, Boston, and Charlestown, it was more than five dollars. In fourteen towns, it was between four and five; in forty-seven towns, between three and four; in one hundred and thirty-eight towns, between two and three; in one hundred and one towns, between one and two; and in two towns, less than one dollar a piece. The amount raised by this town last year for the support of schools, was \$3,400, and the number of scholars, between four and sixteen years of age, was 621. The whole expense of our schools, this year, has been \$4,099.05. Of this sum, only \$2,794.05 have been expended to pay the salaries of teachers, which is \$377.53 less than that which was

expended last year for the same purpose, owing to the change in the grammar schools. \$203.41 were expended for fuel, and the balance for repairs of buildings and incidental expenses. The expense of tuition is, in

Alphabet School,	70 scholars,	\$182,	or	\$2,60	apiece.
Primary	“ 225	“	624,	or 2,77	“
Grammar	“ 170	“	832,	or 4,89	“
High	“ 91	“	908,	or 9,98	“

From this we learn that the price of a scholar's tuition in these schools, is less than one-fourth what it would be in a private school of the same grade, and that there is a gradual increase as he rises from the lowest to the highest grade of our schools, on account of the necessary increase of the teachers' salaries. Two new schools have been organized the past year. One other is now required. But the three will not add to our current expenses a sum equal to the amount saved by the change in the Grammar Schools; and, therefore, your Committee recommend that \$3,100 should be appropriated to pay the salaries of teachers and to purchase fuel for the schools for the ensuing year.*

It is also recommended to repair the school-house in Union street, and to furnish the lower room for an additional school. The expense of the same is estimated at \$200.

* \$3,600 were appropriated by the town.

TEACHERS AND THEIR SCHOOLS.

In the course of the year, twenty-one teachers have been in the service of the Board. Seven have resigned, fourteen are still under appointment, and twelve are at present actively and successfully engaged in their arduous work. Their Registers show the whole number of their pupils to be 649, and their average 501.

Of the two *Mixed Schools* in the West District, that under the care of Miss Pamela Symmes contains the same number of scholars, and has been attended with similar success, as were ascribed to it in the last Report. That in the West School House has increased. Its whole number is 26, and its average 22. In the forepart of the season, it was taught by Miss Mary Gleason, now Mrs. Waterman; and in the latter part, by Miss Mary E. Peck. Those of the Board appointed from time to time to visit it, found it in good order and making laudable progress in its various studies. Both these schools were suspended for the winter; and have not yet been resumed.

The *other Mixed School* is taught by Mr. James W. Green, whose great exertions in its behalf merit our commendation. The variety in the age and attainments of the scholars has increased the labor and difficulty of instructing it. In reading and arithmetic it has made unusual progress. In English grammar, geography, and some other branches, its miscellane-

ous character has rendered much oral instruction necessary, in the communication of which its teacher has evinced an aptness. It has suffered from the tardiness and irregularity of some of its pupils. Its largest number is 55, and its average 35.

The *Alphabet School*, in Cross street, was commenced by Miss Elizabeth C. Graves, now Mrs. Cotton, who sustained in it the good reputation which she had previously acquired as a teacher, and to her fidelity the committee, the scholars and their parents, are indebted for much of its order and progress. On her resignation, Miss Mary E. Sprague was appointed from the place of an assistant in one of the schools in Charlestown, to which she had been elected from a corresponding station in our East Grammar School. Its order is as good as could be expected among so young scholars. She gains their affections and interests them in their studies. One class, which on its admission in the spring was ignorant of the alphabet, was able, at the close of the summer term, to read with tolerable accuracy—a degree of progress seldom realized. Your Committee consider this one of the most interesting schools of the town. About 70 scholars belonged to it in the summer: its present average is 40. The difference is owing to the inclemency of the weather at this season of the year.

The *East Primary School* remains under the instruction of Miss Mary W. Keen, Principal, who continues to enjoy the confidence and approbation of the Board, on account of her great fidelity, and of Miss

Mary L. Richardson, a well qualified assistant, who took the place of Miss Pratt, as she had taken that of Miss Sprague. Each of the two latter was promoted to the Grammar School. The order in this school is excellent, and the progress of the scholars commendable, especially in spelling and reading, which are too often neglected. A class was transferred to the Grammar School last autumn, and another to the school in Cross street. Still it numbers 97 scholars, with an average of 74.

The *South Primary School* is larger than its room can well accommodate. It enrolls 127, and averages 95. Three or four scholars are crowded into a seat designed only for two. Hence your Committee recommend a division of it into an Alphabet school in the lower room and under the present assistant, Miss Maria B. Fuller, and a Primary School in the other room, under its present principal, Miss Almira J. Stetson, both of whom have discharged their duties with fidelity and success. From the inconvenience referred to above, good order has been maintained with difficulty; but the scholars have generally made commendable progress, especially those in Mental Arithmetic and in Bumstead's Second Book. A few received special praise at the recent examination, for their extraordinary good conduct during the term.

At the time of the last annual report, the *East Grammar School* was destitute of a teacher. The vacancy was filled by the promotion of Miss Frances A. Gregg from the rank of Assistant in the High

School. She discharged the duties of the office with distinguished ability, and her services both there and in her former station, will long be held in grateful remembrance. Her resignation was received in October, and after a short vacation, the place was filled by Miss S. E. Woodbridge, of Charlestown, assisted by Miss Sarah E. Pratt, who took Miss Sprague's place in May, as she had taken Miss Gleason's in April. The discipline of this school, at the recent examination, appeared to be of a very superior order, and its state such as to ensure rapid progress in study. Some of the young Misses were publicly commended for their unexceptionable conduct during the term, and a number of the boys, for their noble resolve neither to play nor to associate with those who use any vulgar or profane language. There are 89 scholars in this school and the usual attendance is about 75.

The *Centre Grammar School*, on account of the sickness of Mr. Hathaway, was some time under the charge of Miss Helen Curtis, Principal, and Miss Mary E. Peck, Assistant, both of them well qualified for their work and successful in it. On the resignation of the former, during the spring vacation, her place was supplied by Miss Matilda T. James; and on the promotion of Miss Peck to the Mixed School in the West District, Miss Maria L. Sanborn was elected her successor. Under its present teachers, the order of this school has gradually improved. At the last examination, it was in a flourishing condition. Its recitations in mental arithmetic we have

seldom seen equalled, and never surpassed. It has 66 scholars, with a usual attendance of 59. From each Grammar School a class has been transferred to the *High School* during the year.

This was under the direction of Mr. James Waldock, Jr., till the 31st of Dec., assisted by Miss Gregg till the 12th of March, then by Miss Angelina Wellington till May 9th, and subsequently by Miss Mary W. Wilder. These young ladies have filled their office with credit to themselves and profit to their employers. On the resignation of the Principal, Mr. Charles Cummings was elected to that place, whose rare qualifications for it appear from his successful rivalship of fifteen candidates for the office, all of whom proved on examination to be young gentlemen of good talents, and some of them of uncommon acquisitions, and of long and successful experience. This school has seldom been more flourishing, and its prospects never brighter. Its order is good; its discipline mild, but firm and uniform; its pupils are fast acquiring correct habits of study, great accuracy and promptness in their recitations. It needs nothing but perseverance in well doing to attain a high degree of perfection. Its size, and other considerations, have led to a division of most of its classes in their recitations, based on the distinction of sex. By its present mode of government and of recitation, each scholar is put upon his individuality and made to feel that disorder and failure are disgraceful. The relation of the scholars to their teachers is most

agreeable, and reciprocal confidence and love becoming daily more perfect. It numbers 91, and the average attendance is 76.

A comparison of the state of our schools with that contained in the last Annual Report, shows a gain of several per cent. in the attendance, proving that the powerful appeal there made on this point, has produced a most desirable effect. We would see the parents and teachers extend the same reformation to the removal of tardiness, for which the commencement and termination of each school and of every recitation in it, *precisely* at the hour appointed, appears to us indispensable.

If there is any one study or book, which more than others requires attention, it is spelling and the spelling-book. We are not of the number who consider innovations invariable improvements, nor of those who adhere, with a blind tenacity, to the old way of doing things. But we frankly confess, that in the modern methods of teaching spelling, many of them excellent, we have found no substitute for the noble rivalry induced in this study by a *head* to the class. It is among the most pleasing recollections of our boyhood. May we never forget it, nor those spelling matches, in which we fought many hard battles, and gained many proud triumphs. If it aroused a laudable ambition, it also taught us to love study and excellence. Spelling and reading are the basis of a good education.

We have one suggestion in regard to the habits of

the scholars, which we think deserves the consideration of their teachers. It relates to the cultivation of *reverence* in their pupils. God has distinguished man from other animals by forming him to walk erect. By the constitution of both his body and mind, He has manifested his intention that children should look up with reverence, first to their parents, and then to himself, and finally to their teachers, magistrates, and all superiors in age, rank, wisdom and goodness. It was earnestly inculcated by our Pilgrim sires, and regulated the habits of New England in the days of her pristine glory. Many of us well remember the period when all children were taught to say, Yes, Sir, and No, Sir, to make their obeisance on entering the school-room or retiring from it, and at the commencement and termination of each recitation, when any visitor entered the room or withdrew from it, and whenever they passed a stranger or citizen in the street, and especially to "rise up before the hoary head and to honor the face of the old man." "In losing the manners of olden time, are we in no danger of losing those qualities of character which have given our venerable Commonwealth, in respect to order, courteousness, and solid worth, a highly enviable position among the stars of our Union? We do not look for a restoration of all the customs of former times, but we think that care should be taken to preserve that law of the State which requires the inculcation in our schools of 'all those virtues which are the ornament of human society, and the basis

upon which a republican institution is founded.' " *
To this crown of the virtues, we would have special attention devoted in our schools.

We ask your indulgence for only one suggestion to the parents and guardians of the scholars. We bespeak for the teachers their *sympathy*. They deserve and need it. Their labors are arduous, and their trials numerous and often severe. Let any father or mother consider the difficulties which are unavoidable in the wise management of their children at home. With how much care, watchfulness, anxiety, labor and patience, it is connected! But what are all these compared with the demand constantly made upon the physical and mental energies and upon the heart of a teacher! Give them your sympathy, exercise toward them that charity which thinketh no evil, which is kind, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and goodness, and which is the bond of perfectness; so shall you relieve their onerous charge, aid and cheer them in their work, promote the progress of your children in whatever is lovely and of good report, and greatly enlarge the sphere of your own usefulness and enjoyment.

A. R. BAKER,
JAMES O. CURTIS,
ALEXANDER GREGG,
TIMOTHY COTTING,
HENRY F. TEEL,
JUDAH LORING,
HOSEA BALLOU, 2d.

* Cambridge R. S. C. for 1846, p. 26.

