

THE FORMATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION  
OF CHILDREN IN THE EARLY ENGLISH  
SCHOOLS AS SHOWN BY SOME  
OF THE WRITINGS AND  
RECORDS OF THE  
TIMES

AN ABSTRACT OF

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

OF DANBURY STATE COLLEGE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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September 1963

This study, entitled "A Brief Account of the Formation of Elementary Education of Children in the Early English Schools," is an attempt to discover and show some of the early aims and purposes of English education, to learn something of the formation, structure, and organization of the early English schools, and to record the basic elements of the curriculum offered in these schools. The study has been conducted almost entirely from available copies and translations of early English town and school records, and other writings of the times.

There were several varieties of schools in early England. These included the Choir schools, the Monastery schools, the Cathedral schools, and the Grammar schools. Many of these schools were the testing ground for the ideas of the educators of the day. Perhaps the most famous of these was Saint Paul's Cathedral School where Dean Colet introduced his much imitated ideas and philosophies of education. Various other schools are also discussed in the study.

Schools were slowly created and formed from about the sixth century on. The greatest numbers were formed during the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. An analysis of the records of the founding of some of these schools is contained in the study, including the Ashbourn School, Saint John's School, and the Ripon School.

The administration and structure of the early schools of England slowly evolved throughout the centuries into the form still often used in English schools. Therefore a study

of the stages in this slow evolution is valuable. The schools were managed by governing bodies, were administered by a high master, and served students who came predominantly from the growing middle classes.

The traditional medieval curriculum for young children included the study of Latin, Rhetoric, and Logic and was called the "Trivium." Slowly this was added to and altered in various ways until by the seventeenth century a curriculum had been developed that would be recognized as familiar by many a twentieth century schoolman. The texts used were often ancient Latin and Greek works, although stress was also put on Christian Writers and the Gospels. Erasmus became a widely used contemporary writer. The students studied these works primarily by memorisation and translation of passages.