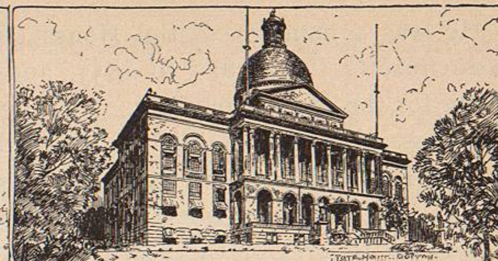
I give the name that fits him best,
Ay, better than his own,
The Sea-king of the sovereign West,
Who made his mast a throne."

Tell Farragut's story about his boyhood.
Give accounts of the capture of New Orleans; of the great naval battle near Mobile.
Describe Farragut's speech at Norfolk.

Decatur, Porter, and Farragut were all sons of naval officers; did that fact aid them in their life-work? Did Farragut's father know with certainty what would be his son's life if he did not change? Why did Farragut write to his wife to keep "perfect silence"? What were "blockade runners"? Was Farragut safe in his high position on the mast? Why was Farragut called a "croaker"? Whom did Holmes call the "Viking of the River Fight," the "Conqueror of the Bay," the "Sea-king of the sovereign West, who made his mast a throne"? Explain the reason for each expression, if possible.



CHAPTER XXXV

Horace Mann

1796–1859

NEAR the close of the last century, on a small farm in Franklin, Massachusetts, Horace Mann was born. He was a thoughtful and studious boy. From the age of ten until he was twenty he had not more than six weeks' schooling in any one year. The teachers in these schools he afterward described as "very good people, but very poor teachers." His school-books he earned by braiding straw.

When he was twenty years old, he came under the influence of a schoolmaster who was a real scholar, a genius who could appreciate rare mental power when he found it in his pupils. This traveling pedagogue encouraged young Horace to prepare for college and obtain a liberal education. His pupil entered into the plan with an intense zeal, so that in a few months he was admitted to advanced standing in Brown University. He was graduated from college in 1819, and on commencement day he delivered an oration upon "The Progressive Character of the Human Race." He taught Latin and Greek at his alma mater, studied law, and was admitted to the bar in 1823.

He was a member of the House of Representatives in Massachusetts from 1827 to 1833, and served in the State Senate for the next four years. Through his personal exertions Massachusetts established a Board of Education, and Mr. Mann was at once put at its head as "Secretary." During his long service, in addition to his other duties, he wrote the annual reports of the board to the people of the State. These reports discussed in a forcible manner many new questions of education, and they had a great influence in elevating the standard of public sentiment and of school instruction, not only in the State of Massachusetts, but throughout the whole country. He made a tour in Europe, especially noting all the good features of the schools of Germany, and then gave the result of his observations to his countrymen.

The earnestness of purpose and tremendous industry which he threw into his work could not fail to produce great results. In speaking of his service at a later period, he said: "I labored in this cause an average of not less than fifteen hours a day, and from the beginning to the end of this period (eleven years) I never took a single day for relaxation, and month after month together passed without my withdrawing a single evening to call upon a friend." It was his desire for better schools in America that made him work like this.

While Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education he brought to pass a complete revolution of public sentiment regarding popular education. It was Horace Mann who, by advocating new methods and new plans—at first almost alone and unaided—started the great movement in public-school education in this country which has continued to the present day. There are many things which we call American, in distinction from others called European. Nothing, however, is

more strikingly American than our system of public education.

The New England settlers very early began to establish schools. Education was dear to their hearts. In 1639 the plantation at Dorchester established a school to be supported by taxation. This was the beginning of the American system of public schools. "The property of the State should be taxed to educate the children of the State." To-day this

AN OLD-TIME COUNTRY SCHOOL-ROOM.

principle is applied in every State and every Territory of the Union. On it depends, in large measure, the strength of our republican institutions.

In the early days, as might be supposed, the schools were very crude. Most of the people were spread over the country upon farms. The towns were divided into school districts,

and, after a time, each district managed its own school affairs. The schoolhouses were small, of but one room, and generally located at "the forks of the roads." They might be twenty or twenty-five feet square, with a long desk on each of three sides and a bench of white-oak or hard-pine plank in front of it. Upon the fourth side was a huge fireplace, with a stone chimney. Wood was plenty, and sometimes the "backlog," the "forestick," and the pile of wood between them would measure at least a quarter of a cord. As the districts became better settled, more benches were added, and, at last, stoves supplanted the fireplaces.

Here the "master" kept the school from six to twelve weeks in the winter, and the "mistress" an equal length of time in the summer. Queer reading lessons and queer ways of spelling they had in those days. Webster's "Blue-back" Spelling Book was in general use at the beginning of this century. It had reading as well as spelling lessons, one of the former being the familiar story of the old man who found a rude boy in his apple tree.

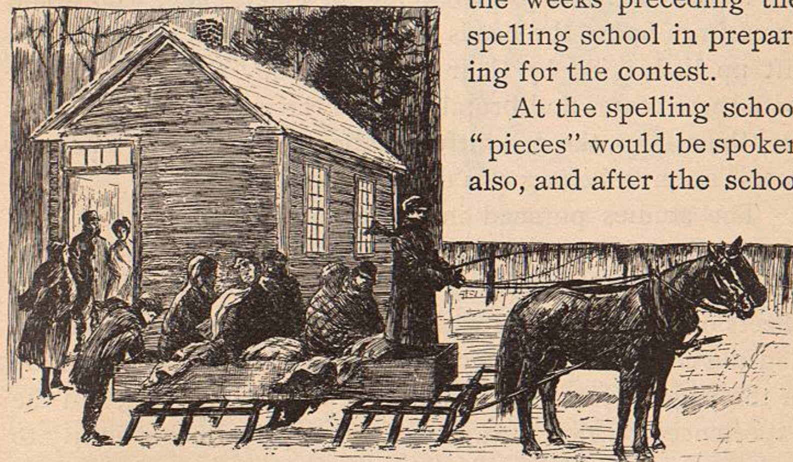
They had curious ways of conducting a spelling-lesson. The word "able" would be spelled thus: "A-by-self, a; b-l-e, ble—able." "Aaron" would be spelled in this way: "Great A, little a; r-o-n, ron—Aaron." Great attention was given in the spelling to the pronunciation of the syllables, and sometimes a little extra explanation would be thrown in.

In some places the word "abomination" would be spelled after this fashion: "A, there's your a; b-o-m, bom, there's your bom, there's your abom; i-n, in, there's your in, there's your bomin, there's your abomin; a, there's your a, there's your ina, there's your bomina, there's your abomina; t-i-o-n, tion, there's your tion, there's your ation, there's your ination, there's your bomination, there's your abomination."

In those days the spelling school was a great institution. It was, for the whole neighborhood, equal to a theatrical play. Great fun the young people had. Sometimes a school district would be pitted against the next school district, and, as the master "put out" the words, the contest would consist in a severe trial to see which district would be "floored" first.

The spellers from one district would be ranged along one side of the area and those from the other district along the other side. The first word would be given to the first speller on one side, the next word to the first speller on the other side, then to the second speller, and so on. If one missed a word, he must immediately take his seat. Rapidly the ranks would be thinned, and by and by the contest would be carried on perhaps between two spellers, one on each side. Then, as one missed and the other was victorious, a mighty shout would rise up. Many would spend a great amount of time during the weeks preceding the spelling school in preparing for the contest.

At the spelling school "pieces" would be spoken also, and after the school



THE RIDE HOME AFTER "SPELLING SCHOOL."

was over would come games, and, if the sleighing was good, an extended sleigh-ride, on the principle that the longest way around was the nearest way home.

In those old times everybody had very positive ideas upon the question of "school discipline." A woman might keep school in the summer, when only the younger scholars went to school; but in the winter it was understood that all the big boys in the neighborhood would attend school, and therefore the committee must find a man that would be unquestionably the *master*. He must be able to prevent the big boys from defying his authority, throwing him out of the window, pitching him into a snowbank, or riding him on a rail. All of these shameful performances have been known to be executed in the early days in some of the New England school districts.

Under such conditions, of course, there would occasionally be found a tyrannical school-master, one who would make incessant use of the "ferule," who would keep some stout hickory sticks on hand prepared for an emergency, who would sometimes bump the heads of two boys together, who would lift up little girls by their ears until they bled. Compared with these coarse and brutal ways on the part of both the boys and the master, the delightful relations of our modern schoolrooms seem to belong to a different world.

The studies pursued in the schools of those early days consisted mainly of the three R's—"Readin', Ritin', and 'Rithmetic." The writing book was usually made of six sheets of foolscap paper with a brown-paper cover sewed on, and the copies were set by the master or mistress, at the top of the page. The writing was done with a quill pen, and the experienced teacher always took great pride in his ability to make and mend pens. A sharp penknife was needed. The new quill must be scraped on the outside to remove the thin

film, a sort of cuticle which enveloped the quill proper. One dexterous stroke cut off what was to become the underside of the pen. A single motion of the knife made the slit. Two quick strokes removed the two upper corners, leaving the point. Then came the most delicate part of this mechanical process. The point of the pen was placed upon the thumbnail of the left hand. The knife was deftly guided so as to cut off the extreme end of the pen directly across the slit, leaving a smooth end, not too blunt so as to make too large a mark, and not too fine so as to scratch. The pen was then ready for use.

A MASTER MENDING A QUILL PEN.

All this is now long past. The old method of teaching, the old system of discipline, the old schoolhouse, and the course of study which included only the three R's, have all given place to modern and improved methods.

Graded schools; houses properly lighted, heated, and ventilated; courses of study enriched and refined; true methods of presenting the subjects to be studied; manual training and physical training—these all are parts of the modern system.

Teachers are now selected, not because of their physical ability to "keep school," but because they have been trained to teach, have been carefully taught how to present the subjects properly to the child's mind; these are the teachers of to-day.

Our school system, however, did not begin at the bottom and work upward, but it began at the top and reached downward. Harvard College, in Massachusetts, was founded in 1636; William and Mary College, in Virginia, in 1693; Yale College, in Connecticut, in 1700; and by the middle of the eighteenth century, three others had been started—King's College, now Columbia University, in New York; Princeton University, in New Jersey; and the University of Pennsylvania.

The colleges required preparatory schools. The Boston Latin School was begun in 1635, and other preparatory schools followed from necessity. About a hundred years ago, private academies were established in large numbers, to prepare young men for college and for business life. During the first half of the nineteenth century these academies played a very important part in the history of education. But about the middle of this century Massachusetts by law made public high schools compulsory in all her larger towns. These high schools soon spread into all the States; they have displaced many of the private academies, and have brought "secondary education," as it is called, within the reach of all the people.

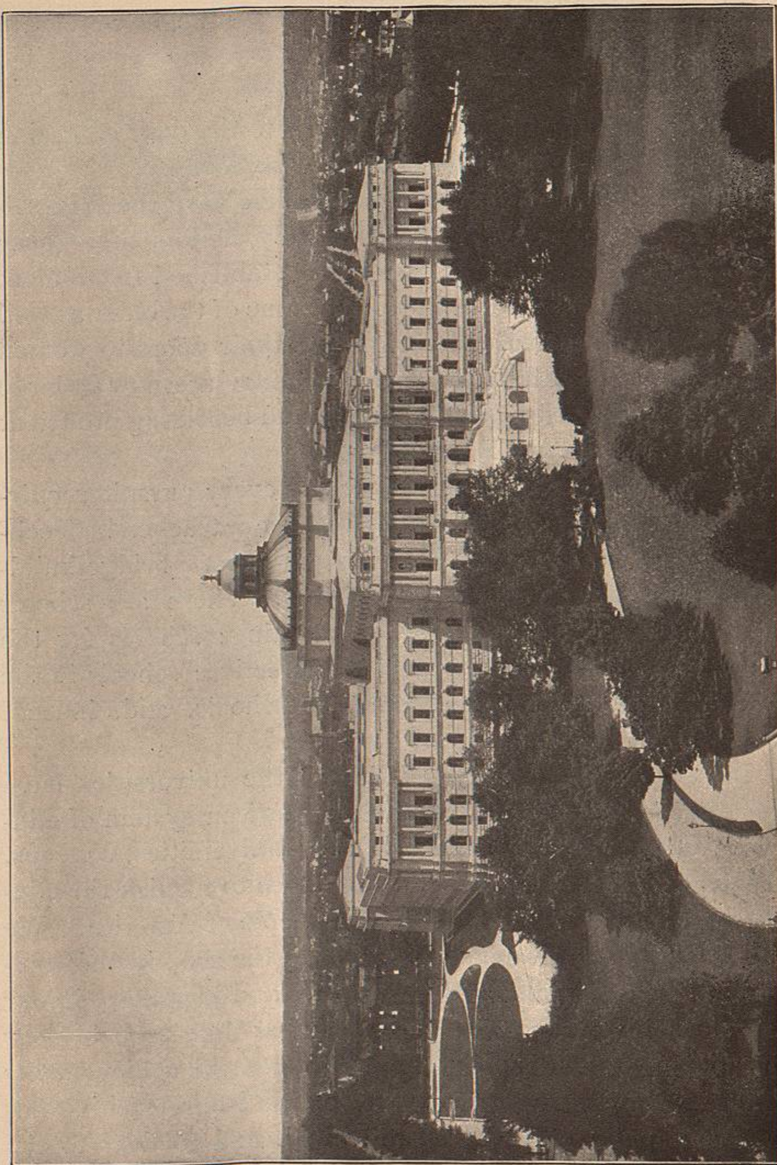
Within the last half of the nineteenth century, vast sums of money have been given for the endowment of colleges throughout the United States. Probably in no part of the world or in any preceding age have such large sums of money been given for educational purposes as have been contributed by individuals and voted by the people within the last fifty years to endow institutions of learning in our country.

In another direction extraordinary advance has been made—namely, in the education of women. Before this country obtained its independence, but little attention had been given to the education of girls. They were taught at home to cook, to sew, to embroider, but their school privileges were very meager. Progress in the education of young women was slow indeed, until within quite recent years. But for half a century our people have been awake to the duty of giving to girls every chance for learning that boys enjoy.

It has been demonstrated that women learn the arts, sciences, and literature as easily, as rapidly, and as thoroughly as men do. Many colleges have been established for women, and they are all full to overflowing. Some of the older as well as the newer universities have opened their doors to women on equal terms with men. Young women are now in large numbers taking post-graduate courses and becoming proficient in various and diverse lines of study.

We have special schools for nearly every pursuit requiring great skill. Normal schools educate our teachers. Technical schools educate our mechanics, engineers, bridge-builders, mining engineers, and architects. There are schools for manual training and physical training; schools for the blind, the deaf, and those otherwise defective; schools in the prisons, night schools, and summer schools, and, indeed, schools of all sorts and for all purposes.

In England, Germany, and France the universities have their special excellences. But the American system of education, including public schools, State universities, colleges, technical schools, and others, all combine to furnish the education which is best adapted to the people of America. We have made rapid advance in science, in the arts, in the comforts of life, in our industrial pursuits, and especially in our marvelous inventions and manufactures; but probably our educational system shows the most wonderful achievements of all. The progress of our schools and our teaching has been so rapid, so varied, so universal, and so dear to the



THE NATION'S NEW LIBRARY, AT WASHINGTON.—THE MOST SUMPTUOUS LIBRARY BUILDING IN THE WORLD.

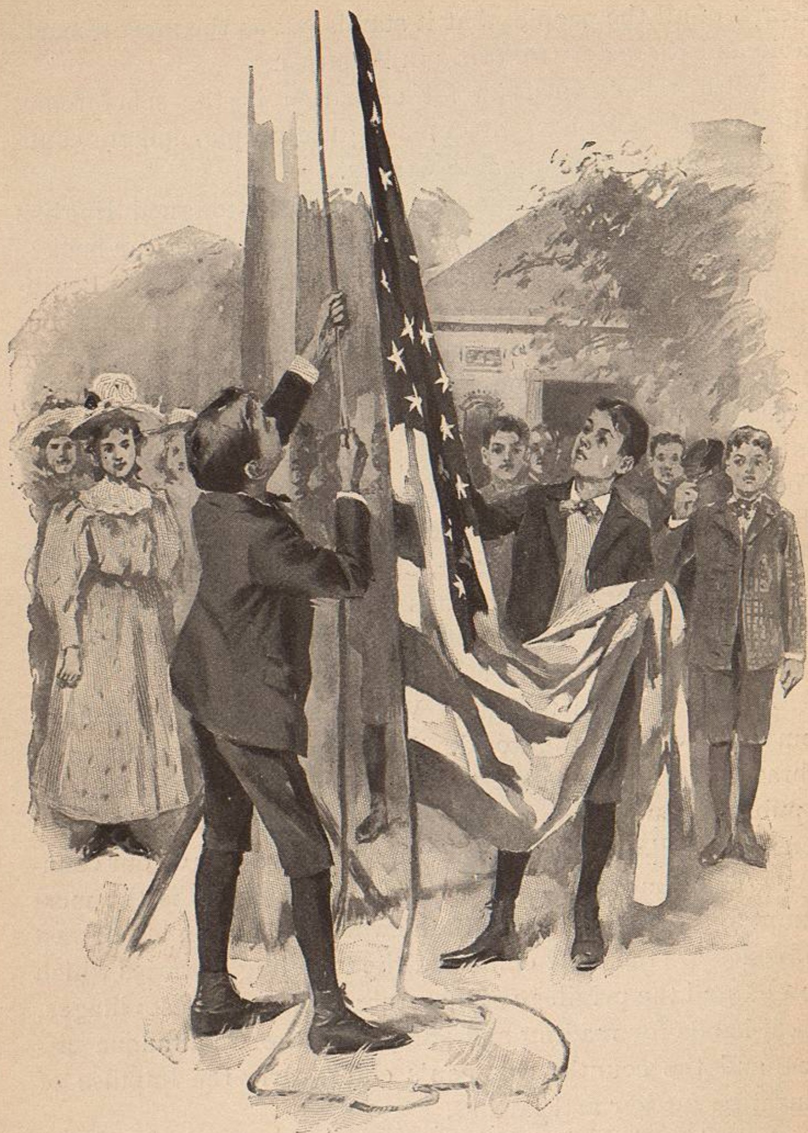
hearts of all the people, that it stands out as the most remarkable and characteristic thing in America.

With the enthusiasm for education in the schoolroom, the love of books has grown among the people, and our country has produced many able writers.

Once, long ago, Sidney Smith, a sharp-tongued English critic, asked contemptuously, "Who reads an American book?" Now the whole reading world reads American books. Beginning with Washington Irving, who wrote so charmingly about Spain and old New York, and gave us "Rip Van Winkle," we have had a splendid company of such historians as Bancroft, Prescott, Parkman, Motley, and MacMaster; of such poets as Bryant, Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, Lowell, Emerson, Poe, Lanier, Whitman; such story-tellers as Cooper, Hawthorne, Cable, James, Howells, Mrs. Stowe, Mrs. Phelps Ward, Mrs. Hodgson Burnett, Crawford, and Davis; and such humorous writers as "Artemus Ward," "Mark Twain," and the narrator of "Uncle Remus"; besides scores of other authors who are scarcely less eminent.

Americans love to read. We have a public library system unmatched in the world. Nearly every city has its great library, and as fast as the towns grow in culture they put up a public library building, where books are free to all the citizens. The Boston Library is one of the wonders of our country. The Congressional Library in Washington is the most sumptuous house for books in the world. Simple, but of vast influence are the book clubs and the traveling libraries which now extend the privilege of literature to the humblest villages. Local bands for reading and study, like the Chautauqua circles, and the countless women's clubs, carry the impulse of education farther and farther.

But this universal impulse is due to the American public



RAISING THE SCHOOLHOUSE FLAG.

school. Here is the origin of that spirit of enlightenment and liberty and justice which makes our people the greatest and best nation of the earth. The national flag, that now floats over nearly every schoolhouse in the land, is a fitting reminder to our fourteen millions of pupils that the school has made our country what it is and that the children now under its folds are to make America what it shall be.

We admire our patriot statesmen and our patriot soldiers. Just as admirable is the patriot school teacher, who is putting heart and soul into the training of future citizens, and who leads their voices as they say: "I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic for which it stands—one Nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Tell the story of Horace Mann: as a boy; as a young man; as an educator.

Explain the meaning of "American system of public education."

Describe the early schoolhouse.

Give an account of a spelling school.

Contrast the early schools with our modern schools.

What is a "liberal education"? What is meant by "supported by taxation"? What are "forks of the roads"? Why did the big boys go to school in the winter only? What is "secondary education"? What is the influence of the flag over the schoolhouse?