

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

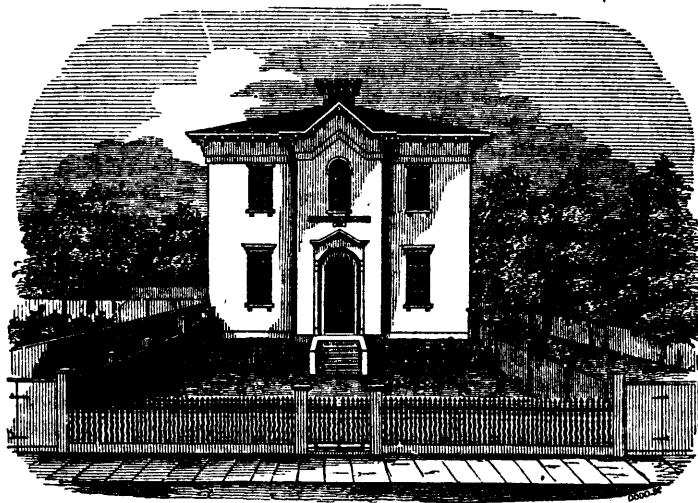
FOR

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FRONT VIEW OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE VILLAGE OF WARREN, RHODE ISLAND.
(For plans of interior arrangements, plan of the grounds, with explanations, see pages 20, 21.)

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DIVISION OF TIME AND DAYS OF THE WEEK AMONG VARIOUS NATIONS.—MYSTICAL NUMBERS.

We have rarely met with so instructive and interesting a summary of the history of the various national divisions of time as the one in the October number (1850) of the *Westminster Review*, entitled *Septenary Institutions*. We select those parts of the paper which embody the historical view of these institutions, omitting the learned disquisition on the Observance of the Sabbath, and the many ingenious theories of the writer as regards the original design in instituting that day of rest.

The Romans had neither *decades*, nor the week of seven days, but divided their months into three irregular intervals, named after three fixed epochs in each month, called the *calends*, the *nones*, and the *ides*. The days of the *calends* were the first of every month, originally the first day of a new moon, when it had been customary to call or summon the people together to mark the event by sacrifice or other religious service, and to regulate by it days for other public business; hence the term *calendæ*, *call days*, from *calo* (Greek *kaleo*), to call or summons. The *nones* (from *nonus*, the ninth) were the nine days before the *ides*; and the *ides* (derived it is said from an obsolete verb *idare*, to divide)* were the middle days of every month. When the Calendar was reformed by Julius Cæsar, the civil year so little corresponded with the seasons, that the summer months had advanced into the autumn, and the autumn months into the winter. Cæsar, following the advice of the Chaldean astronomer, Sosigenes, put back the 25th of March 30 days, to make it correspond with the vernal equinox, and fixed the lengths of the months as they now remain; but he did not alter the designation of the days of the months, or introduce in respect to them any new division. The additional day given to February every fourth year (our leap year) was added to the *calends*, which had then 16 days instead of 15, reckoning from the *ides*, or middle of February to the 1st of March. It was introduced, not at the end of the month, as with us, but between the 6th and 7th of the *calends*, and called the *bis-sexto calendæ*, whence our term *bissextile*, as applied to leap-year—the year of 366 days.

Many years, however, elapsed before the Roman people became fully accustomed to the Julian calendar. The progress of conquest about this period made the Roman people acquainted with the calendars of other nations. The people of India, Syria, Arabia, and probably Egypt, observed weeks of seven days. When these countries, or portions of them, became provinces of the Roman empire,

* More probably from *Io*, whose worship was connected with the full moon.