

XX.—STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

1.—HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The settlement of Connecticut commenced in 1633—three years after that of Boston,—and emanated from it. In its first towns and future ultimate capitals of Hartford and New Haven, the public school was one of the earliest subjects of municipal legislation—in Hartford in 1638, and in New Haven in 1639—contemporaneously with providing for roads and bridges, public worship, and protection against the Indians. And eleven years afterwards, the year that the General Court of Massachusetts Bay chartered Harvard College, the little Commonwealth of Connecticut, in adopting the Code of 1650, provided for the maintenance of schools by townships identically with Massachusetts, as in the Acts quoted above, pages 151-152, in Acts which, with slight modifications to make them more efficient, remained on the Statute book for 200 years. Even at that early period, Connecticut legislated on the subject of Collegiate as well as of Primary Education; adopted Harvard College, and provided to assist in its support, by adopting in the chapter on schools of its Code of laws, the recommendation to “every family” to “give yearly the fourth part of a bushel of corn, or something equivalent thereto, for the advancement of learning by the College at Cambridge,” a contribution which was continued for 50 years, until ten of the principal ministers, in 1700, brought each a number of books to found a College—now Yale College.

One hundred and sixty-seven years ago, in 1701, the Connecticut system of public instruction was so far matured as to embrace the following particulars :

“1. An obligation on every parent and guardian of children not to suffer as much barbarism, in any of their families, as to leave a single child or apprentice unable to read the holy word of God, and the good laws of the Colony; and also to bring them up in some lawful calling or employment ‘under penalty for each offence.’”

“2. A tax of forty shillings on every thousand pounds of the lists of estates was collected in every town with the Annual State tax, and payable proportionally to those towns only which should establish their schools according to law.”

“3. A Common School in every town (township) having over seventy families, kept for at least six months in the year.”

“4. A Grammar School in each of the four head County towns, to fit youth for College.”

“5. A College towards which the General Court made an annual appropriation of £120.”

“6. A provision for the religious instruction of the Indians.”

State School Fund.—In 1795, Connecticut laid the foundation of its State School fund, by devoting for Common School purposes the income of the pro-