

Victor Cousin and the Cause of National Education

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Victor Cousin's Report on Prussian schooling served as a blueprint for the "Guizot Law" of 1833, which established a system of elementary education across France. Translated into English the following year by Sarah Austin, it also played a pivotal role in both the British movement for national education and the common school revival that resulted in the establishment of the Massachusetts Board of Education. Central to Cousin's account was a description of Pestalozzian pedagogy and its potential to ensure political rights and preserve social order by instilling principles of practical Christianity in the population. This answered the prayer of English reformers facing a volatile working class and American clerics concerned by the erosion of religious piety. But Cousin's Report also extolled a second educational aim; the humanistic concept of Bildung, which would become the guiding ideal for the more philosophically minded John Stuart Mill (Austin's closest associate in reform) and Edward Everett, the Massachusetts governor who shepherded the Board of Education into law. Taken together, these sister concepts reveal the extensive impact of German ideas about history, culture, and the importance of education for the progress of civilization.

Victor Cousin's 1832 *Report on the State of Public Instruction in Prussia* is without doubt one of the most influential documents in the history of education. More than any other work it provided French, English, and American reformers with a compelling model of efficient schooling and an authoritative justification for Enlightenment ideas about the role of education in the historical advancement of culture and civilization.

On both sides of the Atlantic leading political and intellectual figures drew upon Cousin's vivid and detailed account of German schooling to justify government involvement in public education. It was instrumental in the framing of the Guizot Law of 1833 that established elementary schools across France and played a key role in the common school crusade that resulted in the establishment of the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1837. Translated by Sarah Austin, the *Report* was also central to the 1830s campaign for national schooling in England. In part its appeal lay in the practicality of the system, which Cousin presented as cheap, efficient, and easily adaptable to other political contexts. Comprehensive tables recording student attendance and state expenditure demonstrated that in a largely Protestant country similar in size to Britain the entire school age

population was being educated for less than £50,000 per year. But the chief message of the *Report* was less the cost of public schooling than the character of the instruction provided. The Prussian teacher, Cousin explained, had the power to transform society. Over the previous century, a new philosophy of education had given rise to pedagogic methods that could meet the needs of the modern nation state. If the mind and character of the population were elevated to accept the guidance of an intellectually informed class of moral leaders, the rights of citizenship could be married with the necessity of order to produce a rational society capable of fostering material progress and the advancement of Christian civilization.

What should not be lost in this account are the underlying commitments of those who embraced Cousin's arguments. The *Report* was clearly written to serve a political agenda itself informed by the German Enlightenment. Cousin had spent the best part of two decades studying German philosophy and was very familiar with the ideas of its most progressive thinkers. Indeed, it was while accompanying Hegel to Cologne—on the latter's return from Paris in the fall of 1827—that he first met Sarah Austin. Like Hegel, Cousin (1852) wanted to establish a rationally ordered

secular state. A new epoch was at hand, he explained the following year, when religious intuition would be superseded by reason. Critical reflection and the rule of intelligence were now the spirit of the age and France had to develop an informed leadership equipped with the intellectual skills to guide its development. This did not mean any loss of faith; reason would convert the “truths offered to it by religion into its own substance . . . it destroys not faith . . . [but] illuminates it and promotes its growth, and raises it gently from the twilight of the symbol to the full light of pure thought” (p. 22). Evidently, he envisioned the same relationship writ large in the state. Ever the student of Plato, social order was to be achieved by harmonizing the religious feelings of the working classes with the expert guidance of a moral and intellectual elite.

While this idealized picture hardly reflected the reality of Prussian schooling in the early 1830s, Cousin’s (1834) *Report*, with its clear and crisp description of legal statutes, compelling statistics, and detailed accounts of institutional practices proved a highly authoritative resource for those who embraced a similar vision of reform. Most importantly, he justified the establishment of Pestalozzian normal schools while calming fears about expenditure and the prospect of social levelling. This dovetailed perfectly with Austin’s concerns about the provision and quality of monitorial instruction for the volatile populations of Britain’s industrialized town and cities. It also spoke to the problems of the American common school, which for New England divines like Charles Brooks was failing in its mission to impart basic religious principles. But the notion of practical Christianity Cousin imported from Prussia also pointed to a second, more profound educational aim; the humanistic concept of *Bildung*, which would become the guiding ideal for more the philosophically minded John Stuart Mill (Austin’s closest associate in reform) and Edward Everett, the Massachusetts governor who shepherded the Board of Education and America’s first Normal schools into law.

The Guizot Law

Cousin arrived in Berlin in June 1831. Warmly received by the Minister of Education, Karl von Altenstein, he was assigned a staff assistant to explain all the legal statutes governing the Prussian system. He reports witnessing “the most secret workings of the administration” and being conducted around educational establishments of the city, from elementary schools to the University. He also visited the large Burgher Normal School in Potsdam. Throughout he followed the same course of action; “first to procure the laws or regulations, and render myself perfectly master of them; next, to verify them by an accurate and detailed inspection” (p. 3). He reviewed hundreds of documents but admitted that the primary object of his *Report* was “the legislative project of 1819 which has the force of law, and regulates the present order of things throughout the country” ensuring, he noted, the near complete education of the nation’s children (p. 25). Achieving a perfect balance of class interests, all parties—local, state, and religious—worked toward a single end, “the civilization of the people” (p. 106). There was “no injudicious spirit of centralization or of official despotism . . . almost everything is left to the parochial, departmental, or provincial authorities” (p. 106). Even local clergy worked in concert with municipal officials in the management of public education. Moreover, unlike the abstract blueprints of the early French Republic, the law was built upon practices that had evolved since the time of the Reformation. “Founded on reality and experience,” it “methodized” proven traditions producing “the happiest results with extraordinary rapidity” (p. 108).

Mindful that France lacked such historical precedents, Cousin explained how easily this well-oiled machine could be adapted to meet the distinct character of the French people. Most important for Cousin was the absolute need to follow Prussia in the provision of instruction suited to the different ranks of society. First and foremost, an intellectual elite had to be schooled in *lycées* styled on the German *Gymnasium*. France might claim

superiority in mathematics and the physical sciences, but it must also look to the classics. These, he maintained, “were without any comparison, the most important of all” (p. 114). For it was through language, literature, history, and philosophy of the ancients that students gained the clearest knowledge of human nature. Of course, such studies were not suitable for the entire population. As in the Prussian *Elementarschulen*, those at the lower end of the social ladder would be better served by an education which concentrated on basic skills and the cultivation of religious sentiments. The urban middle-class presented a different problem. Not only was classical learning irrelevant to their future rank and occupation, it would inevitably generate false ambitions, rendering them discontent with their lot in life. It was thus “of the highest importance to create in France, under one name or another, burgher schools” equipped to impart more extensive and useful knowledge (p. 119).

The whole enterprise turned on a new kind of teacher, the product of the Pestalozzian seminaries. Trained in methods “adapted to the natural growth and improvement of the human mind” they led the child “by enlightened observation and their own experience to simple and lucid principles” (p. 65). This did not mean the establishment of an expensive new estate. Prussia was careful not to remunerate its teachers above others of their social station. Their service to the public good was an act of charity, conducted in the “spirit of poverty, humility, courageous resignation, and modest dignity, which Christianity, rightly understood and wisely taught, can alone give to the teachers of the people” (p. 291).

Jurgen Herbst (1991) raises the question of whether Cousin was misled, confused, or even deceptive in his employment of “the legislative project of 1819,” Süvern’s abortive scheme to enact a unified and progressive system of schooling. Certainly, Cousin (1834) quotes the plan extensively and even concludes that “the different stages” form “a single great establishment of national education, the system of which is one”

(p. 52). But he then qualifies this by explaining that while “intimately connected together,” each branch “pursues its own peculiar end”—with the clear implication, *for the common good* (p. 52). Accordingly, it is hard not to conclude that combined with his slippery language—claiming “the force of law”—Cousin used Süvern’s text to defend his own deep-seated philosophical convictions and promote the political agenda of Louis Philippe’s government, which in the wake of the July Revolution, viewed the constitutional promise of public education as an immediate priority.

Professor of philosophy at the *Ecole Normale*, Cousin studied in Germany during the 1810s before returning to offer the first lectures on Kant in France. His own eclectic synthesis “spiritualism” started with the free activity of the human will and stressed the inner development of the mind through engagement with the truths of diverse traditions. He translated Plato into French and shared the neo-humanist passion for all things Greek. Given his relationship with Hegel and other prominent German thinkers during the 1820s, it is safe to assume he was well versed in the concept of *Bildung* and the aims of Prussian education. As for knowledge of politics, the six months he spent in a Berlin jail during 1824 charged with subversive activities no doubt provided a practical lesson that the conservative forces reigning in Germany were no less potent than those currently dominant in France.

François Guizot (1787-1874), author of the 1833 law, shared Cousin’s intellectual and political sympathies. After graduating from the University of Geneva, he served as tutor to the children of Albert Stapfer, the former minister of the Helvetic government charged with establishing a system of public education in the new Swiss nation. Stapfer had set Pestalozzi up at Burgdorf, and later as ambassador to France, helped promote his pedagogy among the Paris *litterati*—even recommending it to Napoleon (Johnson, 1963). With Stapfer’s support Guizot soon established himself as one of France’s most promising writers, publishing numerous articles on German literary

and philosophical thought. In 1812, at the age of 25, he was appointed chair of modern history at the Sorbonne. His major works were clearly influenced by the historicist approach of his German peers. Ignoring the particularities of the past, he focused on the development of social institutions and their influence on the human faculties. In this context, education was all important; indeed, as editor of *Annales de l'Éducation* between 1811 and 1815 he and his wife were instrumental in the popularization of Pestalozzian and other international approaches to childcare and instruction. By 1816 Guizot had joined the *Doctrinaires*, a centrist party committed to forging a middle path between the political rights promised by the Revolution and the social structures of the *Ancien Régime*. Envisioning a secular, expert led state united by a sense of civic responsibility and national loyalty, he helped draft a plan for a national system of education in which individuals would be schooled for life within the largely impermeable bands of a fixed hierarchical order. Local authorities were to replace the centralized bureaucracy of the Empire and infuse wisdom throughout the body politic.

Out of favor during the Bourbon Restoration, in 1828 Guizot and Cousin cemented their standing as leaders of the liberal cause in a celebrated series of public lectures. Two years later, in the aftermath of the July Revolution, Cousin was made a Peer of France and appointed to the Council for Public Instruction. Guizot became the Minister of Education in 1832. Adamant that the nation had to be regulated by reason rather than force, by July of the following year, he had carried the majority of Cousin's recommendations into law determined to establish what he termed "a government of minds" (Johnson, 1963). Cousin, who remained on the powerful Council for Public Instruction while serving as director of the *Ecole Normale* oversaw the reform of secondary education along the lines of the Prussian *Gymnasium*, determined to produce "a legitimate aristocracy" for the French nation (Goldstein 1968).

Sarah Austin

The extraordinary task of rendering a French government report into English must be put into context. Close friends and next-door neighbors of James Mill and his family, Sarah Austin and her husband John were integral members of the intellectual circle that followed the teachings of the radical utilitarian theorist Jeremy Bentham. John Austin, a legal scholar, taught Mill's son (the future philosopher John Stuart Mill) law; Sarah—whom he would refer to his as his "Mutterlein"—tutored him in German. Two foundational principles underwrote the group's political agenda; an expanded franchise and the promotion of education so that an informed electorate could make intelligent judgments about their best interests. John Arthur Roebuck brought their case for public schooling before the first Reformed Parliament in July 1833. Drawing upon the example of Prussia he sought to minimize questions about personal liberty and confessional difference while stressing education as the panacea for the pressing social problems that beset the country. While in favor of expanding public instruction, the Commons found Roebuck's vague and expansive plan—along with the "regimental" example of Prussia—ill-suited to free institutions and religious character of the nation (Hansard, 1833). The incursion of the state would only undermine the voluntary efforts to expand schooling; it was far better the majority agreed to offer incentives for individual initiative to than to hand the cause of education over to an impersonal bureaucracy. The best Roebuck could achieve was the promise of a Select Committee to investigate the matter in greater detail.

Determined to raise understanding and rally public support, Sarah Austin (1833a) published a detailed account of the Prussian system in the October issue of the *Foreign Quarterly Review* countering critics on the principle of compulsion, the adequacy of the free market, and the religious character of instruction. In the interim—following the arguments of Henry Brougham, the Whig government's leading voice on education—a grant of £20,000 was approved to support the monitorial schools of the Church of

England affiliated National School Society (NS) and the non-sectarian British and Foreign School Society (BFSS). Austin (1833b) was livid. Given the alarming conditions of urban and agricultural life, government had to recognize its fundamental responsibility to improve the mind and morals of the population. Adding a postscript to her article, she complained about the lack of oversight and accountability for the use of public money.

Without some central authority to ensure that the schools newly built shall belong to the public, and that the system of teaching followed in them shall be deserving of approbation, all grants of public money for the education of the poor will either be wholly wasted, or so misapplied, that they will only produce a very small fraction of the good with might, under a better system, be derived from them. (p. 496)

The following year, intent on detailing this better system, she published her translation of Cousin's (1834) *Report* together with a rather more dramatic Preface that emphasized the power of pedagogic methods to transform the character of the lower orders.

"Society," she insisted, "is no longer a calm current, but a tossing sea. Reverence for tradition, for authority is gone. In such a state of things, who can deny the absolute necessity for national education?" (p. ix). This did not mean leveling; like Prussia and France, Britain could school the masses to accept their place under the leadership of wise and virtuous elite. The key to this progressive reform was a new breed of schoolteacher trained to raise the humanity of the child. Instruction had to be transformed from an economy of memorization and compliance to one of understanding and prudent judgment. Without nurturing unrealistic aspirations, she insisted that our "humbler friends" could develop "gentle and kindly sympathies," a "sense of self-respect," and even appreciate the "nobility of virtue" (p. xvii). The intellectual faculties could be trained to bring understanding of

the world in which they lived, and habits could be formed for the "business of life, so as to extract the greatest possible portion of comfort out of small means." (p. xvii).

It was evident that such worthy aims could never be realized by the mechanical methods employed in the monitorial schools of the NS and the BFSS. The Lancastrian method, she quoted a "German writer" (presumably Edward Biber), "may be of use in humanizing the lowest mob of England ... but where men and Christians are to be formed, is defective and ill contrived." (p. xix). Building upon a century of pedagogic science, German educators had proven that such mental and moral powers could be fashioned by teachers who understood how to perfect human nature. In contrast to the preparation of monitorial masters, where the machinery of the system did the work of instruction, this would require the establishment of teaching seminaries. For those who questioned the expense or feared the specter of a new professional class, Austin pointed to the "most affecting, and I must say, sublime example" of the spirit inherent in the Prussian system, "the little schools for training poor schoolmasters in such habits and with such feelings as shall fit them to be the useful and contented teachers of the humblest cottagers of the most miserable villages" (p. xv-xvi). With no aspirations of advancement, they labored happily in their own poverty, "raised above their poor neighbors in education, only that they may become the servants of all, and may train the lowliest children in a sense of the dignity of man, and the beauty of creation, in the love of God and of virtue" (p. xvi).

Grounded in proven and well-accepted practices, there was nothing new or experimental in this system. The British were simply ignorant of the pedagogic advances made on the Continent. An extensive passage quoted from James Pillans on the history of teacher training from August Francke to Pestalozzi demonstrated just how much the country had to learn about the art of instruction (p. xx-xxiv). Whatever concerns might be held about Prussian despotism, its schoolmasters had perfected the ability to educate even the humblest

of its population into sensible, independently minded, and industrious citizens, able to direct their own actions under the guidance of their betters. Curiously, Austin did not draw further on Biber (1831), biographer and former associate of Pestalozzi, now master of the school in Hampstead attended by her daughter Lucy. Trained in the pietistic theology of Wurttemberg, Biber's (1830) lectures "On Christian Education" not only offered an unremitting critique of monitorial instruction they provided a detailed outline of the religious education promoted by Francke and his followers. The mechanical routines of Bell and Lancaster, he concluded, operated like "an engine of evil" to strengthen base passions and suffocate the good, inner spirit of the child. Like Francke, Biber's overriding concern was to overcome Mankind's carnal nature by restoring the intellectual and moral powers weakened by the fall of Adam. Employing a Christian Philosophy reminiscent of Comenius' Pansophy, he maintained that the study of the world and all its contents must be related to the purpose of Creation so that the idea of God "as the maker and supporter of all things" would "impress the child's mind with that reverential awe, which is declared to be 'the beginning of wisdom'" (p. 253). The Holy Word would spark a similar transformation of the emotions. Employing the inspirational power of Scripture and the living example of the savior, the child would be led freely and lovingly to embrace Christ as their monarch.

Like Cousin, Austin insisted that religious instruction must be the main tool of elementary schooling but struggled to explain how this could be achieved by a weak government in the face of fierce sectarian rivalries. In contrast to Prussia and France where religion operated as an arm of the state, intrusion into the domain of the Church only invited political ruin. John Stuart Mill's (1834) article, "Reform in Education," written in 1834 while vacationing with the Austins in Cornwall, illustrates the point. While including a four page excerpt from "On Christian Education" in support of Pestalozzian schooling, he studiously avoided the theological kernel of Biber's argument. Although a strong supporter of national education, Mill had

grown up without God and was highly uncomfortable with the prospect of religious indoctrination. Like his father, he favored more extensive instruction in the branches of useful knowledge. In any case, stymied by the seemingly intractable problems of church and state, his attention was focused on an even more pressing concern, the education of worthy political leaders.

The 1830s was a challenging time for the Austins. Struggling to support her intellectually brilliant but emotionally troubled husband as his academic and legal career faltered, Sarah maintained the family finances through the translation of German and French works (Hamburger & Hamburger, 1985). In 1836 the family moved to Malta when John was offered the opportunity to help frame the Maltese Constitution. Things did not go well; two years later they were back in England. Then, in 1841 they returned to the Continent, first to Dresden and then Paris, where in line with her professional interests and social proclivities Sarah held court with many of Europe's leading political and intellectual figures—Cousin and Guizot included (Goodman, 2002). Returning to Britain amid the turmoil of the 1848 Revolution, she continued her work as a translator while pursuing her own literary projects, and the publication of John's papers after his death in 1859. This included one more work on education, a pamphlet on the schooling of working-class girls—much along the lines of her earlier remarks—stressing the moral culture of the faculties and useful instruction for the child's appointed station, "lest the seeds of uneasy ambitions" be sown evoking "disgusts at the realities of life." (Austin, 1857, p. 5). But Sarah (and John) Austin's contribution to education should also be weighed in the light of the intellectual influence they had on one of the century's most profound thinkers. For despite John Stuart Mill's coolness to his onetime "Mutterlein," his thought was clearly shaped by German ideas on the nature of mind and society imbibed during his formative tutelage under the Austins.

From Bentham to Bildung

In 1826, John Austin journeyed to the University of Bonn hoping to broaden his knowledge of jurisprudence in preparation for his academic appointment at the soon to be opened University of London. This two-year sojourn led to something of a sea change in his political views. By the time Austin returned, Mill (1981a) tells us, “the influences of German literature and of the German character and state of society had made a very perceptible change in his views of life” (p. 184). Building upon Benthamite foundations, Austin solidified his underlying conviction that law and politics could be rendered moral sciences with principles that ensured the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But departing from Bentham’s democratic radicalism, he and Sarah came to believe that power must be grounded with an intellectual class who knew how to guide the state and ensure the population’s interests—rather than their inclinations—are best served. In short, legislators had to lead rather than follow the will of the people. “Let them disregard all the clamors about tyrannical interference” Sarah Austin (1835) wrote, “and remember that it is not the *vox populi*, but the *salus populi*, which is *suprema lex*” (p. 301).

Reflecting on his own intellectual development, Mill (1981a) later confessed that John Austin was the person with whom he shared “the most points of agreement” (p. 184). Convinced that scientific expertise was necessary to address complex economic and political problems of the day, he came to believe that the public must accept the authority of experts on matters of social policy much as they did the wisdom of physicians on questions of health. “It is right,” Mill (1986) argues in “The Spirit of the Age,” that

every man should attempt to understand his interest and his duty. It is right that he should follow his reason as far as his reason will carry him, and cultivate the faculty as highly as possible. But reason itself will teach most men that they must, in the last resort, fall back upon the authority of still

more cultivated minds, as the ultimate sanction of the convictions of their reason itself. (p. 244)

But society was not developing such cultivated minds. Weighing the educational achievements of the day, Mill questioned whether the “mental light” of the age

has not lost in intensity, at least a part of what it has gained in diffusion;” is the “march of intellect” not “a march towards doing without intellect, and supplying our deficiency of giants by the united efforts of a constantly increasing multitude of dwarfs? (p. 330)

The consequence, he feared, was the ascendancy of a powerful mindset able to establish a fixed body of doctrine and employ institutional practices to engineer blind conformity.

Mill’s worries for the governing leadership were motivated by the limits of his own education at the hands of his father. Determined to create a future philosopher who could continue Bentham’s reforms, James Mill immersed his son in an extraordinarily demanding course of academic study. From Plato to Political Economy, his days were spent in the analysis of texts. As a result, Mill reports growing up socially and physically awkward with little practical knowledge of the world. Even more disturbing, his father’s emphasis on the abstract and the analytical rendered him emotionally insensible. Mill’s (1981a) *Autobiography* thus serves as a *Bildungsroman* recounting his adolescent efforts to refashion himself through the education of the sentiments. “The maintenance of due balance among the faculties, now seemed to me of primary importance. The cultivation of the feelings became one the cardinal points in my ethical and philosophic creed” (p. 118). This project of self-formation was a central motif of the German literature and philosophy popularized in England by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle. No doubt Sarah Austin—who translated Goethe

and wrote on the history of German culture—also had an influence. But it was Coleridge who spoke most directly to Mill’s struggles. Rejecting the mechanical associationism of British Empiricism for the dynamic philosophy of Kant, Coleridge insisted on the primacy of an active, organizing subject able to generate meaning and value through creative power of imagination. Rather than being impressed from without, the development of mind and morals had to come from within. The intellect would be awakened not by providing

information that can be conveyed into ... [a] passive Mind ... as if the Human Soul were a mere repository,” but, as Plato showed, by placing it in “such relations of circumstance as should gradually excite its vegetating and germinating powers to produce new fruits of Thought, new Conceptions, and Imaginations, and Ideas. (Coleridge, 1854, p. 45)

This was the concept of *Bildung*—growth, cultivation, humanization—which Mill, citing the influence of Pestalozzi and von Humboldt, identified as the “grand, leading principle, towards which every argument” of his later philosophical masterpiece, *On Liberty* would converge; “the absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity” (Mill, 1981a, p. 215).

But what was being done to cultivate the powers, perfect the mind, and realize human individuality? Even in the great schools Mill (1981b) observed in his 1832 essay “On Genius,” education was “all cram—Latin cram, mathematical cram, literary cram, political cram, theological cram, moral cram” (p. 338). This did not constitute learning. Knowledge was a personal construction that “comes only from within; all that comes from without is but questioning, or else it is mere authority” (p. 332). Rather than “grinding down other men’s ideas to a convenient size, and administering them in the form of cram,” he was adamant that education must “form the thinking faculty itself” (p. 335). Here, as the German neo-

humanists insisted, the moderns had much to learn from the ancients. The Athenian Agora was a scene of

perpetual conflict of adverse intellects, struggling with each other, or struggling with difficulty and necessity. Every man had to play his part upon a stage where cram was of no use—nothing but genuine power would serve his turn. . . . This was the education to form great statesmen, great orators, great warriors, great poets, great architects, great sculptors, great philosophers; because, once for all, it formed men, and not mere knowledge-boxes. (p. 336)

Much as von Humboldt had argued for Prussia, Mill was adamant that improving the national character required leaders with vigorous and original intellects. Such powers could only be acquired through a secular education—like that of Germany and France—which combined freedom of thought with a love of truth. Neither condition, to his constant distress, seemed remotely likely at any level of English schooling. Oxford and Cambridge, Eaton and Westminster, he complained in 1836, only taught the mechanics of Greek and Latin to promote eloquence and persuasion (Mill, 1982a). Even more troublingly, they demanded blind obedience to the authority of the Church. Concerned to make disciples not thinkers, learning was reduced to the memorization of dogma. His prime concern was the cultivation of character.

Mill recognized how liberal society had improved the quality of life, but he also noted its tendency to suffocate the higher and broader expressions of the mind. Here, in the name of culture, he looked to Greek philosophy and literature, not as a model to imitate, but a distant standpoint from which to question and critique all that the modern world takes for granted. To guide the nation, future leaders also needed to understand the logic of inquiry employed in the physical and moral sciences. History was particularly important, as it demonstrated the plasticity of human nature

and the influence of institutions. Finally, and radically, he also called for the introduction of the fine arts hoping that by elevating the sentiments and refining taste, the university might fuel visions of a more noble life. Adapted to the national context, the parallels with von Humboldt's ideals of *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung* are unmistakable.

Education as a National Object

Written between March and September of 1834, Mill's (1982b) "Notes on the Newspapers" in the *Monthly Register* record his thoughts on the second sitting of the Reformed Parliament—a body he had little respect for. The country needed rulers "who can teach us what we should demand," but the current house was composed of men who "have neither the intellect, the knowledge, the energy, the courage, nor even the wish" to guide the people. Rather than leading the nation, the nation was leading them! (p. 154). Their duty to institute a national system of education was a case in point. Together with "Reform in Education" and a short review of Cousin's *Report* in the *Examiner*, Mill voiced his strong support for a Select Committee and the principle of compulsion justified in Austin's Preface—arguments liberally studded with personal attacks on Brougham and his voluntarism. Inevitably, Mill's prediction was confirmed. These men were not cut from the same cloth as the excellent Stein and Hardenberg, architects of the enlightened policies that had transformed Prussia (p. 515).

On April 16th, Brougham rose in the Lords to defend the Whig policy on schooling. Unlike Prussia, where "education was forced under the rigour [sic] of military punishment—under the dread of the serjeant [sic]—under the fear of the corporal," he was adamant that England must not compel public instruction (Hansard, 1834, April 16, p. 849). This did not mean that the leading societies should be left without assistance. With state aid and direction, he was confident that private initiative would be sufficient to meet the educational needs of the nation. The Commons agreed. When Roebuck presented his motion on June 3rd, widespread support for expanding

instruction was tempered by religious and political opposition to government control of schooling. Rather than exploring the feasibility of a national system based upon the example of Prussia, the members would only accept an inquiry "into the state of the education of the people in England and Wales, and into the application and effect of the grant made last Session for the erection of school-houses, and to consider the expediency of further grants in aid of education" (Hansard 1834, June 3, p. 139).

The Committee met throughout the summer, taking testimony from leaders of the two school societies and prominent voices on education; including extensive evidence on the Prussian system from Pillans and Nicholas Julius of Berlin (editor of a Berlin journal charged with popularizing the Altenstein ministry's reforms). The following year they reconvened to interview further witnesses, but evidently found little common ground, concluding only with the terse and telling comment that they were "unable to report their opinion to the House" (p.iii). The most significant feature of the published minutes was the remarkable seven-day evidence of James Simpson, author of the recently published *Necessity of Popular Education as a National Object* (1834). In concert with George Combe, Simpson spearheaded the public campaign for a state system of secular education in the second half of the decade. This was not the Godless instruction charged by its critics, but a non-sectarian program of practical Christianity that stressed both the development of mind and the dissemination of useful knowledge. Closer to the curriculum of the Prussian Burgher School, questions of doctrine would be left to the Church.

Although Austin was not called before the Committee, she did attempt to inform the Inquiry by publishing an extended commentary on the passage of the Guizot Law, "the first born offspring" of the Prussian system (Austin, 1835, p. 260). Again, her focus was on the dignity of human life and the problem of social order. She even quoted Kant to the effect that instruction must tame "the brood of vices, born of undisciplined and

lawless thoughts” and “enthroned wisdom as the ruler of Mankind” (p. 261). This was the essential task of public education. Schoolmasters would constitute a “new priesthood,” not to usurp the Church, but to nurture the religious feelings upon which all denominational teaching must depend. Following Guizot’s example, Austin’s argument then turned to practical questions of content and method—teacher training and textbooks. Here she aligned herself with “excellent” work of Simpson which provided a compelling explanation of the social conditions that beset industrial Britain.

Drawing upon the phrenological theory expounded in Combe’s (1828) *Constitution of Man* (yet another offshoot of German anthropology), Simpson painted a terrifying picture of the laboring classes. Wallowing in ignorance, he judged some seven-eighths of the population sickly and impulsive creatures, unable to govern their actions by reason. Without a national system of education to elevate and inform this volatile mass, crime and disorder would soon reign across the land. But a scientific understanding of human nature was at hand. The anatomy of the brain revealed the hierarchical organization of mental organs generating all thought and behavior. Properly adapted to physiological laws of growth and exercise, Pestalozzian methods could strengthen (or weaken) the child’s faculties. Combined with a basic knowledge of health and economics, even the lowest in society could comprehend the material conditions and moral imperatives that governed their life. Moreover, their improved character would be passed on to future generations, ensuring the historical progress of civilization. Pointing to the ideal of a perfectly balanced brain—the harmonious order of powers gifted by God, corrupted by Mankind—the Romantic and religious language of spiritual development was appropriated within a naturalistic theory of moral and economic improvement.

Simpson, Combe, and their allies had strong support even within the highest ranks of government, but the practical question of how to push educational reform was constrained by the standing interests of the Church. Forced to work

within the existing order, the Whig Ministry looked for a mutually acceptable way to exert greater control over the provision and quality of education. In a famous speech to the Lords, Brougham acknowledged the need to improve teacher preparation (Hansard, 1834, April 16). Three years later, amid widely voiced concerns that instruction was not being extended to the most needed areas, he proposed the establishment of a Board of Education empowered to operate a normal college and inspect schools. Intent on moving the plan forward, in 1839 the Ministry—avoiding the need for a Parliamentary vote—created an educational Committee within the Privy Council. Initially this raised little opposition, but with the publication of its first minute outlining the measures proposed by Brougham, it was greeted with loud and determined resistance. What was to be the faith of a future master? If their training was to be purely secular, would God’s word be left out of schooling? Who would monitor the work of an Anglican or dissenting teacher? And so on. Chastened by Tory opposition, the government capitulated, dropping its scheme for a teaching seminary and limiting the committees’ duties to the administration of government funds. Oversight of instruction would rest with inspectors approved by the respective societies—a far cry from the pedagogically-empowered and rationally structured system of state schooling envisioned by Austin.

Charles Brooks

If the Prussian system did not take root in Britain, it soon found more fertile ground in New England. While historians have long noted American interest in European education, attention has typically focused on native movements for school reform (Kaestle, 1983; Katz, 2001). David Komline (2020) presents a more nuanced picture of Transatlantic influence, tracing the 1837 formation of the Massachusetts Board of Education—and the subsequent establishment of state normal schools—to the agitation of the Reverend Charles Brooks, a Unitarian minister from Plymouth County. Building a pan-Protestant alliance, Brooks

employed Cousin's *Report* to justify the religious rejuvenation of the state through public education. In the summer of 1835, on the final leg of his European tour Brooks attended a gathering at the home of Sarah Austin's cousin, Harriet Martineau. Here he was introduced to Julius, who after his testimony before the Select Committee, was *en route* to investigate American prisons for the German government. The two struck up an immediate bond and agreed to share a cabin on the 41-day passage across the Atlantic. As Brooks (1865) later recalled, this "sound scholar" and "pious Christian" found a ready disciple. "I fell in love with the Prussian system; and it seemed to possess me like a missionary angel" (p. 6). Determined to master the details of European schooling, he immersed himself in study, even initiating correspondence with Cousin (who he had met in Paris). Six months later, when Julius visited Massachusetts, Brooks was certain God had called upon him to "introduce it into my native state" (p. 6). With Austin's translation now available in America, he composed a Thanksgiving Address on the importance of education reform, which he then expanded into three extensive lectures on the nature, implementation, and benefits of Prussian schooling. The following year he traversed the state preaching the cause to religious and educational conventions. Collecting resolutions for action, by 1837 he was ready to petition the legislature. Submitted to the Massachusetts House of Representatives (1837a) on behalf of Plymouth County on January 24th, Brooks laid out the compelling evidence of Cousin's *Report*. "The object of education," he asserted, "is to develop [sic] ALL the powers, faculties, and affections of human nature in their natural order, proper time and due proportion; so that each one may occupy the exact place in the grown-up character which God at first ordained in the infant constitution" (Massachusetts House of Representatives, 1837a, p. 5). The Prussian system, he continued, was designed to unfold "the *whole* nature of man as the Creator designed; thus bringing out *all* the talent of the country, and thereby giving to every child the chance of making the most of himself." It was thus

"emphatically a *Christian* system" (p. 6). Adapted to local needs, Massachusetts needed a committee in each town to oversee its schools, a superintending Board of Education in each country, and a Secretary of Public Instruction to disseminate information and report to the legislature. Most important, as the Prussian model proved, was the establishment of normal schools. A new "era of light and of love" demanded masters able to educate virtuous and comprehending citizens (p. 9). Accordingly, he concluded, "the first of all favors, which you can grant to your constituents. . . [is] to secure to every county 'seminaries for the preparation of teachers'" (p. 9). Brooks was invited to lecture the House of Representatives, and three months later a Bill drafted by James G. Carter forming a State Board of Education was signed into law by then Governor Edward Everett, with Horace Mann as its secretary. Normal schools were soon to follow. Brooks (1864) later pointed with some pride to his pivotal role in the process, a claim dismissed as "absurd" by Everett, with the observation that "my agency is as much ignored as possible" (cited in Frothingham, 1925, p. 137). The same criticism could be leveled at historians of American education who have paid little attention to one of most powerful and influential voices of the Early Republic.

Edward Everett

A prodigious scholar and gifted orator, Everett graduated from Harvard Divinity School in 1813. After two years as Unitarian minister to Boston's Brattle Street Church he was appointed, at age 19, Professor of Greek Literature at his *alma mater*. In preparation for the position, Everett was permitted a four-year sojourn in Europe. Two years were spent at the University of Göttingen (where he became the first American ever to be awarded a doctorate) and two years travelling between Continental capitals. In addition to being schooled by Germany's leading theological and classical scholars Everett, together with his companion George Ticknor, met a veritable galaxy of Europe's *literati* and political leaders—including Byron,

Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt, and, during their 1817-1818 stay in Paris, Madame de Stael whose 1813 book *De L'Allemagne* had fueled their interest in German learning and culture (Gura, 2007). They were also deeply impressed by European institutions. During a six week break from studies in the fall of 1816, they toured the North of Germany visiting, according to Ticknor's biographer, "all the principal cities, and every distinguished university and school, whether in a city or small town" (Hillard, 1876, p 107). This included Dresden, Berlin, Leipsic, Wittenberg, Halle, and Weimar—where they conversed with Goethe. According to Jaeck (1915) they were accompanied by Cousin, who is said to have considered Everett "the best Grecian he ever knew" (p. 256). No less than Ticknor, Everett was also deeply impressed with the superiority and dedication of the German teacher. His diary records his thoughts on improving instruction at home and praises the "Schoolmaster's Institute" at Weimar, "an establishment for the forming young men to be teachers in the free schools" (cited in Yanikoski, 1987, p. 102). Bringing the German model to America became the leading idea of Ticknor's friend Joseph Cosgwell (who matriculated at Göttingen later that year) and Everett's student George Bancroft (who followed in 1818). Uncertain about the direction of his studies, Bancroft floated the idea of returning home to set up a German high school. Everett responded positively, encouraging him to observe all he could, adding "we can do nothing at Cambridge till we contrive the means of having the boys sent to us far better fitted than they are now" (cited in Jaeck, p. 263.)

Like Everett and Ticknor, Bancroft and Cosgwell returned to teach at Harvard, but soon found their careers mired by conservative politics. Determined to make their mark, they combined in 1823 to open an American *Gymnasium* (Round Hill in Northampton) with the aim of employing the classics to develop the mind and character of future university students. For their part Ticknor and Everett sought to reform Harvard from within. Ticknor challenged the traditional method of

recitation; Everett introduced the Greeks through the lens of Heyne and the Bible through the teachings of Eichhorn. For students like Emerson, the experience was electrifying; the ancient world was revealed anew as a source of meaning and value for the mind of a striving nation (Mathews, 1990). Everett took the same message to Boston's leading citizens in a series of popular lectures. More significantly, as editor of the *North American Review* between 1820 and 1824, he worked tirelessly to introduce European ideas in the hopes of igniting a new culture of higher learning that could inform the moral and material progress of the Republic. True to his nickname, "Ever-at-it," some 61 articles flowed from his pen: 116 by mid-Century (Frothingham, 1925; Varg, 1992).

Elected to Congress alongside his great friend Daniel Webster, Everett spent the next ten years in Washington, before returning to serve as Governor of Massachusetts between 1836 and 1838, the momentous years of the Common School Crusade. His long-standing commitment to the importance of education, evident in the length and breadth of his voluminous writings, flowed naturally from his schooling within the Unitarian Church and his subsequent ascendance to its intellectual hub at Harvard. As Daniel Walker Howe (1970) explains, Cambridge theologians and moralists saw public instruction as a religious project, complementing the Church's efforts to prefect the self-directed, informed, and pious citizenry of a Christian Republic. Building upon the legacy of the Pilgrim fathers and the teachings of Scottish Common-Sense philosophy, they embraced a commitment to the inherent moral and rational capacity of the individual. Certainly, the Republic needed wise and virtuous leadership, but this did not mean the kind of social elitism embraced by Europeans. The ideal of the common school promised equal opportunity for all according to merit. It was also necessary for an informed and conscientious citizenry willing to perform their social and civic duties. Both goals were informed by Everett's experiences and Europe, and more particularly the intellectual commitments he had imbibed from German

philosophical and religious thought. The comparison with Mill is instructive. Both looked to the advancement of democracy through public schooling, and both recognized this would require the education of a cultured elite.

Intelligence, Everett (1832) explained to the working men of Boston, was the wealth of a democratic nation. Equally distributed across the population, it had to be cultivated and employed for the material and spiritual benefit of all. Vocational education was important, but like his continental peers, he was more interested in the realization of the spiritual powers bestowed by the Creator. Mankind's true nature depended upon the complete and balanced development of all the mind's faculties, a process of humanization that would bring men and women to a more ethical and rational understanding of themselves and God. "Drawing out the divine" required a new form of instruction. "The mind was not a vessel to be filled up from without" (p. 14). Such knowledge, he continued, could make someone learned, but it could not make them wise. The point of public lectures was "to kindle the understanding to consciousness of its own powers; to make it feel within itself that it is a living, spiritual thing; to feed it, in order that it may itself begin to act and operate, to compare, contrive, invent, improve and perfect (p. 15). Indeed, this was the larger purpose of all social institutions. Like a great school, all the instruments of intelligence—from infant to college education, libraires, public lectures, and even newsprint—had to be employed to improve the population. While the state could not be permitted to exercise control over the interplay of ideas, with Mill, he recognized its obligation to provide resources for individual improvement and promote the future civilization of the nation.

Accounts of the deplorable condition of the state's common school and its inadequately prepared teachers naturally concerned Everett and other likeminded leaders. As his article on "University Education" demonstrates, the example of Europe only heightened the impetus for fundamental reform at home. Praising Jefferson's Rockfish Gap Report, he celebrated the use of

public money—Virginia's Literary Fund—for the expansion of education (Everett, 1820). Public schooling was an obvious good. But more important, as Jefferson would also argue, was the improvement of higher education (Tomlinson, 2005). Everett's overriding concern was the establishment of a national University based upon the German model. Building upon a rigorous *gymnasium* education, he envisioned an advanced professional school that promoted the generation of knowledge through free interchange between the disciplines (a counterpart of the elective system subsequently adopted at the University of Virginia). This could not be left to the states, or to private beneficence. In contrast to the many prestigious colleges supported by the modest, worn-torn monarchies and principalities of Germany, America had "never founded a literary institution of any description or sort;" a free republic, "which ought to see every thing as sacred which belongs to the enlightening, instructing, and elevating the nation," stands in shame, allowing an array of petty aristocrats to be "the guardians of the highest good, the cultivation of the intellectual man" (p. 137).

The Massachusetts Board of Education

As it turned out, with his election as governor in 1836 Everett inherited the opportunity to use public funds for the advancement of schooling in Massachusetts. The question of educational reform had occupied the state legislature for more than a decade. Led by James G. Carter, critics complained that inadequate resources and unprepared teachers had corrupted the historical mission of the common school, most notably, in its duty to ensure the piety and morals of the population. In 1827 Carter submitted a memorial to the Senate requesting funds to establish a teaching seminary. When his petition was narrowly rejected, he joined with other prominent schoolmen in 1830 to press the cause through the formation of the American Institute of Instruction (Kaestle, 1983). The opportunity for progress came in 1834 when Massachusetts received a sizable reimbursement from the federal

government for the sale of land in Maine and its services in the War of 1812. A law was enacted allocating the money to the support common schools, but crucially provided no formula for its disbursement. Weighing the merits of civil and religious liberty with the importance of education to propensity and social order, then Governor John Davis suggested that the legislature approve employing the fund to aid local and voluntary efforts (Massachusetts. House of Representatives, 1835a). Chaired by Everett's older brother Alexander, the House Committee on Education accepted the Brougham-like logic. Half the sum would be allocated based upon population; the other half used to stimulate local initiative. More importantly, the money was not to be wasted on inadequate buildings, books, or instruction. The quality of education had to be improved. Here the Committee turned to the example of Prussia, whose methods of training teachers now engaged "the attention of the friends of education throughout the Christian world" (Massachusetts. House of Representatives, 1835b, p. 8). Applying some portion of the fund for establishment of similar schools, the Committee concluded, "would do more for the cause of public instruction in this Commonwealth, than almost any innovation on the existing institutions that could well be imagined (p. 8). To support their case, the Committee appended an "Outline of the Prussian System" provided by Julius as a short but faithful summary of Cousin's valuable work. They also recommended distributing copies of Austin's translation to every town in the state—which Alexander Everett (1835) then reviewed in the April 1835 issue of the *North American Review* for the broader benefit of the nation.

Evidently concerned that the fund might be distributed without due attention to the quality of instruction, the American Institute of Instruction submitted a memorial the following year calling for the appointment of a state superintendent of schools (Massachusetts. House of Representatives, 1836a). In contrast to Prussia and France, they pointed to the lack of system, the necessity of teacher training, the value of accurate records, and

importance of inspection. The institute's annual conventions had done much to encourage mutual support and edification, but far greater direction and encouragement was needed for effective reform. The Education Committee was in complete agreement. Authored by its new chair, James G. Cater, their 1836 report recommended immediate enactment by the legislature. However, the committee was divided on the question of teacher seminaries pushed by Carter. The example of Prussia weighed heavily, he explained, but the majority held that the current proposal must be in place before any attempt was made to establish normal schools (Massachusetts House of Representatives, 1836b). When the House failed to move on the Committee's modest recommendation, Everett used his January 1837 Address to introduce a more robust proposal (Massachusetts. Senate, 1837). Insistent that the "wealth of Massachusetts always has been, and always will be, the mind of her children," he noted the urgent need to improve facilities, equipment, and instruction; utility alone suggested "the creation of a board of commissioners of schools, to serve without salary, with authority to appoint a secretary, on a reasonable compensation, to be paid from the school fund" (pp. 16-17).

Determined not to let the cause of teaching seminaries languish, supporters called upon Brooks to address the House. Articles appeared in the press and the American Institute of Instruction weighed in with a second memorial (Massachusetts. House of Representatives, 1837b). Carter's first tactic was to secure a portion of further federal funds flowing from the sale of Western lands. When this failed—contrary to the two-step process agreed previously—he drafted a Bill combining his proposal with Everett's plan, only to have it stripped away in the House debate. The amended motion proved successful, and by April the Board of Education had been signed into law, but without any commitment to the establishment of normal schools. Komline (2020) provides a reconstruction of these events, detailing how Brooks' agitation was complemented by the political maneuvering of the state's powerbrokers.

In his efforts to secure passage of the Bill, Everett enlisted the help of Edmund Dwight, a wealthy businessman with powerful connections. His support and influence provided the “crucial momentum” (p. 143). But it came at a cost; a seat on the Board of Education and, what appears to be the added condition, that Horace Mann, not James Carter, be appointed Secretary.

Everett, who chaired the Board and wrote its first two reports, soon discovered that Mann was an inspired choice (Massachusetts. Senate, 1838). His duties, loosely defined, were to report on “the condition and efficiency of the common schools” and communicate information across the Commonwealth “on the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young” (p. 6). To this end it was decided that he should arrange annual conventions and offer lectures in each of the state’s 13 counties. After six months Everett reported “the happiest effects.” Mann’s zeal “had awakened a new interest in the cause of school education” (p. 7). Comparing reports, it is striking how closely they cooperated on the core problems of facilities, record keeping, administration, textbooks, teaching, and the encouragement of public support for schooling. For both men, the elevation of mind and morals was key to the progress of Christian civilization, the project of the American Republic. Curiously, while detailing the poor preparation of teachers, Mann’s first report did not mention normal schools (Massachusetts Senate, 1838). That was Everett’s special project, evidently taking shape behind the scenes. After detailing the example of foreign nations, he cryptically expressed his “sanguine hope that the time is not too far distant, when the resources of public or private liberality will be applied in Massachusetts for the foundation of an institution for the formation of teachers” (Massachusetts. Senate, 1838, p. 12). Again, Dwight had come to the rescue, this time with a \$10,000 donation, matched by the Legislature the following April. Mann’s (1845) second lecture thus expanded on the preparation of teachers in time for the opening of the nation’s first normal school in Lexington, the

following year. Here a new influence became apparent: phrenology. Where Everett’s (1859) speech to teachers at Tisbury in 1838, “Education the Nurture of the Mind,” employed highly metaphorical allusions to the “spiritual essence,” “heavenly flame,” and “vital spark” in the cultivation of powers and talents, Mann looked to physiological laws of cause and effect.

George Combe’s Physiology of the Mind

Mann’s journal reveals the pivotal role Combe’s (1828) *Constitution of Man* played in his decision to accept the Secretaryship. Trading his lawbooks for “the improvability of the race,” he dedicated himself the larger sphere of mind and morals. “Having found the present generation composed of materials almost unmallable, I am about transferring my efforts to the next. Men are cast-iron; but children are wax” (Mann, 1865, p. 83). Simpson’s (1834) *Necessity of Popular Education* illustrated its application to schooling. In what reads like a *precis* of Combe’s moral philosophy, Mann laid out the import of phrenology for the training of teachers. Like any other art, education required a knowledge of materials and the means of transformation. The former was revealed in the architecture of the brain. A hierarchy of discrete emotional, moral, and intellectual organs governed every aspect of human behavior. The latter utilized laws of heredity and exercise. While individuals varied between and within nations according to the influence of social institutions, their innate powers could be strengthened or weakened through appropriate activities. In addition to imparting the most useful knowledge of life, the overarching goal was the perfection of human nature through the full and harmonious balance of the faculties gifted by God. In his *Notes on the United States of America during a Phrenological Visit in 1838-9-40.* Combe (1841a)—who had travelled with Mann and Everett to the Taunton Convention—reported “I never listened to a more sound, philosophical, comprehensive, practical, eloquent, and felicitous composition” (p. I. 65). In fact, he had found his most ardent disciple.

Combe's influence on Mann is apparent in all his later writings, most especially his famous *Seventh Annual Report* (Massachusetts. Senate, 1844). On his return to Europe Combe took up residence in Germany in the hopes of popularizing phrenology in the land of its origin. Mann wrote asking for "a series of letters in relation to the German schools,—their course of studies, modes of instruction, disciplines, order, qualifications of teachers, attainments of scholars, results, &c." in order to improve the training of teachers in the Massachusetts normal schools (Mann, 1865, p. 159). Combe wrote back suggesting he come see for himself. By 1843 the tour was set. But Combe, suffering from an acute case of hemorrhoids, was unable to travel (Stack, 2008). Limited to making introductions and arranging visits, Mann drew upon his "large & comprehensive views" to complete his "impulsive Report" (cited in Tomlinson, 2005, p. 267). Framed in terms of national character, Mann compared the brutalized populations of industrial England with the more elevated character of despotic Prussia. Public schooling was creating a new breed of men and women. The same practices would also work in democratic America, after all "the human faculties are substantially the same all over the world, and hence the best means for their development and growth in one place, must be substantially the best for their development and growth elsewhere" (Mann, 1865, p. 242). Those in favor of the scientific approach to education, he told readers of the *Common School Journal*, were "helping to elevate mankind into the upper and purer regions of civilization, Christianity, and the worship of the true God;" those who obstruct "the progress of this cause are impelling the race backward into barbarism and idolatry" (Mann, M. & Pécant, F (1891), V. p. 163).

What gets lost in this Transatlantic tale is the reciprocal role Massachusetts played in the movement for public education in Britain. Determined to reinvigorate the 1930s campaign for secular schooling, Combe (1841b) published "Education in America," a Cousin-like description of the legal, administrative, and practical workings

of the Massachusetts system. In contrast to the centralized and authoritarian institutions of despotic Prussia he hailed the local and democratic traditions of the United States. As evidenced by public records and copious reports, in its first four years under Mann's stewardship, the Board had worked effectively to improve instruction across the state. Most important for British readers—given the disputes of the previous decade—this had been achieved without legal compulsion or religious rancor. The Secretary's power was limited to the force of argument; clergy of all denominations embraced its nonsectarian focus on practical Christianity. Here was "strong evidence of the possibility of operating on the public mind by means of an organized system, and authorized functionaries, wielding moral powers alone," a lesson highly "instructive to ourselves" (pp, 495-496). After his return from Germany in 1844, Combe (1847a, 1847b, 1848) was ready to take this message to the country. With the government struggling to institute reforms under the yoke of the Church, he published a series of influential papers on science, religion, and schooling—and rallied Richard Cobden and other veterans of the Anti-Corn league to the cause of national education. As Maltby (1918) explains, it was Combe's Massachusetts blueprint that provided the core principles of this Manchester based campaign to establish public schooling, first in Lancashire, and then the nation; the movement which ultimately led, under the leadership of William Edward Forster, to the English Elementary Education Act of 1870.

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Manuscript received, March 8, 2022
Revision received, August 28, 2022
Manuscript accepted, August 29, 2022