



*Calvin E. Stowe*

REV. CALVIN E. STOWE, D.D.

Author of *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Minister's Wife*,  
and *The Old Man and the Sea*

From the *Portrait Gallery*

## CALVIN ELLIS STOWE.

---

CALVIN ELLIS STOWE, whose labors in behalf of common schools and teachers' seminaries, in addition to the constant and pressing demands on his time by professional duties in college and theological schools, entitle him to an honorable place in the history of American Education, was born at Natick, Mass., April 6th, 1802.

His ancestors came from London to Massachusetts, in 1634, and settled in Roxbury. On the records of Roxbury church are still to be seen, in the hand-writing of the Apostle Eliot, the following entries:—

“John Stowe. He arrived at N. E. the 7th of the 3d month, anno 1634. He brought his wife and 6 children; Thomas, Elizabeth, John, Nathaniel, Samuel, Thankful.”

“Elizabeth Stowe, the wife of John Stowe. She was a very godly matron, a blessing, not only to her family, but to all the church. When she had led a christian conversation a few years among us, she died and left a good savor behind her.”

The descendants of this worthy couple have, from the beginning, belonged to the class of industrious, frugal, God-fearing yeomanry, the bone and muscle of New England society.

His father, a farmer, died in July, 1808, leaving the family destitute. His mother, a woman of energy and judgment, managed, with difficulty, to maintain herself and her children. Calvin attended a good district school, taught for a portion of the year by a student of Harvard College, and had access to a parish and social library, of which privileges he made good use.

At twelve years of age, he was apprenticed to a paper-maker, where he remained for four years. At the end of that time, having managed to get together a little money, with that almost desperate resolution to gain an education which has characterized so many poor New England boys, he spent it in paying his expenses during two years' study at Bradford Academy.

Two years afterward, in November, 1820, some members of Dr. Payson's church, in Portland, Me., having furnished the means, he entered Gorham Academy, to fit for college; and, after remaining there ten months, entered Bowdoin College, in September, 1821, under the same patronage.

He graduated, in due course, September, 1824, with the first honors of his class; and remained at college one year, as librarian and tutor. Entering Andover Theological Seminary, in 1825, he graduated in 1828, and remained two years longer, being employed as assistant in Professor Stuart's department, and editing, during part of the time, the Boston Recorder, the oldest religious newspaper in the United States.

In October of 1830, Professor Stowe commenced his long career as a collegiate instructor, being then inaugurated Professor of Languages at Dartmouth College. While here, in 1832, he married Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. Dr. Tyler. She died in August, 1834, leaving no children.

Professor Stowe's reputation for learning and ability already stood high; and, when Dr. Lyman Beecher was invited to the presidency of Lane Theological Seminary, Professor Stowe was offered, and accepted, the Professorship of Biblical Literature in the new Seminary, in 1833. The financial disasters of 1837, as is well known, severely crippled the resources of the seminary, and during some years its officers received little or nothing on account of salaries. They however clung to their posts, although without private resources, and, by resolute though distressing self-sacrifice, maintained the operations of the institution until better times returned, and their scanty incomes were partially restored.

While in this institution, Professor Stowe became convinced that advanced professional schools were out of place, and hopelessly inutile, in a community such as that of the West of that day; and seeing that it was common schools that were wanted, and quickly recognizing the importance of those operations for their improvement, in which Nathan Guilford, Samuel Lewis, Dr. Drake, Dr. Aydelotte, Dr. McGuffey, and their companions, were pioneers, he at once took cordial and strong hold with them; advising and consulting, speaking and writing, wherever occasion served. Professor Stowe was not ambitious of prominence or office, and was well satisfied to act the quieter and more useful part of a private adviser and laborer.

In January, 1836, Professor Stowe married Harriet E., daughter of Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher. In May of the same year, he departed for Europe, his primary errand being to select a library for Lane Seminary. Some friends of education, knowing of this journey, took such measures that the legislature gave him an official appointment as agent to examine European schools, and especially those of Prussia, and voted a small sum in payment of expenses. He returned in 1837, having been very successful in accomplishing both

these offices; and drew up and presented his celebrated "*Report on Elementary Education in Europe.*"

The Legislature of Ohio distributed this Report to every school district in the state, and it was republished and extensively circulated by the legislatures of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Virginia, and elsewhere. Its influence was every where favorable, and strongly marked; and not a little of the advancement in common schools, during the last twenty years, may be traced to that report. The exposition given of the thoroughness, completeness, and comprehensiveness of the system of primary public instruction in Prussia and Wirtemberg, commanded the admiration of educators and statesmen, and stimulated both to the establishment of institutions, organized and conducted with special reference to communicating a knowledge of the science and art of education. Professor Stowe thus sums up the character of the system in reference to the particular wants of Ohio.

"The striking features of this system, even in the hasty and imperfect sketch which my limits allow me to give, are obvious even to superficial observation. No one can fail to observe its great completeness, both as to the number and kind of subjects embraced in it, and as to its adaptedness to develop every power of every kind, and give it a useful direction. What topic, in all that is necessary for a sound business education, is here omitted? I can think of nothing, unless it be one or two of the modern languages, and these are introduced wherever it is necessary. I have not taken the course precisely as it exists in any one school, but have combined, from an investigation of many institutions, the features which I suppose would most fairly represent the whole system. In the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, in a considerable part of Bavaria, Baden, and Wirtemberg, French is taught as well as German; and in the schools of Prussian Poland, German and Polish are taught. Two languages can be taught in a school quite as easily as one, provided the teacher be perfectly familiar with both, as any one may see by visiting Mr. Solomon's school in Cincinnati, where all the instruction is given both in German and English.

What faculty of mind is there that is not developed in the scheme of instruction sketched above? I know of none. The perceptive and reflective faculties, the memory and the judgment, the imagination and the taste, the moral and religious faculty, and even the various kinds of physical and manual dexterity, all have opportunity for development and exercise. Indeed, I think the system, in its great outlines, as nearly complete as human ingenuity and skill can make it; though undoubtedly some of its arrangements and details admit of improvement; and some changes will of course be necessary in adapting it to the circumstances of different countries.

The entirely practical character of the system is obvious throughout. It views every subject on the practical side, and in reference to its adaptedness to use. The dry, technical, abstract parts of science are not those first presented; but the system proceeds, in the only way which nature ever pointed out, from practice to theory, from facts to demonstrations. It has often been a complaint in respect to some systems of education, that the more a man studied, the less he knew of the actual business of life. Such a complaint cannot be made in reference to this system, for, being intended to educate for the actual business of life, this object is never for a moment lost sight of.

Another striking feature of the system is its moral and religious character. Its morality is pure and elevated, its religion entirely removed from the narrowness of sectarian bigotry. What parent is there, loving his children, and wishing to have them respected and happy, who would not desire that they should be

educated under such a kind of moral and religious influence as has been described? Whether a believer in revelation or not, does he not know that without sound morals there can be no happiness, and that there is no morality like the morality of the New Testament? Does he not know that without religion the human heart can never be at rest, and that there is no religion like the religion of the Bible? Every well-informed man knows that, as a general fact, it is impossible to impress the obligations of morality with any efficiency on the heart of a child, or even on that of an adult, without an appeal to some code which is sustained by the authority of God; and for what code will it be possible to claim this authority, if not for the code of the Bible?

But perhaps some will be ready to say, 'The scheme is indeed an excellent one, provided only it were practicable; but the idea of introducing so extensive and complete a course of study into our common schools is entirely visionary, and can never be realized.' I answer, that it is no theory which I have been exhibiting, but a matter of fact, a copy of actual practice. The above system is no visionary scheme, emanating from the closet of a recluse, but a sketch of the course of instruction now actually pursued by thousands of schoolmasters, in the best district schools that have ever been organized. It can be done; for it has been done—it is now done; and it ought to be done. If it can be done in Europe, I believe it can be done in the United States: if it can be done in Prussia, I know it can be done in Ohio. The people have but to say the word and provide the means, and the thing is accomplished; for the word of the people here is even more powerful than the word of the king there; and the means of the people here are altogether more abundant for such an object than the means of the sovereign there. Shall this object, then, so desirable in itself, so entirely practicable, so easily within our reach, fail of accomplishment? For the honor and welfare of our state, for the safety of our whole nation, I trust it will not fail; but that we shall soon witness, in this commonwealth, the introduction of a system of common-school instruction, fully adequate to all the wants of our population.

But the question occurs, *How* can this be done? I will give a few brief hints as to some things which I suppose to be essential to the attainment of so desirable an end.

1. Teachers must be skillful, and trained to their business. It will at once be perceived, that the plan above sketched out proceeds on the supposition that the teacher has fully and distinctly in his mind the whole course of instruction, not only as it respects the matters to be taught, but also as to all the best modes of teaching, that he may be able readily and decidedly to vary his method according to the peculiarities of each individual mind which may come under his care. This is the only true secret of successful teaching. The old mechanical method, in which the teacher relies entirely on his text-book, and drags every mind along through the same dull routine of creeping recitation, is utterly insufficient to meet the wants of our people. It may do in Asiatic Turkey, where the whole object of the school is to learn to pronounce the words of the Koran in one dull, monotonous series of sounds; or it may do in China, where men must never speak or think out of the old beaten track of Chinese imbecility; but it will never do in the United States, where the object of education ought to be to make immediately available, for the highest and best purposes, every particle of real talent that exists in the nation. To effect such a purpose, the teacher must possess a strong and independent mind, well disciplined, and well stored with every thing pertaining to his profession, and ready to adapt his instructions to every degree of intellectual capacity, and every kind of acquired habit. But how can we expect to find such teachers, unless they are trained to their business? A very few of extraordinary powers may occur, as we sometimes find able mechanics, and great mathematicians, who had no early training in their favorite pursuits; but these few exceptions to a general rule will never multiply fast enough to supply our schools with able teachers. The management of the human mind, particularly youthful mind, is the most delicate task ever committed to the hand of man; and shall it be left to mere instinct, or shall our schoolmasters have at least as careful a training as our lawyers and physicians?

2. Teachers, then, must have the means of acquiring the necessary qualifications; in other words, there must be institutions in which the business of teaching

is made a systematic object of attention. I am not an advocate for multiplying our institutions. We already have more in number than we support, and it would be wise to give power and efficiency to those we now possess before we project new ones. But the science and art of teaching ought to be a regular branch of study in some of our academies and high schools, that those who are looking forward to this profession may have an opportunity of studying its principles. In addition to this, in our populous towns, where there is opportunity for it, there should be large model schools, under the care of the most able and experienced teachers that can be obtained; and the candidates for the profession who have already completed the theoretic course of the academy, should be employed in this school as monitors, or assistants—thus testing all their theories by practice, and acquiring skill and dexterity under the guidance of their head master. Thus, while learning, they would be teaching, and no time or effort would be lost. To give efficiency to the whole system, to present a general standard and a prominent point of union, there should be at least one model teachers' seminary, at some central point—as at Columbus—which shall be amply provided with all the means of study and instruction, and have connected with it schools of every grade, for the practice of the students, under the immediate superintendence of their teachers.

3. The teachers must be competently supported, and devoted to their business. Few men attain any great degree of excellence in a profession unless they love it, and place all their hopes in life upon it. A man cannot, consistently with his duty to himself, engage in a business which does not afford him a competent support, unless he has other means of living, which is not the case with many who engage in teaching. In this country especially, where there are such vast fields of profitable employment open to every enterprising man, it is not possible that the best of teachers can be obtained, to any considerable extent, for our district schools, at the present rate of wages. We have already seen what encouragement is held out to teachers in Russia, Prussia, and other European nations, and what pledges are given of competent support to their families, not only while engaged in the work, but when, having been worn out in the public service, they are no longer able to labor. In those countries, where every profession and walk of life is crowded, and where one of the most common and oppressive evils is want of employment, men of high talents and qualifications are often glad to become teachers even of district schools; men who in this country would aspire to the highest places in our colleges, or even our halls of legislation and courts of justice. How much more necessary, then, here, that the profession of teaching should afford a competent support!

Indeed, such is the state of things in this country, that we cannot expect to find male teachers for all our schools. The business of educating, especially young children, must fall, to a great extent, on female teachers. There is not the same variety of tempting employment for females as for men; they can be supported cheaper, and the Creator has given them peculiar qualifications for the education of the young. Females, then, ought to be employed extensively in all our elementary schools, and they should be encouraged and aided in obtaining the qualifications necessary for this work. There is no country in the world where woman holds so high a rank, or exerts so great an influence, as here; wherefore, her responsibilities are the greater, and she is under obligations to render herself the more actively useful.

4. The children must be made comfortable in their school; they must be punctual, and attend the whole course. There can be no profitable study without personal comfort; and the inconvenience and miserable arrangements of some of our school-houses are enough to annihilate all that can be done by the best of teachers. No instructor can teach unless the pupils are present to be taught, and no plan of systematic instruction can be carried steadily through unless the pupils attend punctually and through the whole course.

5. The children must be given up implicitly to the discipline of the school. Nothing can be done unless the teacher has the entire control of his pupils in school-hours, and out of school too, so far as the rules of the school are concerned. If the parent in any way interferes with, or overrules, the arrangements of the teacher, he may attribute it to himself if the school is not successful. No teacher ever ought to be employed to whom the entire management of the children can-

not be safely intrusted; and better at any time dismiss the teacher than counteract his discipline. Let parents but take the pains and spend the money necessary to provide a comfortable school-house and a competent teacher for their children, and they never need apprehend that the discipline of the school will be unreasonably severe. No inconsiderable part of the corporal punishment that has been inflicted in schools, has been made necessary by the discomfort of school-houses and the unskillfulness of teachers. A lively, sensitive boy is stuck upon a bench full of knot-holes and sharp ridges, without a support for his feet or his back, with a scorching fire on one side of him and a freezing wind on the other; and a stiff Orbilius of a master, with wooden brains and iron hands, orders him to sit perfectly still, with nothing to employ his mind or his body, till it is *his turn to read*. Thus confined for hours, what can the poor little fellow do but begin to wriggle like a fish out of water, or an eel in a frying-pan! For this irrepressible effort at relief he receives a box on the ear; this provokes and renders him still more uneasy, and next comes the merciless ferule; and the poor child is finally burnt and frozen, cuffed and beaten, into hardened roguery or incurable stupidity, just because the avarice of his parents denied him a comfortable school-house and a competent teacher.

6. A beginning must be made at certain points, and the advance toward completeness must be gradual. Every thing cannot be done at once, and such a system as is needed cannot be generally introduced till its benefits are first demonstrated by actual experiment. Certain great points, then, where the people are ready to co-operate, and to make the most liberal advances, in proportion to their means, to maintain the schools, should be selected, and no pains or expenses spared, till the full benefits of the best system are realized; and as the good effects are seen, other places will very readily follow the example. All experience has shown that governmental patronage is most profitably employed, not to do the entire work, but simply as an incitement to the people to help themselves.

To follow up this great object, the Legislature has wisely made choice of a Superintendent, whose untiring labors and disinterested zeal are worthy of all praise. But no great plan can be carried through in a single year; and if the Superintendent is to have opportunity to do what is necessary, and to preserve that independence and energy of official character which are requisite to the successful discharge of his duties, he should hold his office for the same term, and on the same conditions, as the Judges of the Supreme Court.

Every officer engaged in this, or in any other public work, should receive a suitable compensation for his services. This, justice requires; and it is the only way to secure fidelity and efficiency.

There is one class of our population for whom some special provision seems necessary. The children of foreign emigrants are now very numerous among us, and it is essential that they receive a good ENGLISH EDUCATION. But they are not prepared to avail themselves of the advantages of our common English schools, their imperfect acquaintance with the language being an insuperable bar to their entering on the course of study. It is necessary, therefore, that there be some preparatory schools, in which instruction shall be communicated both in English and their native tongue. The English is, and must be, the language of this country, and the highest interests of our state demand it of the Legislature to require that the English language be thoroughly taught in every school which they patronize. Still, the exigencies of the case make it necessary that there should be some schools expressly fitted to the condition of our foreign emigrants, to introduce them to a knowledge of our language and institutions. A school of this kind has been established in Cincinnati, by benevolent individuals. It has been in operation about a year, and already nearly three hundred children have received its advantages. Mr. Solomon, the head teacher, was educated for his profession in one of the best institutions of Prussia, and in this school he has demonstrated the excellences of the system. The instructions are all given both in German and English, and this use of two languages does not at all interrupt the progress of the children in their respective studies. I cannot but recommend this philanthropic institution to the notice and patronage of the Legislature.\*

In neighborhoods where there is a mixed population, it is desirable, if possible,

\* German schools now form a part of the system of public schools in Cincinnati.

to employ teachers who understand both languages, and that the exercises of the school be conducted in both, with the rule, however, that all the reviews and examinations be in *English only*."

Professor Stowe took an active part in the proceedings of the Western College of Teachers. In 1835, he submitted "a report on the *Education of Immigrants*," by a liberal system of public schools, in which native and foreign-born children could be educated together, and thus assimilated into the citizens of a common country. In 1837, he read his report on the *Course of Instruction in the Public Primary Schools of Prussia*." In 1838, he read a lecture on *The Bible as a Means of Moral and Intellectual Improvement*," and, in the following year, a paper on *Teachers' Seminaries*," which was published in the same year in the *Biblical Repository*," and afterward in a volume with his *Report on Elementary Instruction in Prussia*." His paper on Teachers' Seminaries had a good influence in the enlightenment of public opinion on that subject. When the Normal Schools of Massachusetts were first established, and afterward when a vacancy in the mastership of one these schools occurred, his services were earnestly sought as principal. In 1844, he delivered a lecture before the American Institute of Instruction, on the *Religious Element in Education*," which was widely circulated and read.

On his return from Europe, Professor Stowe continued his labors at Lane Seminary, until 1850, when, his health being quite broken down by labor and by the climate of Cincinnati, he accepted an appointment as Divinity Professor at Bowdoin College. In 1852, being offered the chair of Sacred Literature at Andover Theological Seminary, he accepted, and still retains the place, in which he is yet hard at work for the good causes which have so long interested him, of theological learning, common schools, temperance, and liberty.

Aside from Professor Stowe's title to a place in this Journal, as an efficient and persevering laborer for common education, he occupies a high place as an instructor in his chosen department, and a man of profound, extensive, and accurate learning, and judicious, original, and independent views in that department. Ill health has not prevented his doing a very great amount of work, both in his own private studies and in lecturing. His faithful thoroughness as a student and teacher, is illustrated by his custom of studying his course anew as he takes each successive class over it, precisely as if he had never been over it before; a method, we may observe in passing, which well remunerates both the teacher and taught, by the freshness of the subject to the former, and the vigor and point of his instructions to the latter.