



FREE ACADEMY, NEW YORK CITY.

EDUCATION.

SECOND ARTICLE.

"EDUCATION is the guardian of liberty, and the bulwark of morality. Knowledge and virtue are generally inseparable companions, and are in the moral, what heat and light are to the natural world—the illuminating and vivifying principle. Every effort ought to be made to fortify our free institutions; and the great bulwark of security is to be found in education—the culture of the heart and the head, the diffusion of knowledge, piety and morality."

—DE WITT CLINTON.

THE rearing of children is the universal element and essential feature of the human family. But in its high state of improvement this institution performs many other valuable functions. It brings about an economical coöperation in procuring and enjoying the means of subsistence; maintains the old, the weak, and the sick; develops the warm affections, and multiplies the feelings that enter into and enrich the current of life, and thus softens the blow of disaster and misfortune. How important, then, that each individual should feel the responsibility thus placed upon him; that he should remember that, no matter how humble his sphere, he has only to put his shoulder to the wheel—to do his share in the general advancement and improvement of mankind. After providing food and shelter, prominent among the duties of the parent is the education of his offspring; that when, in their turn, they become fathers and mothers, they will be better prepared to fulfil the responsible duties with which they become invested.

By the blessings of our free institutions, how little effort on the part of the parents is required in most portions of our country to secure not only a liberal, but, in many instances, an elaborate and finished education. Nor are these superior benefits spread forth in a manner that can stigmatise or bring odium on the recipients: quite the contrary. Many of those who have been honored with the highest gifts their fellow-citizens can bestow, have been proud in the acknowledgement that, to the benefits of

our glorious *Common School System*, they are mainly indebted for the advantages they enjoy. The following quotation is the closing sentence of the brilliant and learned oration, delivered at Dorchester, Massachusetts, on the Fourth of July, by the Honorable Edward Everett, in which, it will be perceived, he gives a beautiful tribute to the public schools of this country:—

"Let us, my fellow-citizens, on this anniversary of the nation's birth, unite in the hope that we shall still be sustained by the same Almighty arm which bore our fathers over the waters—supported them under the hardships of the first settlement—conducted them through the difficulties of the colonial period—protected them through the dangers of the revolutionary struggle, and has guided their career as an independent State. [Cheering.] Thus, my friends, in the neighborhood of the spot where, in my early childhood, I acquired the first elements of learning at one of those public schools which are the glory and strength of New England, I have spoken to you imperfectly of the appropriate topics of the day. It is probably the last time I shall ever have occasion to address an audience precisely of this kind, either in Dorchester or anywhere else. Retired from public life, without the expectation or the wish to return to it, but the contrary—grateful for the generous marks of public confidence which I have received, and which I feel to be beyond my merits—respecting the convictions of those from whom I have at any time differed, and asking the same justice for my own—I own, fellow-citizens, that few things would better please me than to find a quiet retreat in my native town, where I might pass the rest of my humble career in the serious studies and tranquil pursuits which befit the decline of life, till the same old bell, whose voice is never hushed, though Time silences first the fathers and then the children, shall announce for me

also that the chequered scene is over, and the weary is at rest." [Loud and long-continued cheering.]

In a previous article, we endeavored to lay before our readers a general idea of the Public School system of New York City—that is, from the Primary to the Grammar or High schools. But there is still one other feature, and we thought it of sufficient importance to defer notice at the time, and make its history the subject of a special paper. Of course, we allude to that proud example of the results of republican principles, THE FREE ACADEMY—an institution whose benefits, like the dews of heaven, are distributed without pay or price, alike on all classes—the highest and lowest in the land.

The New York Free Academy is a legitimate and almost inevitable development of the system of popular instruction, so liberally endowed by the State, and so amply provided for by the city whose name it bears. The interests of the body politic, viewed from an enlightened standpoint, in its public as well as in its less extended relations, demand some liberal scheme of instruction by which the children of the masses may enjoy the privileges and advantages of at least a good English education. The circumstances of many are such, that they would be precluded from receiving any instruction whatever of a literary character, were the chances left to the ability or the disposition of parents or guardians. The question accordingly becomes one of vast importance to the State, whether some system of popular instruction shall be established and maintained at the public charge, or whether the children of tens of thousands of parents shall be left to the improbabilities of their circumstances. To overlook and to neglect the education of the youth of a State is to give them as a pledge to ignorance, and to assign them to thriftlessness, poverty and crime. The economy of providing an education for the young, as a



CHAPEL OF THE FREE ACADEMY.

simple safeguard against social disasters and public burdens, is so apparent, that it needs no illustration.

The founders of the school system of the city of New York, acted early in obedience to the teachings of such a policy, and half a century since, a society of benevolent men was incorporated by the Legislature of the State, under the title of the Free School Society of New York. Under the control of that institution, nearly one hundred schools were organized at various times, all of which were conducted with great economy and prudence, yet with an enlightened liberality fully up to the means placed at its disposal by the City Treasury.

About the year 1840, a desire for some alteration in the Common School system was expressed by some of the people of the city, and after an earnest discussion of two years, an act was passed by the Legislature, by which the Board of Education was created, and in compliance with which act, the Commissioners were elected and entered upon the duties of their office.

Only a few years had transpired before it became apparent to many, that a very important advance in the standard of popular education was not only expedient, but demanded by the wants of the city, at that time numbering half a million of inhabitants. This advance, it was believed, would be obtained by the endowment of an institution which should afford to the people the opportunities and advantages of a thorough collegiate course in all the branches which give dignity and power to a high school or college of the first rank.

On the 27th July, 1846, Mr. Townsend Harris, one of the Commissioners, offered a resolution to the Board of Education, upon the adoption of which a committee was appointed to report upon the expediency of establishing such an institution. After a deliberation of six months, on the 20th of January, 1847, a report from the

committee was submitted, urging the importance of the proposed High School upon the attention of the Board. On February 10th, following, the report was considered, and a committee appointed to memorialize the Legislature to procure the passage of a law authorizing the Board of Education to found and organize the New York Free Academy. On the 7th of May, in the same year, the Legislature of the State passed the act under the provisions of which the institution was established, with a clause providing that the question of adoption should be submitted to the people at the next ensuing election of school officers, to be held in June. The question was so submitted, and the result of the vote was a majority of 15,995 in its favor, the vote being 19,404 in the affirmative, and 3,409 in the negative. On the rendition of this enormous popular verdict, the Board proceeded to procure the plans of distinguished architects, and before the close of November of that year, the ground was broken for the new institution.

The lot upon which the building stands extends 200 feet on Twenty-third street, and 122½ feet on Lexington avenue, and was purchased for \$25,000. The edifice is 125 feet by 80, and consists, exclusive of the basement and great hall, on the upper floor, of three spacious stories, which are intersected at right angles by two wide passages through the middle of the building. It was constructed with a view to the accommodation of one thousand students. The entire cost of the building was a little less than \$50,000.

On the 15th of January, 1849, the institution was opened for the examination of candidates for admission, and on January 27th, the formal dedication ceremonies and inauguration of the Principal and Faculty took place, and the active duties of instruction were commenced on the 5th of the following month.

As the Academy depended upon a class of students assembled for the first time from many

different schools in the city, whose qualifications and scholarship were to be fully tested, and the number of candidates having been a matter of doubt, a thorough examination was not at first attempted. Considerations of the highest importance in regard to the range of studies, the wants of the institution, and the necessity of some experience in the particular sphere which the Free Academy was designed to fill, furnished additional reasons for this delay in the permanent organization of the institution. The Academy, however, after the fullest and most mature deliberation, was organized as already stated, and the following named gentlemen entered upon their several duties:—

Horace Webster, LL.D., Principal.

Edward C. Ross, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.

Gerardus B. Doeharty, Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.

Theodore Irving, Professor of History and Belles Lettres.

John J. Owen, D. D., Professor of Ancient Languages and Literature.

Oliver W. Gibbs, Professor of Chemistry and Physics.

Jean Roemer, Professor of French Language and Literature.

Augustin J. Morales, Professor of Spanish Language and Literature.

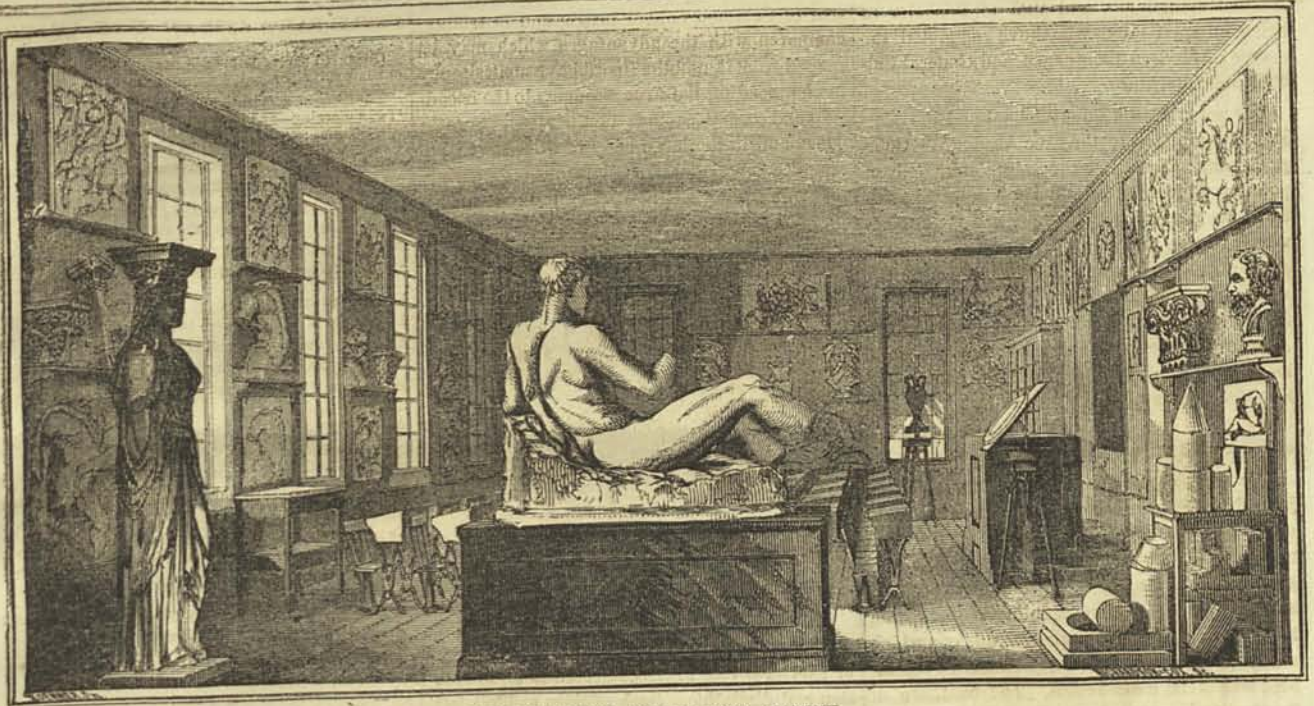
Theodor Gustav Glaubensklee, Professor of German Language and Literature.

Paul P. Duggan, Professor of Drawing.

Thus originated and commenced the Free Academy—the first institution in the State of New York which was specially designed to afford to the poorest as well as to the wealthiest citizen the benefits of a thorough collegiate course of studies, without any cost whatever to the student. The liberality and noble policy of its founders, and of the Legislature of the State, have not by its history so far been made a matter of question, but the institution continually extends its influence and wins new friends by its career.

The qualifications for admission to the Academy are as follows: No student can be admitted unless he reside in the city of New York, be thirteen years of age, shall have attended the Common Schools twelve months, and shall pass a good examination in Spelling, Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic, Elementary Book-keeping, History of the United States, and Algebra, to Simple Equations inclusive.

There are two examinations for the admission of students during the year, one in the month of February and the second in July. There are also two examinations for the advancement of students, which occupy about two weeks, just preceding the examinations for admission. These are both oral and written, the written papers being answers to questions proposed by



DRAWING SCHOOL OF THE FREE ACADEMY.

the professors, and which are placed in the hands of the students only on the morning of the day upon which the examinations in the respective subjects are to take place.

A few weeks previous to the time for the examination of candidates for admission, a circular is addressed by the President of the Faculty to the Principals of the various ward schools, notifying them thereof, and enclosing blank certificates in the following form, to be filled by the teacher:—

I certify that..... now residing at No..... street, in the city of New York, aged..... years, on the..... day of..... 18..... has been a pupil in..... School No..... for 18..... to 18.....

Of this time the pupil was..... in the Primary Department.
Dated the..... day of.....

..... Principal.
Appended to the above is a certificate to be signed by the parent or guardian, as follows:—

I hereby certify that the age of..... as given in the foregoing certificate is correct.

..... Parent or Guardian.

The candidate thus endorsed presents himself before the Principal of the Academy, who directs the Registrar to make an accurate entry of the various facts, which are recorded in the respective journals, on the completion of which the student is furnished with a printed card, containing the following directions:—

1. Throughout the examination you will be known only by the number on the opposite side of this card.
2. Do not write your name upon any of your exercises. Every exercise so marked will be rejected.
3. Write your number conspicuously at the top of every exercise.
4. Avoid all talking or communicating with other candidates, either at your seat, or while passing in and out.
5. Bring no book of any kind to the Examination.

6. Be careful not to lose this card, which will be called for at the close of the Examination.

The reverse is blank, affording space for the entry of the subjects in which the student is examined. The number by which his name is registered is written upon this card—the name, school from which he came, and parentage, being altogether unknown to the professors. This serves to prevent names or personal influences from affecting the decision of the examiners in regard to the merits of candidates, and the record is made of a number in a scale of ten, which indicates the merit of the pupil. Ten is the maximum, and should the required number not be reached, on a comparison of results in the various departments, the candidate is marked deficient, and his application is rejected.

The student having passed his examination, enters upon his course of studies, which is to be, in every respect, absolutely free. There is no charge of any kind. All the supplies are furnished by the institution—lexicons and textbooks, even to the slate pencils, paper for literary exercises, crayons, pen-holders, drawing materials and mathematical instruments. The Academy furnishes the means, and requires only that the student shall furnish the industry, the talent, and the ambition to use them to the best possible advantage.

There is a well-selected chemical and philosophical apparatus from the best European and American establishments, and additions are constantly made to these departments. The Library now numbers about four thousand volumes, including many of the most valuable literary and scientific works in English, French, German, Spanish, Latin and Greek. Additions are made to the Library from the annual appropriations out of the Literature Fund of the State, amounting at the present time to about \$1,000 per annum.

The Drawing School, which furnishes instruction in the Fine Arts, and in every department of

mechanical and practical drawing and descriptive geometry, is furnished with a rich supply of the finest casts of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and also casts of many of the Elgin marbles, secured especially for the Academy.

The department of Natural History, which is but in its infancy of effort, is supplied with a fine cabinet of minerals, shells, skeletons, etc., to which contributions and additions are made from time to time, and which will eventually become a valuable repository of specimens in this department.

In order to advance the interests of the institution, and to stimulate the students to greater effort in their career, several citizens have donated funds for the presentation of medals at the annual examinations. In 1849, Duncan C. Pell placed in the hands of Trustees \$500, to be invested, and the income applied annually, forever, to procure a gold medal, to be awarded to the student who shall have made the greatest proficiency in his general studies.

In 1850, Edwin Burr created a similar trust for a gold medal, to be awarded to the best mathematician.

In 1850, Charles T. Cromwell created a similar trust for a gold medal, to be awarded to the best scholar in History and Belles Lettres.

In 1853, Augustus A. Ward created a similar trust for the presentation of twenty bronze medals, to be awarded to the students who shall have made the most proficiency in the following named subjects: Chemistry, Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, Law, English, Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, German, Oratory, Composition, Logic, Geography, History, Drawing, Algebra and Geometry, Engineering and Hygiene.

The Board of Education is authorized to confer degrees upon the graduates of the Free Academy, and in order to preserve the distinction between the full classical and the modern course, the degree of Bachelor of Arts is conferred upon the graduates in the department of

Ancient Languages, and that of Bachelor of Sciences upon those who have completed the course of Modern Languages and General Science and Literature.

The union of the Infant School and the College is completed by the Free Academy. Comprehending these under one grand system of popular education, the little child may step from the nursery to the school-room, and advancing step by step, he may make those attainments in literary and scientific studies, which will prepare him for the University, or for entering upon a professional career. The Academy is the completion of the system of instruction, the measure of a munificent provision for pupils of whatever class, who desire to enjoy the benefits of even a partial course of classical and scientific studies.

The value of the Free Academy is not to be judged by the number of those who spend two or three years within its walls, or even by the number of those who complete the course and graduate. While this is a prominent consideration in any question concerning its operations, its results, and its advantages, there is one which affects a far greater number than can be assembled within its class rooms. The influence of the institution, in elevating the standard of attainment in a city which is rapidly reaching a population of a million of inhabitants, cannot be measured. The examination through which the Common School pupils must pass to entitle them to a place in the Academy, establishes not only a higher standard than previously existed, but it demands a more perfect acquaintance with, and proficiency in the study themselves. To secure admission to the Academy is consequently an aim in the minds of all who can afford to devote the time to a superior course of scientific and literary culture. It awakens the ambition of pupils in the schools. It stimulates them to greater exertions. It incites to more diligent and critical acquisition, and nerves to a bolder struggle. This ambition exercises a permanent influence on the character of thousands to a greater or less extent, and hence, even in these cases where only a partial course is enjoyed, the results are great and lasting.

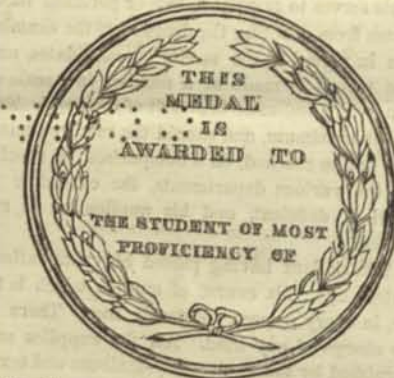
But this spirit of emulation is also shared by the teachers. There is an honorable rivalry among them as to which school shall send the largest number of candidates, and of those who shall pass a good examination. This spirit does not exist to the extent which is desirable, but it exerts a great influence in some of the schools. The teachers in these schools set before their pupils the opportunities and privileges freely offered to them, and by careful training and preparatory labors, they send to the examiners a fine body of candidates every year. As soon as these have entered the Academy, a new promotion of pupils throws into the highest class a new group of learners, all training with special reference to their eligibility as students in the Academy. In such schools the purpose of the institution is best developed. It is not merely to afford the advantages of the College to a few, but to distribute, reflexively and positively, its influence for the elevation of the grade of instruction and attainment throughout our schools.

The expense of such an addition to our sys-

tem of Common School instruction is trifling, compared with the advantages which may be reaped from it, and the Board have no hesitancy in commending the Free Academy to the friendship and cordial support of their successors in office, and to the large body of diligent teachers who have the immediate and responsible task of carrying out the policy of the Board.



Since the Academy was established, 1,163 students have been admitted, who have, for longer or shorter periods, been subjected to its instruction and discipline. Such of them as have left, have gone forth to speak its praise, and to look back to it with gratitude and pride, and to feel it always as one of the ties that binds them to the city of New York, and her honor and prosperity. Had it done nothing but educate these, it would be well worth the money it has cost. But, in addition to these direct results, the institution has an influence which reaches down through all the Grammar-Schools, and affects the entire system of public instruction. The pupils of nearly



fifty Grammar-Schools, with their teachers, have a stimulus and prize before them which awakens interest and ambition, both humble and noble. Coming from these schools, the pupils of the Academy meet on the common ground of intellectual competition, and the most worthy, whether of high or lowly birth, is he who wins the honors of the strife.

The Academy deserves the confidence and friendship of the public; and all interested in literary institutions, and particularly in the great scheme of public instruction, should visit it, witness its operations, and become acquainted with its details.

VALUE OF A POUND OF THE FINEST LINEN THREAD.—A single pound of flaxen thread, intended for the finest specimens of French lace, is valued at six hundred dollars, and the length of the thread is about two hundred and twenty-six miles. One pound of this thread is more valuable than two pounds of gold.

UNCLE SAM'S 4TH OF JULY ORATION.

[Reported expressly for the UNITED STATES MAGAZINE, by our fair correspondent, XENETTE.]

'Twas morning—and lightly the soft summer breeze
Danced over the meadows, and played with the trees;
Fresh flowers to the sunbeams each delicate cup,
All sparkling with dew, lifted gracefully up.
Flashing out to the light of the pure azure sky,
Midst beauty and gladness, the streamlets went by;
While birds in the forest rejoicingly sang,
Till the echoing wilds with the melody rang.

Yet this was not all, for from every vale
The shouts of rejoicing were borne on the gale;
Every city, and village, and rural retreat,
Every highway and by-way, and sidewalk, and street,
Were thronging with people, of all ranks and grades,
Tall folks, and short folks, old women and maids,
Mamas with their daughters, prim dames and young girls,
In laces and ribbons, and holiday curls,
While old men, and young men, and light-hearted boys,
Seemed striving to see which should make the most noise.
Midst cannons and drums, flute, fiddle and fife,
No mortal e'er heard such a din in his life—
One might plainly perceive 'twas no trifling occasion,
To call from all quarters this strange demonstration.

At length, all together, the party sat down
In a beautiful grove half a mile out of town;
The drums ceased their din, and the fife and the flute
By the side of their masters lay quiet and mute—
So silent was all, one might easily hear
The sigh of the breeze in the elm-branches near.

Then the President rose, with a smile and a bow,
Saying, "Ladies and Gentlemen,—Honor us now
With your careful attention; and allow me, I pray,
To announce 'Uncle Sam' as your speaker to-day."

"Uncle Sam" slowly rose—took his quid from his cheek
Put his spectacles on, and made ready to speak—
"MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—We
Are a very great people, as doubtless you see.
Our country extends from the east to the west—
Of all lands under heaven our own is the best—
And no other nation, as justly as we,
Can be truthfully titled *the brave and the free*."

"Why, sir! since our origin, we have done more
Than the whole world together accomplished before.
The world, sir, appeared to be scarcely alive
Till the glorious dawn of the year *Seventy-five*.
There was never, but *once*, in the history of man,
A great act achieved till we Yankees began;
And that, sir, was when, by kind Providence blest,
Columbus discovered this land of the West.

"But little he thought that a nation should rise
In those newly found regions, *the world to surprise*;
Whose wonderful deeds and discoveries vast
Would fairly eclipse everything in the past.
And little thought Britain—proud, stately old dame—
When, with fetters and chains, to our country she came,
That the rod in the hand of her spunky young daughter,
Would soon scourge her back to her home o'er the water
And, much as she hated to, make her declare
That she couldn't govern us, young as we were.

"I was never a boaster; but, sir, I must say,
That I think we've done wonders almost in our day:
Just think of our twice whipping England completely—
And the world says we did that thing fairly and neatly.
Then we've twice showed the Mexicans what we could do
And I think we've been paid for it cleverly, too;
For we forced them to yield us the best of their lands,
And near half their dominion fell into our hands.

"Then, we've routed the Indians out of all places,
And have nearly effaced of their works the last traces—
Made their fine, fertile hunting grounds wholly our own,
And all that opposed are now scattered and gone.
Yet we gave them, to keep, till we wanted it back,
Of deserts and forests a beautiful tract;
And they'll always be welcome to plow it and seed it,
Till we make up our minds that we're likely to need it;
And then, I presume, 'twill most likely be best
For them to remove a few miles farther west.

"Our Generals the greatest of heroes have been—
No nation on earth boasts such wonderful men.