

practical operation of this act," says Dr. Barnard, "the school system of Connecticut, instead of embracing schools of different grades, was gradually narrowed down to a single district school, taught by one teacher in the summer and a different teacher in the winter, for children of all ages and in variety of study residing within certain territorial limits." This step was followed by others in the same direction until 1798, when an act passed that substituted for the town a new corporate body known as a "school society" with territorial limits sometimes coextensive with the town, in some places embracing part of a town, and in others parts of two or three towns. "For a time," Dr. Barnard says, "the effect of this change was not apparent, but, coupled with the change in the mode of supporting schools provided for about this time by public funds, and dispensing with the obligation of raising money by tax, the results were disastrous." The reference here is to the State school fund, soon to be mentioned. The grammar schools ceased to be obligatory, but every school society might, by a vote of two-thirds of the inhabitants present in any legally held meeting, establish a high school for the common benefit of all the inhabitants, in which reading, penmanship, English grammar, composition, arithmetic, and geography, as well as the Latin and Greek languages, and the first principles of religion and morality, should be taught.

The common schools of the Commonwealth had always been the main reliance of the people in respect to the rudiments of education; they were re-