

LENOX SCHOOL

*Report of the Headmaster
to the Trustees*

OCTOBER, 1931

Lenox, Massachusetts,
October 6, 1931.

To the Trustees of Lenox School,

Gentlemen:

Through the death of the Rev. Latta Griswold on August 16th, the School, for the second time within less than two years, has lost one who has had a very intimate and important share in its conduct and development. It had long been an ambition of Mr. Griswold's that there should be a Church boarding school at Lenox. Toward the realization of this vision, in establishing this School, he contributed markedly. His interest was deep, broad, and steadily increasing. His keen insight and understanding, his energetic readiness to help in any and every way, and his strengthening confidence were of invaluable assistance to me personally, and gave him a large share in directing and forwarding the School's growth. As a Trustee, as rector of Trinity Church, as a member of our faculty, and above all as an unfailing friend of the School, we are left the poorer for his passing, but the richer because he has been here among us. "Grant to him, Lord, eternal rest, and let light perpetual shine upon him".

This is the first summer in which it has not been necessary to undertake any alterations. Last fall, the main building was repainted and re-shingled. Donations received during the year have about equalled this expenditure, and therefore our capital deficit continues at just under \$21,000.00, of which \$15,000.00 is covered by a mortgage which you voted last spring to place. While the present is obviously no time for a concerted financial effort, yet we really should not be burdened with this indebtedness, and should aim to remove it as soon as it is in any way possible to do so.

Except that we do urgently need increased space for playing fields, the present plant is entirely adequate for the immediate future. To start, as we have done, by adapting existing buildings, has been advantageous in its initial economy, and in the fact that the final plant can be the outgrowth of the established life of the School rather than vice versa. But it is disadvantageous in that the inevitably heavy expense of permanent buildings, while postponed, is, granting that the School is successful, an inescapable future obligation.

During the past year, the possibilities inherent in the present site have been carefully explored and evaluated. Our property has been surveyed, sketches of proposed buildings submitted, and a tentative eventual development roughly sketched out. If you are satisfied that this site is the one to which we should commit ourselves, then this ultimate plan should be worked over and developed in considerably greater detail, so that whatever changes may be made from time to time may accord with and further it. But if you feel that another site would offer substantially greater possibilities of development, it is not too soon to attempt to find and

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secure such a property. I hope that in the course of our meeting to-day, marked progress can be made toward settling this question.

Even a small staff seldom remains unchanged from year to year. This year, Mr. Solandt has accepted a position teaching at Washington College, Maryland, while Mr. Thomas is at the Fountain Valley School at Colorado Springs. We are grateful for the devotion and help which they both gave so unstintingly during the three years they were with us, and are glad that we can look forward to Mr. Thomas's probable return to Lenox in the near future. The two new men who have been added to the faculty are Mr. Graham S. C. Tatem, a graduate of Oxford University, who has been teaching for some years in Bermuda, and Mr. George H. Blackwell, a Harvard alumnus, who begins his teaching career with us. It is perhaps an indication of the temper and desires of the faculty that six out of eight of the present members voluntarily spent a considerable portion of their summer in systematic study. The beneficent effect on the School of such work is obvious and inevitable.

Judged by the result of the College Board examinations, our scholastic standards seem to be improving, and, on the whole, to be reasonably good. Indeed, in three subjects, all who took the examinations passed. The generally satisfactory showing tends to throw the rather weaker spots of the curriculum into clearer light. We have studied the situation carefully and analysed the difficulties in those subjects in which we are weak, and are uniting in a concerted effort to put them on a satisfactory basis this year. We are making experiments in the direction of definitely trying to teach the younger boys how to prepare a lesson, rather than assuming that they already know. At the same time we are more nearly approximating college conditions for the sixth form by increasing the fraction of time devoted to preparation as opposed to recitation. Interesting ventures in the direction of correlating English more closely with other subjects, and unifying the entire curriculum are being undertaken. While not forgetting college examinations, we hope to be able to deal with them increasingly, not as the thinly disguised ultimate goal of our class work, but as a hurdle to be taken as much as possible in stride.

We have naturally been following with great interest, and with mixed emotions, the work in college of our first graduating class. Taking the marks secured by each boy in his freshman, sixth, and fifth form years, and reducing them all arbitrarily to a numerical basis, we find the average for all three years to be between 73 and 74. In only two cases is the change up or down of any consequence. It would seem, therefore, that the marks secured by a boy at Lenox are a fair index of what he can reasonably expect to get in college.

We are grateful that this year there are twenty-four new boys. Efforts have been made in a number of ways to spread the knowledge of Lenox. Following the meeting of the Provincial Synod at Lenox last fall, mimeo-

graphed copies of the Headmaster's report to that gathering were sent to all the New England clergy. An article about the School written by the Rev. Malcolm Taylor, Executive Secretary of the Province, appeared in a number of Diocesan papers. The Headmaster was graciously given the opportunity to address the convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts on the subject of the School. These efforts and others like them are helpful, even though it is sometimes hard to trace direct results. But we must, of course, chiefly rely on friends of the School who think well of her, and who will take the trouble to let their approval be generally known.

We have at the present writing 74 boys, four more than last year at the same time. Inquiries during the year have increased considerably. Four boys dropped out for financial reasons during the last month; and a substantial number of prospective new boys who would normally have been able to meet our charges and enter the School were this year unable to do so. There has been this year a general decrease in enrollments in private schools, except those with long waiting lists. One might expect that a school whose charges are moderate might be chosen this year by parents who would normally have preferred a more expensive school elsewhere. But no such tendency has been evident at Lenox. We have been much affected by general conditions; but, even so, we have not only managed to hold our own in numbers, but even to go ahead slightly. This is cause for genuine satisfaction.

As compared with a year ago, the increases in our running expenses for the past year are represented almost entirely by the addition of a Secretary, and by routine increases in the pay-roll. For the coming year, we will have to meet larger interest charges on account of our mortgage, and moderate probable increases in two or three other categories. The reduced cost of living will tend to operate in the other direction, but none the less, I expect that next year we might spend somewhat more than we did this. Happily our expected income should adequately cover any likely increase.

Most of our parents have met the tuition payments promptly, but a not inconsiderable minority, for reasons good or bad, have been considerably delayed in paying what is due us. I regret exceedingly that both this year and last certain amounts have remained unpaid at the end of the year and have had to be carried as "accounts receivable." I suppose we have no right to complain, but it is a fact that we have been financially embarrassed, and have had to pay substantial interest charges because of the failure of a few to discharge their financial responsibilities promptly.

The task of securing scholarships continues to be heavy. This year, in large measure through the personal generosity of the Trustees, it was possible to secure the \$3,000.00 appropriated, and to reduce the deficit of the previous year from \$1,000.00 to \$390.00. At the present writing, however, but \$1,200.00 of the needed \$3,000.00 has been pledged for the current academic year, and naturally worthy demands considerably exceed the

latter figure. Some of the parents who can afford to do so have generously undertaken to donate to the scholarship fund in addition to paying the regular tuition. But there are several others who can and I very much hope will do so.

I should be very much against either an abandonment or even restriction of our policy of granting reductions. The group whom this assistance has enabled to remain at Lenox has been outstanding alike in worth, promise, and achievement. The great contribution of this School lies less in assistance it can give to those who could be approximately as well or better cared for in any one of many boarding schools, but rather in the group for whom Lenox is a more or less unique opportunity. However, the present scheme of securing a scholarship fund is certainly not entirely satisfactory. I recommend a thoughtful consideration of the problems involved.

To assign compulsion to its proper plan in school life is a difficult problem, but we have been making some progress in grappling with it. Generally in boarding schools, misdemeanors of various sorts carry with them a certain number of marks, which have to be either balanced in part or whole by merits or worked off in some fashion by either useful or useless effort, during time that would otherwise be free. Most such systems are unthinkingly mechanical, are fundamentally based on a retribution theory of punishment, and fail in practice to distinguish adequately between the occasional and the habitual offenders.

Our first effort aimed at making such a distinction. There was a continuing honor list composed of those who had established a reputation for reliability; their feeling of responsibility could be counted on, so their marks were not recorded; they were intended to be in a sense above the system. For the remainder, it was assumed that those having few marks were really trying, and therefore a penalty was pointless. But for those who exceeded this reasonable number, marks were converted into hours of useful work at a rate that increased substantially with the number of marks received. The theory was that only the relatively serious offender needed to be penalized at all, while the average citizen would be sufficiently motivated by the satisfaction of keeping a good record.

Unfortunately, practice did not seem to square entirely with theory. Some boys on the honor list tended to grow lax behind the shelter of their bulwark. Others not on the honor list, only troubled themselves sufficiently to stay within the allowed free limit. Further, the deterrent effect on those receiving many marks was not in evidence; indeed, a study failed to show the slightest improvement in the record of the habitual offenders. In other words, neither did the better boys actually seem to be successfully stimulated, nor the worse ones effectively deterred, while the appeal to good conduct was on a rather ignoble basis. Furthermore, the procedure of having boys do for punishment pieces of work roughly paralleling those

done by all the boys as part of their regular duty had a demoralizing effect on both groups.

Therefore a change was inaugurated last Christmas which, while at first glance appearing inconsequential, was very far reaching in its effect. All connection between marks and hours of work was severed, and none of the latter were to be given by anyone except the Headmaster. A list of marks received by each boy was kept as before, and a cumulative graph prepared and displayed. This produced a rather healthy endeavour to improve one's own record, in addition to the somewhat less worthy motive of outdoing one's fellows. Those standing high on the list were likely to be favoured for such privileges as, in the nature of the case, could not be accorded to the School as a whole. Each week, every boy was required to confer with his advisor as to the reason for such marks as were secured, and together they tried to arrive at the root of the difficulty, and to plan out ways and means by which the record could be improved. Thus at a stroke, all direct penalty was removed, and the motive for moral conduct placed on an entirely new or loftier basis.

In spite of fears of chaos on the part of some, the results exceeded even our hopes. In the opinion of both masters and prefects, all standards became stricter, and yet a comparison week by week with the previous regime reveals a substantial reduction in the number of marks given. Not only were the various daily jobs better done than they had been, but also much more rapidly done. Necessary pieces of work formerly done by boys for punishment were now shared by all, and done in a small fraction of the time formerly required. It is a matter of record that during the period from Christmas to May, disciplinary penalties of any sort were inflicted on only three boys. Once again, the power of a positive ideal was found in practice to be far more effective than a negative deterrent. We do not claim to have eliminated penalties, but we have reduced them close to the vanishing point.

This year we introduced into our catalogue the following words: "The discipline at Lenox is modelled as closely as may be on that prevailing in a Christian family. When boys exceed the bounds of good conduct they are dealt with in a kindly but firm fashion, looking toward future improvement, and based on the expectation that they really desire to co-operate. Those who show themselves habitually unamenable to this ideal and approach are out of place at Lenox." Our discipline, when it is necessary, is not interested in punishment but in individual redemption. I sincerely believe that the words in the catalogue are not simply the expression of a pious hope, as are too many statements in School literature. During this past year at any rate, I believe that this philosophy has in practice entered fully into the very fabric of our school life, and of our relations one with another.

In any community, certain rules are necessary for the common welfare. It is our endeavour to reduce these rules to as small dimensions as possible, and to hold them constantly subject to radical revision as better ways are shown, and to rely more on general precepts. But at the same time, boys must be taught to cultivate the attitude that rules must be observed scrupulously, even though they may be changed readily. We do not look on ourselves as policemen armed with clubs to scare boys away from infractions; neither are we detectives to be constantly on the watch for them. The gain in strength of character that comes from removing all possibility of error is very doubtful. Free time in boarding school often means mischief for boys and trouble for masters as a result. It is unworthy to avoid the problem; it cannot be painlessly solved. Genuine education demands a free-will forbearance voluntarily assumed. There is little permanent change without a change in motive.

I tell boys frankly that they can probably break plenty of rules without getting caught if that is what they want to do. If and when they are detected, they are reminded that probably for every time that they are caught, there have been ten times when they were not noticed. Of course, we are imposed on by a few, but we are willing to chance this for the sake of a greater gain. Such an attitude on the part of the faculty tends to make the whole business much less of the traditional amusing contest to be waged between those in authority and those under authority. It lays a firm basis for a morality which is not enforced by external authority. While at first, public opinion of an enlightened sort is doubtless the major factor in forming the patterns of conduct of any boy, yet generally well before he completes his course the attitude of creative co-operation has been deliberately chosen and its burdens voluntarily assumed.

In the forming and enforcement of rules, a large part is properly delegated to the students themselves, particularly through the prefects and the Student Council. Most suggestions of new arrangements which they wish to try are sympathetically received, and not infrequently a policy of which I was personally doubtful has been adopted at their request, and has been found in practice to work well. Yet the tyranny of school boy opinion is notorious, and this powerful instrument in practice as often furthers conformity to improper as to proper ideals. It is far too often the case here in America, hardly less than in the older schools of England, that breaking a school tradition is considered among the boys far more serious than gross breaches of the Christian ideals or even of the standards of common decency. Continuous guidance and re-examination in the light of Christian standards is necessary in order that this all powerful public opinion may be increasingly conformed to those ideals which should undergird any school such as this.

I am fearful however, of allowing an equally free hand in enforcement. Obviously the students can handle the situation adequately from one

point of view, and there is considerable gain to themselves from the experience. If one is chiefly interested in mechanical efficiency, a system of student government can accomplish this very well indeed; boys' enforcement is much more likely to err by being too severe than too lenient. Even where the goal is altogether desirable, there is considerable likelihood that this pressure of opinion will prove itself too unimaginative and unbending to be able to deal in the wisest way with the youngster who is in any way other than typical.

Frequently the Student Council can and does help mightily by a sympathetic understanding of individual difficulties; but far more often, individual boys have dealt with and helped others in ways which would have been difficult if not impossible for a master. It has been exhilarating and yet humbling on one or two occasions this last year, in talking with a trusted few of the older boys, to find how fully redemptive and Christian was their point of view toward those not adequately co-operating with the School. Their faith in what might be done not infrequently put me to shame.

While boys generally do have a sense of justice, personally I am interested in something well beyond merely handed justice. Frequently two individuals should be dealt with for their shortcomings in widely divergent, almost opposite ways; one boy should be pleaded with, encouraged or protected, another should be scolded, driven or penalized. Boys are individuals far more than they are examples of any type, and they must be treated as individuals, if the full educational value of any experience is to be secured.

It is an article of my personal faith in the administering of the School that what is good for each individual boy in the long run will not be at variance with what is good for the School as a whole. Like all articles of faith, it is not provable, and yet subsequent events have so frequently demonstrated the adequacy of this approach that it has certainly proved itself a useful working hypothesis. Occasionally, of course, you find a boy whose influence is a corrupting one; when it might seem that the welfare of the School required his removal, it has been remarkable how directly a consideration of his own welfare pointed in the same direction. To attempt to justify the sacrifice of any individual on the ground that the supposed welfare of the group demands it is to my mind the height of folly and cowardice, and a complete negation of Christian principles. In dealing with an individual boy, it simplifies and focuses the problem immensely to realize that there is only one thing to be considered: namely the richest permanent development of the youngster in question.

Regardless of the supposed deterrent effect on the individual concerned, regardless of the force of example on the other boys, any discipline which does not look toward and in some measure result in redemption

of the individual is at best an emergency stop-gap, and not in any sense a solution of the problem involved. In anything so fundamentally individual, no fixed system or plan can be relied upon. We have no regular punishments; I seldom talk in terms of punishment. Where such seem desirable, it is general that a boy himself decides what it is to be on the basis of what he feels is likely to be helpful to him, in his particular case. Disciplinary action which does not result in permanent, constructive advance along the line of character constitutes a largely wasted opportunity. I could tell you of numerous occasions when I have waited and really genuinely hoped that a particular boy would get into trouble of some sort in order that we might be given a chance really to reach him; for as long as everything apparently went smoothly with him, there was little or no opportunity to puncture his complacency, and to stimulate him to lift himself from the acquiescent to the active, from the fair to the good. Usually a particular offence can be made to serve as a springboard from which to leap into the midst of a boy's interests, activities, attitudes and ideals. I have often conversed for several hours with a boy when the specific occasion which was the immediate cause was lost sight of entirely after the first few minutes.

The response to kindness and sympathetic understanding unhappily does not seem to be universal, but it is widespread. While some few, at least for the moment, seem firmly resistant to all advances, yet from many such occasions there has resulted a marked and far-reaching change in a boy's entire attitude, such as was noted at once both by masters and boys, and which succeeding months showed to be a permanent and not merely a temporary improvement. It is easy to detect, and to give a numerical value to progress in Latin or History, for example. It is harder, probably impossible, to be as definite in the case of character development. But a long range comparison over a period of months or years would indicate that while some few seem relatively untouched by contact with the School, the great majority are quite definitely and tangibly helped, some markedly so, in ways that show alike within and without the School.

Character development means helping each boy to see himself increasingly clearly, with both his strength and weakness, and to hold up constantly before him alike the ultimate goal of a richer fuller life, and the next steps toward that goal. Through our faculty advisors, we are each year getting more fully and intimately in touch with each boy as an individual. Through many of the boys, great help is secured in assisting one another by kindly friendship. A Church School should be, and is a laboratory in Christian living. It is not a vain hope that some at least here come to know at first hand the joys of a Christ directed life.

Respectfully submitted,
G. GARDNER MONKS,
Headmaster

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Rev. William Greenough Thayer, D. D., *President*

George Sumner Barton, Esq., *Secretary*

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William Appleton Coolidge, Esq.

Harris Fahnestock, Esq.

George Peabody Gardner, Jr., Esq.

*The Rev. Latta Griswold

George Higginson, Jr., Esq.

The Rev. Fleming James

Frank Judson Pope, Esq.

*Died August 16th at Edinburgh, Scotland.

**SUMMARY OF BALANCE SHEET
for Year Ending September 15, 1931**

Assets

<i>Current Assets</i>	
Cash	\$ 852.76
Accounts receivable	1,550.00
	\$ 2,402.76
 <i>Fixed Assets</i>	
School property	\$ 55,101.15
Improvements	132,410.99
Equipment	18,429.56
	\$ 205,941.70
Prepaid Expense	873.13
	\$ 209,217.59

Liabilities

<i>Current Liabilities</i>	
Notes payable	\$ 9,500.00
Mortgages payable	15,000.00
Less Deficiency in Scholarship Fund 1931	390.00
	\$ 24,110.00

Capital

Legacy-William Amory Gardner	\$ 52,000.00
Capital Account Sept. 15, 1931 .	\$ 129,711.60
Excess of Income over Expenses.	3,395.99
	\$ 133,107.59
	\$ 209,217.59

Statement of Income and Expenses

Incomes

Subscriptions	\$ 3,315.00
Operating Income	
Tuition	\$ 52,570.00
Scholarships applied....	3,000.00
Miscellaneous	487.95
	\$ 56,057.95

Deduct operating expenses

Electricity	\$ 1,042.08
Food	12,219.47
Fuel	3,759.51
Housekeeping	682.31
Infirmary	1,241.93
Interest	632.66
Insurance	818.57
Laundry	2,787.56
Rent and Living allow- ance	3,200.00
Repairs	407.80
Masters' Salaries	16,000.00
Supt.'s Supplies	799.44
Wages	8,233.97
Water	500.00
Other items (each less than \$500.00)	2,411.66
Bad Debts	1,240.00
	\$ 55,976.96

Operating Profit..... \$ 80.99

Excess of Income over Expenses..... \$ 3,395.99

Pittsfield, Massachusetts
September 30th, 1931

I hereby certify that I have checked the bank balance and all the books of entry and find them to be in order. The Balance Sheet, the Statement of Income and Expenses with supporting schedules are the result of my investigation.

Respectfully submitted,

F. H. CHANT, C. P. A.

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