

T H E S I S .

Subject, Reverend Growth of the State Normal School.

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The name normal school came from France. The guiding light of the innovators was, at least in New York, M. Cousin's once celebrated report or series of reports on public instruction in several states of Germany and particularly in Prussia.

The full work in French seems to have been read by the New York board of regents in 1834, but the book was undoubtedly more widely read in a translation of the portion relating to Prussia, of which one half was given to the subject of "primary normal schools."

Thus our school teachers' seminaries became known as normal schools - a school with a French name and a Prussian curriculum. With this brief preface we now turn to the first effort, inaugurated at public expense, to provide our public schools with teachers.

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In all probability three conclusions will be reached by the critical reader of the reports on the early normal school. It will appear that the utility of the early normal school was based on the theory that the acquisition of knowledge is only a preliminary step to the ability to impart it, and that the function of the normal school was to give the pupil an opportunity to digest what he had elsewhere learned. It will also appear that in practice the function of the early normal school was, in the beginning, to review and perfect the elements of a common school education. And, finally, it will be very apparent that, whereas the theory of the normal school required it to train its pupils to impart knowledge to unlettered persons in the common schools, it was in the first term of its course

compelled to become a common school itself and to teach the future teacher not only what he would be called upon to teach, but also to train him to impart the knowledge that in the proper sense of the word he knew himself.

"The art of well delivering the knowledge we possess," said Lord Bacon, "is among the secrets left to be discovered by future generations." This "delivering the knowledge we possess" has since been developed into a system, whose like even the fertile mind of Bacon, but dimly perceived.

The earliest normal school of which we have any record was founded at Rhymes 1681 by Abbe de la Salle. This developed, three years later, into the now famous Christian Brother's School, and became widely influential. By Hermann August Francke it was introduced into

Germany. Before the century closed Russia had six normal schools, and became the centre from which radiated the professional spirit to other European systems, and to the United States.

It was in 1839 that the first normal school was founded by Prof. S. R. Hall of Concord, New Hampshire, in the state of Massachusetts; but there were as yet no very definite ideas as to the systematic and thorough training of teachers.

But the one man to whom, more than to any other, must be credited the permanent public normal school, and the systematic training of teachers, is the Rev. James G. Carter, father of the normal schools, born in the last century and graduated at Harvard 1820.

Since the early establishment of these schools a steady growth has been noted year after year. The first Massachusetts

schools early provided practice classes; the Albany and Millersville institutions, at their organizations while the Oswego school was itself the outgrowth of a model or training class.

One characteristic of very grave importance, though less conspicuous than others, is the prominence given in a few schools to psychological principles, and in fewer yet to the systematic, observation and patient, scientific study of child mind. It has been recently said, "The study of psychology lies at the foundation of any substantial building for high excellence in the profession of teaching. It is in this body of principles more than all else, which makes teaching a profession and not a mere trade. All the reasons that force upon physicians the study of psychology

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may enforce the study of psychology upon professional teachers."

At the present date there are nearly two-hundred normal schools in the United States which are yearly turning out teachers fully qualified to enter the class room, and to secure the best results from their work. Of these, the state of Pennsylvania claims thirteen.

By the act of May 20, 1857, it was provided by the legislature of Pennsylvania that when any number of citizens of this State, not less than 13, shall, as contributors or stockholders, erect and establish a school for the professional training of young men and women as teachers for the common schools of the State, such school might become a State normal school under certain conditions. The first school working under this act was the school

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at Millersville, which was founded 1839-40. Since that time twelve others have been added and the methods of teaching practiced in them are first, a thorough knowledge of the branches of study they propose to teach; second, the best methods of teaching those branches; third, ability to instruct - to lead the young mind judiciously from the known to the unknown.

To-day, the state of Pennsylvania is unsurpassed by any other state in the Union, in the quality of her normal schools.

But, as we enjoy the^{se} educational advantages, we must not forget that we owe much to the efforts of Horace Mann, who was born at Franklin Mass., May 4, 1796, and was the statesman of the new educational life of the republic.

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It was in 1838, the year previous to the founding of our first normal school in the United States, that Mr Mann succeeded in influencing the state of Massachusetts to use a private munificence in the erection of three normal schools in that state.

Our normal school system of to-day is the outgrowth of the earnest work of Mr Mann, Prof. J. R. Wall, and the Rev. James G. Carter.

The normal school of to-day is first of all a school, a seminary of learning not only, but a place for character building. It is so to train the pupils, - the future teachers, - so to repress the evil, and foster the good in their lives; to form habits of system, punctuality, industry, self-control, independence, thoughtfulness, moral earnestness, etc., so that they shall be able to teach by example.

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as well as by precept, by their lives
as by their words.

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