

0. Last Speech of Horace Mann - Story Preface

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Horace Mann walked slowly out the door to address the assembled audience at Antioch College. As president of Antioch, he was also thinking of new ideas for the *Common School Journal* he had started (to communicate the latest ideas, and findings, about education).

Mann took a deep breath. Before him were the graduates of Antioch, together with their friends and teachers. He was as proud of them as they were of him. The crowd eagerly awaited his valedictory address.

Tightening his bow tie, with his head held high, he stood before the silent audience, and began to speak:

I beseech you to treasure up in your hearts ...

Within two months of giving this speech, Horace Mann—the father of the American common school—would die at the age of 63. His final call-to-action was delivered with the same vigor that pushed him to educate himself, better others and improve a nation.

Today, over 90 percent of American children between the ages of 4-18 are getting a good education compared to the 55 percent in the early 1800s. Indeed, Mann believed that "social harmony" was a primary goal of the school and that schools must be available as a birth-right of every American child regardless whether the child's family is rich or poor.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Last-Speech-of-Horace-Mann-Horace-Mann-Father-of-Public-Education>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Last-Speech-of-Horace-Mann-Horace-Mann-Father-of-Public-Education>