

JAMES G. CARTER.

JAMES G. CARTER, to whom more than to any other one person, belongs the credit of having first arrested the attention of the leading minds of Massachusetts, to the necessity of immediate and thorough improvement in the system of free or public schools, and of having clearly pointed out the most direct and thorough mode of procuring this improvement, by providing for the training of competent teachers for these schools, was born in Leominster, Massachusetts, Sept. 7th, 1795. His father's house was on the family homestead, first settled by his grandfather, in 1744, and on a rise of land called, from the owner's name, Carter's Hill.

Up to the age of seventeen he lived the ordinary life of a New England farmer's son; alternating between the summer's work and the winter's schooling, which was all the education that his father's means would allow. At that age he quietly formed the resolution of paying his own way through a preparatory course, at Groton Academy, then under the care of that well-known and respected teacher, Caleb Butler, and a collegiate course at Harvard College; which he accomplished, earning his money by teaching district school and singing school, and by occasional lectures upon the mysteries of their craft before masonic lodges.

He was always on good terms with his class-mates, and among the foremost in his studies. His most intimate friend among them all was the celebrated Warren Colburn. Indeed, much of the methodizing of Mr. Colburn's "*First Lessons in Arithmetic*," was derived from the author's constant consultations with Mr. Carter, who discussed and decided with him, among other questions, that whether problems of a concrete nature should precede the more abstract. The conclusion was that they should.

Mr. Carter graduated at Harvard, in 1820, having spent the preceding winter in teaching at Cohasset, Mass. The school was composed chiefly of young seamen, who improved the winter months in searching for a "northern passage" to learning. They had mutinied under several former teachers, and Mr. Carter's services were secured because of his reputation in discipline. Many of the pupils were larger and older than the master—but the resolute eye, and self-possessed manner of the latter as he took his seat at the desk, and after

a few words, began to read aloud from a book which lay before him, arrested the attention, and excited the interest of the former, and formed the first link in a chain of influences by which he secured their ready obedience, and devout attachment. The pupils and the committee, at the close of the term, united in a letter of thanks for his valuable services to the district.

On leaving college, Mr. Carter opened a private school, in Lancaster, Mass., where he received into his own family many "suspended" students from Harvard College, and correcting the errors and supplying the deficiencies in the education, both moral and intellectual, of this class of pupils, he had an opportunity of pursuing still further the study of the great subject of instruction, and maturing his own views as to the thorough and radical improvement of schools. To his mind education developed itself as a science, and teaching as an art, and to the dissemination of correct views on these points, he addressed himself with the enthusiasm of an original thinker, and a practical man.

His first publication in behalf of popular education appeared in the Boston newspapers, in 1821, and from time to time through the same channel, until 1824, when he issued, in a pamphlet of one hundred and twenty-three pages, his "*Letters to the Hon. William Prescott, LL. D., on the Free Schools of New England, with Remarks on the Principles of Instruction.*" In these letters, Mr. Carter traces the history of the legislature of Massachusetts, respecting free* or public schools—points out the condition of the schools, and dwells on the depressing influence which the establishment of academies and private schools, and the neglect of public grammar or town schools had exerted on the common schools. The original school policy of Massachusetts contemplated the establishment in every large town of at least one school of a higher grade of studies than the district school, with a teacher of college qualifications, so as to bring the means of preparing for college within the reach of the poor, and, at the same time, of qualifying teachers for the district schools. By degrees the requirements of the law were relaxed, until by degrees the place of the town grammar school was filled by an incorporated academy. In view of this state of things, Mr. Carter remarks:—

What would our ancestors have thought of their posterity, those ancestors, who, nearly two hundred years since, amidst all the embarrassments of a new settlement, provided by law for the support of grammar schools in all towns of one hundred families, "the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they

* In the early legislation of New England, *free schools* meant *endowed schools*, and generally, schools intended for instruction in Latin and Greek. They were intended to occupy the place of the grammar schools of England. The name was afterward given indiscriminately to elementary and grammar schools.

may be fitted for the university?" or what would our fathers have thought of their children, those fathers who, in 1780, enjoined it in their constitution, upon "the legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of this commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them; especially the University at Cambridge, public schools, and grammar schools in the towns;" if they could have foreseen, that after one relaxation and another, in forty years, those children would so far forget their duty to "cherish the grammar schools," as to strike them out of existence? What the peculiar condition of the people of this state is, which renders the support of this class of schools unnecessary, impolitic, or unjust, I have never been able to understand. And, although I have been at some pains on the subject, I have never yet learned what the arguments were, which carried the repeal of the law through the last general court. Arguments there must have been, and strong ones, or such an alarming innovation would never have been suffered, upon an institution, to which the people, till quite lately, have always expressed the strongest attachment. Was that class of schools considered unnecessary? If so, what has made them unnecessary? Either the people have no longer need to receive the kind of instruction those schools were intended to afford, or they must receive the same instruction in some other way. The policy, and in our government, the necessity of eliciting the talents of the country, by every possible means, will be demonstrated when we consider how many of our most distinguished jurists, statesmen, and divines, have received their early instruction in the primary and grammar schools of some obscure country village. None, I believe, can be found, who will say the people have no longer need of such facilities for bringing forward to notice the promising talents of their children, and of giving to our country some of its greatest benefactors. Then by abolishing the grammar schools, it is expected the people will receive the same instruction in some other way. But two possible sources occur, which promise in any degree to supply the chasm in the system. The primary schools on the one hand, and the academies on the other. Neither of these sources will answer the expectation, or be adequate to the purpose. The primary schools will not come up to the necessary standard, either as they are contemplated by the law, or as they are, and promise to be, supported by the people. And the academies are out of the reach of precisely that class of people who most need the encouragement offered by the late grammar schools. The effect of the repeal of the law upon the primary schools, is as yet, but matter of conjecture. It is probably expected by some, and it is certainly to be hoped by all, that striking from the system the class of schools immediately above them, they will be improved so as in some degree to supply the place of the higher schools. If this expectation had any foundation, or if there were any probability it would be realized in some good degree, it would not be so much a matter of regret, that the late measure was adopted. But several reasons induce me to believe that the expectation is altogether visionary; and that the measure will have a tendency to sink, rather than improve, the condition of the primary schools.

But it may, perhaps, be said, the qualifications of the instructors are as high, for all practical and useful purposes, as they were under the former law, as it was executed. In the first place, it is not fair or just to reason from the law as it *was executed*, rather than as it *should have been* executed. In the next place, allowing ourselves so to reason, we shall not, I believe, arrive at the same result. The qualification of the grammar schoolmasters were, that they should be "of good morals, well instructed in Latin, Greek, and English languages." This class of schools is now abolished, and "geography" is added to the former qualifications of the teachers of primary schools. Allowing the two classes of schools to have been perfectly amalgamated, which is a great concession in point of fact, as well as acknowledging a great perversion of the law; we have dispensed with Latin and Greek, and require geography in their stead. I have no desire to lessen the estimation in which geography is held as a study peculiarly adapted to our primary schools. And I am ready to concede, that probably ten will wish to study geography where one would wish to study Latin and Greek. Now, if an instructor, who is qualified to teach Latin and Greek, could not by any possibility be qualified, at the same time, to teach geography, and all the minor studies of our schools, I should consider myself as having conceded the whole argument. But this is not the fact. These qualifications are so far from being incompatible, that

they *generally* exist in a superior degree in connection with each other. The connection, to be sure, is not so essential, that a man may not be a very good teacher of Latin and Greek, and still know very little of any thing else. Still, as the studies are arranged in all our schools, academies, and colleges, where young men are prepared for teachers, all the elementary studies, including geography, are generally taught before the languages. So that, by adding them to the qualifications, even if it were *never* required of the instructors to teach them, we insure more mature and accomplished scholars in those branches which are more frequently and generally taught. I would not be understood to discuss, much less to approve, this arrangement of studies for those destined to be scholars by profession. Such arrangement exists, and I avail myself of the fact for my present purpose. But besides insuring better teachers for the common branches, there are always some who would attend to the languages, as preparatory to a public education, if they had opportunity. And, if affording the opportunity to all of every town, should be the means of drawing out but few of superior talents, even those few are worthy of the highest consideration and regard from the public who possess them. These and similar considerations, which I can not here state, have convinced me, I know not whether they will convince any one else, that the repeal of the grammar school law, even if we could never hope it would be executed upon a more liberal construction than it has been for the last ten years, will have a direct tendency to sink the condition and prospects of the primary schools.

As the academies are not entirely free schools, we can not calculate upon *them* to supply instruction to the mass of the people. These are most respectable establishments, and some of them are hardly inferior, in the advantages they afford for acquiring a thorough education, to some institutions which are dignified with the name of colleges. It is not desirable that their condition should be impaired. Nor need any fears be entertained that their condition will be impaired. There are enough in the community who duly estimate the advantages of a good education, and who are able to sustain the expense of these schools to insure their permanent support. And as the other classes of schools which are free, are annihilated or decline in their character and condition, the academies will be encouraged by those who can better appreciate the advantages of good schools, and better afford the necessary expense. So far as it regards the accommodation and pecuniary interest of the rich, and those of moderate property, it is matter of indifference, whether the legislature or public make any appropriations or provisions for schools or not. They can and will take care for themselves. These are not the classes of the community to suffer, when government withhold encouragement from the schools. It is the poor who are to suffer. They must educate their children in *free* schools, and in their own neighborhood, or not educate them at all. The expense of tuition, of books, and of board at the academies are so appalling, as to put the advantages of those schools quite beyond the power of a vast proportion of the community. In the towns where academies happen to be fixed, the poor will of course derive some increased advantages; but these towns are so few compared with the whole, and the incident expenses for books and tuition are so considerable, that for all purposes of directly and efficiently educating the whole mass of the people, the academies may be left out of calculation. For not one in twenty, if one in fifty, throughout the state, will ever find their way to any of them.

From the external organization of the system, Mr. Carter passes to the consideration of the defects of the schools, and the means of improvement.

Two principal causes have operated from the first establishment of the free schools to impair and pervert their influence: incompetent instructors, and bad school books. It is not a little surprising, that a public so deeply impressed with the importance of the system of schools, and so resolved to carry it into full operation, by liberal appropriations, should stop short of their purpose, and stop precisely at that point, where the greatest attention and vigilance were essential to give efficacy to the whole. I do not mean that much good has not been realized; on the contrary, as has been repeatedly remarked, the success of the free school system is

just cause of congratulation; but I mean that their influence has not been the greatest and the best which the *same means*, under better management, might produce.

The employment of incompetent and inexperienced instructors has probably arisen more from the peculiar situation of the country, than from any negligence or indifference on the subject. So many opportunities are open for industrious enterprise, that it has always been difficult to induce men to become *permanent* teachers. This evil, although a serious one, is one which can not at present be removed; but its bad effects may be more qualified, by raising the character and requirements of instructors to a higher standard. The whole business of instruction, with very few exceptions, has hitherto been performed by those who have felt little interest in the subject, beyond the immediate pecuniary compensation stipulated for their services. And even that has been too inconsiderable, to render a want of success in the employment, a subject of much regret. This remark applies to almost all instructors, from the primary schools up to the higher schools; and it has no very remote bearing even upon some of the instructors in our colleges. Three classes of men have furnished the whole body of instructors.

1st Those have undertaken to teach, who had no better reason for it, than that the employment is easier, and perhaps a little more profitable than labor. No doubt many excellent instructors belong to this class. A college education is by no means essential to a good teacher of a primary school. But it must be confessed, that many of this class have been most lamentably deficient in those literary qualifications which *are essential* to any instructor; and, perhaps, still more deficient in their notions of decency and propriety, which never approach to refinement in manners. In the same degree, the schools may be made a most efficient instrument for improving and elevating the state of society when under the direction of men who have themselves been properly taught, they may be the means of disseminating or perpetuating grossness in manners, and vulgarity, when under the direction of different characters.

2d. A second class are those who are acquiring, or have attained a public education; and who assume the business of instruction as a temporary employment, either to afford a pecuniary emolument for the relief of immediate necessities, or to give themselves time to deliberate and choose some more agreeable and profitable profession. This is, probably, the most useful class of instructors; although their usefulness is much impaired by a want of experience and engagedness in the business. The thought that the employment is temporary, and that their ultimate success in life is not much affected by their success as teachers, can not fail to weaken the motives to exertion, and discourage the sacrifices necessary to the successful teacher. The duties of the instructor are so arduous, under the most favorable circumstances, that he needs all the motives to perseverance, which exclusive devotion to the business or self-interest can suggest. His prospects of happiness and respectability in life, therefore, should be more identified with his success as a teacher.

3d. The third class is composed of those who, from conscious weakness, despair of success in any other profession, or who have been more thoroughly convinced, by unfortunate experiment, that they can not attain distinction, perhaps even subsistence, by any other means. There may no doubt be found individuals among this class who are respectable and useful instructors. But as a class, they are the most exceptionable of the three. To develop the powers of the human mind, in the most successful manner, requires a discrimination and judgment which it seldom falls to the lot of men of indifferent talents to possess. In the science of instruction there is full scope for the best talents, and largest acquirements. All the elevated qualities, either of mind or heart, which are necessary to insure success in any of the professions, are essential to the accomplished instructor. And some qualities are required which are not so important in any other profession. How can he hope to arrange and adapt the studies of a child, so as to call forth and strengthen the different powers of the mind, in their natural order, and in the most successful manner, who is not capable of enumerating those powers; much less of analyzing them and understanding their mutual relations and dependencies. Such, however, is the present condition of our country, so numerous are the demands for instructors in the primary and higher schools, and so various are the *private interests* which will be felt in the selection of

them, that it is, probably, too much to expect all to have the discrimination necessary, in order to become accurate and original observers of the phenomena of the youthful mind. But we have much to hope from those who can better appreciate the importance of a correct system from instruction, from the encouragement of individuals, and the patronage of those large towns which carry education to its greatest perfection. It is to these sources we must look for the first examples in improvement.

A large portion of the "*Letters*" was devoted to an advocacy of the introduction of the principles of inductive logic into all the different branches of education, which he illustrates by examples of inductive teaching in the languages, in geography, and in arithmetic; the last as exhibited in W. Colburn's "*First Lessons*." The "*Letters*" conclude with the following anticipations of the progress of education in this country:—

The science of instruction is the sphere, and our country is the place for free and unembarrassed exertion. Hope certainly gives us a bright and animating prospect in the distance. The subject of education has never excited so deep and lively an interest, in every part of our country, as at present. If this interest can be directed by the wisdom and experience of the more enlightened, it can not fail of a great and happy effect. The *importance* of the subject has long since been felt; the time has come when attention should be turned to the *nature* of it. We may then hope for those improvements of which the subject is susceptible; and those splendid results in the state of society, which the more ardent and philanthropic anticipate. But science now sits solemn in her temple afar off. The ways of approach are dark and devious. A few votaries only, by chance or untired perseverance, gain access, till, at the expense of half their lives, they are warned by experience, like an inspiration from above, to become as little children, that they may enter. But when the influence of education is more duly estimated, and when the cultivation of the head and heart shall be united, and form one distinct and dignified profession, drawing to its practice the greatest and best of men; we may then hope a proper direction will be given to the opening minds and expanding hearts of the young; and that all the deep and permanent possessions of childhood and youth, will be upon the side of truth and virtue. Science, philosophy, and religion will then be blended with their very natures, to grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength. The whole earth will then constitute but one beautiful temple, in which may dwell in peace all mankind; and their lives form but one consistent and perpetual worship.

The publication of the "*Letters*" was followed in the winter of 1824-25, by a series of "*Essays upon Popular Education*," over the signature of Franklin, in the Boston Patriot, in which Mr. Carter aimed to present the condition, and the means of improving its public schools, in a manner to be appreciated by the people. These essays attracted a large measure of public attention, as originally published, and when issued in a pamphlet of sixty pages, in 1826, under the title of "*Essays upon Popular Education; containing a particular examination of the Schools of Massachusetts, and an outline for an Institution for the Education of Teachers*." In this series of essays he first gave to the public his plan of a teachers' seminary. These essays, and particularly his views on the principles of education as a science, and his outline of an institution for the education of teachers, attracted much attention. They were very

ably and favorably reviewed in the Literary Gazette, edited by Theophilus Parsons, and of which journal Mr. Carter was editor, in 1826, and devoted a portion of the columns to the advocacy of educational improvements before the public. The essays were made the basis of an article in the North American Review, in 1827, by Prof. Ticknor, and through that article his plan was made known to the English public. Prof. Bryce, in his "*Sketch of a Plan for a System of National Education for Ireland*," published in London, in 1828, speaks of the "outline," as the "first regular publication on the subject of the professional education of teachers which he had heard of."

In the preface to the "*Essays*," Mr. Carter pointed out the disastrous consequences of the neglect of timely legislation in behalf of free or public schools.

The free schools, strange as it may seem, had received almost no legislative attention, protection, or bounty, for nearly forty years. Of course, instead of taking the lead in improvement, as they should have done, they remained as nearly stationary as any institution can remain, in such an age and such a state of society, as those in which we live. Some men of longer foresight, and many, whose interest in the subject was quickened by their having families to educate, saw and lamented this state of things; but, as it was less trouble, on the whole, to build up schools of their own, than to reform those already in existence, they sent in their petitions to the legislature in great profusion for acts of incorporation, and for pecuniary assistance to enable them to establish academies under their own direction. These petitions were usually granted; and donations, small ones to be sure, were made to further their objects. But the obvious tendency of this course of legislation was to help directly those citizens who least needed help, and to encourage precisely that class of schools which, if they were necessary, would spring up spontaneously without the aid of legislative bounty.

Within a few years, even these higher schools, from their unwieldy organization, have ceased to afford such instruction as the public require; and private establishments begin now to take the lead of them. Thus have we departed more and more widely from the principle assumed by our fathers in the establishment of the free schools, viz. to provide as good instruction in all elementary and common branches of knowledge for the poorest citizen in the commonwealth as the richest could buy with all his wealth. Advancement upon advancement has been made by a few, while the mass, who are less vigilant, remain as they were, with only the unconsoling advantage of a little reflected light sent back by those who have gone before them.

The influence of academies on the free or public schools is thus pointed out, and the experience of every New England state, both before and since, confirms the justice of Mr. Carter's view:—

One influence, which they undoubtedly have had, has been to prepare young instructors *some* better than they could be prepared in the town schools themselves. This is a good influence. And if the same object could not be attained much better by other means, it would deserve great consideration in estimating the utility which we are to expect from those establishments for the future. But the preparation of instructors for the free schools never formed a part of the original design of the academies. They were intended to afford instruction in other and higher branches of education than those usually taught in the free schools; and not merely to give better instruction in the same branches. Much less did it come within the wide scope of their purposes to give instruction in the science of teaching generally. So that the little good derived from them in this respect is only incidental.

But the academies have had another influence upon the public town schools, which has much impaired their usefulness, and, if not soon checked, it will ultimately destroy them. This influence, operating for a series of years, has led already to the abandonment of a part of the free school system, and to a depreciation in the character and prospects of the remaining part. And it is working, not slowly, the destruction of the vital principle of the institution, more valuable to us than any other, for the preservation of enlightened freedom. The pernicious influence, to which I allude, will be better understood by taking an example of its operation on a small scale; and then extending the same principle of examination to the whole state, or to New England.

Take any ten contiguous towns in the interior of this commonwealth, and suppose an academy to be placed in the center of them. An academy, as I have before observed, commonly means a corporation, with a township of land in Maine, given them by the state, and a pretty convenient house, built generally by the patriotic subscriptions of those who expect to use it; the instructor being supported, chiefly or altogether, by a separate tax on the scholars. In each of these ten towns, select the six individuals, who have families to educate, who set the highest value on early education, and who are able to defray the expenses of the best which can be had, either in a private school among themselves, or at the academy, which, by the supposition, is in their neighborhood. Now of what immediate consequence can it be to the six families of each town, or to the sixty families of the ten towns, whether there be such a thing as a free school in the commonwealth or not! They have a general interest in them to be sure, because they have themselves been there instructed, and the early associations of childhood and youth are strong; and they have a sort of speculative belief, if it be not rather an innate sentiment, that free schools make a free people. But how are their own particular, personal, and immediate interests affected? Without any libel upon good nature, these are the main springs to human actions. These are the motives which find their way soonest to the human heart, and influence most powerfully and steadily the opinions of men, and the conduct founded upon and resulting from them.

As soon as difficulties and disagreements, in regard to the free schools, arise, as they necessarily must, upon various topics; such as, the amount of money to be raised, the distribution of it among the several districts, the manner of appropriation, whether it be to the "summer schools" or to the "winter schools," to pay an instructor from this family or from that family, of higher qualifications or of lower qualifications, of this or that political or religious creed, or a thousand other questions which are constantly occurring; if any of our six families happen to be dissatisfied or disgusted with any course which may be adopted, they will, immediately, abandon the free schools, and provide for the education of their children in their own way. They may organize a private school, for their own convenience, upon such principles as they most approve. Or, they may send their scholars, at an expense trifling to them, to the academy in their neighborhood. Well, what if they do? The free schools remain, all taxes are paid cheerfully for their support, and the number of scholars is lessened. What is the evil of their sending their children somewhere else to be educated? We should, at first, suppose that it would be an advantage; inasmuch as the amount of money to be expended would be left the same, and the number of pupils to receive the benefit of it would be considerably diminished.

But the evils of this course, and of the general policy of the state government, which has led to it, are very serious ones. When the six individuals of any country town, who are, by the supposition, first in point of wealth and interest in the subject, and who will generally be also first in point of intelligence and influence in town affairs, withdraw their children from the common schools; there are, at the same time, withdrawn a portion of intelligence from their direction, and heartfelt interest from their support. This intelligence is needed, to manage the delicate and important concerns of the schools. And this heartfelt interest is needed, to lead the way to improvements, to stimulate and encourage larger and larger appropriations, and to insure vigilance in their expenditure. Patriotism and philanthropy are dull motives to exertions for the improvement of common schools compared with parental affection. And this quickening power has gone off to the academies or somewhere else with the children, who are the objects of it.

Look at the operation of this influence of the academies upon the free schools, on a still smaller scale. Examine the condition of the latter in the very towns where academies are placed; and where, if their influence be a happy one, we should expect to find the common schools in the best condition. What is the fact? From observation and from information, collected from authentic sources, the assertion may be hazarded that the condition of the free schools will be found, on examination, to be worse, far worse, in those towns than in any others. And it is for this plain reason: because those who can barely afford the expense of tuition, will send their children to the academy, which the state or benevolent individuals have built up for their accommodation, and give themselves no further trouble about the free schools, but to pay the tax-bill for their support, when it is presented.

Thus the men, who would have the most interest in the subject, the most intelligence and the most leisure to conduct the concerns of the town schools, secede from them, and join themselves to other institutions. Abolish the academy and leave these six families of each town to the free schools alone, and you would find all their powers assiduously employed to put them in the best condition possible. Or rather put the free schools in a state to afford as good instruction as the academies now do, and you would supersede, in a great degree, the necessity of them. And it is apprehended that it would be quite easy to place them upon a footing to give even better instruction, at least in all the elementary branches of a common education, than the academies now give or ever have given.

In 1827, Mr. Carter presented a memorial to the legislature, praying for aid in the establishment of a seminary for the education of teachers, with a model school attached. The memorial was favorably reported on by a committee, of which the Hon. William B. Calhoun, of Springfield, Mass., was chairman, and a bill, making an appropriation, was lost by one vote in the senate. In that year, the town of Lancaster appropriated a portion of land, and the use of an academy building, to aid him in carrying out his plan as a private enterprise. He purchased several dwelling-houses, to accommodate his pupils and teachers with lodgings and board, hired assistants, who were to be taught by himself on his plan, and opened his school. Within a few months after his school opened, the people of Lancaster, who did not comprehend the full and ultimate public benefits of the new institution, began to manifest opposition, and threw such obstacles in his way, that he was obliged to abandon his project, as a public enterprise, after having embarrassed himself by his pecuniary outlays for buildings and teachers. He, however, continued to give instruction for many years afterward to private pupils, many of whom are now successful teachers in different parts of the Union.

In 1830, Mr. Carter assisted in the establishment of the American Institute of Instruction, of which he was for many years an officer and an active member. At its first session he delivered a lecture on "the development of the intellectual faculties;" and, in 1831, he gave another on "the necessity and most practicable means of raising the qualifications of teachers."

In 1835, and for several years afterward, he was a member of the legislature; for three years, of the house of representatives; and, in 1838-39, of the senate; and, in that position, as chairman of the

committee on education, drafted several able reports and bills, to promote the cause of educational improvement. During his first term, he secured the appropriation of three hundred dollars a year in aid of the objects of the American Institute of Instruction. In the same session he submitted an elaborate report in favor of "an act to provide for the better instruction of youth, employed in manufacturing establishments,"—which the Hon. Rufus Choate characterized as "a measure of large wisdom and expanded benevolence, which makes it practicable and safe for Massachusetts to grow rich by manufacture and by art." In 1836, as chairman of the same committee, he reported a bill for the appointment of a superintendent of common schools, and advocated the establishment of a seminary for the professional education of teachers.

In 1837, Mr. Carter made a vigorous effort in the house to secure the appropriation of one-half of the United States surplus revenue, for the education of common school teachers. His speech, on the second of February, for this object, is an able exposition of the claims of free schools for efficient and liberal legislation, and of the necessity of an institution devoted exclusively to the appropriate education of teachers for them. His amendment was lost; but he had the satisfaction, at a later period of the session, to draft the bill establishing the Board of Education, which was adopted.

Unfortunately for the cause of popular education, and his own permanent reputation as a teacher and educator, Mr. Carter was drawn away from his school and his study, to plunge into the noisy discussions of politics, and to become involved in the crash of financial speculations and disasters. By so doing he exposed his good name to the detraction and persecution of men whose enmity he had provoked by pecuniary losses and the too strenuous advocacy of temperance and other reformatory movements of the day. Great as were the services rendered to public schools by his pen and his voice,—by pamphlet and by legislation,—his pre-eminent practical talents might have achieved larger results in the organization and administration of schools of different grades, and his clear, vigorous, logical intellect might have poured floods of light over the whole field of education.

Mr. Carter was married, in May, 1827, to Miss Anne M. Packard, daughter of Rev. Asa Packard, formerly of Lancaster. He was a confiding, sympathizing husband, and his wife was entirely worthy of his confidence and love. To his only child, a daughter, he was at once father, brother, and teacher. Whatever were his own cares and burdens, they never made him forgetful of his family. He was the light and warmth of his home; no eclipse was ever visible there. Mr. Carter died at Chicago, on the 21st of July, 1849.

MEMORIAL OF JAMES G. CARTER

TO THE

LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS, AND THE REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON A SEMINARY FOR TEACHERS, IN 1837.

To the Hon. Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in General Court assembled, the undersigned begs leave most respectfully to represent:—

That he is about to open a seminary in a central part of the state, for the general instruction of children and youth of both sexes, and also for the particular instruction of those who may resort to him for that purpose, in the *science of education*; or in the best means of developing the physical, moral, and intellectual powers of the young by judicious and wholesome exercise of those powers, and, at a subsequent period, of conveying to their minds the greatest amount of useful knowledge.

In regard to the department for general purposes, first above named, your memorialist believes that the public demand for a more practical education than is commonly afforded by our schools and colleges in their present state has become so strong and decided as to render it safe for individual enterprise to attempt to answer that demand. And he would not now ask the attention of your honorable body to that part of his plan further than to observe that, in his view, it may, without prejudice to itself, be made greatly subservient to the department for the education of teachers.

The necessity of some systematic preparation of instructors of youth, before they enter upon their duties, is so obvious, upon the slightest consideration; and the want of teachers, better qualified to govern and instruct our common schools than our present means are adequate to supply, has been so severely felt in every part of the state; that your memorialist believes it would even be safe for individual enterprise to enter upon that department, to a limited extent. But, as no seminary for this purpose has, to his knowledge, been established in this country; and as the establishment of one would necessarily require the investment of a considerable capital, as well as the expense of much valuable time, in order to conduct it so as to produce the best results; its advantages, even upon the most economical arrangement that can be made, must be put at a price above the ability of large and important classes of the community to pay. In this view of the subject, it has occurred to your memorialist, that if your honorable body—the chosen guardians of those schools which contain, at this and every moment, one-third of the whole population of the state—would extend to private enterprise a moderate amount of public patronage, it would so far diminish the necessary expenses of the institution to individuals, as to open its doors to all who would aspire to the responsible employment of teachers of youth.

By this union of private and public means—by private enterprise controlled by public wisdom—your memorialist believes that a seminary for the education of teachers might be at once commenced upon a scale more commensurate with its importance to the community, more adequate to the public demands for better instruction, more in keeping with the fundamental principle of the free schools, and more consonant with the whole spirit of our free institutions.

JAMES G. CARTER.

The Committee, of which Hon. William B. Calhoun, of Springfield, was chairman, submitted the following

REPORT.

The Select Committee, to whom was referred "so much of His Excellency the Governor's Message as relates to the subject of a Seminary for the Instruction of School Teachers," and to whom was also referred the memorial of James G. Carter, upon the same subject, respectfully report the accompanying bill.

They also ask leave to report further, that although legislative enactment upon the subject submitted to their consideration be entirely new, yet the attention of the community has been so repeatedly called to it, that public opinion concerning it may with safety be said already to have become unquestionably settled. Discussions in regard to it have been carried on for a considerable period past in this and the neighboring states.

At first, the views taken of it were necessarily indefinite; and, although the sentiment has become general that an institution for the instruction of school-teachers would be of incalculable benefit, yet, as no one had developed a plan, by which the object could be accomplished, the whole subject seemed to be impressed with a visionary and impracticable character. Recently, however, attempts have been made, and, as your committee believe, with great success, to reduce these general views to a standard of practical utility. Men have been induced to bestow their thoughts upon the subject, who—from their situation in the community—from their acquaintance with the science and practice of education—from their deep sense of the wants of the public, made apparent more particularly by the failure of many successive attempts to improve the character and elevate the standard of the free schools—and from the loud complaints which have been uttered on all sides, of the deficiency of good schoolmasters—might very naturally have been selected as specially fitted to examine and investigate the subject, and to apply the proper remedies. The consequence has been, that several plans of a school of instruction, for the purposes contemplated, have already been presented to the public; and your committee have very fortunately been able to avail themselves of the fruits of extensive researches in the premises.

The committee have had their attention called more particularly to the statements and explanations of the memorialist, whose petition has been before them. From a mature consideration of his plan of instruction, they are unanimously of opinion, that it is entirely practical in its character, simple in its details, and peculiarly calculated to develop the powers of the mind, and that the studies it requires are brought wholly and appropriately within the pale of downright utility. It is unnecessary here to go beyond a mere outline.

The attention of the student is to be called primarily to a course of reading upon the subject of education: he is to be instructed thoroughly in all the branches pertaining to his profession, particularly in all that portion of solid learning calculated to fit him to communicate the knowledge required in the common free schools in the country. A peculiar character of usefulness will be stamped upon the institution proposed, by connecting with it an experimental school, consisting entirely of young children, pursuing the ordinary routine of instruction. Here the student will see the whole course of management and discipline requisite in a school, placed obviously and palpably before him. Theory and practice will thus be intimately blended, and the student be led gradually into a knowledge of his appropriate duties, in precisely the same manner in which tact and capacity are acquired in all the other pursuits of life. Indeed, the institution contemplated amounts simply to an attempt to bring the business of school-teaching into a system, from which it has heretofore alone and most unaccountably been excluded.

Whilst the committee incline to the opinion, that this institution should be detached entirely from all other pursuits, and be devoted wholly and distinctly to the simple object in view, they would not be considered as deciding definitely that it could not be safely connected with some of the literary establishments of the state. Some undoubted advantages, particularly those of concentrated effort and action, will, in the opinion of the committee, give an institution of the former character a decided superiority over one of the latter description. In all probability, the wants of the public will require both to be resorted to.

In regard to details generally on the subject, the committee believe they may with great propriety be left to the discretion and judgment of the Board of Commissioners, whose appointment is provided for in the accompanying bill. A sufficient object will now be gained, if the legislature can be satisfied that the plan, in its character and principles, is feasible and practicable. Its simplicity can not but be seen to be particularly distinguishing.

It needs at this time neither argument nor an exhibition of facts, to demonstrate to the legislature, that the free schools of the commonwealth are not such as they ought to be—that they fail, most essentially, of accomplishing the high objects for

which they were established, and toward the support of which so large an amount of money is annually raised amongst the people. Upon this subject public opinion is fully settled.

Nor is there any difficulty in arriving at the true cause. Can it, in the large majority of cases, be traced to any other than the incompetency of teachers? And in this fact there is nothing mysterious. Can the teachers be otherwise than incompetent, when no pains are taken to instruct them in the business of their profession—when, in one word, they are not reputed or constituted a profession?

The great and leading object of school-teachers should be, to learn how to communicate knowledge; yet, although the statutes of the state require them to be thoroughly examined as to their qualifications, it is hardly necessary to remark, that their capabilities in reference to the important object alluded to are, and must be, from the very nature of the thing, kept entirely out of sight. And this state of things must, in the opinion of the committee, continue, and indeed grow worse and worse, until some provision is made for bringing about an end of so much consequence.

The several towns in the commonwealth are obliged by law to raise money for the support of schools: the sums contributed by the people for this purpose are of immense amount. Is it not, beyond question, the sacred duty of the legislature to see to it, that these contributions are made, in the highest possible degree, serviceable? Ought it not, as a matter of course, to be expected that the people will complain, if the government are inactive and indifferent, where such is the stake? In what more suitable and rational way can the government interpose, than in providing the means for furnishing the schools with competent instructors—and in encouraging the establishment of seminaries, whose object shall be to teach the art of communicating knowledge?

Your committee ask the attention of the legislature to the ready patronage, which, in past time, has been extended to the interests of learning in the higher institutions. They dwell, and the legislature and the people whom they represent can not but dwell, with proud satisfaction, upon the cheering recollections which the bare allusion can not fail to bring up. In time gone by, the fathers of the commonwealth have not been unmindful of the claims which the interests of literature have presented. These claims have not been disallowed.

But it is obvious to remark, that the patronage of the state has heretofore uniformly been extended to the higher institutions alone. No hearty interest has ever been manifested, at least in the form now contemplated, in the success and improvement of the free schools of the land. Your committee ask, and ask with great confidence, whether the time has not arrived, when an efficient and fostering hand should be held forth by the legislature to these important institutions? The object in view, it will not be deemed invidious to remark, is not for the benefit of the few, but of the many, of the whole. We call then the attention of the legislature to this pervading interest—the interest of the mass of the people; we ask them to cherish, encourage, and promote it; we ask them to let this community see that they are themselves in earnest in their endeavors to advance their true welfare.

Nor can the influence of education in the maintenance of our republican institutions here be overlooked. It is upon the diffusion of sound learning that we must mainly depend, if we mean to preserve these institutions healthful and enduring. These interests are intimately and deeply connected. But, for the great purposes in view, the learning to be diffused must be that which can be brought home to the business and bosom of every individual in the land. It is the everyday, the common-sense instruction, which we must scatter abroad. All must be thoroughly educated, in order that all may be truly freemen.

No words, in the opinion of your committee, can sufficiently express the magnitude and importance of this subject. It is one, upon which the attention of the legislature of Massachusetts should be particularly fastened. To Massachusetts it eminently pertains to take the lead in the project, which can not fail to accomplish so much in advancing the character, and securing the prosperity of the free schools. Here the system was first adopted. The pilgrims, from whom we derive honorable descent, placed the first hand upon the work. It belongs to the descendants of those pilgrims, and upon the ground where they trod, to finish and sustain it.

For the Committee,

W. B. CALHOUN.