BARNAS SEARS

A CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR
HIS LIFE AND WORK

ALVAH HOVEY, D.D., LL.D.

THE REV. BARNAS SEARS, D D., ABOUT 1871

BARNAS SEARS

A CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR
HIS MAKING AND WORK

BY

ALVAH HOVEY, D.D., LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "A MANUAL OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY," "STUDIES IN ETHICS AND RELIGION," ETC.

"Humility in the solemn presence of a mysterious universe, and reverence for the Power that framed it, best become those who are but the creatures of a day."

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SILVER, BURDETT & COMPANY

NEW YORK BOSTON CHICAGO

MOTIVE

For many years the writer of these pages has felt a strong desire to give expression to his sentiments of gratitude and love to Barnas Sears, D.D., LL.D., his teacher in Christian Theology at Newton (1845–8), and his honored friend to the close of a noble life (1880). No sufficient record of his truly eminent services to the cause of education, whether theological, collegiate, or popular, can be made within the limits of a small volume; but even a brief account of those services, as performed by such a man, may be welcome to not a few readers who find incentives to strenuous labor for the good of mankind in the lives of past toilers in the same field.

It is not forgotten that an eloquent tribute to his character as a man, and to his ability as a teacher of theology, was paid by his

enthusiastic pupil, Doctor Oakman S. Stearns; but it was published in the *Baptist Review* for 1883, and is accessible to few at the present time; moreover, it spoke of him chiefly "as a theological professor," while a great part of his public service was in behalf of academic or popular education. It may be true, as Doctor Stearns intimates, that he never achieved a greater success than in his work at Newton, but it must always be remembered that his work in that school was but a small part of what he did for his country and mankind. It was brilliant and fruitful service, but only a fraction of his life-work, which must not be suffered to obscure the wide compass and rare merit of the rest.

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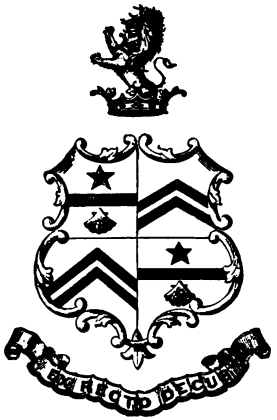

THE SEARS COAT OF ARMS

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Sandisfield, Mass., November 19, 1802.
Entered Brown University in the spring of 1822.
Graduated from Brown University, September 7. 1825.
Entered the Newton Theological Institution, October, 1825.
Commenced preaching for First Baptist Church, Hartford, May 19, 1827.
Ordained pastor of the same, July 11, 1827.
Dismissed at his own request, March, 1829.
Professor of Languages, Hamilton, N. Y., September, 1829.
Married in Brookline, Mass., July 6, 1830.
Studied in Germany and France, 1833–35.
Professor of Christian Theology in the Newton Theological Institution, 1836–48.
President of the Newton Theological Institution, 1839–48.
S.T.D. by Harvard University, 1841.
Secretary of Massachusetts Board of Education, 1848–55.
President and Professor of Moral Philosophy, Brown University, 1855–67.
LL.D. by Yale University, 1862.
General Agent of the Peabody Educational Fund, 1867–80.
President of the American Baptist Missionary Union, 1874–77.
Died at Saratoga, N. Y., July 6, 1880.
Funeral at Brookline, Mass., July 9, 1880.

Barnas Sears:

A Christian Educator

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND EDUCATION

THE American ancestry of Barnas Sears is worthy of distinct notice. He was of the seventh generation from Richard Sears, the emigrant ancestor (from Colchester, England) of a family well known in New England for business enterprise, public spirit, and religious influence. Between Richard Sears the first and Barnas Sears the seventh there were in the direct line four Pauls and one Joshua (Paul[1] Paul[2], Joshua[3], Paul[4], Paul[5]) making it reasonable, if names are characteristic, to look for sound theology, courage,

zeal, and courtesy in the subject of our sketch.

Barnas Sears was born on the 19th day of November, 1802, in Sandisfield, Berkshire County, Massachusetts. His parents were Paul and Rachel (Granger) Sears, both of whom lived to a good age. His father was born February 2, 1769, and died September 25, 1851, at the age of eighty-three years. He is said to have been a man of somewhat uneven temper, and to have had an unmarried brother of rugged nature, who was disposed to undervalue the studious aspirations of his nephew, Barnas.

His mother was born August 4, 1771, and died August 23, 1846, at the age of seventy-five years. She was a woman of very even temper and gentle spirit, always characterized by her son as one of the sweetest Christians. It is, therefore, not surprising that we are told by one who ought to know, that "he had inherited a quick temper, but by the time his family were grown he had it under perfect control." It is added by the same

witness that "his heart was warm and affectionate, so that, although separated from all his brothers and sisters for many years, he seldom spoke of them without emotion." [1]

But, in looking for the sources of temperament and ability, one need not restrict his quest to a man's parents. His earlier ancestry may be represented as well. And Doctor Sears may have had in mind this fact when he said: "My grandfather, whom I remember well, was one of the first settlers in the New Boston district of Sandisfield. He came from Chatham, though he was born in Harwich, Massachusetts, on the Cape. He was so pious and prayerful a man that young Christians of all denominations used to visit him, and gave him the name of 'the saint of New Boston.'" This grandfather, Paul

[1] The children of Paul and Rachel (Granger) Sears were all born in Sandisfield, Mass., in the following order: (1) Mary, July 2, 1788; (2) Alfred, September 27, 1795; (3) Belinda, August 23, 1798; (4) Sally, July 1, 1801; (5) Barnas, November 19, 1802; (6) Lyman, September, 1904; (7) David G., June 29, 1806; (8) John R., January 11, 1809; (9) Hiram, July 8, 1811; (10) Henry, August 3, 1815.

Sears, was first connected with the "Standing Order"; but during the "great awakening" he became a Separatist, and afterwards, following out his convictions, he united with others in organizing the First Baptist Church of Sandisfield.

The first fifteen years of his life were passed by Barnas Sears on his father's farm, with only such opportunities for instruction as farm-boys had in the county of Berkshire a hundred years ago. The book of nature, with its hills and mountains, its forests and streams, its winters and summers, was open to him as to all, but the country schools were not as good as they have since been made. It was before the days of Horace Mann and the most vigorous attempts to improve the character of the public schools of the Bay State. But even then bright children in simple ways laid hold at an early age of the keys of knowledge, and gave to those who observed their proficiency, promise of future distinction. With such children must be numbered the one scholar, in a family of

ten (seven brothers and three sisters), whose name was Barnas, and who is described by a schoolmate as "thoughtful, exemplary, and at the same time vigorous, fond of fun, full of jokes, an unconscious leader." Judging him by this description, the boy was "father of the man." At the age of seven or eight he was a ruddy, laughing-eyed lad, noticeable anywhere in a group of his own age, and attractive even to strangers. How rich in lessons of life must those early years in Berkshire have been!

In speaking of Barnas as "the one scholar in a family of ten children," no shadow of disrespect is meant for the others. The children were all capable and efficient. Several of his brothers became successful merchants, first in Hartford, Connecticut, and afterwards in New York City; and none of them were lacking in vigorous character. They knew how to bring things to pass. Though not scholars, they were well-informed and worthy men and women.

Referring to the common schools of New

England as they were conducted towards the year 1830, Doctor Sears wrote this for his last address: "I will speak of them as I knew them, for I was in them about ten years as a pupil and six winters as a teacher during the first quarter of the century. The school-houses were somewhat improved. The large fireplaces, the movable seats, and the dunce-blocks and fool's caps were going out of use. Discipline was still severe, but there was a better supply of books, a better classification of the pupils, and a more regular order of exercises. Still, everything was mechanical and followed a certain routine, repeating empty words in a way which ossified thought; and the teacher had so many things to do at once, and never time to do anything well, that there was often not a little confusion."

This statement is followed by a remarkable "word-picture" of the daily exercises of such a school, beginning with reading by the highest class, the account of which may be omitted. "During all the time that the lower classes were reading the school-room

presented a lively scene. The teacher's eyes, ears, tongue, and hands were busy, and sometimes nearly all at once. For example, while with one eye and one ear he was attending to a reading lesson, he might, with the other, discover strange tricks,—especially if he turned around suddenly—and would shake one boy, pinch the ear or pull the hair of another, and call out a third for severer punishment. Meanwhile he would, almost incessantly, hear these words: 'Please mend my pen,' 'Please set me a copy,' 'May I go out?' 'May I go to the fire?' 'Will you look over my sum?' These shrill sounds were heard till the youngest class was reached, and the child had repeated the alphabet at the point of the master's penknife. . . . Half the session being thus ended, the whole process (after 'going out') was reversed. The youngest child was called up again 'to say his letters,'—a term which fitly described the performance. Next followed an exercise which required genius. The task assigned was *to make syllables* by repeating in sundry

ways the first two letters of the alphabet, although there was no more connection between those names and the syllables than there was between them and the moon. It reminds one of the story of the monk who filed his teeth in order to speak Hebrew. The spelling exercises, ascending from class to class till the first was reached, filled out the remainder of the half-day. . . . The spelling and the writing of the older classes were, perhaps, the least objectionable of all the school exercises." It was in such a school, according to his own testimony, that Barnas Sears was a pupil about ten years—at least a part of the time; at first, perhaps, in the summer months and, later, presumably in the winter, beginning at the age of five and ending at the age of fifteen.

During these years he acquired a taste for books, and his reading may have encroached sometimes on the hours of labor, to the annoyance of his bachelor uncle, if not to the grief of his more appreciative mother. And so when the ardent youth, at the age of fif-

teen, asked for the gift of his time, for the purpose of working his own way through college, this uncle remarked "that his father might as well let the boy go, as he was nothing but a book-boy, anyhow, and never seemed to care for work."

Events, however, proved that he did care for work when it was a step towards a liberal education. For he presently made a contract with a neighbor to build for him a handsome stone wall, and not only fulfilled his contract by hiring another man to assist him with his team, but gained such a reputation for this kind of work as to be in constant demand.

Whatever he did, he did well, for a high and holy motive had entered into his life. Two years before resolving to seek for himself a liberal education, he had accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord, and had at once taken his place with the band of workers for the cause he loved. When he spoke in social meetings there was always silence, and interest in what he said. His pastor and his mother divined his calling, and encouraged

his longing to prepare for the highest Christian service.

So with his father's consent, he undertook the long task of personal training at his own charges. "He wrought hard during the summer," and the following winter, at the age of sixteen, we find him teaching school, beginning thus early and bravely what proved to be the principal vocation of his life. His first teacher in the classics was the Rev. Timothy M. Cooley of Granville, a neighboring town in Massachusetts, who was somewhat famous in his day for success in fitting boys for college. But before entering Brown young Barnas repaired to the University school and put himself under the tuition of Jesse Hartwell, its accomplished principal.

At a later period he thus characterizes this class of schools as they were then conducted:

"In the academies the teachers, as a class, were well-educated men. The schools were sometimes for both sexes, and consequently had classes in English studies; but when they served as preparatory schools only, little was

taught in them but the elements of Latin and Greek, and even these were rather studied in books than taught by the preceptor. The education, therefore, which boys fitting for college received, was mainly through a vigorous exercise of the memory in learning the words of an ancient language. A weekly composition on some of the virtues or vices, and a declamation every Wednesday from some great orator, such as Chatham or Patrick Henry, were the only variations from the Latin and Greek exercises." In such schools Barnas Sears fitted for college.

A severe fever prevented him from joining his class at the opening of the Freshman year in the autumn of 1821, but he joined it in the spring of 1822, and was graduated in 1825, his part at the Commencement being the philosophical oration, and his theme, "The Influence of Association upon the Intellectual Character."

Of his course as a college student but little is known. Yet from a statement of later years it is certain that he made no persistent

effort to stand at the head of his class in recitation, but preferred a broader scholarship, without "cramming." In weighing the significance of this statement it would be well to bear in mind, *first*, that the regular circle of college studies was at that time (1821–25) much smaller than at present. Few, if any, elective courses were offered to students who were ambitious to enlarge the circuit of their knowledge beyond the prescribed limits of instruction for all.

Speaking of the colleges of that day, Doctor Sears remarks that "The funds of the colleges, and consequently the salaries of the officers, were low. My old president (Dr. Asa Messer) received twelve hundred dollars. I remember this from the fact that once, when he was asked why he did not resign, he said he 'had twelve hundred reasons for not resigning.' The professors lived on eight hundred dollars a year, if they had good positions, or five hundred dollars if they had not. In earlier times each college had a president, two or three professors, one of

whom taught the theology of his church (never in Brown University, however!), and two tutors. . . . The student first fell into the hands of a tutor, stiff and very precise about preserving his somewhat doubtful dignity. He had a room in college, and acted as a spy and officer of police. His experiences were often very romantic. . . . Our professors were more portly men, going on to sixty. Sitting cross-legged in an armchair, against which a silver-headed cane leaned, they would insist on your giving them the exact words of Blair (false English and all), or of Kames, and of Stewart and Hedge. Our president, who heard us in Enfield's philosophy, was more communicative and even facetious. . . . In languages, beyond making Latin, after Clarke's Introduction, there was nothing, if we except scanning, but translating and parsing; no true philology, nothing of the necessary meaning of words from derivation and usage, or of the force of grammatical forms and construction. Everything depended on translation,

generally guessed out, often stolen." Yet he adds that "Many young men, while they yielded passively to college customs, had high aims and fixed purposes. They were faithful in their studies, and made the most of their opportunities; and, more than all, though boys, they were to become men; all had taken the true measure of themselves; had formed warm and lasting friendships; had at least surveyed the field of knowledge, and knew what to do in after life; had, in some way, been so long within the college walls as to take on an air of liberal culture; had, in some measure, acquired a literary taste. When the time for manly action arrived, slumbering capacities were not unfrequently aroused which placed their possessors in the first rank of society. Exactly the same requirements were made of all students. So much of mathematics, so much of Latin and Greek, must be swallowed by every one, whether his digestive organs were adequate or not for their work."

It should be remembered, *secondly*, that

Barnas Sears was already a close reader of books, gathering rich harvests of truth from the wide fields of literature. There was no sluggish vein in his nature. Whatever he did, he did with all the force of high aspiration and purpose. From his excursions into the realms of history, philosophy, moral science, and Christian literature, he must have returned with treasures of learning. It is not known that he ever expressed regret for the method of work which he pursued in college, or that he was dissatisfied with the instruction which he received. But it is understood that he sometimes found it no easy task to obtain the funds needed for his support in study. At one time he went to Boston for help, and, being too poor to pay his fare by stage-coach, he walked all the way thither, a distance of forty-one miles, and after obtaining the sum required, returned to Providence in the same manner — a bracing "constitutional" for the tall (six feet and two inches), graceful, and energetic young man who was moving with a resolute step

into the future! Such exercise, if less attractive than lawn tennis or foot-ball, was no less convincing proof of genuine nobility of character. He was a common school teacher "six winters," and some of these must have fallen to his years in college. But no reference to his wages as a school-master has been discovered. It probably varied with the size of the school and the place of its location. How long he persisted in laying fine stone-wall during the summer vacations, for needed funds, is not known to the writer.

No definite record of his religious life in college has been preserved. He kept no diary of his progress in knowledge or of his growth in grace. If he had, as may be assumed, periods of self-distrust as well as periods of confidence and hope, he suffered them to pass without complaint or exultation. Yet he appears to have availed himself of opportunities to preach the gospel to those who were ready to hear it; and then, as ever afterwards, he did his work in the pulpit without the help or hindrance of a

manuscript. He preferred to look hearers in the face, all the more, perhaps, because his handwriting was not large enough to be easily read at a distance. Moreover, he was keenly alive to his connection with the people before him and stimulated by their unconcealed interest in what he was saying. For he rarely failed to win their earnest attention. All eyes in the assembly were sure to be fixed on the tall and animated speaker. And from his method and success in preaching during his undergraduate course, it may be safely inferred that his spiritual life was not sluggish for any length of time, but, on the contrary, was vigorous and hopeful. Whatever he did, he did with his whole mind and soul, and, as far as can be ascertained, his purpose to serve Christ in the ministry never wavered.

From college to seminary Barnas Sears passed after the interval of a summer vacation, and he certainly found the circle of studies in a theological course even more absorbing than that of the college. His

teachers were Doctors Irah Chase and Henry J. Ripley, both of them accurate instructors and reverent scholars. There were few text-books, and the library of the Newton Theological Institution, then at the very beginning of its history, was meagre and unattractive; but the ideals of its founders were high, as were also the hopes of the young men who came there in quest of religious truth. The elements of Hebrew were dictated at first to the students by Doctor Chase, and the neatly written pages of "B. Sears's" note-book prove that he made good use of accurate instruction in that venerable language. The chair of New Testament interpretation was soon filled by Doctor Ripley, a pupil of Moses Stuart, and his peer in exact knowledge and sound judgment. Besides the "regular course," there were some opportunities for special research, and books enough within reach to make it possible. Beyond any doubt, therefore, the days of the seminary life of Mr. Sears were busy and delightful. The beauti-

ful scenery of the place must have filled his soul with cheer, and his rambling over the hills and through the valleys must have given vigor to his erect and manly form. It is impossible to imagine him unmoved by the aspects of nature which were spread before him morning and evening. God was in his own world, and the alert and wide-visioned student was daily taking lessons from that world. But his correspondence at the time has not been preserved, and we are therefore indebted to our knowledge of the man, and to his manner of referring to college and seminary days, for our assurance of his enthusiasm in the work and the recreation which they brought him.

There is good reason to suppose that Barnas Sears found pleasure during the latter part of his course at Newton in calling rather frequently upon a most worthy family in Brookline. The distance was less than five miles, by rural ways, from the top of Institution Hill to the house of Deacon Elijah Corey, near the western base of Corey Hill, and an

active and purposeful student would have scarcely counted his steps in making it. The goal must have seemed near enough, and the prize fair enough, to call for a frequent walk in that direction. For the prize was nothing less than one who became his companion for life two or three years later (July 6, 1830). More invigorating out-door exercise could not have been desired; unless, indeed, he were able to climb, now and then, in a star-lit evening to the summit of Corey Hill, in the best of company, there to rest awhile and "view the landscape o'er"—a truly magnificent panorama—before returning to the hospitable mansion below. It may be innocently fancied that Barnas Sears and one or more of the Corey girls sometimes did this, to their mutual satisfaction. It is, however, impossible to say how intimate their acquaintance became during his Newton days, for Elizabeth G. Corey attended Miss Caroline Beecher's Young Ladies' School in Hartford, Connecticut, during the two years after Mr. Sears left Newton to become pastor of

the First Baptist Church in Hartford. The school was a famous one, and it is more than probable that the young lady here continued her acquaintance with her Newton friend, enjoying his attentions as well as his ministry.

CHAPTER II

AT HARTFORD AND AT HAMILTON

1828–1833

DURING the last year of his course in Newton, Barnas Sears accepted a call to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church in Hartford, Connecticut, an incidental proof of his persistence in the habit of preaching by way of supply to churches that needed his services. He was ordained in the year 1828, and engaged with all his heart in ministerial duties. Tall, erect, with a noble bearing and uncommon personal attractiveness, he easily gained the hearts of his people. His success, both as a preacher and as a pastor, was marked, and it seemed for a brief period that his vocation for life would be in the pulpit. More than forty years afterwards he "was affectionately remembered by the few sur-

vivors of his flock" (Stearns). But before the end of his second year in Hartford he began to suffer severely with a bronchial weakness which troubled him frequently during the rest of his life. For this reason he was willing to accept the professorship of ancient languages in the "Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution" in 1829.

Professor Sears was a lover of the classics, and his brief career in Hamilton as a teacher of the ancient languages was nothing less than brilliant. The school was young, but more distinguished for its religious character and evangelical theology than for a high standard of literary attainment. Barnas Sears became the rising star of the faculty and the pride of the students. In his address at the Jubilee Anniversary at Madison University (now Colgate), Doctor Eaton said: "No man ever connected with the faculty was more admired and loved; and on no one were higher hopes reposed than upon Professor Sears. He was the pride and glory of the institution in its intellectual and literary

character, to which his short connection had powerfully contributed." It appears that he also served the church in Hamilton as pastor during a part, at least, of this triennium.

But he was presently convinced that the course of theological study and instruction, which was the *raison d'être* for the existence of the school, ought to be extended and improved; others agreed with him on the point, and in order to accomplish this end he was transferred from the chair of ancient languages to a new chair of biblical theology. But as there was no class prepared to enter at once on the new study, and as he himself felt the need of further preparation for the great chair to which he had been assigned, it was deemed necessary for him to visit Germany, and learn the methods of work in that land of scholars and libraries. Doubtless the impulse to visit Germany was due to his own mind, rather than to that of any other person. For already the faculties of theology in German universities had earned the distinction of remarkable freedom in religious

speculation as well as in biblical criticism, and it required more decision of purpose than it does now for a young professor, who expected to be a teacher of biblical theology, to put himself in contact with the German free-thinkers or rationalists, as they were called. But Professor Sears who was a man of deep religious convictions and quick intellect, resolved to profit by the stimulating inquiries pushed to their furthest limit by educators in Halle, Leipsic, Berlin, and Paris.

CHAPTER III

IN GERMANY AND FRANCE

(1833–1835)

ACCORDINGLY, leaving his wife and child with her parents in Brookline, Mass. (for he had been married in 1830 to Miss Elizabeth G. Corey of that town), he embarked at New York on the 12th of July, 1833, for Hamburg, where he landed on the 24th of August and found "several pious friends having Baptist sentiments," who wished to be immersed and organized into a Baptist church. Among these was J. G. Oncken, who was to become so well known as the bold and sagacious leader of his brethren in Northern Europe, though suffering for a time many things for the Lord's sake. The steadfast disciples were advised by Professor Sears to defer their public confession of faith until he had

become better acquainted with the whole situation.

The following citations from letters to Mrs. Sears will bring the course of events more distinctly before the reader:

"HAMBURG, August 24, 1833.

"I have written that the passage to the Azores was pleasant and occupied fourteen days. We passed through the English Channel in less than two days, and from the Straits of Dover to the Texel we sailed in twenty-four hours. Here a storm commenced which drove us most furiously all the way to Cuxhaven, a distance of thirty miles. The North Sea is dreaded by all the sons of the ocean, as it is full of shoals and quicksands all along the eastern coast, with only very narrow passages at the mouth of the rivers, especially at the Weser and Elbe. We had no pilot and our sailors felt great alarm. *I* felt as I had never felt before. When the storm became overpowering about 9 o'clock in the evening, knowing that I was

too much exhausted to struggle with the waves, should it at length become necessary, I arranged my things so as to have the most valuable at hand, spent some time in calm but painful reflection, solemnly committed myself to God, my only Helper, and, incredible as it may seem, lay down in my clothes and slept, not knowing but that I should awake in a foundered ship! Oh, how cheering was the morning light! But the storm still was raging, hurling us swiftly between rocks and sand-banks, and the whole day was spent in fear. At sunset the gale brought us into the mouth of the Elbe, the yellow, sandy-looking Elbe, and we soon set foot on the green turf of Cuxhaven, which at that moment we would not have exchanged for so much gold."

"August 27, 1833.

"After leaving Cuxhaven we ascended the Elbe for three miles before discovering its northern bank. From that point to Hamburg, a distance of seventy miles, the river

averages two miles in width. . . . I find several pious friends here, and eight or ten persons having Baptist sentiments. These request me to baptize them. But I have decided to wait, hoping we may organize a church and ordain a minister. I expect to remain here until September 3d, and then, accompanied by Mr. Oncken, go to Berlin, whence I hope to go direct to Halle."

"HALLE, April 8, 1834.

"Mr. Oncken's letter contained a request for me to come to Hamburg (three hundred miles) and baptize himself and several others, and to form a church. As the summer term at Leipsic commences the 5th of May, I could not well go after that time; I have therefore concluded to go the last of the present week. . . . From your request concerning someone to write to you in case anything should befall me, I perceive that you think me a greater stranger here than I really am. It would be impossible for you *not* to hear. I can hardly count the number who would do

everything as for a brother. 'As strangers, and yet well known' (*Paul*). . . . I go to Halle next Friday, and there join Mr. Haverstick, who is going on my way as far as Helmstadt. I shall then pass to Brunswick and Hanover, and thence to Hamburg, and shall probably return by a still more southern route, so as to visit new places every time. . . . If you wish to know how I spend the vacation, it is thus: I am reviewing the Hebrew I read in Halle. I have a little book, in which I write down every word that I have to look out in the dictionary, and these words I commit to memory. This little book will be my pocket companion to Hamburg. I am now also directing my attention to Latin. Before the summer closes I intend to speak it fluently. It is certainly a shame for a scholar to be dependent upon a Latin dictionary! I expect to have occasion to read much Latin; it begins to seem a little like a native language."

At about midnight of the 22d of April seven persons were baptized by Professor

Sears in the river Elbe, a few miles from the city, and, according to the following certificate in the hand writing of Barnas Sears, Mr. J. G. Oncken was ordained by him the next day to the Gospel ministry.

"*HAMBURG, April 23, 1834.*

"*Dear Brother Oncken:*

"*This is to testify to all whom it may concern, that, at the request of the Baptist church in this place, after being fully satisfied of your personal piety, of the correctness of your views of Christian doctrine, of your possessing those ministerial qualifications specified in Scripture, & of your being called both by the Spirit and Providence of God to the work of the ministry, I have by prayer and the imposition of hands solemnly set you apart to that responsible office; and in the name of the church in which I hold an official standing as a regular ordained minister, pronounce you scripturally invested with all the powers which belong to a pastor of the flock of Christ and to a minister of the gospel. May the Lord grant that you may*

have a higher testimony than man can give, that you may be recognized by him as a good minister of Jesus Christ; and may it be your exalted privilege to win, through grace, many souls to his love; and to build up, in true knowledge, faith, and every Christian virtue, the church, redeemed by his precious blood. I hereby also commend you to the confidence of the Christian public, as a minister of the gospel, and to the affectionate regards of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

"BARNAS SEARS,

"*Professor of Biblical Theology in the Hamilton Literary and Theological Seminary, and formerly Pastor of the Baptist Church in Hamilton, N. Y., in North America.*"

On the 27th of April, 1834, he wrote as follows to his wife: "My heart burns to tell you without delay of what has happened here to-day. Everything has gone on with me much according to expectation, only more favorably. I have baptized seven persons, have constituted a church, and have ordained Mr. Oncken as pastor. Several more are asking for baptism, but we think it prudent

to defer it a little. . . . To-day our little flock have partaken of the Lord's Supper together! The scene was one of surpassing interest! They seemed to be overcome with feeling, and *everyone* was in tears. Dear friends! I never expect again to sit with them on such an occasion till we meet in another world. There is a prospect that the Government will not disturb them."

In that hope he was too sanguine; yet the little group, in spite of much opposition for a time, has become more than a hundred thousand, including a large number as offshoots from the German mission. In this whole transaction we have a fine illustration of the mingled discretion and courage which marked the conduct of Professor Sears through life. He was neither rash on the one hand nor timid on the other. He met emergencies manfully, but did not seek them. He was prepared to stand fast in the face of opposition, but he avoided provoking it.

Although much absorbed by his duties in Germany, Professor Sears often refers with

deep interest to the members of his family. Thus, in a letter dated May 26, 1834, he says: "I think no person ever had such a mother. When I think of her virtues and of all she has done for me, my feelings are beyond expression. . . . My friends are all too good for me. It is such a relief to be able to think of wife and child as well and happy."

In another letter to his wife, dated August 10, 1834, he thus refers to members of the family, and it is a sample of many similar passages: "When you write your sister, remember me particularly to Brother Pratt (who had married his wife's sister) and tell them that it rejoices my heart that even in Europe I hear of his fame. I would write to him if I thought a letter would ever reach him and an answer reach me here. I have a great fondness for him. I suppose Mother Corey has, by this time, experienced the bitterness of parting with dear Sarah and Mr. Comstock. May your sister go attended with peace and prosperity! It is a noble sacrifice."

Of his residence in Germany but a brief account can be given. He entered upon his studies in Halle with high hopes and great ardor. He was there several months and formed a life-long friendship with Tholuck and Gesenius. The former was admired by him as a powerful preacher of evangelical truth, and, at the same time, as a versatile scholar and attractive teacher. Gesenius, it is said, advised him to read Arabic after reading Syriac; Tholuck advised Rabbinical Hebrew. He followed the advice of both, being ready to undertake anything that promised to be useful to him in his chosen work. "I am transported into a new world," he writes, "and in study have commenced a new life. I feel as if I had been seven or eight years slowly waking up out of sleep, and am just beginning to be wide awake. If I succeed, as I now hope, I shall bring home a cart-load of notes and have matter enough to digest all the remainder of my life."

Every reader of this memorial will be pleased to see parts of a letter written by

Professor Sears from Halle. In the first part of this letter he refers to Doctor Tholuck in the following terms: "The University of Halle has no place of worship attached to it; it has, however, a morning service once in the week in one of the principal churches of the city. The preacher appointed by the King of Prussia was Professor Marks; but, when Doctor Tholuck came to Halle and was appointed associate preacher, he drew so much larger audiences than Professor Marks that the latter resigned. Standing almost alone in his evangelical sentiments, Tholuck attracts throngs of rationalists to hear his melting appeals in behalf of 'a religion pure and undefiled.' The first discourse that I heard from him was upon Luther's birthday. He preached like a reformer, and it seemed as if the congregation were ashamed of having departed so egregiously from the standards of the faith. The next time that he preached happened to be on the Lutheran festival in memory of the dead; and, though he is no admirer of papal rites, he did not

hesitate to seize the opportunity to give solemn counsel to the living. The hymn selected for the occasion was the *Dies Iræ*, or 'The Last Judgment,' by Celano of the thirteenth century. It is a masterly production, and must live as long as Christianity itself. It was impossible to refrain from tears when, at the 7th stanza, all the trumpets ceased, and the choir, accompanied by a softened tone of the organ, sang these touching lines:

'Quid sum miser tunc dicturus,
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Quum vix justus sit securus?'

Though there are ten different German versions of this hymn, none of them reach the beautiful simplicity of the original. Both Goethe and Scott have introduced parts of it into their poetical works, and the most distinguished modern compositors have set it to music."

In the same letter is a graphic description of the opening services on a great occasion at the University church, and we can almost

see his changing countenance as he sat or stood in the vast assembly. "The assembly was immense. We went very early in order to obtain a seat, and found hundreds crowding about the passages before the doors were opened. At the door we obtained the printed sheet containing the hymns and responses of the day. The service commenced with singing two stanzas, in which the whole congregation joined. The Germans, it is known, are a musical people. The cultivation of the voice is with them a part of education; and when in church the old and young all pour out their song together, it seems to touch a chord of public sympathy and to operate somewhat like the old national songs of the Swiss mountaineers. We sat silently in front of the pulpit, and when the congregation paused we could just hear at the altar at our extreme left the accent of the preacher uttering the Lord's Prayer; then, suddenly, voices of melody broke upon our ear from the orchestra of the gallery in the opposite extreme of the house. The preacher and the

choir were facing each other and responding, while the whole congregation, standing, occupied the vast space between. The words are generally some of the most impressive and poetical parts of Scripture, and the music of a select character. The choir, which is trained with great care, consists of men and small boys.

"And I must confess that no human voice produces upon me so fine an effect as the cultivated voice of a boy. It is not, indeed, so deep and rich in the expression of human passion as that of a man, nor has it the various power and compass of a female voice. But in those light and shrill tones, which waft the spirit upward, it is *unique* and unrivalled. As artists select the forms of boys as the best ideal of angel forms, so may the music of their voices be selected as the best ideal of seraphic music. It is not difficult to fancy that such sounds were heard on the plains of Bethlehem.

"During the responses the organ was silent. Then followed what is called the 'chief song,'

in which everything that could utter a sound united. In these shouts of the multitude and tumultuous clangor of instruments, which appear like an attempt to carry the heart by storm, there is, in my opinion, something too gross and physical to have the happiest effect. The chorister acted a kind of pantomime, which was designed, I suppose, to direct the choir, but which made him appear like a harlequin. Before the hymn was concluded, the preacher was standing in the pulpit in true German style,—in a fixed posture, with his hands clasped before his breast and his eyes turned upward,—and produced, I hope, a happier impression upon others than upon the writer. After a few words of introduction, the text was announced and the congregation rose when it was read. Sometimes the introduction of the sermon is from another passage of Scripture, and then a hymn intervenes between the introduction and the sermon. Not long after the commencement of the discourse, the little velvet bag, fastened to the end of a

rod with a small bell, passes through the congregation and every one casts in his mite. Why the time of sermon should be chosen for this business I cannot divine."

This, surely, is a very graphic picture of what preceded the sermon itself. Professor Sears now turns to the latter, and especially to the preacher, Doctor Tholuck, whose work in the pulpit he greatly admired. "Here ended all that could be offensive to one's taste or piety; and now one of the most devout Christians and a distinguished scholar and critic came forth to act a part where his great strength lies. His familiarity with the language and spirit of the Old and New Testament, with the works of genius not only in the literary treasures of Greece and Rome and in the languages of modern Europe, but also in the wide field of Oriental literature, affords him rare facilities of pouring out his glowing thoughts so as to strike every capacity and reach every human passion. The child-like simplicity of his character and manner, the tenderness of his affections, and

the subduing influence of religion upon his understanding and heart, win for him the confidence of his hearers, while the truth of his own feelings and his deep philosophic knowledge of the human heart enable him to speak to it directly and powerfully in its agonies and in its joys, in its repose and in its tumults. Like a part of nature he seems to know all that human nature has felt or can feel, and hence has a power over the sympathy of others with which few men are gifted. The strength of maternal affection, the confiding simplicity of childhood, the silent grief of the widow, the loneliness of the orphan, the retrospect of old age . . . all revive at his touch with the freshness of original feelings. He thrills the heart with the assaults of truth, not so much by following men in their business and pleasures as in stealing upon those moments of reflection when light flashes upon the conscience and disturbs the dream of life. The man of the world who is sometimes visited by a recollection of early religious impressions, of a pious

F. A. G. THOLUCK, PH.D.

father's sacred counsels or of a mother's tears; the man of business in whose path the footsteps of providence are too plain to be denied or doubted; the statesman who is often driven back to religion as the only conservative principle of national security; professional men of every name, who, in all the ultimate truths of science, find a mysterious God; and the student who, in the strife of human opinion, finds no resting place for the soul,—these all bow, for the time being, to the preacher's power, and acknowledge that he knows the way to their hearts; not unfrequently saying, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.' As might be expected, he is often the instrument of conversion, not only in his preaching, but also in his private intercourse and in his extensive correspondence. The plain, practical doctrines of Christianity are his principal themes, and all things else come in as accidental aids. He is neither boisterous nor artificially nice, but calm and sincere."

Not less graphic is Professor Sears's picture

of lecture-room work in the University. "The University of Halle has no splendid pile of buildings, but on the contrary, the principal lecture-rooms are in different parts of the city. The only common centre is near the market, where all the public notices of the University are put up. Each faculty has its separate place of advertisement. As one approaches towards the entrance he sees a frame containing a case over which is written, 'Ordo Theologicus,' beyond it another with 'Ordo Philosophicus,' including philology, and then follow the faculties of law and medicine. Each professor puts up in his own handwriting, commonly in Latin, a notice of all his exercises. The interior of the lecture-rooms resembles that of large session rooms. Every seat is numbered and every student has his particular place. When the hour of lecture arrives, the students are very punctually in their assigned places. They usually spend fifteen minutes in mending their pens, fixing their papers, whistling and smoking before the lecturer appears. When he en-

ters, a simultaneous hiss is heard all over the room and all is instantly still. The students have nothing to do but to write down the lecture as it is delivered. Some of the professors add much to the interest and value of their lectures by giving a copious exposition of a single topic extemporaneously, and then stating the substance of it in a condensed form. Thus the students can drop their pens and give their whole attention to the subject; and by the fulness of extemporaneous illustration perfectly understand the views of the lecturer, while he can select with better judgment, and abridge with more skill, what they are to commit to writing. The whole process of dictation appears, at least to a stranger, not a little ludicrous.

"The professors exercise no government. The number of one's hearers, and, of course, his income, depends on his popularity with the students. One professor last summer *read* a full course of lectures to two students who sat each side of him on a sofa in his own parlor. The students hear whom they please

and no professor can be independent by virtue of his office. Nothing but his talent, or rather his *tact*, secures to him power and influence. The only real check upon the student is that his final examination will be *rigid*. He is advised and taught the relative importance of different branches of study in the lectures on *Encyclopædia*. The lecturers, therefore, must use much art, for they must have a hearing. Some are amusing and discursive and stoop to gratify a depraved taste. Some flash with the brilliancy of their wit. Some give the fruits of immense reading on subjects not very closely connected with what they profess to teach. Others, laying their account with the good sense of the students, render their lectures as nearly as possible what they should be. When a lecturer is dictating, he appears like a horse accustomed to the mill. If he is not heard, or if he dictates too fast, the signal is given by a hiss, which is neither given nor received as a token of disrespect, but as a mere conventional sign for mutual conven-

ience. If an opinion expressed by a professor is offensive to the students, they set up a murmuring noise. Though Tholuck now has more hearers than any other lecturer in Halle, I have often heard their sullen growls when he openly dissented from Gesenius or De Wette; or recommended Hengstenberg's views, or Olshausen's. But if there is a large number of students of opposite feelings, as is commonly the case, they hush the noise by raising a respectful hiss. If it is lamentable to see such theological students, it is, on the other hand, pleasing to see Tholuck gaining the ascendency over them. What adds to the strangeness of the scene is to see several present in military dress. But it should be remembered that Prussia is a military kingdom, and that most of the students do military duty one year while at the University."

In a postscript to this letter, not, of course, intended for publication, the writer says that "the political state of Germany is dreadful. Revolutionists must fight, I believe, before

this part of Europe can be quiet. . . . Labor here is but little higher by the year than with us by the month. Men live on air. Many of the professors are as poor as snakes. . . . During the winter I am obliged to send all my letters to Havre. The postage to that place costs at least fifty cents. When the spring opens I can send much cheaper by Hamburg. . . . May I have your prayers that I be not the worse but the better, for having come to Germany? Yours in Christian love,

"BARNAS SEARS.

"Halle, Jan. 18, 1834."

From Halle, after his visit to Hamburg and the baptism of Oncken, Professor Sears went to Leipsic and came into pleasant relations with Winer, Rosenmüller, Hermann, and other professors of the University. His love of classical studies was rekindled at this place, and he wrote: "I am drinking at the fountain of Greek and Roman literature, and could easily make this the pursuit of my life." He was attracted, if not fascinated, by

the German method of teaching Latin, and especially by the practice of lecturing and conversing in Latin. His own facility in acquiring the power to converse in a foreign language was remarkable, and he soon learned to understand the people with whom he was living. Within less than a month after he entered France he was able to understand the Parisians and speak with them freely. It is also evident that he mastered very rapidly the common words and ordinary construction of every language which he wished to learn.

It is interesting to notice how completely Professor Sears gave himself to the work in hand. Thus, in a letter from Leipsic, May 26, 1834, he says: "This summer I shall be buried in Latin. Lectures, private lessons, and almost everything is in Latin. Since I began this letter I have had to check myself and resist German and Latin expressions. I am charmed with the lectures of Winer and Hermann. I do not mean to say that I believe all these men say, but I am instructed

and greatly stimulated by their genius and learning. . . . I now have a daily exercise in *speaking* Latin. This makes me wish to read every Latin book I can find. The greatest modern Latin writers—Muretus, Ruhnken, and Wittenbach—are scarcely out of my hands a minute. My only trouble is that I wish to read them all at once." Rarely is any one so fully absorbed in his studies. He was for the time being *totus in illis*.

From Leipsic Professor Sears repaired to Berlin, and at the great University of that city became acquainted with Müller, "with whom no living physiologist can easily dispute the palm;" with Bopp, "the founder and richest ornament of the Sanscrit school of comparative philology;" with Böck, "the greatest living master of Grecian antiquity;" with Bekker, "the greatest editor of the Greek classics from manuscript authorities;" with Zumpt, "the Latin grammarian;" with Grimm, "the greatest German grammarian, lexicographer, and antiquary;" with Charles Ritter, "the prince of geographers;" with

Ranke the historian, "with no rival but Guizot; with the self-taught Pertz, until lately librarian when Leibnitz was in Hanover but now in Berlin, prosecuting the greatest literary project of the kind, a complete and critical edition of all the Latin historians of Germany, from the fifth to the fifteenth century;" with Neander, "the reformer and almost the creator of philosophic church history;" and with Hengstenberg, a resolute conservative in biblical criticism, "never so happy as when in the thickest of the fight against the leaders of rationalism." To have met with these men, and to have listened to several of them, was of great value to such a man as this young American, in quest of all the sources of knowledge. But we have no space to employ in descriptions of his Berlin activity.

After his university work in Berlin, and before his return to America, he spent three months in Paris, for the threefold purpose of increasing his knowledge of the French language, of becoming familiar with the

theological treasures of that city, and of encouraging the few Baptists, especially the Rostans, who resided there. The months were crowded with activities, and were of no small benefit to him in later years. He made himself, as was his custom in other places, master of the topography of Paris, so that he was at home in every part of the city. He visited the greater schools and libraries and centers of light. He sought the Christians of his own faith and spoke to them words of cheer and counsel, such as only an American could utter. But the writer has no particulars to relate concerning the lectures which he heard, or the fruits which he culled from the trees of that great orchard. Yet he has heard Doctor Sears speak with lively interest of the months passed in Paris and of his success in learning to converse in French.

In summing up the results of his residence in these three universities, Doctor Stearns remarks that "His life in Germany inflamed his zeal for the broadest culture possible, placed in his hands the best methods for

careful research and authoritative results, and empowered him to understand the sources of Christian knowledge and the limitations to which it is subject. He was not tainted with rationalism, so called, nor did he lose his faith in the faith of his fathers; his stability in the old paths was strengthened by the resistance of opposing forces. It was needful to know whereof he affirmed; and this necessity settled him the more solidly on the Rock which can never be shaken. . . . He was now nearly thirty-three years old, with health restored, and with mind and heart eager to express themselves; and when almost exactly at that age he resumed his labors at Hamilton, no teacher among the Baptists of this country was more thoroughly equipped for the position to which he had been called."

CHAPTER IV

PROFESSOR AND PRESIDENT AT NEWTON THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION

1835–1848

AFTER his return from Europe, Professor Sears taught less than a full year at Hamilton. His reputation had greatly increased since he left the seminary at Newton, the residence of his wife and child at Brookline during his stay abroad had served to keep him before the minds of his Newton friends, and many of the people wished to see him again as a teacher where he had been three years a pupil. To the great disappointment of Hamilton, a change in his place of labor was soon effected.

For in May, 1836, the Rev. Barnas Sears began his labors in the Newton Theological Institution as Professor of Christian Theology.

To this chair he had been elected "a short time since," as the record book of the faculty attests. The title, "Christian Theology," was now given for the first time to a chair of instruction in this seminary. It took the place of the chair of "Biblical Theology," probably because the latter designation had begun to be used in a more restricted sense, to signify historical theology as taught in different books of Holy Scripture, rather than theology as derived by synthesis from the teaching of the whole Bible. Christian theology, as understood by Professor Sears, was to be drawn primarily from the Scriptures, yet their doctrines were to be logically arranged, and, as far as possible, rationally supported. Hence a teacher of this science ought to be familiar with philosophy, psychology, history, natural science, and interpretation, although bound to give the first place in authority to the Holy Scriptures. Few young men at that time possessed ampler qualifications for the chair than Barnas Sears. Doctor Stearns has truly said: "He was in the

prime of life, in vigorous health, the possessor of a well-stocked library, his mind thoroughly disciplined, and his acquisitions ample, his heart in full sympathy with the denomination he loved, and his purpose fixed to do for Newton, and what Newton represented, all that Barnas Sears could do." His motto was: "While religion should be our atmosphere, knowledge should be our food, and discipline our exercise." [1]

To estimate correctly what Doctor Sears accomplished during the twelve years of his service in Newton, it is necessary to bear in mind that, in addition to the regular work of his professorship, which he never slighted, he gave instruction in church history during a part of the time; that for the last ten years he was president of the seminary; that he was editor of the *Christian Review* a number of years; that he was the writer of numerous articles in that review, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, and in the *American Encyclopedia;* that he was the author of four

[1] From his diary.

volumes and the principal contributor to a fifth; that he was for years an active member of the Executive Committee of the American Baptist Missionary Union; and that he was frequently preacher of ordination and other occasional sermons. During this period Doctor Sears worked rapidly and intensely, yet with great care and exactness. He believed that five hours of concentrated and vigorous effort were worth more in the attainment or expression of knowledge than ten hours of less strenuous effort. So he worked with a will, with soul, mind, and strength, and the product of his work was abundant and precious.

Five of his sixteen articles in the *Christian Review* are characterized as follows by Doctor Stearns: " His review of Neander's 'Church History' is a careful *résumé* of church history and church historians. His review of Burgess 'On Baptism' is a classic. His review of Wigger's 'Pelagian Controversy' is exhaustive. His article on 'China, its Geography and Religion,' exhibits a familiarity with the land and the people satisfactory even to a native

scholar. His article on 'Augustine' is both learned and philosophical. No less valuable are his well-known articles in the *Bibliotheca Sacra:* 'Reformers before the Reformation,' 'The Papacy and the Empire,' 'Redepenning's Life of Origen,' 'Historical Studies,' 'The Religious Experience of Luther in the Cloister of Erfurt,' being not only good but authoritative reading." The books which he gave to the public during this period were: "Noehden's German Grammar," so recasting it and supplying its deficiencies that, for a long time, it was the best in the English language; "The Ciceronian," explaining the German method of teaching Latin; "Select Treatises of Luther," in German, with notes, designed as a stimulus to the study of early German, for which he had great fondness; "The Life of Martin Luther," which he failed to complete according to the original plan; and "Classical Studies: or, Ancient Literature," his collaborators being Professors B. B. Edwards of Andover, and C. C. Felton of Harvard, the bulk of the book being his own contributions.

Doctor Sears was a most inspiring teacher of theology, and perhaps equally so of church history. He never used a text-book, and rarely or never brought more than the briefest notes into the class-room. His supreme purpose was to lead his pupils to investigate and judge for themselves, to go out into the world of history and of experience, and especially into the domain of Scripture for the data to be used in reasoning about questions of faith, and then to reason soberly and fairly, with the expectation of finding the ultimate grounds of their belief. He kept in mind the nature of their vocation, namely, that of being leaders of religious thought and conduct, and felt that to qualify them for their mission in the world they must be led first of all to build the structure of their own creed with their own hands. They must be incited to handle and weigh, to test and shape every stone which was placed in that edifice, lest there should be found at last, in some part of it, wood, hay, or stubble, to mar its strength or its beauty. He therefore

encouraged them to controvert his own views or those of their classmates, with vigor but courtesy, for the purpose of having the subject in hand thoroughly canvassed by the very persons who were in all probability to discuss the same subject before the people. Moreover, he knew how to guide such a debate and make it profitable. He was an adept in the art of leading his pupils to anticipate problems sure to meet them in actual life, and to find the solution of them. His courtesy and tact were so prompt and natural that his pupils often became, for the time being, to the great satisfaction of their master, earnest teachers of one another. That this method was deliberately chosen, appears from one of his reports to the trustees. "The leading objects of the teacher (meaning himself) have been: (1) To create a deep interest in the study; (2) to point out the extent and connections of the subject of inquiry, together with the method to be pursued and the means to be employed; (3) to have the results of such investigations and

RESIDENCE OF DR. SEARS, CENTRE STREET, NEWTON CENTRE, MASS., 1838-1848

reflections presented first by the student, then by the class, and lastly by the teacher, in free, but not polemic discussions; (4) to have the fundamental doctrines and collateral topics in any branch of study, the most important works, ancient and modern, on theology; the best chapters and treatises on particular topics made the subjects of analyses, critiques, translations, etc., to be read before the class, and followed by oral discussion. Neither the examination of text-books nor formal lectures have been adopted."

Doctor Sears was a great lover of books and a fine judge of their value. What he read he mastered and could reproduce in a condensed form. He often referred in his class-room to the works of distinguished men, pointed out their particular excellences, and criticised in a keen but kindly spirit their faults. One left his presence eager to get hold of some of these books and to enjoy the light which they would pour on the subjects of present inquiry.

Doctor Sears came to his class-room full of the subject to be investigated. It was his habit to study with his coat off, so to speak, up to the time when he must start for the old Mansion House on the top of the hill, so that his theme had full possession of him when he came before his waiting pupils. Instantly, after a few words of reverent prayer, he took his seat and was at once in the heart of his theme. The inward fire was aglow, and whether he began with an explanation, or a historical *résumé*, or a question, it was evident from his manner that he was already grappling with the truth to be vindicated or the error to be exposed. No time was lost in getting at work. The field to be explored was rapidly outlined and made to appear so large and interesting that every moment of the hour was seen to be needed for the task of surveying it properly. Yet there was no hurry or rush or confusion in the look or utterance of the teacher. But the task was one that claimed instant and perfect attention. If the field to be surveyed was large,

time must be taken to make the survey thorough. But any delay or beating about the bush was not to be thought of. The game was already in sight and the chase begun. Nevertheless, the interest was well sustained. It grew deeper and livelier until the hour was past. Students forgot the hardness of the benches on which they sat. The desk before them might be old and soiled and cut by many a daring knife, but they perceived it not. Their minds were with their teacher or the subject which he had laid before them.

Yet their interest was not merely intellectual; it was often deeply religious. Conscience and feeling were touched, and candidates for the gospel ministry felt themselves constrained to devote their lives to a more fervent service of Christ. The writer will never forget the impression made upon him by Doctor Sears's luminous discussion of the Divine Perfections, or by one of his ablest occasional sermons, having for its theme, "The Love of God." His treatment of the

profoundest verities of religion was singularly lucid and convincing.

The theology taught by Doctor Sears was biblical in its source and evangelical in its tone. It was clear to those who sat at his feet that he was not in search of new opinions because they were new, or of old opinions because they were old, but rather of the truth, whether new or old. But, though his theology was biblical in its source, he did not shut his eyes to the lessons of nature. While he believed in Jesus Christ, as the highest and perfect revelation of God the Father, his mind was evermore hospitable to truth from any source. He was indeed a Baptist from conviction, but he was at the same time large-minded and large-hearted towards men of other creeds; and always ready to defend their right to the same "liberty of soul" which he claimed for himself. His relations with men of other churches were friendly and his recognition of their excellence prompt. When listening to his class-room instructions, or observing his pleasure in

a fair debate between students on a mooted question, one was led to feel instinctively that his confidence in truth was steadfast, and his desire to have freedom for all in search of it was most sincere. He was delighted to have those who were to be public teachers of religion look at all sides of a problem before claiming to have solved it. The following picture of a first hour in his class-room is from the pen of his loving pupil, Doctor Oakman S. Stearns. Nothing could be truer to fact.

"Drawing from personal recollections, let me invite you to accompany me to the familiar and homely class-room in the southeast corner of the old Mansion House. There is a class of twelve scattered about the room, sitting before crude benches, with pen, ink, and note-books, waiting for the presence of him of whom they have heard much, but of whom they know little. The door opens. A tall, dignified, white-haired man enters and quietly takes his seat. Other teachers are accustomed to stand, but he sits. He sits

before a rusty-looking, green-covered table, draws from his pocket a few pieces of paper on which something seems to be written, lays them down, and then rises and says, 'Let us pray.' You know him to be your teacher, but before that brief prayer closes, you feel him to be your brother and your friend. His simplicity of manner, his freedom from assumption, his exemption from any impression that what he is about to say will be oracular, though full to the brim with the purpose of the hour, in form, in bearing, in the entire make-up of the man, the first and the strongest conviction you receive is fraternal sympathy. Such a man, you soliloquize . . . will not ask that his *ipse dixit* shall be the final utterance concerning God's thoughts. He doubtless knows more than I and will probably tell me much that I do not know, but he is seeking to ascend the heights and descend the depths of God in nature, God in man, and God in revelation; and all he will require is to search with him for the solid stepping-stones. Such was the first

impression Professor Sears made upon me. And I think a like impression was received by all those students who studied *with* him." Doctor Stearns then proceeds to characterize his teaching as (1) comprehensive, (2) scriptural, (3) incisive and suggestive, (4) timely. "Repeatedly he would say, 'Young gentlemen, it is easy to destroy, not so easy to rebuild. If you remove the old landmarks you must supply their place. An oft-quoted text may be irrelevant, but there are enough that are relevant.'"

Among the highly valued treasures of the writer is a small note-book of Doctor Sears, a gift from him as a *pignus amicitiæ* to one who had been called to the chair which Doctor Sears himself had so ably filled. A few paragraphs from this manuscript treasure will perhaps be welcome to the reader. These paragraphs are parts of a mere outline, a dry epitome, of what the great teacher expanded by way of "Introduction" to his course in theology.

"Theology is the Science of Religion.

"RELIGION

"We are here concerned only with what truly appertains to the Christian religion. Whatever true elements of religion may exist in paganism, and there are many, are embraced in Christianity.

"Religion, to be genuine, must be founded upon objective truth; and, to be vital, must have a subjective existence. Without the former, it would be nothing but superstition; without the latter, nothing but a knowledge that is vain.

"Religion is not knowledge, is not feeling, is not action; it is all these combined,—it is spiritual life. Love, though the most vital part of religion, is but a part. A feeling of dependence on God, as defined by Schleiermacher, is too vague a representation. Still more unsatisfactory is the Hegelian definition, a tendency to the infinite. God dwelling in the soul—the view of Hengstenberg—is substituting the cause for the effect. *Modus*

cognoscendi et colendi Deum, makes religion an aggregate without unity.

"Whether religion has its seat primarily in the understanding or in the affections (moral suasion, the taste system), whether it is essentially γνῶσις or πίστις (Origen, and his opponents, Augustine says, *Fides præcedit intellectui*), a *habitus theoreticus* or a *habitus practicus* (the Scholastics, the Mystics), has been a question of much controversy. The decision of this question must greatly affect the mode of preaching and of all religious instruction.

"If we analyze religion and find it to consist of knowledge, feeling and action, following, too, in this order, it will be evident that action, being an effect of the two former, though essential as evidence, cannot be the radical part. Knowledge, again, though an indispensable condition, is merely a necessary antecedent (and so is life, reason, etc.), and not of itself a producing cause of right affections. Take away the middle link, and there is *nothing* of religion left. A holy inclination

throws back upon the understanding a clearer light, and here spiritual knowledge commences and sets the whole machinery of religion in operation.

"It may be true that these spiritual perceptions are the acts of the understanding, the affections having no perceptive faculty, but if unholy affections necessarily prevent these moral perceptions, and holy affections necessarily produce them, then these affections are the spiritual part, notwithstanding they act only through the medium of the intellect.

"It has been said that religion resides exclusively in the will; that this is the only moral faculty, the only one whose action depends entirely upon ourselves, and, of course, the only one for which we are accountable. But it cannot be shown that the will has any *direct* power over the affections, whereas it is easy to show that the affections govern the will. If this can be shown in any common exercises of the mind, it will establish their order as cause and effect in religious exer-

cises. Love, for example, is not the result of volition, but springs from the adaptedness of the *object* to the character of the individual. Now, love—the essence of religion—is not *itself* a right state of the will, though producing it. All the powers must be subject to religious influence. The intellect must first apprehend certain truths (few and simple) as a prerequisite to regeneration. In connection with that (by some unknown law of fitness) the Holy Spirit must change the inclination. This governs the will, and everything else follows spontaneously. Of this, more under the head, Regeneration.

"Christianity is partly an assemblage of facts, and partly a system of principles. Neither can be laid aside without destroying it as a whole. The one relates to it as an actual provision for restoring fallen men; the other as containing immutable principles of truth, which can exist alone for such as have never sinned. Strauss denies the facts; and many have but a faint perception of the principles of Christianity.

"Theology, which related first to the Divine Nature, was in the Middle Ages extended to all divine things—*λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ* or *τοῦ θεῖου*. Its object is to give an exact and at the same time comprehensive view of all the doctrines of the Bible.

"(1) Popular and poetical language is to be translated, so far as may be, into the exact language of science. Hence it presupposes an exegetical training. Some subjects can be so well understood by us, as to enable us to determine with clearness how language must be understood; but on subjects beyond our comprehension a difficulty in interpreting language will always remain.

"(2) Subjects must be analyzed philosophically, so far as it is in our power to do it. Otherwise, their nature, their difference or agreement with others cannot be understood. *E. g.*, repentance, faith, love, regeneration, sanctification.

"(3) The relations of doctrines to each other must be so far ascertained as to preserve their harmony. The uncertain must

conform to the certain; our inferences must not set aside divine testimony. Express and clear declarations of Scripture, and simple and necessary inferences, take the precedence of philosophical speculation and long concatenations of reasoning. Two doctrines fully established by independent evidence, must be allowed to stand, even when we cannot perceive the connection, which is most likely to occur on subjects which lie out of the sphere of human knowledge.

"The demands of theology, as a science, are exegetical and logical, the former furnishing the material, the latter the instrument.

"*The relation of philosophy, or reason, to theology* is not perfectly simple. As philosophy is a very broad term, we must make many distinctions. (1) Science cannot be overruled by theology. (2) Necessary consequences of established principles cannot be disregarded. (3) Reason is a guide in those lower matters which are presupposed by the Scriptures. (4) Speculation on the highest

questions respecting God and the invisible world can never be the basis of a sound theology. (5) Those essential principles which are common to all systems of philosophy must be admitted by the theologian.

"Theology borders on mental philosophy as it does on many sciences, but it does not include any of them. These relations are to be pointed out in the discussion of particular topics and everything referred to its proper place.

"*The relation of Christian theology to natural theology* is that of a certain, authoritative, and complete system to that of a vague, insufficient, and imperfect one. The latter is either presupposed by the former, or included in it. Such a system of pure natural theology never existed.

"*Its relation to Christian Ethics* is that of cause and effect; and they cannot be entirely separated. When, for the sake of convenience, they are separated, the latter must repeat so much of the former as to lay a foundation for itself. If, as in this country

and England, moral philosophy is made a distinct science not including the Christian system, then what is peculiar to *Christian* ethics can be introduced into theology in connection with the Christian virtues, the rest (moral philosophy) being presupposed."

CHAPTER V

SECRETARY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION

1848–1855

DURING his connection with Newton, Professor Sears received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard College (1841). After twelve years of arduous service he was elected Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and resigned his place in Newton to be the successor of Horace Mann in a post which few men were supposed able to fill. It will be unnecessary to attempt any elaborate description of his work in the position which he occupied so honorably and usefully for the next seven years. Among his successors in that office was the Honorable George S. Boutwell, who thus spoke of the task achieved by Doctor Sears as Secretary of the Board of Education:

"When the intellectual powers of Doctor Sears were in their fullness, when his scholarship was recognized generally by learned men and by universities, when his capacity for useful public service had been tested and justified by experience, he accepted the office of Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. His only predecessor was Horace Mann. That eminent leader of public opinion, and reformer both of the methods and of the result of education, had impressed his ideas upon the people and woven his policy into the institutions of the State. But his career had been a career of controversy, in which indeed he had triumphed. But there lingered in the minds of many a hope that the changes which he had introduced and the reforms which he had established would, at no distant day, be overthrown. The State, in Doctor Sears, secured an exponent and advocate and a most temperate defender of the reforms which Mr. Mann had introduced. There was no step backward, but he presented always the genial and

attractive side of every subject to the public. In the Normal Schools, in the Teachers' Institutes, and in the County Associations, he brought into the public service eminent men and distinguished teachers, of whom I may mention President Felton, Professor Agassiz, Professor Guyot, Professor Russell, Lowell Mason, and George B. Emerson; and thus were the youth and the children of the State brought under the influence of persons who gave them high ideas of life and the best practical illustrations of the art of teaching. What in Mr. Mann's time had been regarded by many as experimental, became in Doctor Sears's time the established and recognized policy of the State. Old controversies were silenced. Our system of public education, *schools for all the people, sustained by all the people*, was placed upon a foundation as immovable as the foundation of the State itself.

"It would be too much, perhaps, to say that all these great changes were due to Doctor Sears alone, but I cannot doubt that to his urbanity, to his earnestness, to his intelli-

THE REV. BARNAS SEARS, D.D., ABOUT 1850
(While Secretary of Mass. Board of Education)

gent activity, the State was largely indebted for the establishment of a new order of things in our system of public instruction. It cannot be assumed that Doctor Sears could have instituted the reforms or carried out the contest which made the administration of Mr. Mann conspicuous, but it would be equally improper to assume that even Mr. Mann himself could have established permanently the reforms which he instituted, or have made fixed in the policy of the State the changes which he had advocated. These two co-workers placed the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the greatest obligation. That old, imperfect system of education was set aside and a new and better one placed in its stead. The change was for Massachusetts, and the example was for the whole country. And if, in the richness of these thirty years, other communities have attained such excellence in their system of education as banishes every thought of the claim of superiority on our part, then they, equally with ourselves, owe a debt

to the memory of Horace Mann and Barnas Sears."

This may be accepted as a just estimate of the work of Doctor Sears as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education from 1848 to 1855. It refers to the principal difficulties of his task and to some of the elements of his power to accomplish it. Perhaps there was no man in the State who could have filled more ably than himself the place to which he was called. For his interest in public schools was profound and his knowledge of systems and methods of education unsurpassed. At the same time he was in accord with his predecessor and with the Board in respect to the methods to be employed as well as to the ideals to be sought in general education. The success of his many Teachers' Institutes was marked and undeniable; and their success was due even more to his inspiring presence and generalship than to the great ability of the men whom he called to his assistance. There was alertness and animation and good cheer wherever he pre-

sided, and teachers returned to their calling with zeal enkindled for nobler service after a week with him and his helpers. It is hard to overrate the value of personal intercourse with such an educator. In this respect he was probably superior to Horace Mann; more genial, more stimulating, at least in tone and manner, and more winsome; a great leader with an appreciative and loving spirit, pointing out fearlessly ways of possible advance, while recognizing generously everything strong or beautiful in current methods or workers. In this direction may be seen his unrivaled power. This made him an educator of educators.

A few excerpts from his Annual Reports will be welcome to every intelligent reader, even though they are too brief to afford a clear view of the significance of the complete documents. In his Report for the year 1850 he treats, among other things, of the Teachers' Institutes held during the previous year. "The experience of the present year goes to confirm that of past years, that no means

employed by the State for the improvement of the schools have an immediate efficiency equal to that of the Institutes. They perform the office of light-armed troops, and by the celerity of their movements accomplish much that lies beyond the reach of the Normal Schools. . . . By reducing the time from ten days to six, I am able to take the supervision of them all, without any interruption, and to procure instructors of a high order and retain them without change to the end. A larger number of teachers, likewise, can afford the time and the expense necessary to attend. . . . The object is to give the whole body of teachers a new impulse to improvement; to direct their attention to the importance of ascertaining the best methods of instruction; to lead them, through the influence of eminent and experienced teachers, to task their own invention, judgment, and skill to the utmost for perfecting themselves in the art of teaching. . . . The tone and spirit of an Institute is therefore a matter of much greater moment than

the amount of time given to a mere review of studies."

In the Report for 1855, having set forth the principal arguments for and against having any religious teaching in public schools, he said: "Considerations of this nature have done much to unite the great bulk of the community on the common ground of a Christian but unsectarian education for all the Commonwealth. It has been found, upon experiment, that religion can be introduced into the schools, without polemical theology; that the Christian temper and spirit can be exhibited and inculcated, without stirring the bitter waters of strife; and that instruction in religion and religious doctrines can be added to any extent, at home or elsewhere, through some one or more of the numerous provisions which are made for all who desire that instruction." Referring to past controversies, he says: "But when the battle has been fairly fought out and the victory won, the change is irrevocable. Spectres will not make their appearance after the

day has dawned. All that has here been said is veritable history. The early friends of the Massachusetts movement in education have not forgotten it. Of these struggles, enough remains in some few parts of the State to render intelligible descriptions given of previous conditions of things, somewhat as certain living animals in some parts of the world, serve to illustrate the fossil remains of former geological periods. But, in general, a great change has come over the Commonwealth in this respect, which is attributable to a variety of causes. The seed sown at a previous period is producing its harvest now. The ideas which then belonged to the few have become the property of the many. The smaller number, with the right on their side, have proved stronger, in the end, than the greater number without it. But, after making due allowance for all these and similar considerations, the principal cause, if not of the change itself, at least of the rapidity with which it has been effected, is to be sought in the policy of the Board in carrying their views, and those of

the Legislature, to the very doors of the people, by the living voice of men appointed for the purpose. . . . The effect of a plan of operations so carefully laid, and so well executed, has been most gratifying. Watchful observers have not failed to perceive that to it we are mainly indebted for the newly-awakened interest and activity manifested in places that were slumbering in indifference and inactivity but a few years ago, and for that general tide of enlightened public sentiment on education which is now seen flowing over nearly every portion of the Commonwealth."

In his Report for 1856, Doctor Sears discusses with great thoroughness the obstacles to perfect success in public-school education; such as the indulgence of unreasonable hopes; the danger of overlooking the limitations of the teacher's power, limitations in himself and in the fact that only a part of education belongs to the school-room; in the presence of a foreign race of men; in their demoralizing influence; in the rush of young people from the

country into the city; in the low tone of morals often prevalent; and in the equivocal character of much of the reading and of the public amusements in which the children of the present age share with others. He then suggests antidotes to the evils described. Near the close of this very able report, he says: "A child ought to be taught to regulate his actions by the will of God. In one respect the teacher and pupil ought to stand on a level with each other, both bowing to the will of their Maker, and performing their respective duties to each other out of regard to His authority. A school should be led to view itself as under the inspection of an All-seeing Witness, and each member to hold himself accountable to Him for the spirit and character of his deportment. Let these comprehensive principles be kept before the mind, and they will have a weight of authority which every one will feel. There will be a sense of obligation lying back of the teacher's rules, making it the easier for him to require of pupils the performance of their duties from

the fact that both he and they together are accountable to a higher being. In this way the moral natures of children are called into action. The conscience has its part to act. A line is dropped which sounds the heart to its lowest depths. Character thus formed has strength and firmness. Its roots strike deep and spread in every direction, giving a vigorous growth to its trunk and waving branches, and holding them firmly in their true position."

The particular objects which Doctor Sears sought to accomplish were three: (1) A change in the laws of the Commonwealth by which the control of common schools should be put into the hands of towns, instead of being left in the hands of small districts that contributed a part of the expense, selected teachers, and fixed the amount of schooling for their children. The town-system puts all this in the hands of a suitable board of committeemen appointed by the whole town, while all charges are paid by the town or State. (2) An improvement in the qualifications of

teachers for their work. To effect this, Normal Schools were supported by the State, and the Secretary of the Board of Education was charged with the duty of making them as efficient as possible. In this part of his work, Doctor Sears felt a deep interest and was successful. (3) A further improvement of experienced teachers by means of yearly Institutes in different parts of the State. These Institutes aimed to quicken the zeal and enlarge the knowledge of teachers. Doctor Sears made it a point to have able and progressive lecturers associated with himself in the conduct of these Institutes, and he also, by his own appeals, sought to make teachers magnify their calling and seek with supreme endeavor the building up of moral character in their pupils. The end of education was, in his judgment, two-fold: the formation of character and the attainment of power to serve mankind. These objects he sought with very great enthusiasm, discretion, and success. The field was large, the task was difficult, and the results cheering.

RESIDENCE OF DR. SEARS, PLEASANT STREET, NEWTON CENTRE, 1848–1865

Some of his pupils in theology have expressed their regret that he published so few books, that the amount of his writing in official correspondence and annual reports consumed so much of his time that he had none left for book-making. But the tablets on which he wrote during many of his busy years were the souls of young men and women who were in turn transmitting his influence to the souls of children in the Commonwealth. And it is doubtful whether he could have reached a greater number with his beneficent impulses in any other way. Vigorous as was his pen, and clear as were the thoughts expressed by it, his living presence and voice were more powerful than his words on the printed page. No doubt he believed this. No doubt he remembered the example of Socrates, and of the divine Man who was a far greater teacher than the Grecian sage. Indeed, a true man is almost always greater than his books. To hear and to see him at close range are better than to read his choicest thoughts in print. If there are exceptions

to this rule, it must be in cases where one is slow of speech or too diffident to be his true self in the presence of others. Horace Mann was a specially powerful writer, and may, perhaps, have been one of the few who can move men as deeply by writing as by speaking, even though his presence arrested attention and his self-respect overcame diffidence. But Doctor Sears could master a subject without the use of a pen. His unwritten speech was equal in pith and substance to that which was written. And gladly as all of us would have welcomed a history of the Lutheran Reformation, or of the German Anabaptists, from his pen, it is by no means certain that he could have prepared such a work without neglecting more useful labors. Providence beckoned, and he followed, as should always be the case.

CHAPTER VI

PRESIDENCY OF BROWN UNIVERSITY

1855–1867

Doctor Sears enjoyed his relation to the State, to the Board of Education, and to the teachers of Massachusetts. He thought of leaving his post as Secretary only when the Presidency of Brown University was offered him. The writer recalls with distinctness a conversation on this matter. Doctor Sears had been assured that, with his own consent, his name would be laid before the corporation as a candidate for the office of president, and that, if so, he would be without doubt elected. He was now balancing in his mind the opportunities for usefulness in the two positions, and, though personal considerations appeared to be wholly secondary, he took occasion to express very strongly the

satisfaction which he had had in his work for education in the Old Bay State, and the regret he would feel at sundering his connection with his Massachusetts friends and co-laborers. Nevertheless, the opening at Providence seemed to him a call from God to serve the cause of Christian education in a different sphere, and he was making up his mind to obey that call. With singular clearness he summarized the reasons for abiding at his post in Massachusetts, and, over against these, the reasons for going to Providence and putting his matured strength into the lives of young men who were qualifying themselves for public service. He was in the midst of his days,—fifty-three years of age,—and as full of hope and enthusiasm as he was twenty years before. There was evidently in his heart a deep longing to be at work directly for young men. And so, as I clearly perceived, the balances of his judgment inclined towards the new field. He had been my teacher or neighbor and friend in Newton Center ten years, and it was not in my power

to think of his removal to another State without regret; but, as usual, his statement of the case brought my judgment into accord with his own, and I was ready to bid him God-speed as he prepared to leave his delightful home in Newton Center for the President's house on College Street, Providence.

But what was his success in the new station? How did he prosper in dealing with undergraduates and with the overseers of this ancient school? In answer to a note of inquiry, the following letter from Doctor Albert Harkness was received:

"PROVIDENCE, Sept. 28, 1901.

"MY DEAR DOCTOR HOVEY:

"Your letter came during my absence from the city, and it has followed me from place to place until I fear my answer can be of no use to you.

"I assume that you wish only a few general hints that may aid you in completing your estimate of Doctor Sears. You are

doubtless aware that he came very near being my ideal of a college president. He administered the affairs of Brown University according to the charter, and, as I believe, faithfully and wisely. He was a ripe scholar and a Christian gentleman, and by his personal character and attainments exerted a powerful influence for good, not only upon the students, but also upon the professors. We all saw that he was deeply interested in the College, and that he gave his best thought and his most earnest endeavors to its welfare. He was the best President to work with that I have ever had the good fortune to know. He encouraged all departments while he left all the professors free to adopt methods suited to their tastes and genius, believing that thus the best results would be reached.

" Unfortunately the administration of Doctor Sears covered the period of our Civil War, when it was, of course, impossible to do much for the enlargement of the College. But Doctor Sears was not only a wise and efficient

THE REV. BARNAS SEARS, D.D., ABOUT 1861
(At Brown University as President)

president, but an accomplished and faithful professor. He was an inspiring teacher, and he taught the students to think for themselves. If these hasty lines can be of any service to you, I shall be very glad. Should you wish anything more, kindly inform me. I am glad, dear Doctor Hovey, that you have undertaken this pleasant task, as I know you understand and appreciate the character and worth of Doctor Sears, whose memory I cherish with grateful affection.

"With kind regards and best wishes for you and yours, I am as ever your friend,

"ALBERT HARKNESS."

To this discriminating letter may be added a few paragraphs from the remarks of Professor John L. Lincoln, at the funeral of Doctor Sears in Brookline, Mass.:

"It is just twenty-five years this summer since Doctor Sears was called to the presidency of the University, an office made vacant by the unexpected resignation of the late Doctor Wayland. Just thirty years had

passed away since Doctor Sears had left the college as a student. . . . He was, then, just past fifty years of age, and so was in the full vigor of his manhood, in the full maturity of all his powers—so fine in themselves and so well developed by long study and discipline, in the ripeness of his fame as an educator and as a leader in education. But all these resources of his, which were so ample, he needed, and all these powers of his he needed, at their greatest and their best, and none felt it more than himself; for he was called to fill the post which had been held for twenty-five years by Doctor Wayland, so honored for his character and for his standing as an educator second, perhaps, to none in our whole country. But he was called to the place, as some of you know, by the unanimous choice of the guardians of the college, who felt more deeply than anybody else could feel the great void in the college which he was called to fill. But that unanimity of choice, so cordially responded to by the faculty, and by the graduates and friends

of the college, seemed a bright augury of the success of his administration. And how well did the issue answer to that bright augury! How well, how nobly he achieved that task which was then devolved upon him! I think we must all see—those of us most conversant with the affairs of the college can certainly see—that he administered the great trusts confided to him with an enthusiastic devotion to religion, education, and learning which had been so dear to the founders of the college and to its subsequent benefactors and friends, with a true and loyal love to the place of his education, and with the sense of duty and responsibility which belonged to him then and always as a Christian man. I remember . . . difficulties which he had to encounter, trials which he had to endure, incident to a post of such complex relations and duties, but he surmounted or passed through them all with patience and skill.

"Let me say a word as I recall his relations to the college circle, to his undergraduate pupils. I think I may say that of all who

have administered the affairs of the college in the place of chief and guide, no one was more highly esteemed, and certainly no one was more truly loved, by all the pupils than President Sears. I well remember how he gained their admiration by the ample stores of knowledge which he had at such ready command, and which he made so accessible to them for their assistance and their improvement; how he impressed them with perfect respect for his love of truth and enthusiastic pursuit of it, for the habits of personal investigation which he formed in them, and for the reverence which he inspired in them for true wisdom and that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, with faith in Christ as the Redeemer of the world. I am sure that all his pupils . . . were impressed by the soundness of his judgment and the vigor of his devotion. . . . But I think that he bound them to him most of all by personal, by filial ties of affection that were firm as steel and precious as gold. . . . By the love for them which shone out from

all his conduct . . . there ever went forth a virtue which had in it for them, and for them all, everything beloved and blessed and pure. . . . I spoke of the coming of Doctor Sears to our college, full as it was with life and with promise. . . . But I remember also his departure, after those twelve years of service, when that promise had been proudly and amply fulfilled, and we felt what a loss it was that we had sustained—a loss that could hardly be made good to us. Yet there was something of consolation in the confidence we had in the high esteem entertained for him without the walls of the college, since he was judged by the Trustees of the Peabody Fund to be the man best of all fitted to administer that grand trust for a great educational enterprise."

It will also be in place to hear the testimony of one or two who were under his instruction in Brown University:

"I was under Doctor Sears's instruction in my senior year (1860–1)," writes Doctor Burrage. "The studies were philosophy, the history

of philosophy, and the evidences of Christianity. In the first two Doctor Sears used text-books, viz., Haven's "Intellectual Philosophy" and Schwegler's "History of Philosophy." Not much time, however, was given to the recitations of the text of the lesson. A large part of the hour was occupied by Doctor Sears himself in explanation and illustration of the text. The wealth of his learning impressed us all. His mind was a great storehouse from which he drew abundantly. Doubtless the average college student received in Doctor Sears's recitation room little beyond what is derived from a noble personality. I cannot but believe, however, that to sit in the presence of such a man an hour a day, four days in a week, for a college year, means much to any student. A bright scholar, prepared by aptitude and study to profit by the instruction of Doctor Sears, found not only enjoyment in his classes, but great intellectual stimulus. The instruction in the evidences of Christianity was by lectures, and here, as it seemed to me, Doctor Sears was at

his best. The lectures were dictated, and I have often had occasion to consult them since my college days. Here also he gave us much more than the text of his lectures. He was thoroughly familiar with what the best scholars in Europe had said and were saying in reference to Christianity; and his aim was to make us also familiar with it. My obligations to Doctor Sears at the time I gratefully acknowledged, and I shall be grateful to him as long as I live.

"In the first part of my senior year the Civil War was approaching, and my college days ended in the beginnings of the great conflict. With lessons concerning philosophy and religion, Doctor Sears mingled many a lesson of patriotism and duty. As young men we were made to feel that we were living in a great crisis of the nation's history, when the requirements of patriotism and duty should be conscientiously considered. If we should have a part in the war, we knew we would have Doctor Sears's approval and benediction. H. S. BURRAGE."

"DEAR DOCTOR HOVEY,—I enclose Doctor Burrage's reminiscences of President Sears, and add a few words of my own. Our class, that of '66, pursued nearly the same studies as Doctor Burrage's class, with the addition of German; but with us he made no use of text-books, except in grammar. In philosophy and related subjects he dictated to us lectures he had himself prepared. He seemed to care very little, however, about our remembering even the substance of them. Some professors appreciate a student's efforts in the exact proportion in which their own words are reproduced. If Doctor Sears ever took any note of a student's daily work,—and we could never perceive that he did,—he measured us by an entirely different standard. A parrot-like repetition of his lectures would have given him but little pleasure. On one occasion he remarked: '*I do not care to have you remember what I say; I am simply anxious to teach you how to think. If you learn that, you may burn my lectures if you will.*' With such a teacher I can imag-

ine some students would not be over-well pleased. Those who sought the class-room in order to be thoroughly drilled-into some definite scheme of philosophy, probably went away from Doctor Sears, grumbling that they had gotten nothing. But some of us certainly found him the most inspiring of college teachers. He awakened and stimulated us by his own example of noble thinking. At the same time it has always seemed to me that Doctor Sears was at his best in those lines of study that appealed to his literary tastes. It was when he talked of art and literature and life that he revealed most clearly his own lofty ideals and pure and noble tastes. My remembrance of him as a teacher of German literature brings back hours of keenest enjoyment. His success in this line leads me to believe that he would have been a beau-ideal teacher of the classics, and to wish that I might have had the privilege of reading Homer or Plato under his guidance.

"In his personal relation with the students

he was most successful in winning their deepest and most loyal attachment. I don't believe a student in Brown in my days could have been insolent to Doctor Sears. If one had dared to be, the entire college would have frowned on the offender. I have heard men who were under Doctor Sears complain since leaving college of something lacking as a teacher in him, but in my college days I never heard a word from any source that did not express the highest appreciation both of his character and attainments. In my memory he stands among the teachers of my youth, equalled by few, surpassed by none.

"J. B. Gough Pidge."

The Rev. Albert H. Plumb, D.D., of Roxbury, Massachusetts, writes in the following strain:

"I went to Providence during a six-weeks' spring vacation at Andover Seminary, and took notes of Doctor Sears's lectures on Christian Evidences and of his remarks on Doctor Wayland's "Moral Philosophy," in 1856.

He impressed me as a very learned man, widely read, and profound in his philosophical thinking, wonderfully rich, too, in his illustrative comments and practical applications of principles in the formation of correct judgments and in the guidance of conduct. I have found stimulus as well as instruction whenever I have taken down my notes of his teaching. His replies to the questions and objections of students showed tact and power.

"In the spring of 1857 I was in Providence again, and I remember distinctly a remarkable scene in the First Baptist Church. The church was filled at one of those memorable men's prayer meetings, perhaps at the noon hour on week days, which characterized the great revivals through the country that year. Doctor Sears arose, evidently much moved, and, as I recall his statements, said that he had a little time previous written to his son in business in New York, telling him of the deep religious interest, and urging him to leave his business and come on to Providence to attend the meetings and seek salvation.

His son came, and Doctor Sears said: 'He has just returned to his home rejoicing in a hope in Christ.' He added:

> 'Let sinners learn to pray,
> Let saints keep near the throne;
> Our help in times of deep distress
> Is found in God alone.'"

It has been said, with great propriety, that "as President of Brown University he was distinguished for politeness and courtesy to the young men under his care. More than one wild, reckless student has been heard to say that there was no fun in trying to 'get a rise' on their 'Prex.', for he was so sincerely respectful that it made all their efforts fall flat to the ground. Even in the sarcastic and impudently witty Mock Programme issued on class days, their loved President was spoken of as 'a gentleman and a scholar,' and never was his dignified and stately presence brought down to ridicule, even by the most daring ring-leader in rowdyism. 'He treated me as though I was a Senior,' explained an apprehensive Freshman, after a summons to

PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, BROWN UNIVERSITY

Doctor Sears's study, 'and the first thing he did was to offer me a chair.'"

If it be asked, What did he accomplish during his presidency of Brown? the answer may be given in the words of Doctor Guild, the librarian of the college: "During his administration the faculties for instruction were increased; an elegant and well-appointed laboratory for the department of analytical chemistry was erected at the expense of liberal-minded citizens of Providence; a system of scholarships for meritorious and indigent students was inaugurated; the Bowen estate, so called, on the corner of George and Prospect Streets, through the munificence of a member of the corporation, was added to the college green; the institution was brought into harmonious relations with the government of the city and State by liberal concessions in the matter of taxation; a debt of twenty-five thousand dollars was extinguished, and large additions were made to the college funds."

Brief reference may here be made to the

discourse of Doctor Sears at the Centennial Celebration of Brown University in 1864. It was an able historical retrospect, afterwards published; but its account of certain events connected with the origin of the College Charter did not escape censure. It was felt to be partisan by some liberal supporters of the college, although it is difficult to believe that its author had any but friendly feelings towards Christians of every name, or that he intended the slightest injustice to the memory of any man. He was himself too good a historian to believe in misrepresentation, if there was any opportunity for it, and it may be doubted whether there was any motive for it in the instance referred to.

But the great work of Doctor Sears during his presidency was with and for the undergraduates. It was strictly educational, aiming to secure the development of the whole man on lines of beauty and power. Neither the moral nor the religious nature was overlooked. Reason, conscience, and will were deemed of no less worth than memory and

learning. Character was glorified far more than reputation. It was the aim of Doctor Sears to inspire the men under his care with a love of goodness and truth, more intense and controlling than their love of greatness. And his influence over them was ideally powerful and wholesome. If he did not make them all better men, more scholarly, more thoughtful, more conscientious, more self-forgetful, more courteous, more humane, more hopeful, and more useful, than they were when they came under his influence, it must have been because of their being already "joined to their idols" and given over to "a reprobate mind." Some there are in our schools of learning who may not unjustly be thus characterized, and no educator should be held responsible for their persistence in evil ways. But they are rare in schools administered by men of the caliber and spirit of Doctor Sears.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL AGENT OF THE PEABODY EDUCATION FUND

1867–1880

"To be quite clear what one ought to do, and have little or no choice, is one of the essentials of happiness."
B. SEARS, in Diary.

IN the year 1867, Doctor Sears was called to a very different, though no less responsible post—that of Secretary or General Agent of the Trustees of the well-known Peabody Fund. That important fund for the promotion of education in the Southern States was created by the following letter of George Peabody, a native of Danvers, Massachusetts, part of which is now Peabody, but long a resident in London, England:

"To Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, of Massachusetts; Hon. Hamilton Fish, of New York; Right Rev^d^ Charles P. McIlvaine, of Ohio; General U. S. Grant, of the United

States Army; Hon. William C. Rives, of Virginia; Hon. John H. Clifford, of Massachusetts; Hon. William Aiken, of South Carolina; William M. Evarts, Esq., of New York; Hon. William A. Graham, of North Carolina; Charles Macalester, Esq., of Pennsylvania; George W. Riggs, Esq., of Washington; Samuel Wetmore, Esq., of New York; Edward A. Bradford, Esq., of Maryland; and George Peabody Russell, Esq., of Massachusetts:—I give to you, gentlemen, the sum of one million of dollars, to be by you and your successors held in trust, and the income thereof used and applied at your discretion for the intellectual, moral, or industrial education among the young of the more destitute portions of the Southern and Southwestern States of our Union; my purpose being that the benefits intended shall be distributed among the entire population, without other distinction than their needs and the opportunities of usefulness to them.

"Besides the income thus devised I give to you permission to use from the principal

sum, within the next two years, an amount not exceeding forty per cent.

"In addition to this gift I place in your hands bonds of the State of Mississippi, issued to the Planters Bank, amounting, with interest, to about eleven hundred thousand dollars, the amount realized by you from which is to be added to and used for the purposes of the Trust. The validity of these bonds has never been questioned.

"The details and organization of the Trust I leave with you, only requesting that Mr. Winthrop be chairman, and Gov. Fish and Bishop McIlvaine vice-chairmen of your body; and I give you power to make all necessary by-laws and regulations; to obtain an Act of Incorporation if any shall be necessary. All vacancies, occurring in your number by death, resignation, or otherwise, shall be filled by your election as soon as conveniently may be, and having in view an equality of representation so far as regards the Northern and Southern States.

"GEORGE PEABODY.

"WASHINGTON, Feb. 7, 1867."

In further explanation of his purpose, he wrote: "What I desire is to aid in giving elementary education to the children of the common people." It appears that Mr. Winthrop had conversed with Doctor Sears at the old Wednesday Evening Club of Boston concerning the execution of the Trust, and that this conversation led to a request by him that Doctor Sears would state his views in writing. Thinking of the matter over night, he gave his consent the next morning to do this, and the following day brought this letter to Mr. Winthrop:

"PROVIDENCE, March 14, 1867.

"HON. ROBERT C. WINTHROP: At your request, I give you such thoughts as have occurred to my mind, in the brief time that has intervened since I saw you, on the subject of the use that it is expedient to make of the Fund which Mr. Peabody has placed at your disposal.

"1. Too much importance cannot be attached to the policy and measures that shall

be adopted. Besides the care that can be bestowed on the subject by the Trustees, who, it is supposed, can give but a limited amount of their time to it, I think, with you, that it is desirable to have an executive officer, a superintendent, who can comprehend the whole subject, and work whatever machinery is necessary with unity of design and with effectiveness.

"2. As to plans and methods, much is to be created. We have nothing exactly like what is to be undertaken. There are no examples before you. There has been no experience directly in this line of action. Much must come by time and by actual trial. Principles may be laid down, but there must be room for variations in details.

"3. There are two general methods to be considered: the one is that of originating and carrying on a system of schools. The other is that of disbursing funds in aid of others who shall have the schools in charge. The former method would require an extensive system of agencies. *Work* will not go on

well, without an ever-present and active superintendence and vigilance to prevent and correct abuses arising from negligence or selfishness. The latter is simpler, easier, and attended with fewer risks.

"Now, if time shall show that the two methods must be, to some extent, combined, it would seem to be safer and more convenient to begin with the second, as the transition to the first could be made without trouble and to any extent, whenever it should seem expedient. Any change in the other direction would be more difficult, as the first method commits one largely to the future.

"4. I should think it might be as well to begin with a single agent, whose first business it should be to furnish aid where it is most needed, in strengthening and resuscitating schools, and, perhaps, aiding others to open new ones. For a time he might find judicious and active friends of education, who, in different localities, would gladly render him the aid he shall need. Thus he

would soon, as he proceeds, learn not only what kind and amount of help is needed, but he could come to know the men who could best render it. If it be necessary to have local agents, this would, perhaps, be the best way of introducing them.

"5. Of course, *effective schools*, that shall be *permanent*, is the great *desideratum*. This is not only the best thing for the young, but they furnish to the people at large the strongest argument in favor of popular education. Let good schools, springing up on the soil, growing out of the wants of the people and meeting those wants, be sprinkled all over the South, as examples, and be made the *nuclei* for others, and let them be established and controlled, as far as possible, by the people themselves, and they will in time grow into State systems. Beside direct aid in the support of such schools, which would, no doubt, be the first work to be done, there are various indirect ways of reaching the same end. Normal schools, especially for training female teachers for the primary

schools; higher education given in the form of scholarships to a limited number of young men who should obligate themselves to teach as long a period, at least, as that during which they received aid, or to refund the money; encouragement to Teachers' Associations (County or State Associations) by giving them fifty or a hundred dollars to pay the lecturers at their meetings; aid to Editors or Publishers of Journals of Education for the benefit of Teachers, these might be some of the indirect methods to be used.

"6. I state a little more particularly here some of the objections to the first plan mentioned in No. 3. There will not only be a great amount of supervision and direction of the work on the hands of the Trustees and their agents; but many official reports from all the schools, whose form must be prescribed, which must be examined, collated, and, possibly, printed, as is now done by Boards of Education. All this formidable official procedure by a body of men in some

sense foreign to the different States, will only serve as a barrier, keeping the schools from the public sympathies. The ownership of lots and buildings by the Trustees will tend to make the people indifferent or jealous. The ultimate transfer of such property to the towns and cities will be an awkward business to transact. The permanent care of a large number of houses, their security, proper occupancy and repairs, will be troublesome. Property jointly held by the towns and the Trustees would occasion still more trouble. At the utmost, I should think, one or two or three Normal School buildings might be owned by the Trustees. Even these it might be better to induce the *people* to build, and then carry on the school for them, for a longer or shorter time, either wholly or in part. Places for other schools, especially primary schools, could be obtained without building or purchasing them, certainly for the present. But on these and other similar points experience would soon be the best teacher. These are first thoughts,

which, for that reason, may have little value.

"Very respectfully and sincerely your obt. servant,

"B. SEARS."

By comparing the action of the Board of Trustees at its first meeting on the 19th of March, 1867, it will be seen that it followed very closely the suggestions of this remarkable letter. For it was resolved:

"1. That for the present the promotion of Primary, or Common School Education, by such means or agencies as now exist or may need to be created, be the leading object of the Board, in the use of the fund placed at its disposal.

"2. That in aid of the above general design, and as promotive of the same, the Board will have in view the furtherance of Normal School Education for the preparation of teachers as well by the endowment of Scholarships in existing Southern institutions as by the establishing of Normal Schools and the aiding of such Normal Schools as

may now be in operation in the Southern and Southwestern States, including such measures as may be feasible and as experience may show to be expedient, for the promotion of education in the application of science to the industrial pursuits of life.

"3. That a General Agent of the highest qualifications be appointed by the Board, to whom shall be entrusted, under an Executive Committee, the whole charge of carrying out the designs of Mr. Peabody in his great gift, under such resolutions and instructions as the Board shall from time to time adopt.

"4. That the Rev. Dr. Sears, President of Brown University, be appointed the General Agent of the Board, upon such terms as may be arranged by the Finance Committee.

"5. That an Executive Committee of five Trustees be appointed by the Chairman at each annual meeting of the Board, to whom shall be entrusted, in connection with the General Agent, the carrying out of such resolutions and plans as the Board shall from time to time adopt.

"6. That the next Annual Meeting of the Board be held in New York on the third Tuesday in June, 1868, and that in the meantime the Chairman be authorized to call meetings at such times and places as the Executive Committee may direct."

After further discussion, it was resolved:

"That the Board will hold a meeting in the city of Richmond on the third Tuesday of January next."

In response to this action of the Trustees, Doctor Sears took a little time for further consideration and consultation. He was delighted with his relations to faculty and students in the University, and the corporation was ready in its support of his measures. But he was uncertain as to his safety in the climate of New England during the winter months, and he believed there was a wide door of usefulness opened to him in administering the Peabody Fund. As was expected by Mr. Winthrop, he decided ere long to accept the new position and sunder his connection with the college which he ardently

loved. His acceptance was dated March 30, 1867. The following paragraph from an article of Doctor Heman Lincoln emphasizes one of the reasons for his decision: "In regard to the Peabody Agency, the call of Doctor Sears by Providence was as marked as the call of Moses or Samuel. His health had been broken down by the anxieties of professional labor in Brown University; his voice had failed and refused its office. The physician's order was imperative for a change of climate, and for rest. Doctor Sears was on the point of asking from the Corporation for a year's absence in Europe, when the unanimous choice of Mr. Peabody and the Trustees of the noble fund called him to a new work. It gave him release from public speaking, it opened a milder climate, and probably added ten years to his life, and he accepted it as a direct call from God." Removing to Staunton, Virginia, September 19, 1867, he entered with vigor and hope upon his new and difficult task.

No better representation of this task and

of the skill and prudence with which it was performed has been made than the following from the pen of Doctor J. L. M. Curry, the successor of Doctor Sears as Secretary of the Peabody Trust: "With great energy and tact Doctor Sears entered upon his delicate, difficult, and onerous duties. . . . He brought to the discharge of his work accurate scholarship, unusual fullness of historical and pedagogical information, a minute and practical acquaintance with the principles and details of State School systems, imperturbable temper, patient and laborious inquiry, a ready and thankful willingness to learn, and to modify opinions and judgments formed from partial knowledge, a broad and tolerant patriotism, impressive courtesy and dignity of manner, firmness of action, tenderest sympathy for the unfortunate, and steadfast, inextinguishable faith in the feasibility and indispensableness of universal education. It may well be doubted whether any other person could have been found who had such adaptedness to the work, because of his rare

combination of personal, intellectual, and moral qualities. Reference has been made to the bankruptcy of the South and to the timeliness of the benefaction. The truth of history requires the cumulative statement that while many resolutely accepted the situation, and with courage and subdued hope turned their faces to the future, a majority dwelt in the mournful past, grieved with unutterable sadness over 'the lost cause,' and adjusted themselves slowly and with ill-temper to the new environments, and were not restraintful in the bitter and almost savage expression of their discontent. To conciliate opposition, to quiet offensive hostility, to avoid irritation, to put a charitable construction upon hasty speech and rude action, to help in dissipating despair, to be listened to in suggesting and urging a permanent policy of free schools, offering equal advantages to the late masters and the emancipated slaves, and in direct opposition to the traditions and practices of the whole past, required what few men possessed; and this

history would have been very different but for the wonderful skill and ability with which Doctor Sears, transferring his home and citizenship to Virginia, surmounted obstacles, changed adverse opinions and convictions of the people, made the Peabody Fund a most popular trust, and became himself imbedded in the confidence and affections of the South." [1]

It was a primary object of Doctor Sears to encourage the establishment of systems of public schools in all the States; and one of the questions which he presently encountered related to the attitude which the almoners of the Peabody Fund would hold to the demand for "mixed schools." In 1869, he wrote to a New Orleans paper in reply to articles of inquiry:

"I will now state our position, which is perfectly known to you. We assume no control whatever over the arrangement of the schools to which assistance is accorded.

[1] See *Peabody Education Fund*, by the Hon. J. L. M. Curry.

We have nothing to do with any party questions, or with the policy pursued by Municipal or State authorities. *We only wish to aid in the work of universal education.* If separate schools are provided for the two races, and both of them are pleased with the arrangement, we can have no embarrassment in co-operating with the State authorities. If the law requires mixed schools, and the children, whether white or black, generally attend them, we shall have no difficulty in our work. . . . If a State government ventures upon an experiment which works badly, we cannot help it. We leave the responsibility where it belongs. We must go our way, and do our duty, helping the needy and uneducated 'among the entire population, without other distinction than their needs, and the opportunities of usefulness to them.' Our proper business is to encourage universal education; not to meddle with any party question, nor to encourage or discourage any political body."

But he became fully convinced that "any

authoritative interference with the schools of these States (by Congress) would be disastrous to the dearest interests of education, and would be by far the most unfortunate for that class of citizens in whose behalf such measures have been proposed. Foreseeing the dangers which threatened the destruction of the State systems of free schools in the South, in all of which provision is made for the education of one race as much as the other, and standing, in some sense, as the guardian of the interests committed to your care, I could not remain a passive spectator, while men in power were unwittingly, as we are bound to believe, urging on a measure which, if carried out, would undo nearly all that you have done at the expenditure of so much treasure and assiduous labor. On the contrary, I felt constrained to go twice before committees and leading members of Congress, and utter a voice of earnest warning against a futile attempt to enforce 'mixed schools,' and to show, as best I might, what would be the necessary operation of such a

law. . . . Already an amount of mischief has been done which it will take years to repair. Confidence has been shaken; and men who stood firm before have become despondent, and are retiring from the field. . . . Upon no part of the community would the threatened calamity fall so heavily as upon the colored people. Others can, without any personal sacrifice, return to the old system of private schools. . . . These, on the other hand, would in most places be left completely destitute of schools. . . . Let us look at the question in the light of their interest merely. What advantages of education have they now in fact or in law? The same that the white people have. . . . The laws in all the States require the same provision to be made for both. Nor can any distinction be safely made in administering them. . . . From the very nature of the case, the State governments must, in the end, adopt and carry out the same rule for both races," etc. (Annual Report in 1874). The "Civil Rights Bill" was passed without

the clause covering the co-education of the races, and the "States moved on with confidence and courage," the words of Doctor Curry assure us.

To illustrate a little further the work of Doctor Sears, it may be remarked that during the winter and spring of 1876 he made a canvass of the State of Texas in the interest of public schools, which had failed of success "during a period of fierce party strife." In a letter to Mr. Winthrop, he says: "My work in Texas was finished more than a week ago, and I trust all reasonable expectations have been realized. The appointments and other arrangements made by our agent, Rev. Doctor Burleson, turned out to be excellent." And Doctor Burleson published an address, in which he said: "Doctor Sears has made this tour to Texas in compliance with the special request of Mr. Peabody, expressed shortly before his death. There never was such a canvass made in the great cause of education in Texas before, and never was there such enthusiasm awakened to commence a

new and grand educational era in Texas. Doctor Sears has been heard with profound attention by our governor and supreme judges, our greatest educators, our mayors, our editors, our merchants, and leading minds in all our professions and occupations. One sentiment universally prevails—and that is, that it will be a burning shame on Texas not to provide better educational facilities."

These particulars have been mentioned to show, though in a very imperfect manner, the extremely difficult and arduous service which Doctor Sears was called to perform. It would be easy to increase their number indefinitely, and to enlarge upon the patience and tact always displayed by him. He was a Christian philanthropist putting all his energy and heart into the work.

As to the manner of his fulfilling this new and conspicuous trust, I may here produce the testimony of the Honorable Robert C. Winthrop at the funeral of Doctor Sears in Brookline. The very style of Mr. Winthrop's re-

marks seems to labor with his emotion and sense of conscientious obligation to speak but the words of truth and soberness:

"It must be only a word that I shall say. Within an hour past I have reached my home after a fatiguing journey of more than sixty miles on this most oppressive day rather than be absent from the obsequies of one whom I venerated and loved. And the most that I can say here this afternoon is to unite my voice with that of my friend (Mr. Boutwell) who has just taken his seat, in thanking God for the good and great life that has just closed. It has been my fortune to be brought into the most intimate and affectionate relations to Doctor Sears for thirteen years past, and I think hardly a full month has ever elapsed during that period—unless I happened to be in Europe, and even then his letters often followed me—that I have not read letters from him on this question of the great trust which had been committed to him through Mr. George Peabody, or, as I might say, as much through my own

agency as Mr. Peabody's, for Mr. Peabody had never known Doctor Sears, I think, until after he had been made Secretary or General Agent of that great Board of Trustees. Governor Clifford and myself knew him as Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts, and Governor Clifford had known him as President of Brown University; but I know very well that from the day on which, by a unanimous vote of that great Board, we made him its General Agent, from that time to this we have gloried in that act. It has been the crowning glory of his own life. We have had as Trustees, with whom he was associated, such men as President Hayes, President Grant, Governor Fish, Secretary Evarts, Bishop McIlvaine of Ohio, Bishop Whipple, the present Apostolic of Minnesota, and I think there is not one of them, and many others, who would not enjoin upon me, utterly unprepared as I am, for I had the intimation only as I entered the door a moment ago that anything was expected from me—there is not one of them who

RESIDENCE OF DR. SEARS, HAMILTON, NEW YORK, 1830–33

THE HON. ROBERT C. WINTHROP

would not hold me to account if I did not express in behalf of the whole Board, including especially the Southern members—Mr. Keene, of South Carolina, Mr. Stuart, General Jackson, of Georgia, and the Chief Justice of Louisiana, who has recently been added to our Board in place of General Taylor—there is not one of them who would not hold me to strict account if I did not express in their behalf as well as my own the deep sense of the great public loss that has been sustained in the death of Doctor Sears, and of the great personal loss which we shall all feel.

"But, as I said, he has finished the crowning glory of his life. Coming in just at the close of the war, and when feelings between the different parts of the country were embittered, when there was great jealousy, great impatience with anything that should seem like interference with Southern institutions, he so conducted that great trust through a period of thirteen years, that we have completed, really, the primary work for which

the trust was instituted, and are ready to follow a defined line of policy. He has conducted it in a manner which I do not believe any man living or dead could have conducted it—with so much success, with so much ability, with so much devotion. I can say nothing more."

And surely nothing more need be said to convince anyone, who knows the relation of Robert C. Winthrop to Barnas Sears and the Peabody Fund, that the service of Doctor Sears to the cause of education during the last thirteen years of his life was a service of the noblest and finest quality, worthy of the cause and worthy of the man whose name we delight to honor.

Yet the remarks of the Right Reverend H. B. Whipple, at the meeting of the Board of Trustees, February 2, 1881, after the Chairman's address on Doctor Sears, deserve a place in this record:

"I do not feel able to add one word to the just tribute paid by our Chairman to the memory of Doctor Sears. His name will al-

ways be remembered as the wise almoner of this great trust. We all know his rare wisdom, his patient industry and his gentleness in overcoming obstacles, and so drawing all hearts to him that they worked with him in laying the foundations of a system of public schools for the South.

"I feel that as one of another communion I may say a few words of his Christian character. The crowning glory of his life was his simple, earnest faith in Jesus Christ. It was to him a life of loyalty to the ONE who had created and redeemed him. He doubtless loved the church which was his home, but his heart was too great to have his sympathies fettered by any hedges of man's making. He loved all whom God loved, and his heart went out for all who need the comfort and consolations of religion. We can all recall times when his gentle manners and Christian humility won our hearts. I have felt it a great privilege to be associated with one whose religion was so broad, so earnest, so real. Few men leave behind them so

many blessed memories of work which was well done. We can rejoice, while we mourn, that the brave servant of Christ has entered into the rest of the people of God. For him the hoary head was a crown of glory, for he was found in the way of righteousness, and we believe that for him at eventide there was the light of the other home."

No less instructive were the remarks of the Honorable A. H. H. Stuart at the same meeting of the Board. After speaking of Doctor Sears at his home in Staunton, he added these words concerning his work:

"But it was as an advocate of popular education, as an organizer of public schools, as an exponent of the best methods of instruction, as a leader of public opinion, that he stood pre-eminent among the men of the day. His speech before the Convention of Virginia in 1868, on the subject of 'Free Schools,' and the general diffusion of knowledge among the people, was, in my judgment, one of the ablest and most effective that was ever de-

livered on that subject; and I have no hesitation in saying that it aided materially in giving shape and impulse to the admirable system of 'Free Schools' which now prevails in Virginia.

"In reading the speech a few days ago, I was particularly impressed with the following sentence: 'Among the best gifts of Providence to a nation are great and good men who act as its leaders and guides; who leave their mark upon their age; who give a new direction to affairs; who introduce a course of events which go down from generation to generation pouring their blessings on mankind.' How replete with wisdom, how beautiful in expression, is this sentence,—how worthy of the man who gave utterance to it! And who among those best acquainted with him can fail to perceive that, in these few words, he unconsciously, but with a master's hand, sketched what must be recognized as an accurate portrait of his own noble character!"

Not less significant were the words of

Chancellor Stearns of the Normal College at Nashville, Tenn., as a tribute to the character and work of Doctor Sears: "This is not the time or place for a minute analysis of the character of this gifted person, nor for a discussion of those traits whose strength, fullness, and harmony made up the man. I have already touched upon many of the more prominent. But as I have challenged your admiration, I would also with much more earnestness, if possible, hold up this exalted character for your study and imitation. His almost august person will never again be seen, or his noble presence felt by us. We shall never again listen, spellbound, to the words of wise counsel falling in sweet yet manly tones from his lips. We shall see him no more, but I shall beg you not to forget what made him great. The dignity of his person, the elegance and courtliness of his manners, his profound learning, his benevolent spirit, his purity of heart, his undying Christian faith, his devotion to his Lord and Master, may all be yours. Live, young gentlemen

and ladies, such lives as his, and you will not have lived in vain."

Tributes of a similar character came to Mr. Winthrop from all parts of the South; from boards of education, trustees of public schools, State superintendents of instruction, associations of teachers, city councils, and governors; from Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, Kansas, and Texas. All of them were unqualified in their high appreciation of the service which Doctor Sears had rendered to the cause of education by his personal influence in the administration of the Peabody Fund. It would be a pleasure to reproduce these testimonials of his almost unparalleled success in so difficult an enterprise; but space will not permit.

In perfect accord with these testimonies concerning Doctor Sears in the last thirteen years of his life, are the words of the writer of this memorial at his funeral, based upon what he was as a teacher thirty years before. His earlier work was prophetic of his later.

"No man can be an inspiring teacher without

loving knowledge with a great and manifest love. This qualification for his work at Newton was possessed in an eminent degree by Doctor Sears. His pupils in theology and church history were made to feel that realms of truth were constantly opening to his view, and that he was eagerly beckoning them onward in the search for it. The action of his mind was rapid and comprehensive. Details of argument did not confuse him. He laid hold of the latest and best discussions of the topics which he was to present and used them with skill. He gave to his pupils the impression that truth was many-sided and not to be attained without effort, but also that it was eternal and within the reach of honest endeavor. Not that it could be found here in its perfection; for, though his words were habitually hopeful, no one was more willing to admit that now we know but in part.

"With this sober estimate of human progress in religious science, he kept alive in his own heart and kindled in the hearts of his pupils an ardent love of Christian knowledge,

giving to some of them an impulse to high endeavor which will only cease to work with the last moment of life.

"But Doctor Sears was not simply a scholar, he was also a philanthropist deeply interested in the improvement of society. Familiar with the history of mankind, he was accustomed to trace with delight the indications of a divine plan in that history, the signs of overruling wisdom amid the passion and selfishness of conflicting nations, the evidences of progress toward something better in the operation of vast social, moral, and religious forces. This was evident in his teaching. He had an eye to the world while he was speaking to his class. He felt the pulses of his age while he was dealing with a few young men in the retirement of an upper room. This may have been partly due to the historical cast of his mind, but it was chiefly due to his love of man. There was nothing of the hermit in his spirit. He believed in living and working among men for their benefit.

"And no class of students could be so small that he did not seem to connect it with the whole world, and to feel that the truth he was unfolding might be carried by it to the ends of the earth. Nor was this a delusion. From some of the smallest groups that sat at his feet, men were called to visit distant lands, that they might cast seeds of truth into minds untaught and dark. How much of their zeal for the diffusion of saving truth was due to his influence no one can tell, but we who enjoyed his tuition know that the weal of mankind was rarely absent from his thoughts.

"For eight years he was a faithful and laborious member of the Executive Committee of our Foreign Missionary Society. His service on this Committee was during a time of peculiar difficulty and excitement; his counsel and influence are said to have been wise and firm though conciliatory, and his efforts very efficient in preserving the Society from bankruptcy. I remember well the appeals which he sometimes made to

young men in behalf of the foreign service. Moreover, happily for us, and I believe for him, he was repeatedly chosen, a few years since, to preside over the Missionary Union (three years, 1874–77). The addresses which he delivered at the opening sessions of the Union were remarkable, especially the last two, one of them upon the *Older Missionaries of the Society*, and the other upon the *Present State of our Mission Fields*.

"After what has been said, it is scarcely necessary to speak of Doctor Sears's fidelity to Christian truth. Yet this is one of the clearest evidences of high character which the life of any Christian affords. For, though persecution has ceased, it is impossible for any good man to fill a place in society without meeting with persons who disapprove, if they do not despise, his religious belief; and it is the mark of a great and genuine man to be always faithful to his convictions of religious duty, to stand firmly by what he believes to be true, and to let the testimony of his example proclaim the faith

of his soul. In this respect, I have reason to suppose that Doctor Sears was a model Christian, courteous to all, overawed by none, willing to treat others kindly, but ready, on proper occasions, to avow his own standing in the Church of Christ, and his own faith in the Redeemer of men. Such was the impression which he made on our minds as a theological teacher. For while his discussions in the class-room were broad and free, without bitterness to any and singularly just to those whose views differed from his own, I am bound to say that I was never in doubt as to his own belief on any important point, and was sure that he accepted with steadfast confidence the cardinal facts and principles of our holy religion. Making free use of German scholarship, and boldly asserting it to be his right and duty to do this, he was never, I think, the servant of that scholarship, but always, in a proper sense, its master, rejecting without fear or scruple any of its conclusions that seemed to be erroneous. And no mind, reverent and

hospitable towards truth, can do otherwise. Is not this the same man who thirty years afterwards administered the Peabody Fund in the South?

"If a more definite statement is desired in respect to the results of Doctor Sears's work in the South, the following words of Honorable Robert C. Winthrop are sufficient: 'We may well thank God that we have enjoyed his inestimable services for thirteen successive years, and that during this period he has accomplished, with our counsel and co-operation, the first and most important part of the plan which he originally marked out for us. We have laid foundations which cannot be removed. The Common School System has been recognized and adopted in every one of the States contemplated by Mr. Peabody's endowment. Good School Laws have been enacted in all the Southern States, and good Common Schools may now be found "sprinkled," as he said, over those States, as examples and models.'

"Another authority says: 'When he began,

the South was almost a stranger to public schools; to-day the public-school system of all Southern States is almost complete, and its rapidly increasing privileges are offered to all alike. It would be erroneous to assert that this is exclusively the work of Doctor Sears; but it is right to say that no man has cared more wisely for the common schools of the whole South than Doctor Sears. He has done fully as much for the schools of the South as Horace Mann did for those of Massachusetts; possibly he has done more. And, unlike most reformers, he has been a peace-maker, modest, retiring, and sweet-tempered. It would be contrary to human nature, if the whole South did not mourn his loss like that of a paternal friend and personal benefactor.'

"In respect to the second part of the work planned by Doctor Sears, the founding of Normal Schools, of scholarships, and the promotion of Teachers' Institutes, a good beginning had been made. Writing to Mr. Winthrop on the 23d of October, 1877, he

says of Texas: 'The truth is, the light is coming in steadily, and cannot be shut out. I am reminded of what Luther said to Melancthon, "When you and I are drinking our beer, the Gospel is spreading among the people."'

"In a letter to Mr. Winthrop, dated April 28, 1879, after speaking of the Normal Schools in North Carolina, Mississippi, Virginia, and Tennessee, and of the movements for their establishment in Florida, Georgia, and Texas, he says: 'On the whole, it now looks as if we should carry out our new plan, the improvement of teachers, as successfully as we did our first, the establishment of schools. We must not expect to accomplish this in a day; but we may expect to see the work done in a few years, if we steadily make this our chief aim.'

"In his efforts to solve a perplexing problem concerning the removal of the Normal College at Nashville, Tennessee, to another place, Doctor Sears went to Atlanta, Georgia, in the month of March, 1880, where he was

joined by Chancellor Stearns on the 22d of the month. 'On my arrival,' the Chancellor reports, 'I found that Doctor Sears had reached Atlanta some time before me. To my deep regret, I found him in bed and very ill,—much more so, it seemed to me, than he was willing to admit. He had been actively engaged since his arrival, with numerous persons, who sought his always agreeable company, and in visiting different sites proposed for the location of the College. The weather was cold and damp, and he was suffering too much for the further prosecution of business.' After describing a visit made by three members of the Board to Athens, a rival site for the College, Mr. Stearns continues: 'We did not reach Atlanta on our return the second day, until after 12 o'clock at night. With some hesitation lest I should disturb the Governor's hospitable family, I repaired to the Executive Mansion. The servant who admitted me said: "Doctor Sears wishes to see you in his room as soon as you arrive." "But Doctor Sears," I replied,

"did not probably anticipate that I would be detained until so late an hour; besides, he is sick, and I cannot think of disturbing him." "But," said he, "Doctor Sears has not gone to bed, and says he shall not until you come. He *must* see you to-night." I accordingly knocked softly at his door, almost certain that there would be no response; but, to my amazement, he called me in, and, as the servant said, sat waiting my arrival at nearly one o'clock at night! He could not sleep, he said, until my return and he had heard my report. I gave him a brief description of my visit, and then urged him to retire, promising to give him all the particulars in the morning.'

"It may not be out of place for me to say here, that the physical disability under which Doctor Sears was laboring at this time seemed to us who were near him a mere temporary affliction, and not at all indicative of enfeebled or wasting physical powers. His mind seemed never more vigorous, quicker of apprehension, clearer or more powerful,

or his judgment more logical and profound. The remarkable vigor of intellect he exhibited was not unfrequently commented upon by those he met during this visit."

CHAPTER VIII

HOME AND SOCIAL LIFE

BUT what can be said of Doctor Sears in his Staunton home during these thirteen years? In the remarks of Honorable A. H. H. Stuart, a part of which have already been quoted, we find a partial answer to this question. "In my first interview I found myself drawn to him by that species of magnetism which some men possess in so high a degree, and which at once inspires confidence and awakens sympathy. . . . To high intellectual gifts and large attainments in most of the departments of useful knowledge, he united an urbanity of manner and vivacity of spirits which rendered his society peculiarly attractive. His colloquial talent and his boundless stores of literary incidents and anecdotes gave a fascination to his conversation which I have rarely known equalled.

His house in Staunton was a sort of social center, where a liberal hospitality was dispensed, and gentlemen and ladies of cultivated tastes met periodically to read and interchange thoughts and comments on the best literary works of the day. . . . In social life, while Dr. Sears was always dignified in his bearing, and never for a moment forgot what was due to his high official position and his sacred calling as a minister of the Gospel, like Sidney Smith, he often took pleasure in unbending and giving way to the natural gayety of his disposition. On more than one festive occasion, when surrounded by a few congenial friends, I have known him unlock, as it were, the treasury of his literary knowledge, and delight the company with racy anecdotes and sparkling displays of wit and humor, which all felt it was a high privilege to enjoy."

Not long after his death, there appeared in *The Watchman* an article which speaks in pleasant terms of his enjoyment of life in his Virginia home.

RESIDENCE OF DR. SEARS AT STAUNTON, VIRGINIA

"He adapted himself to a retired, quiet life with surprising cheerfulness. He became very fond of his beautiful Virginia home, and spent much of his leisure in improving it. During the long summer months he preferred remaining there to travelling or visiting abroad. The pure mountain air and the magnificent view from his piazza of the famous 'Valley of the Shenandoah,' extending for more than twenty miles, interrupted at last by the Blue Ridge, afforded him continual delight. It was his habit to take a favorite author out into the open air, and spend hours under the wide-spreading oaks, with which his place abounded. Here much of his thinking was done; here much of his company was received. Many of his intimate friends find themselves even now vainly looking for the familiar figure, as they come up the shady walks and expecting the kindly greeting which always welcomed them. He took great pleasure in pointing out the various places of interest to the frequent strangers who, attracted by the

commanding prospect, rather hesitatingly ventured up the hill. Many have carried away pleasant memories of the genial, courteous old gentleman, who so hospitably begged them to rest awhile, and, in the case of ladies and children, so freely offered them flowers or fruit.

"In previous situations he had never had the time or opportunity to enter into outdoor occupations, but now, like the venerable Dr. Wayland, he found delight in cultivating fruit-trees, and vines, and ornamental shrubs; and, although unused to the exertion, might often have been seen with his hoe or pruning-knife. The partial superintending of a small place, about a mile distant from his residence, interested him much, and although regarded as merely a 'garden' by Virginians, who could not, by any stretch of courtesy, call forty acres a 'farm,' to him it was quite an undertaking. Conjectures were often laughingly made as to what some of his Northern friends would say, if they could meet him, riding out behind his colored man, in his

spring wagon, with wide-brimmed hat and umbrella, 'to view his crops.' There can be no doubt that this simple, quiet country residence prolonged his life for years. The bronchial cough, which always assailed him on Northern trips, here ceased. The unwonted exercise brought healthful fatigue, and his sleep was calm and restful."

With these "Northern trips" may be connected an item of the present writer's experience. He is member of a literary and religious club which Doctor Sears honored with his presence during a transient visit to Boston. One of the usages of the club is to call upon its members and guests to make some report of their reading during the month. Doctor Sears was easily first in such an exercise; for he was not only a great reader of good books, but a most skilful reporter of their contents. His memory retained with burr-like tenacity the substance of what was committed to it, and was rarely at fault in recalling whatever was stored away in it. On the occasion referred to, his characterization

of several books was so distinct and forcible as to kindle the admiration of all present.

Doctor Sears was able to adapt himself with remarkable facility to circumstances. A friend writes that "it was often a wonder how he could so readily conform to any and every condition. Once while visiting a well-known family in the Southwestern part of the State, he had occasion to take a trip of more than seventy miles across uncultivated country. The oldest lady member owned a very fine saddle-horse, which she, although a grandmother, kept exclusively for her individual use. In arranging for the expedition, this lady proposed that Doctor Sears should take her horse and journey in the saddle! It had been probably over forty years since he had ridden horseback, but he accepted the proposal, and afterwards was accustomed to relate, with some merriment, how he accomplished the jaunt in three days' time. Mr. Peabody met this lady at the White Sulphur Springs, shortly after, in company with Doctor Sears, and hearing this fact related,

thanked her very graciously for assisting in carrying out his great scheme of education.

"On another occasion, while travelling in Arkansas, the happy ability to 'accept the situation' asserted itself with good fortune to others. A furious snow-storm had blocked the track, detaining the impatient passengers for many hours. Without food or fuel, their condition was most uncomfortable, but he, with his cheerful voice and ready wit, beguiled the time, encouraging each individual to contribute anecdote or joke, so that the dismal detention was robbed of half its wretchedness. Among the ladies there was one, however, who did not participate in the amusement and laughter. On inquiry, it was found that she was a foreigner, and unable to speak English. Her joy was intense on hearing Dr. Sears address her in her own language, and she soon told him her romantic history. Several years before, her lover had left Germany to make a home in the United States, and had finally settled in Arkansas. Having succeeded in saving

some money, he sent for his betrothed to come to him. She had been put in charge of a family who came as far as New York, and who gave her, on parting, a written appeal to whomever she should journey with, bespeaking their kind offices. Armed with this slight protection, she had bravely made her way to within a few miles of her destination. But this accident had completely unnerved her, and she was about to give way to despair, when the kind, reassuring stranger bade her take heart and promised to assist her all in his power. She afterwards said that hearing 'those good words from the beautiful old gentleman gave new courage.'

"Doctor Sears's journeys abounded in incidents of this sort, showing uniform courtesy and unfeigned interest in the welfare of his fellow-creatures. His was true kindness of heart, bestowing itself alike on the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant. As a natural result he made hosts of friends, and always met with the greatest attention in all his Southern trips."

It is possible to emphasize the "sweet reasonableness" of Doctor Sears so strongly as to obscure his indignation at wrong and even his energy in carrying out a deliberate purpose. He was from first to last, as every great worker must be, *tenax propositi*. Clear-sighted in deliberation, he was strenuous in action. Doctor Heman Lincoln refers to an intimation that he sometimes "used a vein of sarcasm in his controversial writing which wounded persons more than errors;" but he replies very truly that "no one intimate with Doctor Sears would doubt that a power of sarcasm was one of his great intellectual gifts. His intimate friends always wondered how he could hold such a power under restraint. He was a model of urbanity in social life, and of courtesy in discussions on the platform and through the press. The gift of sarcasm was rarely brought into use, perhaps never, save in obedience to the divine command: 'Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.'"

CHAPTER IX

LAST ADDRESS READ BY DOCTOR ELLIS

We now turn to the words spoken by Doctor George E. Ellis concerning the last days of his friend at Saratoga, whither he had come to address the American Institute of Instruction on the "Educational Progress in the United States During the last Fifty Years." Said Doctor Ellis, before reading for his friend this address: "It could not have entered my mind in coming to make my accustomed summer visit here, that I should be called to the service which I am asked now to perform, in part by the late honored and revered Doctor Sears, and in part by the president of this institute. Doctor Sears had dictated at his home in Staunton, Virginia, and brought with him, the manuscript of an address for this occasion. He was much reduced in health and very weak when he

came, four weeks ago, and expected that his address would be read for him, while he hoped to attend your meetings. You all know with what fidelity and ability, with what pre-eminent wisdom and practical efficiency he has discharged his high and difficult service to the great Peabody Educational Trust for the Southern States. The distinguished and most earnest president of that commission, the Honorable Robert C. Winthrop, my friend and neighbor in Boston, stood in the closest relations of confidence and regard with Doctor Sears, and charged me on my coming here to seek out the patient, with whom I had been long acquainted, and to report on his condition. I accordingly made almost daily visits, and, by Doctor Sears's request, these were generally protracted ones, as they engaged his mind from dwelling on his ill symptoms. He was exceedingly reduced and weak, but hopeful of at least partial restoration, preserving all his dignity and sweet serenity, constantly referring to the beneficent work which had engaged him with

such rewarding results for thirteen years, and expressing his profound respect and warm affection for his advising and sustaining friend, Mr. Winthrop. His vigor of mind was wholly unimpaired, and his thoughts, fed by the elevated tasks and occupations which had made his long life so serviceable and benignant, were a better sustenance than his slender diet and his unavailing drugs. At the verge of its close, his animating, existing being, his life, seemed to be of a sort for which there could be no arrest or break, so continuous and steadfast was its flow on towards a deepening channel. His interest for his last days was largely engaged by his address for the occasion. The only intimation which he gave as to his thought on what might be the result, near, or not long to be delayed, of his illness, was in a word which he dropped to me, that this address was to be his last labor of the pen. On Saturday, by his gently earnest request, I read it over to him in his chamber. With all the acuteness and vivacity of mind of his

best years he made me pause upon words and statements, to insure simplicity and exactness as to phrase and fact. And then, with most courteous delicacy, he solicited of me as a favor, what more than willingly I am now to do, adding also the suggestion that I should preface the reading by telling you how it fell to me. I would answer but vaguely his full question as to what I thought might be immediately before him. Trust and hope are always full and fair for such as he. More difficult was it to meet the inquiry of his faithful partner: 'I have lived with him fifty years. He is a pure man. Am I going to lose my dear husband?' Careful preparations had been made for his passage to Boston yesterday, but spirit and body then chose to part, and took their ways to different homes."

This chaste and beautiful tribute was received with profound attention, and the earnest impressiveness of the speaker produced deep emotion in the vast assemblage.

CHAPTER X

RETROSPECT

THUS passed from human sight (on July 6, 1880) a leader of men in the nineteenth century. How can we best interpret the facts brought to mind by this imperfect sketch of his life? Of one thing we may be certain, namely, that he was debtor to his parents for a nature of uncommon resources, for a brain of fine qualities, a soul of noble impulses, and a body of manly proportions. He was born for strenuous action, and would have achieved distinction in any form of public service which he had chosen. There is, indeed, no evidence that he was a born poet, or that he could have excelled in writing verses; but almost anything else he seemed able to do. One cannot be too thankful for an intelligent and vigorous ancestry.

But heredity does not really account for

individuality. Doctor Sears was in many respects superior to any of his family. He was in fact a new and self-trained man. The steps of his progress from the age of fifteen to the end were self-chosen and resolute; the goal which he set before his eyes from the first was distant and shining. He sought to become a true servant of God by serving truly the highest interests of man; and for long years, at his own charges, he persisted in qualifying himself for this high calling. In those years the fibre of his being was tested and made firm, the mettle of his spirit was proved and seen to be pure and ardent. Reason, memory, and conscience were subjected to severe discipline, and by means of humane studies his knowledge of what is in man was steadily augmented. He was in the end well read in the lore of the soul. What a lesson does his career offer to an American youth who is asking: What am I to do in life? How can a farmer boy without help reach a sphere of large influence among men?

Yet it is not strictly accurate to say that Barnas Sears was altogether self-trained. For "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will"; and there was at least one impulse to sublime endeavor in the soul of young Sears which it would be wrong to forget. He early became a King's son, with a loyal and loving heart, and the presence of that invisible King in his soul was a source of light and holy impulse never to be overlooked. His religious convictions were deep and steadfast, the action of his conscience was controlling, and his love to God was unfailing and crescent to the last. His sermons to the students at Brown, as well as his Chapel talks to them, on occasions, were referred to by Professor Lincoln at the funeral as often both tender and impressive. There was in him "a well of water springing up into life eternal," which contributed even more than his simply human purpose to his education and success as an educator.

This had something also to do with his manliness and courtesy. For he was singu-

larly attractive in his intercourse with persons younger than himself. His manner was that of undisguised friendship, not that of dignified though graceful condescension. Young men soon felt at home in his study. They were somehow made to understand that he was a brother in spirit, considerate of their feelings, their hopes, and their anxieties. He wielded without apparent effort the sceptre of good breeding and fellow-feeling combined. They looked upon his benignant face with delight; they noticed the sparkle of his eye with answering pleasure. He was a *Christian gentleman*, which presupposes both humanity and piety. He was not saintly, but good and true and open-hearted. So they trusted him fully.

That he was a distinguished scholar, in a broad and true sense of the words, is unquestionable; not a specialist in any one language or natural science, but a man of uncommon knowledge in many departments of study; a natural linguist, historian, and logician; a man of quick and penetrating

insight, of easy versatility, of untiring energy in quest of truth, and hospitable to new discoveries without being easily disturbed in older principles. He was so well informed on almost all the subjects of human thought, that it was ever a pleasure to converse with him on any question before the public.

That he was an able teacher will also be conceded by those who sat at his feet in the class-room; not a martinet or drill-master; not a man who loved to have his *ipsissima verba* repeated, as all his pupils were aware; but one who opened broad fields of inquiry, stimulated thought, and encouraged those before him to employ their own judgment and conscience in the interpretation of history and of life. His method perhaps was not suited to every pupil, but it was very inspiring and profitable to many, certainly to those who were already graduates from college and engaged in studies for the ministry.

Doctor Sears was also a superb administrator. This appeared in his connection with Newton, with the Massachusetts Board

of Education, with Brown University, and with the Peabody Trust. In the last important post his administrative capacity was signally displayed. No one familiar with the circumstances can entertain any doubt on this point. The fruits of his work were most beneficent, and one half the land has reason to remember him as a singularly wise and courageous advocate of public schools where they were at first looked upon with suspicion. His influence was a blessing of inestimable value to the people of the South. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The springs and affluents of this beneficent life must be sought in many quarters: first of all, in the grace and providence of God; but then, in the ancestral heritage of capacity from the Sears and Granger blood united; in the pure airs and clear waters of Berkshire; in the wholesome food and outdoor toil of farm life; in the district schools of former times, whether as pupil or teacher; in the drill of worthy masters fitting boys for

college; in the professors and books of a New England college; in the special and more thorough discussions of theological teachers; in the lessons of pastoral experience and classical study; in the schools of Germany and France, and the literatures of Greece and Rome, of Palestine and Arabia, of Prussia and Paris; in the society of savants and rulers; in books of history and logic and science consulted in preparing for his work as teacher of theology, or Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, or President of Brown University, or General Agent of the Peabody Fund; and indeed in all the changes of nature and of society passing before his eyes in the lapse of years. His spirit was open to all kinds of ennobling influence. It was capacious and thirsty enough to welcome affluents of knowledge and holy impulse from current events in human progress, as well as from the beautiful aspects of nature.

But the issues of his life were even richer than its affluents, because they took addi-

tional force and beauty from his noble purpose. Hence these issues found their way to the play fellows of his childhood, to the schoolmates of his youth, to his comrades in the academy, to his associates in the college and the seminary, to his flock in Hartford and his pupils in Hamilton, to his fellow-students in Germany and his friends in Hamburg and Paris, to his pupils in Newton and to the whole body of school teachers in Massachusetts, to the undergraduates of Brown University and the public men of all the South. The number of men whose careers he did much to ennoble is past computation, and the spreading streams of his influence will flow on until time shall be no longer. In him was fulfilled the Psalmist's language:

"And he shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also doth not wither,
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Doctor Sears will be remembered as an

educator. His last address was on the subject of education, and the last words of that address, though not read at Saratoga, were full of wisdom.

"Fifty years ago,—let me say in conclusion,—we thought we had already reached the goal of human knowledge. We now look back on what we knew then, somewhat as we then looked upon what the ancients knew. Let us learn to think modestly of our attainments, and wonderingly at the unsolved mysteries of our own being, of nature, and of Providence. Neither Huxley nor Spencer can teach us all things. The time may come when they and we, and all the men of our day, will be regarded as mere smatterers in knowledge. What we know not, and cannot know in this age, may be revealed to those who come after us.

"HUMILITY IN THE SOLEMN PRESENCE OF A MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE, AND REVERENCE FOR THE POWER THAT FRAMED IT, BEST BECOME THOSE WHO ARE BUT THE CREATURES OF A DAY."

COREY HILL HOMESTEAD BROOKLINE MASS

APPENDIX

MRS. SEARS was the daughter of Deacon Elijah and Elizabeth (Watson) Corey, of Brookline, Mass. She was born November 21, 1809, being therefore seven years and two days younger than her husband, and was named for her mother Elizabeth. She died in Staunton, Virginia, March 23, 1883, at the age of seventy-three years, three months, and two days. Her father united with the First Baptist Church in Newton ("Father Grafton's") in 1811, was dismissed by letter to unite with others in forming the First Baptist Church of Cambridge in 1817, and became still later a constituent member of the Brookline Baptist Church. "Deacon Corey was one of the most liberal and influential Baptists of his time. His home was open to ministers and students. Upon a given Sabbath a young student rode home with him from the Cambridge church, and that day Barnas Sears and Elizabeth Corey met for the first time. Two years ago last July, Doctor Sears died at Saratoga. As the family were going to Brookline for his burial, Mrs. Sears said to her children, during a detention at Albany, that it was just fifty years (July 7, 1830–July 7, 1880) since she passed through that city on her way to Hamilton as a bride." Mrs. Sears was the sister of Mrs. Pratt, whose husband, John Pratt, D.D., was president of Granville College (now Denison University), Ohio, and she was half-sister to Mrs. Comstock, whose husband died so prematurely in Arracan, Burma. Mrs. Sears's grandfather, Captain Timothy Corey, was a soldier of the Revolution, beginning

his service at the battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775. It has been truly said of her that "her quiet power enabled her to supplement the needs of her husband's intense intellectual activities by the closest and most careful attention to everything pertaining to the home life. . . . A bright young student said of her once: 'She has the most authoritative simplicity of any person I ever knew.' It was this that made her the noble wife, woman, mother that she was." Doctor Sears was always sure of her affection and wisdom, and his last will is evidence of the mutual confidence which marked their intercourse through half a century. "I do bequeath and devise to my wife, Elizabeth G. Sears, all of my property of every description, both real and personal, whether being in the State of Virginia or Massachusetts or West Virginia, or which I may hereafter acquire, to be her own absolute property, and to be disposed of in any way she may desire. This I do because she gave me the share she inherited in her father's estate, and because I have perfect confidence that she will do what is reasonable and just for our children."

From the following paragraph in the *Vindicator*, one may learn the disposition which Mrs. Sears made of the property bequeathed to her: "The will of Mrs. Elizabeth G. Sears, deceased, relict of the late Doctor Barnas Sears, was also admitted to probate in this court. The testator bequeaths two tracts of coal land, 400 acres and 260 acres respectively in Fayette Co., West Va., to her children, Wm. B., Edward H., and Robert Sears, and Mrs. Lizzie S. Fultz; the property at Brookline, Mass., including the old Corey homestead, to her sons, Wm. B., Edward H., and Robert D. Sears; the interest on $7,000 for life to her son E. D. Sears; all her property in the city of Staunton, including her residence on Sears's hill with its furniture,

books, pictures, etc., and also the houses and lots in West End, to her daughter, Mrs. Lizzie S. Fultz, and the forty acres of land lying west of and near Staunton, known as "The Garden," to her son-in-law, Dr. J. H. Fultz. The testator appointed Capt. Alex. H. Fultz as her executor. Capt. Fultz has qualified, giving bond in the sum of $8,000."

Dr. and Mrs. Sears had five children, four sons and one daughter, as follows:

I. William Barnas, born Hamilton, Madison Co., N. Y., July 11, 1832.

II. Lizzie Corey, born Newton Center, Mass., October 14, 1838; died January 25, 1900, Chicago, Ill.

III. Edward Henry, born Newton Center, Mass., October 4, 1840; died August 22, 1886, Dorchester, Mass.

IV. Robert Davis, born Newton Center, Mass., June 28, 1842.

V. Edmund Dwight, born Newton Center, Mass., June 28, 1852; died November 10, 1883, Staunton, Va.

William Barnas Sears was educated in private schools or by private teachers in Newton Center. He was for a time an assistant teacher of German, Latin, and Greek in the Pierce Academy. June 6, 1861, he was commissioned by Governor Sprague 1st Lieutenant 2d Regiment Rhode Island Volunteers, and October 28th of the same year, Captain. He was in the Army of the Potomac under McClellan, Burnside, Hooker, Meade, and Grant, and took part in the battles of the Peninsula, Antietam, Gettysburg, and the Wilderness, leading his company in many desperate struggles with the enemy. June 17, 1864, his term of enlistment having expired, he was mustered out, and returned to private life and business pursuits. His career as a soldier was patriotic, and he left the army honored by

his superiors as well as by those under his command. In business and social life, and in the Grand Army of the Republic, he has always deserved the confidence of his associates, and has been called to fill several positions of honor and usefulness. His valuable assistance to the writer in verifying dates, contributing facts, and presenting photograph plates, is gratefully acknowledged.

Lizzie Corey Sears, as the wife of J. H. Fultz, M.D., and as the private secretary of her father during many years of his agency for the Peabody Fund, gave ample proof of cultivated powers and high character. The friends of Doctor Sears are indebted to her for the record of many incidents in the life of her father, and for the publication of selections from his home correspondence while in Germany. She appreciated her father, as did the other children also, and the story of his life in these pages has been enriched by not a few paragraphs from her pen. Although she died in Chicago, her body was brought to Brookline and placed in the Corey family tomb, with those of her parents.

Edward Henry Sears was in Brown University one year, September 1, 1860–June 5, 1861. At the last date he was made 1st Lieutenant 2d Regiment Rhode Island Infantry; July 21, 1861 (first battle of Bull Run), he was made Captain of Company D, and December 2, 1861, was commissioned 1st Lieutenant of Battery G, Light Artillery. He was in action at Yorktown, Va., Fair Oaks, Malvern Hill, second Bull Run, Antietam, and Fredericksburg, Va. On August 22, 1863, he was appointed Acting-assistant Paymaster U. S. Navy, and ordered to report to the gunboat *Underwriter* at Newberne, N. C. The crew of the *Underwriter* was killed or captured by the Confederates, and he was a prisoner of war at Kingston, N. C., Danville, Va., Libby, Richmond, the stockade at Macon, Ga., and Roper Buildings

MRS. ELIZABETH COREY SEARS

MRS. LIZZIE SEARS FULTZ

CAPT. W. B. SEARS

CAPT. EDWARD H. SEARS

in Charleston, S. C., nine months, and then released by exchange, November 15, 1864. He was ordered to report to the U. S. S. *Wachusett*, of the Chinese Naval Squadron, December 15, 1864, in which he served until June 22, 1868. He was appointed postmaster of Staunton, Va., December 21, 1869, and held the office six years. His subsequent career in business life was such as to command the respect and gain the good will of those who knew him. "His great enjoyments" are said to have been "in sketching, drawing, music, reading, hunting, and yachting. He possessed a keen sense of the ludicrous, and was full of wit and humor."

A third son, Robert Davis, bore the title Lieutenant, but was prevented by sickness from engaging in actual service.

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[1] "Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution" became, in 1846, "Madison University," and, in 1890, "Colgate University."