

THE ROUND HILL SCHOOL

BY JOHN SPENCER BASSETT

The Round Hill School, conducted at Northampton, Massachusetts, from 1823 to 1834, is chiefly remembered because one of its founders was George Bancroft. It has a better claim to fame because it was an early experiment in education that deserved a better fate than it found in a new country, whose intellectual life was really undeveloped. At that time only a few good preparatory schools had been founded, with courses that led to the freshman class in the colleges. They were conducted in a routine manner, the object being that the boys should be ready for college when the proper time came. The best of these schools, like the two founded by the Phillips family at Andover and Exeter, did not endeavor to give each pupil individual treatment, and at that time physical training was not considered a notable part of the school's function. In these two particulars the Round Hill School was distinctive. It may be asked by one who reads its history whether the time has not come when the experiment that failed in Northampton cannot be carried to a successful issue with such modifications of plan as a changing society would make necessary?

For the creation of the school and its conduct in the larger phases credit chiefly belongs to Joseph Green Cogswell, a man whose "pure and faithful life" can only charm him who reviews it. He had, in a rare degree, intelligence, simplicity of soul, and devotion to his ideals; but he lacked that other essential quality of getting himself remembered among the great, the faculty of selecting a large and showy scene on which to display his efforts. He was probably a greater

man that Bancroft, his partner, but he did not have Bancroft's capacity of doing things that tell. The ideal of the school was his, he was its executive head, and when its progress seemed to halt it was he who shouldered the responsibility, financial and otherwise, and tried to carry the enterprise forward to success. When the school was in need of money it was he who got it from wealthy friends in New York and Boston, men who loved him for his fine nature and later forced him to accept their stock as donations to the progress of the institution. It was he, also, who won the hearts of the pupils, ruling them by his invariable authority of respect while in school and living in their esteem to the end of his days.

This does not mean that Bancroft was not an important factor in the life of the school. He was an excellent scholar in Greek, Latin, and German, which branches he taught, and he was devoted to their pursuit. He was a strict teacher, and it is of record that the boys who were interested in their studies learned much from him. But he soon became absorbed in literary duties and was often so much engaged with them that school duties became tiresome. Mischievous boys took advantage of his weakness, crept out of schoolroom while he was thinking about something else than the conduct of the pupils, and made fun of his eccentricities. His own words tell us what he thought about the life of a teacher. "I should be grateful could I obtain that personal leisure, which might enable me to enter the career of letters with some reasonable expectation of doing myself justice. But at present I am doomed to bear with the petulance, restrain the frivolity, mend the tempers, and improve the minds of children."¹ Nevertheless, he did more teaching than his partner, and did it well. Cogswell himself bears witness in his letters to the ability of his partner. In this sketch of the school

¹ "Correspondence of Bancroft and Sparks," *Smith College Studies in History*, II, 138. Also, Bassett, "Middle Group of Historians," 165.

attention will be given largely to the executive head, not because the Greek teacher is not important, but because it is around the efforts of the executive head that one finds the facts and ideas that make the school itself worth remembering.

Joseph Green Cogswell was born at Ipswich, Massachusetts, September 27, 1786. His father, who died in 1793, was a man of moderate wealth, and left to his son the consciousness of good standing among his fellows. Joseph graduated from Harvard in 1806, having spent most of his vacations teaching school, the custom of many of the students of the day. For six years he was employed either as supercargo of some New England ship bound for Europe or India, or reading law in the offices of Fisher Ames and Judge Prescott, father of William H. Prescott, the historian. The Prescotts, father and son, with George Ticknor, Jared Sparks, Edward Everett, Samuel A. and William H. Eliot and George Bancroft made an interesting and inspiring group of men, all keenly interested in developing the intellectual life of New England. They all had some kind of touch with European conditions, and it was their ambition to plant in the New World some of the best ideas they had encountered in the Old.

In 1812 Cogswell was admitted to the bar and married Mary Gilman, daughter of Governor John Taylor Gilman, of New Hampshire. He settled forthwith in Belfast, Maine, then an outpost of civilization. The year he spent there was saddened by the sudden collapse of his wife's health. She was seized with a virulent form of tuberculosis, which carried her off in the summer of 1813. In his anguish Belfast became for her husband the synonym of all that was terrifying. He described life in these words, probably too dark for even that newly settled place:

"The more I become acquainted with mankind in this part of the country, the more degraded I find the human character here; as the distresses of the people increase, their vices appear to multiply, and

those who have heretofore been used to resort to industry for their support, now procure it by the basest and most unprincipled acts. When I hear our first lawyers, and even our judges, avow that no man can succeed here by uprightness and honorable dealing, I blush for the character of the profession; but so it is The first principles of religion are absolutely unknown to a great portion here; and the laws of morality are wholly disregarded."²

He was especially shocked at the way in which the people spent Sunday, which to one brought up in the well regulated life in an old New England town had a singular meaning in the inner life of the people. His views of the town were probably not entirely just, since he seems to have started life there with the determination to have nothing to do with the people. He admitted that he saw none of the inhabitants in a social way and that none of them entered his house except as clients. In 1813 he gave up Belfast and ceased to be a lawyer.

The next two years were spent as a Latin tutor at Harvard. The duties of the position were not pleasant to one whose talents, as Ticknor said, were "associated with an eagerness for the attainment of his object which often prevents him from devoting time enough to secure it," and his health and spirits suffered as a consequence. In 1815 he resigned forthwith and set out for Europe as agent for Mr. William Gray, a Boston merchant, who had business in Mediterranean ports. He returned to Boston in the following spring on a sudden fancy and gave up what seems to have been a flattering prospect of remaining in business. In Boston he received an offer much more to his liking. Mr. Israel Thorndike engaged him to go abroad with his son, Augustus Thorndike, to remain for two years, or longer, at good compensation. This kind of employment appealed to him more than commerce. Late in 1816 he arrived in Göttingen, where Ticknor and Everett were students, and began a sojourn of four years in Europe.

² Miss Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Joseph Green Cogswell," 17-19. At this time, 1813, the war with Great Britain added to the distress of the people of Belfast.

It was a period of delightful study, travel, and observation. At Göttingen he manifested much interest in science, particularly in mineralogy, which he studied enough to make him an enthusiast. Besides the professors in the university he met many men of distinction, notably Goethe, who showed him his cabinet of minerals. He found much to delight him in Rome, Paris and London. In his desire to learn everything that opportunity offered he studied the classification of the Göttingen library, having Benecke for instructor. With this eminent scholar he spent many hours in the library, getting the principles upon which the books were arranged. It was done without special object in view, but it yielded practical results years later when he became the first librarian of the Astor Library in New York. During these years he made many journeys on foot, through the Harz Mountains, the Alps, and less romantic regions. He was always a good walker, even before he left New England, and in his letters he speaks of some of these tramps as the most enjoyable experiences of his life. In four weeks in Switzerland he walked nine hundred and rode one hundred and eighty miles.

In Switzerland two famous schools drew his attention and he made journeys to visit and examine them. One was the school of Fellenberg, at Hofwyl, near Berne. This philanthropist had established his school to teach agriculture. He made it the occasion of instilling in the minds of the pupils the elements of good character. It was his plan to have among the pupils sons of the rich and high born as well as sons of paupers, believing that in doing so he would teach respect for the rights that each class had against the other. He discarded rewards and punishment and allowed each boy to defend his position when reproved. Speaking of the pupils Cogswell said:

“More heartfelt joy I never witnessed in my life, not, as it seemed to me, because they were about to relax from their labors, but

because they had the happiness to be placed for their education in a school, the head of which was rather a father than a master to them. I saw a thousand proofs of the sentiments they entertain toward each other, and nothing could resemble more a tender and solicitous parent, surrounded by a family of obedient and affectionate children. There was the greatest equality and at the same time the greatest respect, a respect of the heart I mean, not of fear; instructors and pupils walked arm in arm together, played together, ate at the same table, and all without any danger to their reciprocal rights; how delightful it must be to govern, where love is the principle of obedience!"³

The other school was the establishment of Pestalozzi at Yverdon, where he spent a day. He was evidently disappointed in the place. His comment was: "Called on Pestalozzi and spent the day in examining his institutions and minerals.—Hatred and envy of Fellenberg—bad order—no obedience in scholars." In another place he said of a visit to Pestalozzi:

"A painful visit it was to me, to see this good old man and real philanthropist going broken-hearted to his grave, for broken-hearted he must be, in contemplating the ruined state of the institution which he has been laboring his whole life to establish. . . . My regrets, however, are more for himself than for the public, for I do not believe that his system carried to the extent he does, is the true method of storing the mind with knowledge. It would exclude memory altogether as a medium of instructing, and make use of reason alone, which is absurd. Reason must be furnished with ideas for the materials of its ratiocinations, and many of these must be laid up in and recalled by the memory This is the misery of all systems, that the makers of them are never satisfied with putting them in practice as far as they are true, merely, but have a foolish vanity of giving them universal applicability."⁴

His long rambles came to an end in October, 1820. There had been talk that he should come back to take a professorship in Harvard, but he put it aside on the ground that he was not capable of wearing the robes of a professor as a Harvard professor should wear them. He would, he said, accept the position of librarian, for he felt competent to discharge its

³ Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 87.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 81 n 1, 115.

duties. For all these resolves he accepted at Harvard on his return the professorships of mineralogy and chemistry and the post of librarian, the combined salaries being \$1960 and fees. The lectures in chemistry and mineralogy were not numerous, and he seems to have taken most seriously the task of librarian. The books were classified on the plan of the Göttingen library.

Ticknor, now professor of Modern Languages and Belles Lettres at Harvard, was deeply interested in the plan of giving instruction something of the European caste. His efforts were received by the conservatives in the faculty as the efforts of young and ardent reformers are usually received. He was too wise to become discouraged, but Cogswell, who sympathized with him, was less philosophical. In one of his letters Ticknor said: "Cogswell, however, is in a state of mortal discontent. He is weary of the imperfect state of education at College, and bitterly vexed with the want of liberal views in the Corporation, as to the principles on which the Library shall be managed and increased. If he would but wait a while, I think all things would turn out right; but perhaps, he lacks patience and constancy for this. At least, he now protests if things are not speedily reformed, he shall quit the College entirely."⁵

When these words were written, October 29, 1822, George Bancroft had recently begun his duties at Harvard as tutor in Greek. This brilliant young man had received the bachelor's degree at Harvard in 1817 and the degree of doctor of philosophy at Göttingen in 1820, when he was but twenty years old. He returned to America in 1822 and was appointed a tutor immediately. He, also, made a portion of the party of reform in the college, supporting Ticknor and Cogswell in their contentions. For him Cogswell had conceived a high regard in Göttingen. Leaving there in 1819 he wrote: "It was sad parting, too, from little

⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

Bancroft. He is a most interesting youth, and is to make one of our great men."⁶

It was late in the autumn of 1822 that the two men began to consider a project for establishing a school, in which boys would be taught in the thorough manner of the best European schools. Such an institution, they thought, would become a model for other schools and would lead to general improvements. Here again Ticknor tells us what was going on. He wrote, February 1, 1823:

"Cogswell has put the library in perfect order, and is now finishing his catalogue of it, but the corporation neither comprehend what he has done, nor respect him enough for his great disinterested labor. Bancroft is making great exertions to teach Greek thoroughly, and succeeds; but is thwarted in every movement by the President. I am very desirous they should stay, and by patient continuance carry through all their projects, as they will in time; but they declare they will not, whether they establish their school or give it up."⁷

In one of Bancroft's letters, December 3, 1822, he announces the purpose that led the two men, saying in his exuberant way: "I am going to turn *school-master*. I long to become an independent man, namely, a man who lives by his own labours. Mr. Cogswell has seen so much of the world, that he knows it and its folly; he will join me in my scheme; we will together establish a school, the end of which is to be the moral and intellectual maturity of the mind of each boy that we take charge of; and the means are to be first and foremost *instruction in the classics*. We intend going into the country, and we shall choose a pleasant site, where nature in her loveliness may breathe calmness and inspire purity. We will live retired from the clamour of scandal and the disputes of the irresolute. We will delight ourselves with letters, and instead of warring against the corporation and contending with scandalous reports, we will train up a few minds to virtue and honour, and hope that when we die there

⁶ Ibid, 107.

⁷ Ibid, 135. In personal matters President Kirkland and Bancroft were very friendly.

will be some hands to throw flowers over our tombs . . . We will plant gardens, lay out walks, beautify nature, and propagate good knowledge. We call our establishment a school, and mean to consider ourselves as schoolmasters. We might indeed assume a pompous name, speak of instituting a Gymnasium; but let the name be modest. I like the sound of the word schoolmaster."⁸

Before passing judgment on these gushing words we should remember that the writer was then but twenty-two years old and that by nature he was warmly imaginative. His words do not express the true nature of the situation at Harvard. Cogswell, of a more judicious temperament, is a better witness in that respect. He said the trouble arose out of the fact that all the American colleges were established to make ministers and not scholars and the old system had been preserved in spite of the changes that had occurred in other parts of the world. He wishes that Harvard might be the first in the United States to shake off the old traditions. In that connection he said:

"A strange notion prevails in Cambridge against lecturing. If the institution is intended to be a mere school, to teach the elements of language, and the first principles of science, the opinion is undoubtedly correct; but if, in addition, they have higher views, and would draw to them men who are making learning a business of life, or build up a name for themselves they must have lecturers, and lecturers, too, who can keep an audience awake."⁹

That both men should turn to the field of secondary instruction is not singular. In the first place, all the reformers at Harvard and their sympathizers near the college were convinced that a good school, based on modern methods, was the thing most needed. Edward Everett had written to that effect in 1819, saying: "We can do nothing at Cambridge till we contrive the means of having the boys sent to us far

⁸ To S. A. Eliot, Bancroft MSS., Mass. Hist. Soc.; also in Howe, "Life of George Bancroft," I, 161.

⁹ Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 45.

better fitted than they are now."¹⁰ The suggestion was well received by Bancroft, who took pains to study the methods in use in the German *gymnasia*, and while in Italy, on his circuitous return to the United States, he entered in his journal his idea of what a good school should be like.

Seven main points were set down: 1. Greek should be the first foreign language taught. 2. Natural history should be taught, especially to the poor who would have to do with the cultivation of the soil. 3. Emulation must not be stimulated by offering prizes, nor in any other way; for it was the object of good teaching to get each pupil to do the best in him, and it was likely that prizes would discourage those who were not bright mentally. 4. Corporal punishment tended to degrade the pupil and to encourage fear and deception and for these reasons should not be used. 5. Classes should be formed according to each boy's capacity. 6. Poor boys should be educated for schoolmasters in order to supply the rural districts with good teachers. and 7. "Eventually a vast printing establishment might be annexed to the school." The third, fourth, and fifth points here enumerated became distinctive features of the instruction at Round Hill, and the first and second played their parts, but to a less pronounced degree. Some of these points were also embraced in the system employed by Fellenberg at Hofwyl, where Cogswell had studied them; and since he and Bancroft had foregathered at Göttingen and probably talked about the scheme, it is possible that they came to the younger of the men from the Swiss model, which Cogswell admired.¹¹

¹⁰ Howe, "Life of Bancroft," I, 166.

¹¹ *Ibid*, I, 128-130. The following extract from a letter of Bancroft's to President Kirkland, November 5, 1820, is also interesting in this connection: "Besides the public schools there is at Berlin a private institution, which promises to become very useful. Ten young men, animated by the eloquence and patriotism of Fichte, formed a plan some years ago of establishing a school after the new principles. Each of them chose a peculiar branch, in which he was to perfect himself, and which he was afterwards to teach. Three of them went in the meantime to live with Pestalozzi and became acquainted with his principles from the man himself. An ardour and a perseverance, such as the young men have manifested, deserve to meet with the most decided success." *Ibid*, I, 91.

While in Germany Bancroft visited the celebrated *gymnasium* at Schulpforte, near Naumberg, in Prussia. This institution was founded by Maurice of Saxony early in the sixteenth century, occupying an old monastery in which masters and pupils lived in an industrious family. On the first floor were the public rooms, on the second the rooms of the instructors and their families, on the third the study rooms of the boys, and on the fourth the sleeping rooms of the pupils. The discipline was strict, and the boys were required to work from five in the morning, in summer, or from six in winter, to five in the afternoon, with only an hour at noon for dinner and recreation. There was a great deal of intensive work, and the summer vacations were short. The boys entered at twelve years of age and generally remained until they were eighteen, when they were ready for professional schools or the university. The subjects taught embraced "all the branches of philosophy," Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, French, and Italian. Mathematics were taught thoroughly, through differential calculus. History, geography, music, and dancing were also taught, as well as religion and morals by the chief preacher in the school. A large number of themes were required in German and poetry and orations in Latin. The institution had a revenue from vested funds of 53,000 rix-dollars a year, and of this fund 46,000 rix-dollars were spent on instruction. The teachers had good salaries and lived in comfort and without anxiety for the future.¹² The school probably gave as good an education as a boy got in an American college of the day.

Having determined to embark in the enterprise, Cogswell and Bancroft set out in the spring of 1823 to find a place in which to settle. It seems that Bancroft directed the quest; for the first place examined was Worcester, where his father lived. Nothing

¹² Bancroft to Professor Levi Hedge, March 6, 1821. Bancroft MSS., Mass. Hist. Soc.

in the neighborhood was satisfactory to them and they went on to Northampton, where Bancroft's sister, Jane Bancroft, had taught school a year earlier. Here they found a site to their liking.

It is not surprising that they fell victims to the wonderful charm of Round Hill. Cogswell described it in the following words:

"About half a mile from the village of Northampton, on the brow of a beautiful hill, overlooking the Connecticut, and the rich plain through which it flows, and the fine picturesque hills which form its banks, we found two houses to be let for a very small rent, and, as all the circumstances connected with the situation were exactly to our minds, we concluded, at once to begin our experiment there. Accordingly we have engaged the houses from September, and expect to enter upon our new duties the first of October."¹²

Round Hill is an eminence of more than one hundred feet above the center of the town of Northampton. On the eastern side the hill drops off abruptly for about fifty feet and then runs down to the level of the town in a rather steep slope. It is bounded on this side by Prospect Street, on which in 1823 were three or four of the fine old houses that now stand, a reminder of olden days. East of Prospect Street lay the rambling town, half a mile wide, beyond that were the broad meadows that border the Connecticut, and on the far side of the river rose the beautifully notched Holyoke range of small mountains, behind which the sun rises in rosy majesty or the full moon in dreamy splendor. In whatever light I have seen it, it has fascinated me. If it is a summer day of brilliant sunshine, or a shimmering golden autumn afternoon when the deep blue hills are broidered in gold, or some winter's morning when the timbered slopes of the range overcast with snow strike out in defiance through the vibrant atmosphere, or some murky season when the bluish gray mists nearly hide the crest of the mountain chain, or some full-mooned summer night when the whole valley floats peacefully

¹² Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 135.

beneath a wealth of haze-shot silver, or in any other of its many moods it holds one spellbound, calling up the deepest feelings of beauty and delight in the human soul. Many an old Round Hill boy has come back in mature manhood to drink again its charms, and Jenny Lind, who once saw its glories on a professional trip came back later to spend her honeymoon on this Hill. It is to this day worthy of all the adoration that Cogswell, Bancroft, and a thousand other devotees have given to it.

In 1681 four acres on its eastern slope were granted by the town to Rev. Solomon Stoddard, pastor of the town, and in 1726 the rest of the property, about forty-six acres, was granted for forty pounds to his son, Colonel John Stoddard. In 1803 the Stoddard heirs sold it for \$1600 to the Shepherd brothers, sons of Dr. Levi Shepherd. One of them, Thomas Shepherd, was especially charmed by the view, and three years later built a handsome stone house on the edge of the hill, at a cost of \$12,000. Shortly afterwards his brother, Levi Shepherd, built a good brick house also on the edge of the hill and a little north of the stone house of his brother. A cousin of the two men, Colonel James Shepherd, built a third house, of wood, north of the other two. Into two of these buildings the school was adjusted. The stone house fell to Bancroft who took a portion of the pupils with him, the brick house to Cogswell, who took the rest of the boys. Mr. Shepherd seems to have remained in the wooden building. With them came, also from Harvard, N. M. Hentz, whom Ticknor called the best French teacher the college had employed.

The "Prospectus of a School to be Established at Round Hill, Northampton" is written in Bancroft's style. It begins with this announcement:

"In the autumn of the present year we propose to establish at Northampton an institution for the education of boys. As our plan may in some degree be novel, we deem it proper to explain to

the public the objects which we have in view, and the principles by which we shall be guided.

"If we would attempt to form the characters as well as to cultivate the minds of the young, we must be able to control all their occupations. For this reason we intend to have them under the same roof with ourselves, and we become responsible for their manners, habits and morals, no less than for their progress in useful knowledge. It does not enter into our plan to have day scholars; and we shall never receive any, excepting a limited number from the town in which we shall reside"

"The institution, which we purpose to establish, is designed to furnish occupation for those years, which in France are spent at a *Collège*, and in Germany at a *Gymnasium*. A boy, who has completed his ninth year, is old enough to commence his regular studies, and to delay them longer would be to waste precious time, and (what is of still more moment) the period, when good habits are most easily formed. For learning the modern languages these years are so valuable, that the loss of them is irreparable, because during these a purity of pronunciation (we speak with particular reference to the French) may readily be acquired, which in after life no efforts can attain."¹⁴

The writer of the prospectus would not undertake to say how young a boy should be to make it unwise to send him to the school, but he left us to think that it would be well to send a boy when he was nine years old. He was clear as to the maximum age, saying that none would be received who had completed the twelfth year; and he seemed to mean that no boy would be received who had been at another school, where the methods of instruction were so different from those at Round Hill that it would be impossible to teach him satisfactorily. To secure power over the morals and minds of the pupils the numbers must be small, and not more than twenty pupils would be received at first, preferably only fifteen. There were to be two vacations each year, of three weeks each, which the pupils might spend with their families. The government would be parental, but it must be ample. Punishments in the ordinary sense would

¹⁴ A copy of the Prospectus of 1823, an "Account of the School," etc., 1826; and an "Outline of the Round Hill School," 1831, are in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

not be inflicted, but no boy would be kept in school whose conduct was such that in ordinary discipline he would deserve punishment. Prizes for industry and obedience to rules were not to be offered, and the spirit of emulation was not to be encouraged. Finally, it was announced that each boy should pay three hundred dollars a year for all expenses, a sum about one hundred and twenty-five dollars larger than the amount announced at that time as the minimum necessary expenses of a Harvard student.

In 1823 Northampton was a town of more than ordinary importance. It had long been noted for the eminence of its leading men, among them Jonathan Edwards, Seth Pomeroy, Joseph Hawley, and Caleb Strong, to say nothing of several men who had borne the names of Stoddard, Lyman, and Williams. Of the "River Gods" of the Connecticut Valley it had a liberal share. It had just begun to respond to the impetus for manufactures, which was destined to make its neighbors, Holyoke and Springfield, greater industrial centers in the course of time; but it has clung tenaciously to its social distinction. The opening of the school at Round Hill was the beginning of an eminence in education that has continued to this day.

To the people of the town the announcement that a new kind of school was to be established in their midst caused much talk. In one of her vivacious letters Mrs. Lyman said:

"Did I tell you in my last, that on the first of October Mr. Cogswell and Mr. George Bancroft—two professors from Cambridge—were going to open a school on the plan of a German Gymnasium; of course Joseph is to be an alumnus of the institution. It proposes to teach all that is taught in any college in the United States. I do not feel quite so much enthusiasm as to the success of their plan as many others do; but, at any rate, they will be an immense accession to our society, as they are distinguished for their *learning, piety, and wisdom.*"¹⁵

¹⁵ Memoir of Mrs. A. J. Lyman, ed. 1876, p. 195.

It would be pleasant to believe that the town of Northampton received the school gladly, but as a matter of fact the town was not superior to the small vices of country towns, as we may see from Mrs. Lyman's letters. She herself had "misgivings in regard to the efficacy of their plan, though I have done everything to cultivate faith that anyone could. The idea of a number of children being educated without rewards or punishments, I can hardly believe possible; because it bears no analogy to any system, human or divine, that I am acquainted with. The Almighty has seen fit in his providence to keep up a system of chastisements from which the best of his creatures are not exempt." Others thought even worse of the project than Mrs. Lyman; and, indeed, that lady felt better as time passed. In February, 1824, when it was likely that the school would be moved to Red Hook, on the North River, she said: "Notwithstanding all that may be said, I feel great regret at having them leave, believing that they would secure the esteem of the people by a longer stay, wherein the redeeming traits of their characters might be exhibited."¹⁶

The other side of the matter was presented by Cogswell in replying to a Boston friend who had reproved him for treating the Northampton people badly. He said:

"You do us injustice in supposing that we have shown any disrespect to the people of this place. We did not formally return all visits which were made to us, it is true, because we meant that they should understand our duties would not allow us to exchange the common civilities of society, and that our lives must be those of retired scholars. At the same time we never omitted any opportunity of manifesting our respect and reciprocating courtesies, which did not interfere with our regular and necessary vocations. If we have not been faithful to our charge, we must expect to hear the language of complaint, but if we have given up our pleasures and gratifications for the sake of a more scrupulous fidelity, our motives, at least, ought to be a justification for omissions of other duties, which it would have been better not to have left undone."¹⁷

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 197, 203.

¹⁷ Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 153.

The situation is not hard to understand. An old and self-conscious society agitated by the arrival of three young gentlemen from Cambridge, all of whom were widely traveled, at least two of whom had seen and talked to Goethe and many another man of distinction in Europe, had introduced the school as a means of opening a brilliant act in the social drama of the town. The people were doomed to disappointment; for the scholars, with their charges, remained steadily on the hill. It is true they were absorbed with the life there. When the cattle-show came, that sacred event in Northampton's year of existence, neither the boys nor their masters attended. Then tongues wagged. One gentleman remarked that he had never seen a more ordinary group of boys in all his life. Mrs. Howe wrote a lampoon, in revenge, it was said for something Cogswell did to thwart her plans for a declamation. After much discussion quiet was resumed; and the relations between the town and school were more pacific, if not more cordial. It is not hard to see from the infrequent reference to the townspeople and town events in the letters of Cogswell and Bancroft that they were really not interested in their surroundings; and it was natural that the citizens should feel themselves ignored. On the other hand, Cogswell was right in saying that their duties were so important that it was not well to dissipate the time in local social activities. Many another student and serious minded man has had to make the same choice.

2. THE INNER LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

In regulating the inner life of the school it seems that Bancroft had much to say about the methods of instruction and Cogswell much about the management of the boys. Four series of letters by Round Hill boys to their parents have passed through my hands.¹⁸ In them it is always Cogswell to whom the

¹⁸ 1. Henry W. Rivers and George Rivers to their parents, Providence, R. I. (Mass. Hist. Soc.); 2. George C. Shattuck, Jr., to his father, Boston, Mass. (Mass. Hist. Soc.); 3. Samuel Ward, 3d., and Henry Ward, to his father, New York, (N. Y. Public Library); and 4, Thomas Gold Appleton to his parents (printed in "Life and Letters of Thomas Gold Appleton," 38-61.)

writers refer as planning excursions, making talks to the pupils, issuing supplies, and doing whatever stood for the out-of-class regulation of the school. He is sometimes referred to as the teacher of certain classes. Bancroft is rarely mentioned by these boys, and when his name occurs it is apt to be in connection with his classes. He was never a favorite with the Round Hill boys.

The first term opened, October 1, 1823, with fifteen boarders and ten day pupils. Each boy was given an examination. Although they came from the most prominent families in Boston and New York, and from the surrounding regions, they were poorly advanced in learning. Said Cogswell: "Every subject examined gave me the promise of one trial, at least, in the work before me. It was either obtuseness to be sharpened, obstinacy to be subdued, roughness to be smoothed, rudeness to be snubbed, habits of idleness to be corrected, new notions of study to be infused, or, worse than all, mind to be created. I soon found that the only course to be followed was, to begin *de novo* with every one, and to consider them as opening a book for the first time I am more convinced than ever of the necessity of a reform in our system of instruction, for there is not a single boy of our number, collected, as they are, from the several extremes of our country, who bears the marks of even tolerable teaching or discipline." The picture was, perhaps, a little too dark. It is worthy of remark that when the school had been going twelve days Cogswell felt much encouraged, saying: "The effect of our labor is already seen in manners, habits, of study and interest of what is to be learnt, and I do believe there must be some satisfaction in cultivating such a fine field."¹⁹ Further experience fully justified this confidence. Two weeks later he reported much improvement in manners, and obedience, but he said

¹⁹ Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 140.

that the students were still far below the standard "in regard to improvement in knowledge."

The system of mental training adopted in the school was likely to reveal the case of the backward boy with unusual distinctness. No classes were formed, each boy being assigned to the book which was deemed proper for his state of advancement. He was told to prepare as much matter as he wished and to report to the master when he was ready to recite. When he came up he was questioned on the text with great attention to detail. The first question he missed he was sent back to his seat to repair the deficiency and could not come up again until no other boy was ready to recite. The advantage of this system was that no boy studied with reference to the progress of another boy, and while he was allowed full opportunity to learn all that his interest prompted him to learn, he came to esteem excellence in his studies for its own value. This system threw much labor on the instructor, reducing him nearly to the position of private tutor. It was a system not to be followed by a master who had many pupils at one time. But we must remember that the School at Round Hill was established on a liberal basis. The costs to each student—three hundred dollars for all expenses—was equal to liberal expenses at Harvard at the time. The School expected to employ as many masters as the system demanded.

The regimen was as follows, using the words of Cogswell: "We rise at six and meet soon after for prayers, study till eight, at which hour we breakfast, then play till nine, from nine till twelve *Stunden*, dine at half past twelve, play till two, from two to five *Stunden*, sup at half past five, play till seven, and then assemble for the evening occupation, which thus far has been reading only, as there was scarce one among the number who could read English decently. A little before nine they are dismissed to go to bed."²⁰

²⁰ Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 141.

In winter the boys dressed by candle-light and were at work by sunrise. In this rigid system we see the trace of influence from Germany.

It was also in imitation of European schools that uniform dress was adopted. The "Account of the School,"²¹ 1826, has this on the subject:

"The dress which is adopted among us is as follows: Coat or roundabout and trowsers of blue grey broadcloth with bright buttons, waistcoat of light blue kerseymere, for winter. Blue broadcloth is allowed instead of blue gray. Blue nankin or cotton suit complete, for summer; and for holidays—blue silk or bombazine coat or roundabout, white jacket and trowsers, drill or marseilles. Our object is, to establish a general uniformity. A plain blue cloth cap in winter, or a straw hat in summer, is allowed, instead of a hat."

The first vacation was to begin at about the end of March, and the other at the end of September. The proprietors advised parents who lived near Northampton to have their boys with them during these vacations, holding that it was better for the pupils to have that much relaxation from school. But arrangements were made for other students to stay at the school, one of the proprietors remaining with them, and assigning easy tasks to keep them from falling into idleness. In this respect the work was very exacting upon the teachers. This vacation duty usually fell to Cogswell, who never shrank from it, although he complained that it kept him from visiting his friends in Boston and Cambridge, whose cultured homes he missed sadly.

In selecting two short vacations instead of one longer holiday we see again the influence of European habits. The proprietors would agree with those of today who think that American vacations are needlessly long and wasteful of time and impulse.

In the Round Hill discipline great stress was laid on physical exercise. Games and sports were not emphasized, as in modern time but such wholesome exercise as walking, skating, swimming, and riding

²¹ Page 19.

on horseback. Long tramps were one of Cogswell's favorite diversions, and he trained the boys to take them. One of his first concerns was to lay out a half-mile track around the grounds and to lead the boys in races around it. It was run in $3\frac{1}{4}$ minutes, and Cogswell ran it twice on "Sunday but after dark" in $6\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Every Saturday afternoon, in good weather, there was a walk of several miles. The day after Thanksgiving, 1823, Cogswell started with six pupils on a jaunt to Hartford, a distance of nearly fifty miles. At Springfield, after walking twenty-one miles, he hired a wagon and drove the rest of the way, returning next day as he went. In thirty-seven hours the party walked forty-two miles without complaining, the latter part of it over the meadows in the dark at the rate of four and a half miles an hour, Cogswell always setting the pace. One of the boys reported while going out that a tack was hurting his foot: The master examined his shoe and found that a peg had worked through the stocking and wounded the heel until blood ran. "As there was no remedy," says Cogswell, "I told him that we had but seven miles further to walk and that he must bear it; he said not a word more of the pain. To pay him for his fortitude I bought him a new pair of shoes at Hartford, and with them he came back as briskly as any of us."²²

In later years the long tramps seem to have been less frequent, but the school did not cease to encourage hardy outdoor exercise. Horses were bought and the boys were given regular turns riding. Accompanied by a master they dashed along the roads in small cavalcades until they became well known to the people of the country-side. At other times the great sleigh was loaded with boys, sometimes as many as fifty were thrust into its capacious sides, and the afternoon was spent in a jolly tour. In summer a great wagon, or two wagons, would start out with one of the teachers and a company of pupils, to be gone for two or

²² Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 146.

three days. One of the students tells his mother of a visit to Mount Tom in these words:

"We did not have to walk any, but rode all the way. We started at about eleven and got there at about one o'clock. We ate our dinner (which was carried in the provision wagon) at the foot of the mountain. While we were eating, it began to rain and did not stop for more than an hour. When it did we started to go up the mountain but soon were caught in the rain again. We did not mind it but went on and by the time we got to the top we were as wet as *drowned rats*. You can imagine what a prospect there is from the mountain when I tell you that we could see a meeting-house in a town *seventy miles* off notwithstanding the rain. It cleared off a little so that looking on the valley it seemed like a piece of Calico. It is as different as can be from Holyoke, and I think if you come here this summer you will miss a great deal if you do not go there. Mr. Bancroft told me yesterday that I must speak at the exhibition, but he has not given me a piece yet."²³

In all such excursions, as well as in other sports, Cogswell was the leader of the boys. On a certain Saturday he "took the boys a walk of ten miles through the woods in search of berries, and had a good frolic with them. For four miles we could discover no track by which to direct our steps, and often could not see the sun from the thickness of the shades through which we crawled and crept. Still no creature of them flinched, although the flock consisted of eighteen of the smallest, including Daniel and Sam. Dexter. We preserved our tranquility and our industry, and the boys their mirth and gayety."²⁴

One of the boys, recalling his schooldays later in life, had this to say of Cogswell's method with the pupils:

"He was in his school, as in one of his summer excursion walks, where he led off the procession, a boy of a larger growth and maturer experience, but nevertheless one of the party, and by no means a Jupiter Tonans, frowning from his arm-chair on a raised platform, aloof and apart from the rest. Indeed, his relation to the boys was scarcely even that of a teacher. He was the organizer, manager, and father of the community, while his partner, Mr.

²³ George Rivers to his mother, July 5, 1829, Mass. Histl. Soc.

²⁴ Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 154.

Bancroft, did a great deal more of the teaching; and a large staff of German, French and Italians, as well as eminent young men fresh from our college training, all worked assiduously under his general supervision. His department especially was that of moral and affectionate influence, beside which he was head farmer, builder, gardner, and treasurer of the place."²⁵

Extreme neatness was his ambition, and he prided himself in the fact that the boys had a clean table-cloth every day and "clean napkins almost as often" with a "clean wiping towel every other morning." The tone of confidence with which he spoke of these achievements indicates that such precautions were unusual at the time. We may have some idea of what kind of table-cloths were in use from the following order he gave to Bancroft on a visit to Boston: "Go to Ballard and Prince's, Marlboro Street, and get 5 yards of 6-4 checked cotton table-cloth, red and black, to match as near as you remember, that which we have." Perhaps we should remind ourselves that cotton cloth cost more in 1824 than at present. It was required of the boys that they cut their own wood for fires and that they keep their rooms, and although much was said about the evils of prizes in the studies, it became the custom to offer a reward for the neatest room. Other prizes were given, as a cross-bow and books for excellence in deportment. With the cross-bows the boys hunted squirrels and birds, which were abundant in the chestnut and oak woods near the school.

On a slope covered with pines the boys were allowed to build little houses for themselves, out of lumber provided by the school. Many a youngster had here his first longings for proprietorship gratified. The cabins, with chimneys, all built by their own hands under supervision of a sympathetic master and friend, became a popular place of resort. In them they cooked birds and squirrels, taken by their own cross-bows or snares, and sometimes chickens obtained in

²⁵ Thomas Gold Appleton, "A Sheaf of Papers," 12.

less valiant adventures. The place was called "Crony Village" and for a time it played an important part in the discipline of the school and exercised some educational influence; but there were boys who could not be trusted, and when it became evident that the segregation of the pupils for a large portion of the day gave them opportunity to form bad habits secretly, the order was given to demolish the village. It is an evidence of the obedience of the pupils that the order was executed without serious protest. When the school began to exist, friends, and the proprietors themselves, feared that there would be some attempt to turn the masters out. Cogswell's big-brotherly influence soon removed any such a fear.

For Bancroft the pupils came to have a less respectful attitude. He had his eccentricities, one of them being the shaking of his head in a peculiar manner, and he was so near sighted that he was quite dependent upon his glasses. The boys gave him the nickname of "The Critter," and they played mild pranks on him. One pupil, an ingenious fellow, out of a piece of lead drain-pipe whittled a fairly good plate representing Bancroft as an erect Prussian drill-master, from behind whose body appeared a long and graceful tail with an arrow-pointed tip, a military incarnation of the devil. From this plate were printed copies of the picture for secret circulation. On the margin of the issues of the school's literary weekly,—a very creditable paper of its class—appear several impressions of it.^{25a}

Although the proprietors endeavored to get along without inflicting serious discipline on the pupils, the school was not free from the ordinary breaches of good deportment. For the punishment of the worst offenders a strong room, known as the "dungeon," was provided, and to be confined in it was the severest punishment short of suspension. Sam. Ward, 3d, tells his

^{25a} Mass. Hist. Soc. "Proceedings", XLVII, 222.

father of an incident connected with this "dungeon," December 17, 1826, as follows:

"I have a great deal to tell you, about a thing which if it had continued would have been a rebellion here. Several boys went a skating without leave. Mr. Cogswell found it out and as a punishment told them to stay in an hour every day until Christmas. One of them (a very large boy from Baltimore) did not stay in one afternoon and Mr. Cogswell called him down the next day in the afternoon and skolded him for it and told him that if he did not stay in the next day, he would put him in a place where he could not get out; says the boy that is if you are able to. If I am able said Mr. C and at the same instant collared the boy. the boy collared him and down they went together, but Mr. Cogswell being on a sort of a platform and consequently higher than and having the advantage of the boy came down on top of him but the boy turned him and they struggled a while together at last the boy loosened his hold and said, Mr. Cogswell, I could hurt you if I wished but I never want to raise my hand against a master, but at the same time I think that this is no way for a master to treat a boy. then Mr. Cogswell told him to follow *him*, the boy went, and Mr. Cogswell put him in a dungeon. After supper several of the large boys went down to the dungeon having filed a key to unlock it. Mr. Cogswell found them out, called them in to his room at 9 o'clock at night, scolded them and sent one a way that very night in a gig to Chesterfield put another in the dungeon, and the school has been a continual state of confusion almost ever since."²⁵

A hundred years ago the American school-boy was much less tractable than at present. Fired by traditions of resistance to the masters, he felt that life was a failure if he obeyed all the rules. A rebellion in the school, or a locking of doors against the teacher, was to be expected in most places. But Cogswell, who took no large boys, had a right to think that he would escape such affairs. And he did escape them in general. In all the letters I have seen from the boys there is not another case like that just cited. In one instance, however, we have an interesting view of the punishment inflicted on certain offenders; and as the incident happens to be one of the few that ever come down to us in the words of both the instructor

²⁵ Ward Letters, N. Y. Pub. Libr.

and the pupil concerned, it is related here in each form. The boy was Sam. Ward, 3d, and his story is as follows:

"Last week, when reciting my Latin to Mr. Gheradi after we had finished our lesson, as we had some time left, we began to scan, as we often do, my turn being the last of all. I began to scan, in the beginning of a line. I said that a certain word was long by authority. Mr. Gheradi asked me what I meant by authority. I told him it meant the use of the poets (which by the by was perfectly right) and he told it meant when there was no other rule to be found, which was right also. I went on scanning and scanned several words by authority, upon which he being angry, got up and said. Well by my authority you lose your dinner. Mr. Gheradi said I, Mr. Bancroft shall know this if you are in earnest. he said nothing and upon which I went up to Mr. B. and told him about it. But Mr. Gheradi had anticipated me and I found Mr. B. wholly prepared to receive me unfavourably. When I spoke first he interrupted me immediately (Sam Ward hold you tongue you know that you are a lazy fellow and did not get you lesson, but went on scanning by authority, because you did know the right rules). here I told him that we had no lesson set as to study but he went on Hold your tongue, if you say anything more I'll punish you severely go to your seat and obey Mr. Gheradi. I went to my seat in a passion (as I am ashamed to say) I went to dinner for who will not say that I was right. After I had been at table about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an hour Mr. Bancroft happening to think of me came to my seat and found me there, In a terrible passion he exclaimed, Leave the table immediately. Now you shan't have any dinner for a whole week. I got up from the table immediately. Now here is my story which is plain and simple and also true, as can be proved if proofs are wanting."²⁷

When the elder Samuel Ward received this letter he wrote to Bancroft,²⁸ who replied in these words to the part of his inquiry which concerned this incident:

"Sam. failed in Prosody, and his instructor in Latin found it right one day to tell him to stay away from dinner. Sam. replied he would speak with Mr. Bancroft about it, and he knew that I should not insist upon his submitting to the punishment &c'. But on learning the case I thought the instructor had done precisely right. Sam. nevertheless went to dinner. I was displeased at this, and told him to stay away from dinner for the coming week, at the same time telling him I would take a favorable report of him from the Latin instructor each day as a sufficiency, which should entitle him to

²⁷ Sam. Ward, 3d, to his father, Feb. 25, 1827. N. Y. Pub. Libr.

²⁸ March 7, 1827, N. Y. Pub. Libr.

freedom from the punishment. The reports have been regularly brought me, and have been generally very much to his credit, and never against him, in one instance only doubtful. One thing in connection with this I ought to add. I reasoned with Sam as to his course in this matter, and endeavored to show him, it was inconsistent with self-respect and the manliness of character which become him and might be expected of him, and that he must respect himself to gain the respect of others. He declared himself at the moment indifferent to the good opinion of one of the instructors. It was an expression of petulance, less manly than I could have wished. This whole matter has passed away without any injury to Sam. and with the advantage of his being led more circumspect."

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL

When the two proprietors rented the two houses on Round Hill from Mr. Thomas Shepherd, in 1823, it was agreed that after a year they should have the opportunity to buy the property for a specified sum. When they undertook to complete this agreement their landlord charged them a larger sum than had been mentioned, and announced that he must have a higher rental, if the property was taken another year on that plan. Nettled by this treatment the two men agreed to seek another location. Cogswell made a journey to New York and inspected several sites in the vicinity. He finally found at Red Hook, New Jersey, a large and commodious house with several acres of land, to be bought on favorable terms. From Mrs. Lyman we know that the announcement that the school was to leave Northampton was received in the town with regret. But at the last moment Mr. Shepherd relented and offered the Round Hill property at a sum within the reach of Cogswell and Bancroft. It was thus agreed in the spring of 1824 that he would convey the property, containing fifty acres, more or less, with the three buildings and outhouses on it, for twelve thousand dollars, the school to give his son tuition without charge for eight years. The price was low, even at the time.

The pleasure of owning an estate was strong in the purchasers, and they set out at once to improve their

property. During the spring vacation Bancroft made a visit to Boston, regaling himself with the society of his old associates of a literary turn, in order to make up for a long period of rustication. Cogswell remained on Round Hill looking after improvements in houses and grounds. Partitions were removed so as to make a large dining hall, and trees were set out on the eastern slope of the hill, among them a hundred sugar maples.

One of his annoyances came from the presence of Mrs. Thomas Shepherd, who had occupied the wooden residence during the winter and was slow in giving it up after the property was purchased. In what way she displeased Cogswell is not clear, but it is worth while to preserve his humorous account of her departure. He wrote:

"Mrs. T. Shepherd has given me her word to quit the premises before night, and I know not when I have taken such satisfaction in saying bon voyage to anyone as I promise myself in saying it to her. It seems to be the custom of the place to make a present to the wife when she relinquishes her dower, and if she behaves decently I think it would be well for us to part in peace. Therefore, I wish you would buy a silver sugar bowl at Stoddart and Frobisher's in Cornhill or at Jones's in Market Street, not the most costly, say about \$25 to \$28, but in good taste, as it must be to please you, and if she deserves it she shall have it. If not, it will do to go with our cream ewer to show out now and then when the great folks come to see us."

In a postscript we are told that Mrs. Shepherd did in fact leave Round Hill about noon, as promised, but whether or not she deserved the sugar bowl we are not informed. In justice to that lady, I should add that she was connected with prominent families and left behind her a reputation as a lady of fashion and good breeding. It is not likely, therefore, that she made herself personally objectionable. Her presence on the estate was probably an assertion of some technical right, in connection with the conveyance of the property, with which we are not familiar.

The Round Hill estate lay between the Albany road, now known as Elm Street, and a road then just beginning to be called Prospect Street, but it was not contiguous to the former. It was reached at the time by a private way running up the eastern slope, and in order to control a better approach from that side the proprietors bought four acres of land from Solomon Williams, "minister of the gospel," thinking of opening a road across it.²⁹ Later, it was concluded that a better approach would be from Elm Street. Here, a quarter of a mile from the edge of the town, was a little group of houses to which the name "New Boston" had been given. Judge Samuel Henshaw, William and Jared Clark, George Bridgman, the tanner, Mrs. Lucy Barnard, and Timothy Jewett, were among the residents on the north side of the road. On the south side were only two or three inconsequential places, while below the hill, on the edge of the river, was George Bridgman's tannery. The road was nobly protected by the fine elms, set out by John Hunt about 1730, which then at their maturity attracted so much attention that they gave the road a new name. Cogswell saw the beauty of this region and bought several acres of land in small parcels on Elm Street, and opened a road from the school across this new purchase. He seems to have had the fatal land hunger of a young man, for he bought in small lots over thirty-five acres of land contiguous to his original property, and besides that a considerable farm lying between Elm and Prospect Streets, and extending from what is now Franklin Street to Massasoit, or nearly that far. The latter was to raise supplies for the school, whereas the former were used for a vegetable garden. At its maximum size the property was three-fourths of a mile square.

These purchases seem to have been chiefly the results of Cogswell's ambitions. Bancroft was more canny and probably came at an early day to realize

²⁹ See Records in Office of Register of Deeds, Hampshire County, Book 51, p. 601.

that his own business enterprises should be conducted on a basis independent of Cogswell's. It was in 1826, therefore, that he got from the latter a deed by which Cogswell released to him for \$3400 a considerable part of the Round Hill property. The dividing line was drawn so that it left to Bancroft the house in which he lived, the stone house built by Thomas Shepherd, and twelve acres of garden and woodland on the side of the property nearest Elm Street.³⁰ On it was a schoolhouse, situated near the dividing line. In fact, the line veered northward at the northwest corner, lest it leave a small part of the house on its other side. From Elm Street Bancroft opened a road to his house, known now as Round Hill Road, and not to be confused with the lane that was opened to the school property proper, which left Elm Street two hundred feet west of Bancroft's road. The latter went no farther than Bancroft's house.

The school property, though reduced, still sufficed amply for the needs of the institution, of which Bancroft and Cogswell remained joint owners. In the summer of 1826 a contract was made to enlarge the wooden building on the hill. It is interesting because from it we may see the size of the structure. It provided for a building situated south of the former building, and 47 feet long and 27 feet wide, exclusive of the piazza that ran along the side nearest the driveway. It was to be exactly like the older wooden building, with which it was to be connected by a central hall 40 feet wide and 37 feet deep. Thus the whole front façade of the building was 127 feet. Each wing contained six rooms on each floor, and over the hall was an equal number, a long passage-way running down the center of the second floor, and admitting to the sleeping-rooms on each side. This arrangement provided thirty rooms and was ample for the boys in attendance in 1826. But the numbers grew

³⁰ Cogswell's quit claim is recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds in the Hampshire County, Book 55, p. 261, see also Book 184, p. 456.

so rapidly that it was enlarged by building an ell on the north end, running off to the west some seventy-five feet. In 1827 the attendance was 135; and in 1831, when this number was somewhat reduced, it was announced that each boy could have a separate room if he desired it. Round Hill was a school for well-to-do boys, and the accommodations were such as that class would approve at the time.

On the northwest side of Round Hill, the gymnastic grounds were laid out. They were on both sides of what is now Crescent Street north of Third Avenue and embraced eight or ten acres, bordered on the west by a brook. In the middle of the grounds was a mast, while bars, ladders, and other pieces of the simple outdoor apparatus of the day were placed in convenient places. There was an instructor in gymnastics, and much importance was attached to his teaching. Neither rain, cold, nor snow interfered with outdoor exercise. The ideal was to "make a man" of a student. Cogswell had the idea in his mind and seems to have urged it on his patrons. He told his sister-in-law to send her son to Round Hill, where he could be made a man, and young Sam. Ward urged his father to send a younger son to the school for the same purpose. The heroic treatment was well received by the boys, who eagerly endured the hardening process.

The growth of the school was rapid in the first five years of its existence. The 25 boys who were there at the opening had increased to 69 in 1825. In the following summer the number was 80; but the fame of the institution was so well established that in the autumn of the same year there were 127; and in May, 1827, it was 135. This was about the crest of the wave. In fact, Cogswell now began to turn off applicants, and in 1828 he was determined to reduce the number to one hundred. If one means to be truly a father to his pupils, guiding their sports, reading, and morals as well as directing their studies, he must

soon realize that there is a limit to the size of his family.

The responsibilities of his position also wore hard on Cogswell, whose mercurial temperament was not well suited for the steady jog of the schoolmaster. The scheme of having two vacations a year of three weeks each made it necessary for the boys from a remote distance to remain in the school during the period. It fell to him to care for them. When the number was small he would take them to some place near Boston and give himself the opportunity to renew his acquaintance with old friends; but when the school became large the number left over was too great for such an undertaking. This continual demand on his time weighed heavily on his spirits. "I am now on my fifth year," he said in 1828, "of an entire devotedness to one object, and one which affords little or no intellectual gratification, and still less comfort to the heart. There must be a change ere long or I die."³¹

There seems good reason to believe that at this time, or soon afterwards, the relations between the two proprietors began to be strained—not seriously strained, but just enough awry to make it evident that the two men were not properly adjusted to one another. Bancroft was tiring of the routine life of a schoolmaster, and Cogswell was weary of managing immature boys. Under such circumstances it was natural that a break should occur. We may get an idea of its immediate cause in a letter from Cogswell to his partner, March 3, 1830. The letter begins as follows:

"As I am about to make you a proposition which may appear to have some connexion with the events which took place during my absence, I must begin by giving you the most positive assurances, that I believe your management was in the highest degree judicious, and not only deserves my entire concurrence but also the expression of great satisfaction with the efficiency and firmness by which it was distinguished. In the view however of the various difficulties of discipline, which have arisen during our connexion,

³¹ Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 160.

I am persuaded that entire unity of purpose and plan would do much toward effecting the most desirable end of education, docility & uniform obedience, & am induced by this consideration to propose to you the following modifications of our connexion."

Here follows certain proposals which need not be repeated, since they were not adopted as made. Instead, the following terms were accepted two days later as proposed by Cogswell:

"1. That on the joint property being conveyed to me, I shall discharge the mortgage, or discharge you from any obligation on account of it and in addition give you \$5000 to be paid as you propose in ten semi-annual payments the first to be made Nov. 1, 1830, and the remaining at regular intervals of six months, with interest.

"2. That the plan of conveying the property in whole or in part to a joint stock company shall, if effected, be for my exclusive benefit, and all the obligations entered into in furtherance of it be transferred to myself individually.

"3. That six months from the first of April be allowed me for completing my arrangements, during which time your connexion with the school to remain as heretofore and the specific sum of \$1000, of which \$500 shall be paid you in May and \$500 in August to be received in lieu of your proportion of the proceeds. And as I propose to be absent during the month of April and part of May, [and] must therefore rely on your presence at the Hill, it would be a matter of course that you should have an opportunity of absenting yourself two or three weeks during the term should you desire it.

"4. That it is to be understood by us both and to be made known to our mutual friends, that this change in our relations proceeds from no conflict of opinions or feelings, but is agreed upon in the spirit of the most cordial amity and from a desire to promote each other's welfare."

March 26, 1830, these terms were formally accepted in an instrument signed by both parties, Cogswell pledging fifty shares of stock in the corporation as security for the \$5000 he was to pay Bancroft in semi-annual payments. The Round Hill Corporation was chartered by the General Court February 18, 1829, but it was not organized until January 6, 1830. Immediately afterwards Cogswell took a journey to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington endeavoring to sell stock in the company. In

the last named city he secured subscriptions for twelve shares one of them from Daniel Webster, whose name he placed at the head of his list. In New York he received substantial aid from Samuel Ward, the second of the name, a prominent banker who had sent three sons to Round Hill, and whose friendship for Cogswell was to last through many critical years. March 13 he reported that he had sold more than ninety shares, and it is probable that he sold others in a trip he made in April to Charleston and Savannah. There were two hundred shares in all, and those not sold to individual subscribers remained his own property. On the whole he felt encouraged, and November 6, 1830, at an adjourned meeting of the corporation, having acquired Bancroft's share of the property by a deed of quit claim, he leased the estate to the corporation for a term of five years, until January 1, 1836, for a rental of \$1200 a year, it being agreed that the lessees would spend \$400 annually in repairs. For the conduct of the school he was retained as superintendent, but I cannot find any mention of the compensation he was to receive for such services. It could hardly have been less than \$1600 a year, since that sum was promised to Bancroft, who was retained as a teacher until the end of October, 1831. Notwithstanding the evidence of this contract, preserved in writing in the Bancroft manuscripts, the Round Hill estate was sold outright to the corporation by a deed made by the two partners and dated November 3, 1830, in which both Bancroft's release to Cogswell and Cogswell's lease to the corporation seem to have been ignored.³² I cannot explain the seeming contradiction.

When he agreed to buy the entire property Cogswell valued it at \$34,000 and said that it had cost \$50,000. The purchase of 1824 had been made through assistance from Harvard, whose authorities lent \$8000,

³² See Bancroft MSS., Mass. Hist. Soc. and Records in office of the Register of Deeds, Hampshire County, Bk. 66, p. 201.

taking a mortgage which Cogswell paid off December 7, 1830, evidently from the proceeds of the sale of stock in the company. It is hard to say that the condition of the enterprise was satisfactory. Bad debts had been one source of losses and Cogswell complained that the food consumed by the pupils in the six years during which the school had run cost \$5000 more than the allowance made for it. It was his habit to spend freely on the table. Keeping horses for the use of the boys was another undue expense, and the system in use demanded a large number of instructors in proportion to the attendance. Add to this the fact that Cogswell had bought rather more real estate than he needed, and it will be evident that he was in no pleasant situation.

His sanguine disposition enabled him to enter the new stage of existence in the school's history in the best spirits. "I have never felt younger," he said, "more zealous, higher hopes or greater confidence of success than I now do in the view of the prospect before me. I have had a burden upon me which weighed me down to earth. I am now free, and shall soar on my own wings."³³ Nevertheless, the tide was against him. His own success had, for one thing, led other persons to establish schools which professed to follow his example. Probably, also, the results of the instruction did not support the early claims for the schools' superiority. Whatever the reason, it is certain that numbers failed, and as the expenses of the school were not reduced in a corresponding way, the institution ran into debt. This situation brought discouragement to Cogswell, who, to make matters worse, fell into a state of melancholy on account of the death of his sister, his only near relative. Greatly depressed he announced to his friends in July, 1832, that he intended to give up the School as soon as he could settle his affairs and pay the debts he owed.

³³ A. E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 167.

When this decision became known a movement was started in Northampton to have it reversed. Seven of the leading citizens, Lewis Strong, I. C. Bates, Charles A. Dewey, T. Napier, Judge Hinckley, Judge Lyman, and Ebenezer Hunt, prepared an appeal in behalf of the school and circulated it in the newspapers. Next Samuel Ward, of New York, started a movement by which the stock-holders were to surrender their stock to Cogswell, thus relieving him of embarrassment. The scheme succeeded generally, and he took courage and agreed to carry the school on another year. At the end of 1833, however, it was apparent that he could go no further and in the following spring, at the close of the winter term, it seems, he definitely closed Round Hill, and accepted a position to conduct an academy established by the Episcopal Bishop Ives in Raleigh, North Carolina. In this place he remained for two years conducting successfully a school of the best grade. He had several offers to remain in the South in a more conspicuous capacity, two or three being for college presidencies and others for professorships; but the life there did not attract him, and he gave up all such inducements to become a tutor in New York. Later he was selected by Mr. John Jacob Astor to supervise the organization of the Astor Library; and thenceforth he lived, until he reached a ripe old age, the quiet and congenial life of a librarian, dying in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1871.

THE INSTRUCTION AT ROUND HILL

It is not to be denied that the experiment at Northampton was made to meet a condition greatly in need of improvement. In all but a few notable schools instruction was in a wretched state; and in the best schools it was less efficient than now, due probably to the prevalence of routine methods and low educational ideals. The majority of school-masters sent their pupils droning through declensions

and formulae without regard to the development of intellectual culture. "You can have no conception," said Cogswell after he had examined the pupils that were sent to him, "of the sham which school-masters make of the work of instruction, without a chance for proving them, similar to that which we now have." Edward Everett said he could prepare a boy for an American college in Latin and Greek in six months.³⁴

In order to effect improvement he and Bancroft took for their model the secondary education in France and Germany, where pupils were taught with longer terms and longer hours, and with a greater insistence on details than in Great Britain. Upon this *collège*, or *gymnasium*, system were superimposed the ideas they got from the Fellenberg School at Hofwyl, near Berne. For the first group of pupils, twenty-five in all, none of them over twelve years of age, three teachers were provided, all highly educated, and it was possible to give much time to the individual pupil. Each boy recited in a class alone and went forward as rapidly as he could. It was like giving to each the advantages of a private tutor. Well directed gymnastics were prescribed for each pupil, as much for educational results as for the sake of exercise. The school gave due weight to the mental effects of co-operative forms of play.

One of the things that had impressed Cogswell at Hofwyl was the happy mingling of students and masters in rural festivals and games; and he was careful to introduce such opportunity into the life at Round Hill. Many excursions were made in fine weather to nearby places of rural or sylvan beauty. An account has already been given of a visit to Mount Tom,³⁵ and another is given herewith of a visit to a certain field in strawberry time, taken from the narrative of a schoolboy participant. The month was

³⁴ Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 145; T. W. Higginson, "Göttingen and Harvard," *Harv. Grad. Mag.* VI, 18.

³⁵ See p. 39.

June and the place to which the excursion was made was eight miles from Northampton. The school started in the early morning, half in wagons and carriages and half on foot. At a tavern five miles from the school the pedestrians exchanged places with those who rode; and on the return those who walked first on the way out rode last on the way back, so that each shift walked but eight miles. On the side of a hill red with fruit the boys found the objects of their search. "We staid there about an hour," says our informant "and then we came back to the house [the tavern]. We found upon our arrival there long tables set out in the yard in the open air, large bowls of milk were placed there, one for each boy, the table was plentifully covered with bread, fresh butter, cheese, cold ham, sugar &c. I had a pint bowl three quarters full of delicious strawberries, and the rest filled up with milk, and as much loaf sugar as we wanted, for Mr. Cogswell had brought out a couple of loaves. Imagine to yourself one hundred and 35 boys all seated at table, enjoying themselves as much as possible, after dinner we set out to return home in the order which I have described above."⁸⁶ In such recreations it was sought to stimulate healthy love of nature and interest in innocent and elevating sport.

The first prospectus of the school, issued in 1823, gives an idea of the subjects taught and the purpose in teaching them. The general object, it was announced, was to train the boys "for the world as it is," not for some ideal world. First of all came the ability to read and write correctly, to write a good hand, and to become proficient in arithmetic. Beyond that the pupils would be given a familiarity with the best works in English literature. Next were the Greek and Latin classics as "the basis of learning and taste." Instruction was also to be given in French, German, Italian, and Spanish. French was taught by N. M. Hentz, a protestant graduate of the Uni-

⁸⁶ Samuel Ward, 3d, to his father, June 28, 1827, N. Y. Public Library.

versity of Paris, whom George Ticknor pronounced the best tutor in this language that Harvard had seen. Bancroft himself taught German for a time, but within a year or two G. H. Bode was brought over from Germany and given the work. The average salary of an instructor was \$500 the first year, with the prospect of an increase of \$100 the second. Probably no other school of its kind in the United States gave such good advantages in the modern languages; for besides a native Frenchman and a German there was generally a native Spaniard. In mathematics the boys were carried through algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, and at a later time even higher branches were taught. In natural sciences they had less advanced instruction, while moral philosophy and history were taught in general outlines. This much from the prospectus.

In a description of the work done at the school, issued in 1826, much of this was reiterated and some of it was enlarged. Added emphasis was given to gymnastic instruction. "We are deeply impressed," said the circular, "with the necessity of uniting physical with moral education; and are particularly favored in executing our plans of connecting them by the assistance of a pupil and friend of Jahn, the greatest modern advocate of gymnastics. We have proceeded slowly in our attempts, for the undertaking was a new one; but now we see ourselves near the accomplishment of our views. The whole subject of the union of moral and physical education is a great deal simpler, than it may at first appear. And here, too, we may say, that we were the first in the new continent to connect gymnastics with a purely literary establishment."³⁷

A third statement, published in 1831, after Bancroft had withdrawn, shows still more decided changes.

³⁷ "Some Account of the School," etc., 1826, p. 12. In 1828 C. Beck was "professor of Latin and Gymnastics." He wrote a "Treatise on Gymnastics." Sam. Ward, 3d, to his father, May 18, 1828, N. Y. Pub. Libr.

The course of study it is true, remained nearly the same; but now it was openly announced that the boys were taught in classes, not more than six in each. This departure from the old custom of having the boys recite individually as they were able—a custom dear to Bancroft's heart—was probably the result of a desire to economize in the employment of tutors. At this time several new subjects appear in the list of those taught; as Bookkeeping, Horticulture, Statistics, and Surveying. Drawing, dancing, music, which had been introduced gradually as polite accomplishments, generally taught in the summer term, were also mentioned. As a school for the sons of leading families, the place was the scene of much gayety in a simple way. One of its activities was to publish a very creditable literary paper, and on occasions dramatic exhibitions were given which proved the ability of teachers and pupils. In the announcement of 1831 Cogswell inserted the following paragraph:³⁸

“A question may here arise, if the Institution is intended to supersede the necessity of resorting to the University and prepare a young man for professional studies or for active life. The answer is, that it was established to advance the cause of education, and, therefore, acts in concert with all other Institutions, which promote the like design, but that its plan of study is independent of every one, and only when specially requested, is regulated by requisites for the admission to the Colleges respectively. It aims, however, at all times, to put its pupils, pursuing a classical course, in a condition to be transferred to any other literary Institution, and continue their studies with that class, in which their advancement should properly place them. It is acknowledged with great satisfaction, that this principle has been acted upon by some of the most distinguished Institutions in the country, in which the examination of pupils sent from this, has been made with reference to the state of their knowledge, and not to the books from which they may have acquired it.”

In this respect the Round Hill School was true to its European model, which sent a boy from the College or Gymnasium straight to the professional school,

³⁸ Page 56.

the university, or the active walks of life. It was, however, badly adjusted to the work of the American college, which has grown up between the strictly preparatory work and the specialized work of the university. Our American college really undertakes to do part of the work of the *Gymnasium* and part of the work of the European university; or, putting it from another point of view, Round Hill, following the *Gymnasium*, was trying to do part of the work of the preparatory school and part of that of the American college, and it was badly adjusted to the system into which it was thrust. It was of no avail to say that the system was bad and needed amending. Cogswell and Bancroft were not strong enough to change the whole system. The colleges, against whose prerogatives they arrayed themselves, would not give way. Parents who wished to send their sons to college had to choose between sending them to a school which would prepare for the Freshman class and one which gave preparation that made it possible for the boys, with special care, to enter the Junior class, and they generally chose the former.

In coming to this conclusion they were naturally aided by the rule to which the colleges held that a boy who entered with advanced standing, should not be relieved from the obligation to pay tuition for the time he had escaped study in the college classes. Thus, if a boy completed the work of the Freshman and Sophomore classes at Round Hill and entered Yale, he must nevertheless pay tuition at that college for the full four year course. The point was the subject of a correspondence between Bancroft and President Day, of Yale. Bancroft pointed out that four men were teaching at Round Hill who had the "right to instruct and lecture publicly and privately at any of the regularly constituted universities of Germany"; and, he continued, "We hope you will, in the spirit of liberal justice and of harmony acknowledge us, in so far as your public immunities are concerned, as

fellow laborers in the great cause, entitled to the respect which we sincerely give, and having a claim on regard, corresponding to the confidence which we manifest in recommending from time to time our pupils to your charge."

Bancroft, who wrote in behalf of his partner also, urged that in the case of advanced-standing students the character of the work at Round Hill was such that the students should be received at Yale on the same basis as students transferred from colleges, provided they passed the examinations, and in doing this he had the following to say about the instruction at his school:

"In our instruction we have reference to the subject to be taught, more than the books. For example, in the Latin, while Horace, Livy, Virgil, and Cicero are regularly used, we sometimes read Tacitus, and Ovid, Juvenal and Persius, and occasionally should take the letters, not of Cicero only, but of Pliny, and even sometimes read a Latin tragedy. In Greek we have still kept the *Graeca Majora* in use, though we are fast methodizing a plan by which the works of Greek writers themselves and not extracts will be used. In mathematics we have thus far followed the French manuals, though our preference is not on all points a strong one."

To all this pleading the Yale authorities turned a deaf ear. Harvard's general rule was like Yale's on this subject,³⁹ but I have not been able to learn whether or not it was relaxed, as was urged in the application to President Day. As for advanced standing, Round Hill boys secured it on examination at several institutions. Samuel Ward, 3d, entered the Sophomore Class at Columbia, when the class was nearly at the Junior year, graduating in little more than two years. George C. Shattuck, Jr., writing to his father proposed to try to enter advanced Sophomore at Harvard, go to Paris for a year, and on his return continue with the class he had joined. He said that he was fitted for the Junior year in Latin and Greek, and, in fact, he graduated in 1831, two years after leaving

³⁹ See Appendix to the Catalogue of 1825.

Northampton. The Round Hill examinations he considered very difficult. To mathematics the examiners gave eight hours. He did not fear the examination in Greek and Latin, subjects in which Bancroft had given the class much drill "and tried us to the utmost." George Shattuck said that boys in the class with him had entered the Senior Class in Yale. How well he was taught in mathematics may be seen in the fact that he was studying calculus, as well as surveying and nautical astronomy. In Greek he went as far as Pindar and Callimachus.

At this time, in 1825, the Harvard catalogue announced the conditions under which students entered the Freshman Class as follows:

"To be received into the Freshman Class, a candidate must be thoroughly acquainted with the Grammar of the Latin and Greek languages, including Prosody; be able properly to construe and parse any portion of the following books, namely, Jacobs' Greek Reader, the Gospels in the Greek Testament, Virgil, Sallust, and Cicero's Select Orations, and to translate English into Latin correctly. He must be well versed in Ancient and Modern Geography, the fundamental rules of Arithmetick, vulgar and decimal fractions; proportion, simple and compound; single and double fellowship; alligation, medial and alternate; and Algebra to the end of simple equations, comprehending also the doctrine of roots and powers, and arithmetical and geometrical progression."⁴⁰

Competent boys at Round Hill, who had been at the school two or three years, were generally able to meet these requirements at thirteen years of age, when they were too young for college life. It was natural, therefore, that such boys should be retained in the school until they were able to enter college with advanced credit. But this fact shows how much the whole system of higher education was awry. In fact, if we compare the curriculum of the American college of the time with that of the *Gymnasium*, at Schulpforte, we must conclude that in teaching Latin, Greek, and mathematics, which then constituted

⁴⁰ George C. Shattuck, Jr., to his father, Jan. 10, 25; Aug. 28; Sept. 21; Nov. 9, 28; Dec. 7, 1828; March 1, 8; May 26; Aug. 23 — 1829. Mass. Hist. Soc.

three-fourths of the real work of a college course, the *Gymnasium* was the seat of sounder learning. These subjects were generally finished in the American college by the end of Junior year; and the time of the seniors was given up to many subjects taken in short courses. In 1825 a Harvard senior was required to take Intellectual Philosophy, Optics, Astronomy, Paley's Evidences, Butler's Analogy, Political Economy, Philosophy of Natural History, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Geology, or a substitute for the last three in ancient or modern languages. The smattering a student got of these several subjects taught in such a small space and time, could have had little educational value. It is, therefore, not too much to say that the net results of the gymnasial education at Round Hill was about as good as a college education a century ago. So nearly were they equal that it was not to be expected that both could thrive in the same country.

The failure of the Round Hill School was thus fundamentally due to the impossibility of adjusting the *gymnasium* to the existing system in the country. In fact, with all the advantages of this type of school as a means of securing accurate and intense instruction, it has not been adopted in our educational life. Cogswell was forced to realize it, and when he gave up the struggle in 1834 his excellent plant remained unoccupied for a time. The sole ownership of the property reverted to him through the generosity of the shareholders, who transferred their shares to him, he assuming the indebtedness of the Institution. These obligations he paid off by selling the lands he had bought adjacent to the estate, and by using the money he earned in other capacities. The estate itself remained a financial burden on his hands. Finally, in 1848 he sold it to the Round Hill Water Cure Retreat Company for \$15,000. Adding to this sum the \$3400 he had received from Bancroft for half interest in the portion that had been sold in 1826 he

received a total sum of \$18,400 for property which, with the improvements, had cost fully twice that amount. It was a bad financial venture, but it was a long time before he ceased to feel the influence of his old dream. Visiting Northampton in 1846 in connection with the project which eventually resulted in the sale of the estate, he wrote: "Round Hill never looked more beautiful, and I feel quite tempted to come back to this enchanting spot. I am staying on the hill with Mr. Clark and a single night here has quite revived me."⁴¹ A considerable portion of this property has been used for residences by the people of the thriving town, which in these days has spread its streets around, and far beyond, what was a suburban elevation in 1823; but the Hill proper and some of the buildings that once sheltered the busy Round Hill boys and masters are now owned and used by the Clarke School for the Deaf.

⁴¹ Anna E. Ticknor, "Life of Cogswell," 237. Edward Clarke purchased part of George Bancroft's estate and lived in the stone house.

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.