

before to touch 80. Lancaster was a member of the Society of Friends, and received much encouragement and assistance from them. His enthusiasm and benevolence led him to conceive the practicability of bringing all the children of the poor under education by the new system. He published pamphlets recommending the plan, and in one of them ascribes the chief merit to Dr. Bell, whom he afterwards visited at Swanage. His own school Lancaster made free, and obtained subscriptions from friends of education for its support. At length he was admitted to an interview with George III, at Weymouth, in 1805, and his majesty being charmed with the order and efficiency of his schools, subscribed to the fund 100*l.* a-year, the Queen 50*l.*, and the princesses 25*l.* each, to be employed in the extension of the Lancasterian system, to promote which a Society was formed under the patronage of the King. (1) Such was the origin of the British and Foreign School Society, originally "the Royal Lancasterian Institution for promoting the Education of the Children of the Poor." (2.)

Dr. Bell's method in process of time was adopted in the Lambeth schools by the Archbishop of Canterbury; and in the Royal Military School at Chelsea; whilst numerous schools sprung into existence under what is known to this day as the *Madras System*. The distinctive features of Bell's National Schools, and Lancaster's British and Foreign School systems were, that the religious instruction in the former was according to the formularies of the Established Church; whilst the latter represented the Dissenting interests, admitting the reception of the Bible as the foundation of all instruction, but without note or comment. This still remains the essential difference between the two societies, and the schools conducted on their principles.

To these systems have since been added Normal and Model Schools; and for the girls in these schools instructions in domestic economy and the duties of servants.

In 1808, Dr. Bell endeavoured to induce the Government to establish upon his plans "A National Board" of Education, with schools placed under the management of the parochial clergy. In this he failed; but by aid of friends of the Established Church, and under the patronage of the bishops and clergy, the National Society was eventually formed in 1811. (3.)

CVI.

THE PRIMER AND THE HORNBOOK.

The earliest printed book used in the tuition of youth was the *Primer* (*Primarius* Latin), a small prayer-book in which children were taught to read—and the R. C. book of devotions in the monastic schools. At the Reformation, the *Primer* was retained, but the requisite changes were made. In 1545, Henry VIII, ordered to be printed an English "form of Public Prayer," entitled the *Primer*, said to be "set furth by the King's majestie and his clergie, to be taught, lerned, and red." A copy of this rare book is extant: it was once the property of Sir John Clark, priest of the chapel of Leedsbridge, and founder of the school. This appears from the following autograph note in the Calendar: "Thus day I began the schole at Leeds, July 4, 1563."

It would be hard to say when the contents of the *Primer* were changed from sacred to secular: the change was probably very gradual, more especially as the *Primers* printed to this day contain occasional prayers—the good seed which cannot be sown too early in the mind of childhood. The accounts of the grammar-schools of the sixteenth century contain much interesting evidence of the value attached to school-books, by the care which is directed to be taken of them. Thus, in the Corporation records of Boston, in Lincolnshire, in 1578, it was agreed that "a Dictionarye shall be bought for the scollers of the Free Schole; and the same booke to be *tyed in a cheque*, and set upon a desk in the scoole, whereunto any scoller may have access as occasion shall serve." There are later entries of the Corporation purchasing dictionaries, for the use of the school; besides presents of dictionaries, lexicons, grammars, folio English Bibles, &c.—(*Thompson's History of Boston.*)

(1) The noble wish of George III.—"that the day might come when every poor child in his dominions would be able to read the Bible"—doubtless greatly assisted by the sanction of Royal Authority this new system of teaching, as well as the Bible Society established in 1804.

(2) Lancaster resigned his direction of the school in 1808. He died in 1838, having been supported in his latter days solely by an annuity purchased for him by a few old and attached friends.

(3) Dr. Bell died in 1832, leaving the princely sum of 132,000*l.* for the encouragement of literature and the advancement of education.

Another "dumb teacher" was the Hornbook, of which a specimen exists, in black-letter, of the time of Queen Elizabeth. It appears to be at least as ancient as 1570, is mounted on wood, and protected with transparent horn.

"The letters may be read, *through the horn*,
That make the story perfect."—*Ben Johnson.*

There is a large cross, the *criss-cross*, and then the alphabet in large and small letters. The vowels follow next, and their combinations with the consonants; and the whole is concluded with the Lord's Prayer and the *Roman numerals*. The Arabic numerals are not given. Shakspeare thus refers to the cross-row of the Horn-book:—

"He hearkens after prophecies and dreams;
And from the cross-row plucks the letter G;
And says, a wizard told him that by G
His issue disinherited should be."—*Richard III.*

Again, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, act v. scene 1, Moth, the page to Armado, says, in describing Holofernes the schoolmaster, "He teaches boys the Hornbook."

Colgrave has, "*La Croix de par Dieu*, the Christ's-cross-rowe, or *horne-booke*, wherein a child learns it;" and Florio, ed. 1611, p. 93, *Centurionia*, a child's horne-booke hanging at his girdle."

In the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps, at Middlehill, are two genuine Horn-books of the reigns of Charles I. and II. Locke, in his *Thoughts on Education*, speaks of the "ordinary road of the Hornbook and Primer," and directs that "the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments he should learn by heart, not by reading them himself in his Primer, but by somebody's repeating them before he can read."

Shenstone, who was taught to read at a dame-school, near Halesowen, in Shropshire, in his delightfully quaint poem of the *Schoolmistress*, commemorating his venerable preceptress, thus records the use of the Horn-book:—

"Lo; now with state she utters her command;
Eftsoons the urchins to their tasks repair;
Their books of stature small they take in hand,
Which with pellucid horn secured are
To save from finger wet the letters fair."

Cowper thus describes the Hornbook of his time:—

"Neatly secured from being soiled or torn
Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,
A book (to please us at a tender age
'Tis called a book, though but a single page)
Presents the prayer the Saviour deigned to teach,
Which children use, and parsons—when they preach."
Tirocinium, or a Review of Schools, 1784.

We have somewhere read a story of a mother tempting her son along the cross-row by giving him an apple for each letter he learnt. This brings us to the gingerbread alphabet of our own time, which appears to have been common a century and a half since:—

"To master John the English maid
A Hornbook gives of gingerbread;
And, that the child may learn the better,
As he can name, he eats the letter."—*Prior.*

And anecdote illustrative of Lord Erskine's readiness is related—that when asked by a judge if a single sheet could be called a book, he replied, "The common Hornbook, my lord."

John Britton, who was born in the parish of Kingston St. Michael's, Wilts, in 1771, tells us, in his *Autobiography*, that he was placed with a schoolmistress: "here, he writes, 'I learnt the Christ-cross-row' from a Hornbook, on which were the alphabet in large and small letters, and the nine figures in Roman and Arabic numerals. The hornbook is now a rarity." Such a Hornbook is engraved opposite. It was met with in the year 1850, among the old stock of a bookseller, at Peterborough, in Lincolnshire, and is thus described: Its dimensions are 9 by 5 inches. The alphabet, &c., are printed upon white paper, which is laid upon a thin piece of oak, and is covered with a sheet of horn, secured in its place by eight tacks, driven through a border or mounting of brass; the object of this horn-covering being to keep the "book," or rather leaf, unsoiled. The first line is the cross-row; so named, says Johnson, "because a cross is placed at the beginning, to show that the end of learning is piety."

The Hornbook was not always mounted on a board; many were