

**THE HISTORY OF
COMPULSORY
EDUCATION IN
NEW ENGLAND**

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The History of Compulsory Education in New England by John William Perrin

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JOHN WILLIAM PERRIN

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OF
COMPULSORY EDUCATION
IN
NEW ENGLAND

*A Dissertation presented to the Faculty of Arts, Literature, and
Science of the University of Chicago, in Candidacy
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*

BY
JOHN WILLIAM PERRIN, A. M.

MEADVILLE, PENNA
1896

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY: THE ORIGIN OF MODERN COMPULSORY EDUCATION, AND THE PROGRESS OF UNIVERSAL EDU- CATION AND THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPULSION IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.	5
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CHAPTER II.

THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPULSION IN NEW ENGLAND. 1620- 1800	17
---------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

INDIRECT COMPULSION: THE FACTORY LAWS OF MASSA- CHUSETTS AND CONNECTICUT	33
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRUANCY PROBLEM IN MASSACHUSETTS. 1845-1890.	46
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CHAPTER V.

THE GENERAL COMPULSORY LAWS OF NEW ENGLAND. 1852-1890	57
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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY : THE ORIGIN OF MODERN COMPULSORY EDUCATION, AND THE PROGRESS OF UNIVERSAL EDUCATION AND THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPULSION IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

MODERN compulsory education has its origin in the Reformation.* The making of man responsible for the religious "faith that is within him" put upon each one the obligation of reading and understanding the Bible for himself. It made the education of the people, among all branches of the Protestant faith, a religious duty to be as carefully and conscientiously performed as any other duty contained in the religious creed they had accepted. This explains the great attention that Luther and Calvin, the chief exponents of the Protestant reform, gave to the establishment of schools for the people. During the remainder of Luther's life after his revolt from Rome, he advocated universal education and urged the establishment of schools for the masses. While he believed "the church is the mother of the school," he urged the establish-

* In the sixth year of the reign of James IV. of Scotland (1494), a statute ordered all barons and freeholders to put their sons and heirs at school "from six or nine years of age and keep them there until they should have perfect Latin under a penalty of £20." After that they were to study Philosophy and Law for three years. This statute was not universal in its application; it applied only to the upper classes. In this respect it differs from present day legislation on this subject. Macpherson's "Annals of Commerce," Vol. II., p. 7. See also, "Historical Survey of Education in Scotland Prior to the Establishment of the Present System," in Report of Commissioner of Education, 1889-90, Vol. I., p. 217.

ment and support of schools by municipalities. In 1524, in an address on this subject to the mayors and aldermen of Germany he says: "Dear rulers, if we must spend so much yearly upon artillery, roads, bridges, dykes, and innumerable other things of the same kind, in order that a city may have temporal peace and tranquillity, why should we not spend as much on the poor, needy youth, that we may support an able man or two for schoolmaster?"* He not only urged the establishment of schools by every city and village for the sake of the mental and moral training of the youth, but he urged such a course as a duty the municipality owed to itself. He believed that the safety, strength, and perpetuity of municipalities depended more on the schools they established than on their armies and fortifications. In the address which has just been quoted he emphasizes this belief in no uncertain language. "Therefore it is becoming," he says, "for the council and the magistrates to have the greatest care and diligence for the youth. For since the good, the honor, the life, and the activity of a great city is committed to their faithful hands, they do not act justly before God and the world when they do not seek the prosperity and improvement of the city with all their power, night and day. Now a city's prosperity lies not alone in accumulating great treasures, producing strong walls, beautiful houses, and munitions of war; indeed where there is much of this, and reckless fools come into power, it is so much the worse, and of greater detriment to the city. But this is the best and richest increase, prosperity, and strength of the city, that it has many polished, learned, judicious, honorable, and well-bred citizens; who when they have been able to accumulate treasures and great

* An die Bürgermeister und Rathsherren aller Städte Deutschlands, dass sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen.

"Liebe Herren, muss man jährlich so viel wenden an Büchsen, Wege, Stege, Dämme, und dergleichen unzählige Stücke mehr, damit eine Stadt zeitlichen Frieden und Gemach habe; warum sollte man nicht vielmehr doch auch so viel wenden an die dürstige arme Jugend, dass man einem geschickten Mann oder zwei zu Schulmeistern hielte?"—*Dr. Martin Luther's reformatorische Schriften von Dr. Karl Zimmermann (Darmstadt, 1877), Zweiter Band, Seite 517.*

wealth may keep and use them rightly."* Again, in a letter to John the Constant, who had succeeded his brother Frederick the Wise as elector in 1525, he says: "Where there is a city which has the ability, your electoral grace has the power to compel [the people] to support schools, pulpits, and parishes. If they will not do it for their salvation, then consider that your electoral grace, as highest guardian of the youth and of all others needing supervision, shall compel them to do so, just as they are compelled to give and render services toward bridges, paths, and roads, or other matters pertaining to the public interest."†

His plans for universal education did not end with the establishment and support of schools by municipalities. In his sermon on the "Duty of Sending Children to School," he maintains that it is both the right and the duty of the state to enact laws compelling parents to send their children to school. "I maintain," he says, "that the civil authorities are under obligations to compel the people to send their children to school. . . . If the government can compel such citizens as are fit for military service to bear spear and rifle, to mount ramparts, and perform other martial duties in time of war; how much more has it a right to compel the people to send their children to school, because in this case we are

* "Darum will es hier dem Rath und der Obrigkeit gebühren, die allergrösste Sorge und Fleiss auf das junge Volk zu haben. Denn weil der ganzen Stadt Gut, Ehre, Leib, und Leben ihnen zu treuer Hand befohlen ist, so thäten sie nicht rechtlich vor Gott und der Welt, so sie der Stadt Gedeihen und Besserung nicht suchten mit allem Vermögen Tag und Nacht. Nun legt einer Stadt Gedeihen nicht allein darin, dass man grosse Schätze sammle, feste Mauern, schöne Häuser, viele Büchsen und Harnische zeuge; ja, wo dass viel ist und tolle Narren darüber kommen, ist so viel desto ärger und desto grözern Schade derselben Stadt, sondern dass ist einer Stadt bestes und aller reichstes Gedeihen, Heil und Kraft, dass sie ist so viel feiner, gelehrter, vernünftiger, ehrbarer, wohlgezogener Bürger hat, die können darnach wohl Schätze und alles Gut sammeln, halten und recht brauchen."—*Ibid.*, Seite 521.

† "Wo eine Stadt oder Dorf ist, die des Vermögens sind, hat G. E. F. G. Macht sie zu zwingen, dass sie Schulen, Predigtstühle, Pfarren halten. Wollen sie es nicht zu ihrer Seligkeit thun, noch befehlen, so ist G. E. F. G. da, als oberster Vormund der Jugend; und Aller die es bedürfen, und soll sie mit Gewalt dazu halten, dazu sie es thun müssen; gleich als wenn man sie mit Gewalt zwingt, dazu sie zur Brücken, Steg, und Weg, oder sonst zufälliger Landesnoth geben und dienen."—*Schreiben an den Kurfürsten Johannes, 22sten November, 1526. Zimmermann, Dritter Band, Seite 193.*

warring with the devil, whose object it is secretly to exhaust our cities and principalities of their strong men."*

Besides the establishment of schools, he urged the formation of libraries. "Finally," he says, "it is well for all those, who have so much love and desire, that schools and studies be established, and sustained in Germany, to keep in mind that we must spare no trouble nor expense to furnish good libraries, especially in great cities, where such are possible. For if the Gospel and all the arts are to remain, they must indeed be enclosed and bound up in books and writings."† These libraries were not to include the writings of the school-men and the church fathers merely, but also the works of every great writer, whether pagan or Christian.

The labors of Luther in behalf of universal education bore much good fruit from their beginning. In 1524 Duke John of Gotha granted a petition of the council, the parish, the dean, and the court, declaring for the Reformation. This was on Tuesday of Whitsuntide, and in August of the same year Frederick Myconius, Luther's intimate friend, was made evangelical minister and superintendent of the duchy. In this year appeared Luther's address to the mayors and aldermen of Germany. Myconius considered it one of his principal duties to care for the schools. He fused those already in existence in Gotha into one, and established the new school thus formed in the convent of the Augustinians.‡ This was no easy task. Myconius himself says, "Schools and studies were

* This sermon is not given in the edition of Luther's writings that I have used. The quotation is taken from "Luther on Education," by F. V. N. Painter, A. M. (Philadelphia, 1889), p. 269.

† "Zum letzten ist auch das wohl zu bedenken allen denjenigen, so Liebe und Lust haben, dasz solche Schulen und Sprachen in deutschen Ländern aufgerichtet und erhalten werden, dasz man Fleisz und Kosten nicht spare, gute Libereien und Bücherhäuser, sonderlich in den gräzesten Städten, die solches wohl vermögen, zu verschaffen. Denn so das Evangelium und allerlei Kunst soll bleiben, muss je in Bücher und Schriften verfasst und angebanden sein."—*Zimmermann, Zweiter Band, Seite 536.*

‡ Dr. Henry Barnard in speaking of this school calls Myconius "the founder of the gymnasium." See "Systems, Institutions, and Statistics of Public Instruction in Different Countries," by Henry Barnard, LL. D. (New York, 1872), Part I., "Europe—German States," p. 575.