HENRY BARNARD
THE NESTOR OF AMERICAN EDUCATORS
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1811-

Dr. Henry Barnard is one of the most eminent of American educators. Although fifteen years younger than Horace Mann and Mary Lyon, he entered upon an educational career at about the same time that they did. He was only two years younger than Longfellow, Holmes, and Whittier, and he was a leader in the times of Webster, Clay, and Calhoun; yet he has lived to enjoy the professional companionship of even the young men of to-day. He witnessed the first coming of the ideals of Pestalozzi to America, and the educational reforms of Fröbel. Thus has Dr. Barnard worked with every man whose name will be associated with education in the nineteenth century. No other man has had this privilege.

When Dr. Barnard began his professional career there were no good school buildings except in a few cities. The schoolhouses were neither ventilated nor well heated; they had no good seats, no serviceable blackboards, and no apparatus of any kind. The few schoolbooks
used by the pupils were of the most inferior kind. Reading, writing, and arithmetic were the only subjects generally taught, and cruel flogging was witnessed daily in the schools. Dr. Barnard advocated improvements in all these lines, and he has seen the changes as they have taken place.

HIS BOYHOOD

Henry Barnard is still living (in 1890) at Hartford, Connecticut, in the same house in which he was born, on January 24, 1811. It is a mansion of the old substantial style of architecture, and in his childhood must have been one of the finest houses in Hartford. His father was a prominent citizen, and belonged to one of the first families of Connecticut.

Henry went to the common schools from early boyhood, though most of the Hartford boys whose parents were well-to-do were sent to private schools. At twelve years of age he was sent to the academy at Monson, Massachusetts, and afterwards to the Hopkins School, in Hartford, to prepare for college.

His schoolmates have told many interesting stories of his brilliant scholarship, and his declamations and debates at school. He held high rank in his classes, could speak well, was a fine appearing lad, and was always looked up to as a leader.
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AT COLLEGE

At fifteen years of age Henry Barnard entered Yale College, and at nineteen he graduated with honors. Young as he was, he was one of the ablest men in the literary societies, and was president of the Linonian, the leading debating society at Yale. He took prizes in English and in Latin composition.

Such distinction meant much, for there were many able men in Yale with Henry Barnard. Horace Bushnell, one of the greatest preachers in the United States, was there; Francis Barnard, afterwards president of Columbia College; and Noah Porter, later president of Yale. Among his fellow-students, three became United States senators, nine members of Congress, one Secretary of War, five ministers to foreign countries, three governors of states, fifteen judges, six college presidents, and forty-three college professors. It was a proof of great ability for a lad in his teens to carry off honors among such talent.

The year that he graduated from college, Daniel Webster delivered the great speech of his life—the reply to Colonel Hayne in the United States senate. This made a profound impression upon the young orator of Yale.

At the same time William Lloyd Garrison
was at the height of his power as an enthusiastic champion of the rights of the negro, and this appealed strongly to Mr. Barnard.

He was resolved upon a public career, in which oratory was to play a leading part. In preparation for this he studied law after graduating from college, and was duly admitted to the bar. Before practicing law he went to Europe, where he visited all the principal countries, and became acquainted with Wordsworth, Carlyle, De Quincey, and other noted writers. Thus, with study and travel, he secured the best equipment for a successful public career.

CHOOSING A CAREER

On his return from Europe, at scarcely twenty-five years of age, Mr. Barnard was elected to the Connecticut legislature from Hartford. This was quick recognition for a man who had previously done nothing in politics.

He became at once interested in the cause of education, and proposed a bill creating a State Board of Education. The legislature of Connecticut was very conservative. Few people believed that it would accept any school bill, especially one so ideal and revolutionary as that offered by Mr. Barnard. Yet such was his influence and magnetism, that after his eloquent speech, the bill passed the house of representa-
tives without a dissenting vote, and was adopted unanimously by the senate.

The same year that Mr. Barnard entered political life, Horace Mann left the Massachusetts legislature, to give himself to the work of education. Mr. Barnard's admiration for Horace Mann vied with his admiration for Webster and Garrison, and the choice between an educational and a political or legal career was a difficult one.

In the law, a way was open to fame and fortune, with every opportunity for the exercise of all the popular powers he possessed. One of the ablest lawyers of New York city, the attorney-general for the state, had invited him to become his law partner. Few young men of twenty-seven would decline such an offer for the sake of being an educator.

Horace Mann was the only man in the country who would have said, "Do it." Henry Barnard did it. For sixty years he has devoted his life to the schools, and his eminence and service in his chosen field more than justify the choice.

SCHOOL WORK IN CONNECTICUT

Mr. Barnard accepted the position of secretary of the Connecticut Board of Education, which is practically that of state superintendent of schools. He was very active in arranging educational conventions in every county, and in
visiting schools. He corresponded with more than two thirds of the teachers in the state, and addressed many public meetings.

He established the *Connecticut School Journal*, and wrote annual reports, second in value only to those which Horace Mann was writing in Massachusetts. Kent, in his famous "Commentaries on American Law," speaks of Mr. Barnard's first report as a "bold and startling document," which "contains a minute, accurate, comprehensive, and instructive exhibition of the condition and operation of the common school system."

Mr. Barnard continued this work for four years. Then the baser politicians, for political purposes, succeeded in abolishing the office he held. Most men would have returned to law in discouragement, but Henry Barnard persevered in the cause he had made his own.

**IN RHODE ISLAND**

The Rhode Island legislature, at about this time, did what has rarely been done in America for any educator. It adjourned all business and met in joint session to listen to an address from Mr. Barnard upon the subject of education. This speech was one of the grandest efforts of his life. In consequence of it, the legislature passed a law much like the school law of Con-
necticut, and Mr. Barnard became the first Commissioner of Education for Rhode Island.

He did not wish to accept the position when the governor offered it to him. He had begun to prepare a work on the history of education. He yielded, however, when the governor said, "Isn't it better, Barnard, to make history than to write it?"

During the five years that he was in Rhode Island he made history of education very fast. He put the schools into good condition, and for the first time secured public taxation for their support. Through his efforts more than sixteen thousand educational pamphlets were distributed gratuitously, and libraries of at least five hundred volumes were established in all but three towns of the state.

Mr. Barnard left this work because his health failed. The teachers of the state gave him a testimonial of their regret, and the legislature unanimously extended to him a vote of "thanks for the able, faithful, and judicious manner in which he had fulfilled the duties of his office."

OTHER POSITIONS

While Rhode Island was moving forward rapidly under the lead of Mr. Barnard, Connecticut became very much ashamed of the way she had treated him. When his health was
restored, in 1850, he was invited to become principal of the new state normal school, and superintendent of Connecticut schools. He carried on this work in a successful and popular manner for four years, until ill-health necessitated his resigning both positions.

After three years of freedom from care, and several months of travel through the South and West, he accepted the presidency of the University of Wisconsin. He remained there two years, and gave much time and attention to the school work of that state.

In 1866 he was elected president of St. John's College, in Maryland. He worked there until he was appointed by the President, in 1867, to organize a national Bureau of Education, and then he became the first United States Commissioner of Education.

In other ways Mr. Barnard had been honored. In 1851 both Yale and Union College bestowed upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. The next year Harvard gave him the same honor, and later Columbia bestowed the degree of L. H. D.

No other man, as an educator simply, ever received such honors from four such institutions. They were earned and bestowed by the time he was forty years old.
COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

The Bureau of Education is now recognized as one of the important departments of government, but when Dr. Barnard was appointed the first Commissioner of Education, on March 14, 1867, the scope of the department was yet to be determined. Dr. Barnard's acquaintance with all educators, and with most of the public men of this country and of Europe, at once gave the bureau a wide influence.

Without a week's delay, he began to gather statistics regarding all classes of schools, colleges, and professional institutions, in their organization, equipment, instruction, and management. He also looked up the facts about school funds, educational associations, school laws, and schoolhouses. In a few weeks he developed the plans upon which most of the valuable educational information of the past thirty years has been gathered. His own library became the nucleus from which a national educational library has grown.

When we view the vast, grand work that has been accomplished by this department, and is being done now by Commissioner William T. Harris and his corps of experts, we appreciate how much we owe to the man whose energy established the office and whose scholarship set its high standard.
AS AN AUTHOR

Dr. Barnard began, in 1855, the publication of a series of annual volumes on education, known as the "American Journal of Education," and continued it until 1893. These volumes give a vast amount of information upon education in the different countries of the world—information such as can be found in no other place. No greater series of books on education has ever been published.

The "Journal" cost Dr. Barnard $50,000 more than he received from it, and his fortune was ultimately lost in the great enterprise. Yet it will be his lasting monument.

These volumes and his reports of the Bureau of Education prove beyond all question that he has mastered the history of education in the nineteenth century in a thorough, comprehensive, and critical way as no other man has ever done.

No one can ever write about American or European educational affairs from 1820 to 1875, without drawing most of his information and inspiration from the writings of Henry Barnard. He has all the instincts of the scientist, the patience of an historian, the poise of a statesman, and the zeal of a reformer.
CONCLUSION

Dr. Henry Barnard retired from the office of Commissioner of Education, and from all active educational work, on March 15, 1870, at the age of sixty.

When he began his career as an educator, Connecticut had no system of free public schools. During the previous two hundred years, there had been many good schools in the state, but education could not become general until the schools were free and public. Dr. Barnard’s first work was to develop a public school system, and to place the schools on a firm financial and professional basis. Through his efforts they have ranked for more than fifty years among the best schools in the country.

In Rhode Island he did equally good service. That state, also, had had no free public school system worthy the name until Dr. Barnard organized and developed one. She has been justly proud of the rank of her schools for fifty years, and it is largely due to Dr. Barnard. No other man has been so closely allied with the organization of two almost perfect school systems in two important states.

In his eminence as orator and author, in his personal acquaintance with the eminent literary and scholarly men and women in both hemi-
spheres, in the length of time he has served the cause of education, as the promoter of the educational systems of two states, and as the father of the national Bureau of Education, which is the most perfect department of the kind in the world, Dr. Barnard has enjoyed a great combination of opportunities and successes as an educator.

A thorough scholar, a brilliant orator, a forcible writer, a skillful administrator, he has devoted his talents, his time, and his wealth to the cause of education for sixty-five of the eighty-eight years of his life.