

**THE DISTRICT SCHOOL
AS IT WAS, BY ONE
WHO WENT TO IT**

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The district school as it was, by one who went to it by Warren Burton & Clifton Johnson

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WARREN BURTON & CLIFTON JOHNSON

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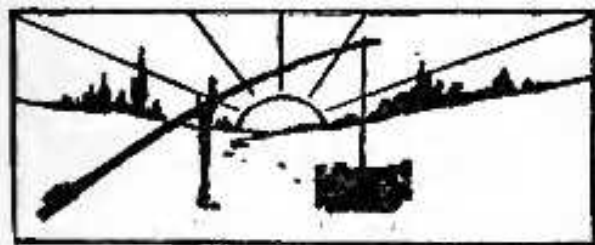


Frontispiece

THE
DISTRICT SCHOOL
AS IT WAS

BY ONE WHO
WENT TO IT

EDITED BY
CLIFTON JOHNSON



LEE AND SHEPARD
BOSTON MDCCCXCVII

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THE
DISTRICT SCHOOL
AS IT WAS

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Introduction

THE New England schools of the early part of the century had a primitive picturesqueness that makes them seem of a much more remote past than they really are. The wood-pile in the yard, the open fire-place, the backless benches on which the smaller scholars sat, and the two terms — one in winter under a master, and one in summer ruled by a mistress — have the flavor of pioneer days. In this seeming remoteness, coupled with its actual nearness, lies the chief reason for the charm that this period has for us. The intervening seventy or eighty years have destroyed every vestige of the old school sights and customs. We have only fragmentary reminiscences left. But the more the facts fade, the more they allure us. We are bringing the old furniture down from the garrets, and setting it forth in the places of honor in our best rooms; and the

same feeling that prompts this love for an ancient chair or "chest of drawers" makes us prize the reminiscences of bygone times as age gives them an increasing rarity.

Here, then, is "The District School As It Was." I know of no brighter, more graphic impressions of the school-days of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The descriptions have an unusual degree of simplicity and charm, and at the same time are spiced with a sparkle of humor that makes them good reading, apart from any historic attraction.

The book was first published in Boston, in 1833, where it was received "with unqualified favor." A little later it was brought out in New York, with equal success, and a few years afterward a London edition was issued as giving a faithful description of one of the institutions of New England.

In 1852 "The District School," with several lesser works by the same writer, was published in a twelvemo volume of 364 pages, "to be disposed of to subscribers for the benefit of the Author." The longest of the additional writings had been previously published as a separate book entitled "The Scenery Shower." But it was found that to the mystified mind of the average reader this title was understood to mean