

After holding a seat in the Legislative Halls of Connecticut for three years, where he became instrumental in the appointment of a Board of Commissioners of common schools, he abandoned his profession and banished from his mind the promptings of political ambition, and went forth to labor, with all his might, in the field of Education, as Secretary to the Board. He held this office during four years and it is a substantial evidence that he made it no sinecure, that, whilst engaged in the faithful discharge of its duties, visiting schools, enquiring into their condition, and suggesting improvements, delivering lectures, holding Teachers' Institutes, &c., he spent out of his private funds, for the promotion of the cause of Education in Connecticut, a sum nearly equal to his salary.

Neither the Educational Board nor Barnard possessed any power to change the educational law or system in practice; their duties were to collect information in relation to the existing condition of the common schools, to disseminate sound views, to awaken the public mind to the importance of educational reform, and to enlighten it with respect to what the character of the reform should be. The necessity for the establishment of a Normal School for the training of teachers was distinctly perceived, yet it was considered premature to establish such an institution before it could command popular sympathy and favor.

The result of Mr Barnard's investigations, showed a long list of evils. Teachers were poorly qualified for their duties, and still more inadequately remunerated; children were late and irregular in their attendance; school houses and furniture inconvenient and out of repair; there was total lack of uniformity in school books; schools were often discontinued in the winter season for want of fuel; a deplorable apathy with respect to the whole question of education, prevailed in the public mind, and it was the general impression that no improvements were necessary.

It would occupy more space than we can devote, to enumerate all the varied inquiries of the highest moment, in relation to the internal and external condition of education, which were instituted by Mr Barnard. The following are the general heads upon which interrogations were made:—

"Name, territorial condition, population, and pecuniary resources of the District; School Premises, including general questions, site, school house, apparatus and library; The School,—general questions, the teacher, attendance, classification, course of instruction in the physical, intellectual, moral, æsthetic, and industrial departments; Studies and text-books; Methods; Spelling; Reading; Composition; Grammar; Arithmetic; Penmanship; Geography; History; Drawing; Music; Government; Examination; Parental and public interest; Other means of popular education."

From these various subjects we select one, that of Government, and subjoin the particular questions, most of which, every teacher in every land may, with advantage, propose to himself:—

"1. Do you enter on your duties in the school-room in the right spirit, in good health, and with the right preparation for the work?"

"2. Do you aim to make your children love you, by exhibiting a strong sympathy in their pursuits, and a fondness for their company?"

"3. Do you attend strictly to punctuality, regularity, and order, in your own duties?"

"4. Do you perform your work with animation, exercise constant patience, and never lose your temper?"

"5. Do you exhibit firmness, impartiality, kindness, and parental regard, toward your scholars?"

"6. Do you see that your pupils are all properly seated, and every way physically comfortable, as to light, air, and temperature?"

"7. Do you see that all your children, at all times, have something to do, and a motive for doing it?"

"8. Do you make order, quietness, and obedience, the habit of your school?"

"9. Do you aim to enlist the affection and activity of the older pupils in doing good to you and the school?"

"10. Do you give rewards, &c.?"

"11. What punishments are inflicted, &c.?"

"12. If corporal punishment is inflicted, what is the instrument used, &c.?"

"13. Are you careful to avoid a spirit of fault-finding, &c.?"

"14. Are you careful to administer rebuke more in sorrow than in anger, &c.?"

"15. Do you try to secure the co-operation of parents in the government of the school?"

"16. Have you had cases of thoroughly incorrigible pupils? If so, what did you do with them?"

"17. Do you find that emulation, or the desire of surpassing, can be employed as a motive to study, and good behaviour, without stirring up jealousy, envy, &c.?"

"18. Are your rewards bestowed mainly for evidence of intellectual capacity, or for habitual industry, &c.?"

"19. Are your punishments unmixed with exhibitions of personal feelings, as anger, scorn, &c.?"

"20. Do you pay proper regard to the physical condition of the culprit, such as a disordered nervous system, natural irritability and restlessness of temperament, or debility of body, in administering punishment?"

"21. Have you observed that punishment is effectual in proportion to its certainty more than to its severity? and more from the manner than the frequency?"

One would suppose that if greatness of soul, self-sacrifice for the public good, purity of motives, and acts of usefulness could raise a man above the storms of party, the evil surmises and cavils of the narrow-minded and prejudiced, and secure him from the animosities and rancor of enemies, Barnard would have been hailed by all as a public benefactor. But it was far otherwise. The State Legislature annihilated, in 1842, the office which he held, as one which entailed heavy expenses on the state and yielded no proportionate beneficial results. We cannot contemplate this interruption of his labors of love, but with wonder and reprobation. Yet the feelings displayed by the politicians of Connecticut are by no means anomalous. Whilst professing to be the conservators and the promoters of the public good, with high trusts reposed in them and weighty responsibilities resting upon them, we too frequently find unscrupulous statesmen and driveling politicians impugning motives too pure to find a response in their own breasts, and striving to bring into reproach or ruthlessly to overturn institutions, and set aside men, whose sole aim and influence is the public good and whose highest crime is their unflinching adherence to the promotion of their object. Not to pander to the lust for power which reigns predominant in the breasts of such characters, is sufficient crime to draw forth a sentence of proscription from their tribunal, which no amount of inherent excellence and instrumentality in the public good, can avert or mitigate.

The motto of politicians is alas, too often, "Myself, Myself!" O that it were always, "My Country!" What a bright day if all were like the patriotic admiral who, though a zealous republican, pursued and fought the enemies of England in the days of the despotic Protector, "I fight not for Cromwell," said he, "but for my country."

(To be Continued.)