

HORACE MANN, - AMERICA'S FIRST

GREAT EDUCATOR.

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OUTLINE.

I. Birth.

Date.

Place.

Parentage.

II. Childhood.

Education.

Work.

III. Manhood.

Graduated from Brown University.

Studied Law.

Marriage and Wedded Life.

Began the work of an Educator.

IV. Secretary of the Board of Education.

Annual Report.

Duties.

Reforms introduced in the State.

Members of the Board.

Served a term of twelve years.

Establishment of the normal school.

Marriage to Miss Peabody.

Wedding tour.

V. President of Antioch College.

Work done by him.

Opening of the College.

Cure of habits in the students.

VI. Death.

Commencement Day

Died - August 2nd, 1859.

Passing from death to life.

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Horace Mann was born in Franklin, Massachusetts, on May 4th, 1796. His father, who was a farmer, died when Horace was thirteen years old. He left to his family a strong impression of moral worth and also love of knowledge. His mother with whom Horace lived for twenty years, was the object of his most tender affection and respect.

But in those days there was always a certain self-restraint which existed between parents and children, and Horace had this reserve. So he never told his mother either his physical or mental feelings, till they were revealed to her by their intensity. He was obliged to work out all the problems by himself and retained only "painful memories" of childhood.

In writing to a friend he says: "I regard it as an irretrievable misfortune that my childhood was not a happy one. By nature I was exceedingly buoyant and elastic; but the poverty of my parents subjected me to continual privations. I do not remember the time when I began to work. Even my play days - not play days, for I never had any, but my play hours - were earned by extra exertion, finishing tasks early to gain a little leisure for boyish sports. **** I have derived one compensation however from the rigor of my early lot. Industry or diligence became my second nature. Owing to these ingrained habits, work has always been to me what water is to a fish."

His ears were strangers to music and he was not taught the art of drawing, and when "his fingers were tingling to express his ideas in pictures, his fingers were severely rapped by the teacher so that the artificial tingling drove away the natural."

When a boy he earned his school-books by braiding straw, and altho his parents could not give him an education they always spoke

of it with enthusiasm and reverence and inspired Horace with a love for it.

He was taught to take care of his books, and he said that he "would as soon have struck a pin thru his flesh as thru the page of a book".

From ten to twenty years of age he had never been to school more than eight or ten weeks in a year.

The town where he lived had a small library donated by Dr. Franklin which consisted of old histories and theologies which Horace read and gloried in. Another thing which entered into the life of Horace was the preaching of Dr. Emmons, who taught or rather ruled his people. He expounded all the doctrines of hell - torment unflinchingly and in their most terrible significance. Going to church was a religious ordinance to his family and during all his boyhood, he hardly remembered ever staying at home.

He was always free from the common vices. He never swore or used the "vile weed", for he had formed a resolution to be a "slave to no habit". One of the sorrows which Mr. Mann felt in his boyhood, was the death of his brother who was drowned when twelve years of age.

He was graduated from Brown University in 1819, where he was elected tutor in Greek and Latin, and in 1821 he entered Judge Gould's law school at Litchfield, Connecticut. He was considered to be the best scholar and lawyer among the thirty students there. He is described at this time to possess a "massive brow, high arching head, mild light eye and eloquent mouth".

Horace Mann began his legal career in Dedham and in 1827 was elected to the House of Representatives of Massachusetts. As a lawyer he had remarkable success, yet he would never uphold the wrong side.

He won many cases from the fact that the jury believed he was right and would decide in his favor. About this time he married the young daughter of President Messer of Brown University. After two years of wedded life, she died and the terrible blow almost caused his reason to give way.

From this time on after turning his back to the presidency, he became an educator and accepted the position of secretary of the State Board of Education. The result of this work is embodied in an annual report written in 1838. His duties as secretary of the Board were "to collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the common schools and other means of popular education and to diffuse as widely as possible, thru every part of the commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the work of the young."

The first meeting of the Board was held on June 29, 1837, and they at once preceeded to elect Mr. Mann as their secretary at a salary of one thousand dollars. On entering his duties as secretary he withdrew from all professional and business engagements and from politics. He introduced a thorough reform in the schools of the state and procured the adoption of extensive changes in the school law, establishing county normals and instituting county conventions. After several months of labor he travelled about six hundred miles and was able to say that out of three hundred and five towns which should send in returns of their schools, he had received two hundred and ninety four. He had personally examined or received exact and thorough information of about eight hundred buildings and knew about the condition of about one thousand more.

He discusses the heating, ventillation, and lighting of the school-houses, and urges the teacher to look after and inforce clean-

liness and neatness. It was also recommended that every school house should have a clock and a bell, pump, or well of water, mats and scrapers. He advocated the discontinuance of corporal punishment, and finally some of the Boston teachers were induced to abandon it.

He worked with increasing vigor, and from the time he accepted the position in 1837 until his resignation, he worked on an average fifteen hours a day. From the beginning of this term of office until the end, he never took a day off for relaxation and months and months would pass without his spending a single evening to call upon a friend.

Under the auspices of the Board, and at his own expense, he went to Europe in 1843, to visit schools, especially in Germany, to make reports. The seventh annual report embodied the results of this tour.

The Massachusetts Board of Education was established by an act of the legislature on the twentieth day of April, 1837. It provided that the board should consist of the governor and eight persons appointed by the governor each to hold office eight years, one to retire each year in the order of his appointment.

The original members were: James G. Carter, Emerson Davis, Edmund Dwight, Horace Mann, Edward A. Newton, Thomas Robbina, Jared Sparks and George Hill. Horace Mann was secretary for twelve years, his successor being Rev. Barnes Sears, afterward president of Brown University.

Before the first year of his work was ended, Edmund Dwight made a gift of ten thousand dollars to the establishment of two normal schools provided the state would do the same.

The first normal was established on July 3rd, 1838 on Lexington Green. This was the first normal school of America. A second was established at Barre the same year. In 1839 the legislature enacted a law making a six month term the minimum of the district school. For

all of this Mr. Mann deserved a large share of the credit.

On May first 1843, Mr. Mann married Miss Mary Peabody, sister of Miss Elizabeth Peabody, the well known kindergartner and of Mrs, Nathaniel Hawthorne, wife of the celebrated novelist. They took his wedding tour to Europe, ostensibly to recuperate his health and in thirteen days after leaving home he was visiting the colleges and schools of Great Britian.

On the 15th of September 1852, Mr. Mann was nominated governor of Massachusetts. On the same day, he was chosen president of Antioch College at Yellow Springs, Green County, Ohio. The latter office was accepted.

Early in September in 1853, Mr. Mann left New England for the West. After he had cut loose from all his friends, this strong man gave way and wept like a child for he felt as if he was going to a far away country and was changing his home permanently. When he arrived at the new college, there was no one standing ready to receive the new president. No house had been built for him as had been promised. No provision made for a temporary residence; but happily there was a large boarding house, whose summer residents had left but a few weeks before this was finally opened for him.

The college buildings were far from being completed, and it was only by hard work that the chapel was made ready for the large number of guests who were expected to be present at the opening of the school. When the day arrived there were three thousand persons assembled, many of whom brot comforters and provisions. Out of the whole number of applicants eight were found qualified to form the freshman class.

During the year Mr. Mann devoted much time to the cure of many habits in the students common to "Western Society". Among them the use of tobacco was very common, even with boys twelve years of age. He

saved many from the evil influences of the bad habit, helping them every day to hold to their resolution, till they could pronounce themselves safe.

On commencement day of that year, his baccalaureate sermon was finished but an hour before it was delivered he did not even have time to read it over. It was the last day that he could stand upon his feet, but the next day, instead of having sleep and rest, an important committee was meeting, which lasted two days longer. He had a burning fever from this on and the much needed sleep was far from him. For two days he lingered and on the second day of August 1859 he passed away.

The strong brain found it hard to die, but at last God gave him his rest. Those who looked upon his face after his spirit had passed away from it, saw that what is called death, was only more life.