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VOLUME I

The Movement for Industrial Education
AND THE
Establishment of the University
1840-1870

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dramatic instances in his own life when he believed he had received messages from those far distant.

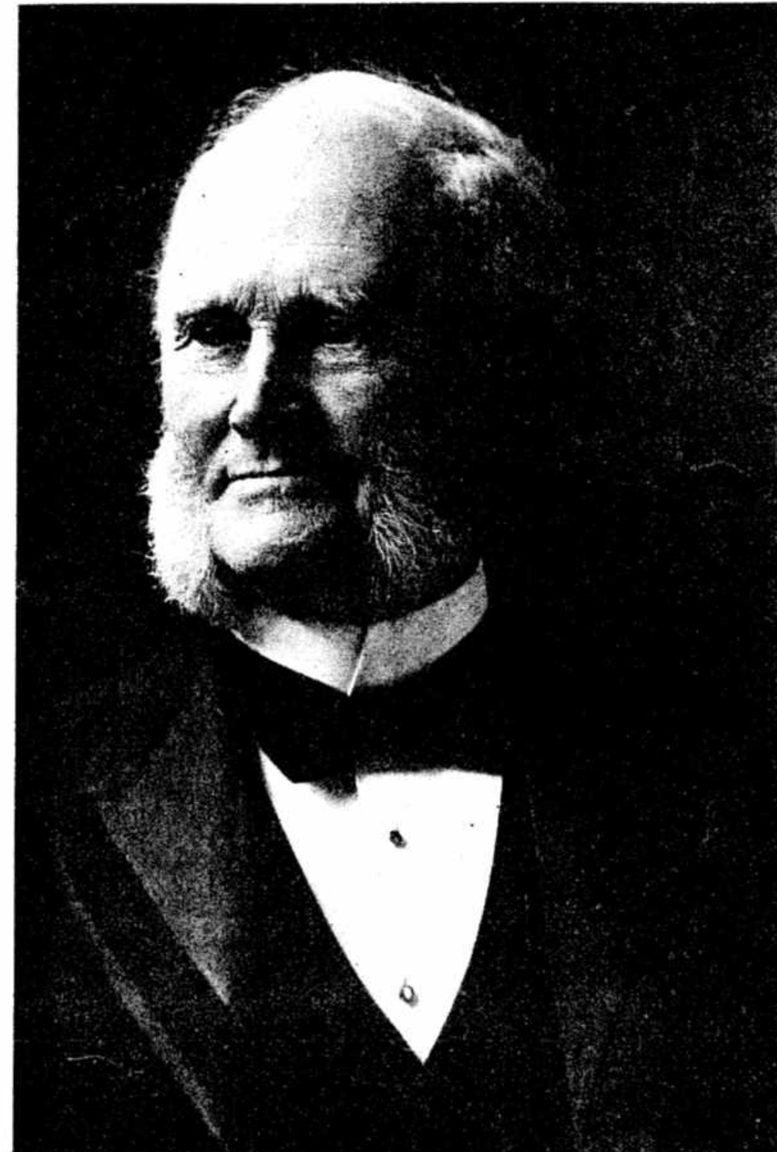
He wrote much; besides what has been mentioned, he produced books or pamphlets upon "The three great races," "Universal law and its opposites," and "Our republic." He himself felt that the work for which he would be remembered was his religious writing, "The new American church," "The Christ word versus the church word," and "The Kingdom of Heaven." Yet very few read his religious writings while on every hand his educational plan is shaping lives.

He died in 1899 at the grand old age of ninety-three. The work he did never has been recognized in any way commensurate with its importance. Nor would he resent it, for all he asked was the privilege of doing that work. Yet it would be fitting if each industrial university had its Turner hall; and certainly if ever the central institution that was part of the plan is established, the name carved over the first building to be erected should be the name of Jonathan Baldwin Turner.

BRONSON MURRAY

Like his associate in the struggle for industrial education Bronson Murray was an eastern man. Although born to wealth and station in the city of New York, he had a natural affection for the soil that demanded satisfaction. His own education caused him to feel acutely the need of education for the farm and the practical industries, hence he eagerly indorsed Turner's plan. His most significant work was as originator of the Illinois industrial league and ardent supporter of it; he was also one of the founders of the Illinois agricultural society and for a time corresponding secretary.

He stood staunchly by Turner through the hard years of conflict, giving freely of his money, labor, influence, and encouragement. When Turner's eyes failed and he was compelled to deliver his addresses blindfolded, he was led to and from the halls by Bronson Murray, tall, very straight, very patrician in appearance, called the handsomest man in Illinois. When misfortune came to Turner, it was Murray that was



BRONSON MURRAY

always the first to offer his assistance. After the cowardly firing of Turner's buildings in 1853, Murray wrote offering to send him "a pair of good nags" to use until spring. He adds that while he has no money on hand he expects to have $500 or $1000 at any time as the result of a land sale and he courteously makes it clear that it will be a joy to him to lend it to Turner.[15]

While a modest man he was too intelligent to underrate himself. When Turner spoke to him in high terms of his ability, he replied:

"What you say of my ability is flattering to me. I know I have never been stalled and that I have braved experience from the silken chambers whence I emanated to savage wilderness of Arkansas ruffians and woody swamps. That experience trains a man to know his capacity for action tho it may not to judge how others view him."[16]

There is often in his letters a serene practical philosophy that recalls Marcus Aurelius, as when he says of the discouragements that first met the Morrill bill: "Perhaps Morrill's Bill is too good to make much progress yet. It must first be 'despised and rejected of men' if it be salvation in any respect for the human race or any part of them."[17] Such a well poised spirit was invaluable in the discouragements and bafflements that met the new movement.

In regard to his early life it is possible fortunately to quote his own words: "In the year 1817," wrote Mr. Murray, "in the city of New York, my paternal grandfather, John Boyles Murray, was the owner of two four-story basement houses, Nos. 43 and 45 Barclay street, which he had built on two lots leased from Columbia College. Mrs. Okill kept a ladies boarding school at No. 43, leased from my grandfather who occupied with his family, No. 45. Here I was born on the 15th of April of that year, my parents then temporarily residing there."[18]

[15]Murray to Turner, October 29, 1853, Turner manuscripts.

[16]Letter of October 29, 1853.

[17]Murray to Turner, March 11, 1858, Turner manuscripts.

[18]"*Autobiography of Bronson Murray*" down to about 1840, loaned by his son, James B. Murray of Yonkers, New York, to whose courtesy the author is indebted also for a sketch of Mr. Murray's later life. Words of Bronson Murray that are quoted are from the *Autobiography*.

Mr. Murray's father, James B. Murray, was a prominent army officer, a Colonel of a regiment of artillery in the War of 1812, a man who had traveled widely and was a friend of many of the leading statesmen and diplomats both at home and abroad. These facts explain an incident related by Mr. Murray of his early experience: "I remember my father taking me by the hand one day in 1824 and walking down to a Hudson river pier near the Battery, and, with a large number of persons, boarding a steamboat, I think it was called the Bellona, and I think Commodore Vanderbilt was its Captain. I was told we were going to meet General LaFayette and bring him to New York from Amboy." A painful accident that occurred of a sailor having his arms blown off obscured in the young boy's mind any recollections of the noted Frenchman.

The account of his early education shows how he acquired not only a dislike to methods then employed in teaching, but to the "dead literature" the teachers endeavored to drive in. After referring to an incident of November 4, 1825, when he went with his father to witness the parade and procession on land and water in honor of the opening of the Erie canal, the "marriage of the waters" as it was called, he wrote further:

"Shortly after that I was sent to boarding school at Jamaica, Long Island. Here I remained for two years and became acquainted with the fever and ague, together with the rudiments of education, enforced dexterously with a flat ruler, by the learned teacher, on the prominent part of the person of the boy who was laying face downward over the edge of the platform while his feet were on the floor. Principal Eigenbroght allowed no other master to administer flaggelation, and he seems to have fancied that the dead languages could be incorporated by that operation into the vulnerable part of a recreant, who could not receive it intellectually otherwise, for I distinctly remember he would point with his rule at one boy in the class before him and order him to conjugate a Latin verb, and then, while the boy was conjugating, the ruler would be brought with a smarting smash upon the rotund muscle below, a pair of little heels would perform acrobatic motions in the air; the ruler would point at the next aspirant for dead

literature in the class who would begin declining a Latin noun. The ruler would descend hitting its former mark, the heels flying again in the air, the ruler again pointed to the class and the operation again be repeated until a sufficient number of blows had been administered when the young recreant would be released with no increase to his knowledge of Latin but a supposed sufficiency of an improvement in scholarship." No wonder that in later years he cared little whether classics were ever taught in the new proposed industrial university.[19]

In 1832 Mr. Murray entered Columbia college as a freshman. He remained there for two terms. During this period his father required him to work in a carpenter's shop and later to attend lectures on civil engineering. In 1834 his father gave him three dollars and started him out to work as a rodman for an engineering party working on the Morris canal from Newark to Jersey City. Thus began his professional life of civil engineer which lasted some ten years. He worked in various places on numerous jobs from New York to Michigan. The experiences of these years in the newly developing west gave him a confidence and a poise that were striking characteristics throughout all the remaining years of his life.

The panic of 1837, and the resulting financial depressions during the subsequent years, having destroyed all prospects of the early resumption of railroad construction and of public works and thereby his immediate outlook as a civil engineer, Murray decided to go west and settle on some 1,600 acres of land owned by his father. Therefore in 1844 he went out to Chicago, bought equipment and began farming.[20] In 1847 he returned to New York state and in June of that year married Miss Anna E. Peyton, daughter of Colonel Rowzee Peyton of Richmond, Virginia, who had moved to Geneva, New York. Returning with his bride by stage coach to Chicago, they went then by canal boat to Ottawa and then by team to his farm at Farm Ridge, ten miles south of town. While living on this

[19] See Murray's "Suggestions for a basis of an Illinois Industrial University," paragraph 1, in appendix p. 435.

[20] A receipted bill for a horse and wagon bought in Chicago shows that he paid the munificent sum of twelve dollars and some cents for them.

farm he became interested in the movement for industrial universities. Here he frequently entertained Turner, Rutherford, and others of his friends.

"Being a firm believer in the future of Illinois farm lands, he put all he could raise into Government land warrants which he located in LaSalle and later in Livingston County. He then sold as many of the lands as the farmers and settlers wanted (often entering for them lands they desired), and retaining the balance, he later had them broken up and put under cultivation, and they became the support of his family and himself for the rest of his life.

"He took Professor Turner's view of the value of the osage orange for hedge and fencing purposes, and along the lines of those lands which he retained in Livingston County, he had osage orange set out and cultivated with great care,—over 30 miles of it,—and so far ahead of time that when the lands were ready for improvement, the hedge furnished almost continuous fences. The hedges grew so luxuriantly as to cut off the breezes from the roads and therefore had to be trimmed down. Some of their stumps today measure a foot in diameter."

"About 1855 he moved from Farm Ridge to Ottawa, Illinois, into a house he bought of Professor Charruaud on Rose Hill, just North of town, and there had furniture for the parlor sent on from one of the best makers in New York."

"He was a strong anti-slavery man from the very beginning, a personal friend of Abraham Lincoln, whom he warmly supported and he also favored the underground railroad, with which Capt. William Strawn of Odell had some connection."

"In the fall of 1858 he left that house at Ottawa and moved East to his father's country house at Greenfield Hill, near Fairfield, Conn., where he remained that winter. The house was not fitted nor heated for winter. The coldest day that winter,—so cold that all the children had to be kept in bed to keep them warm,—he drove to Bridgeport, four miles away, in an open wagon to buy and bring back a stove for the hall, to keep them warm; and so bitter was the day, that he met only one other person out on the road. But he brought the stove back with him.

"In the spring of 1859 he moved to Fairfield, and in the fall of 1861, to Stamford, Conn., for better school facilities for the younger children.

"About 1863 he moved to New York and about 1866 to Newport, Rhode Island.

"In the fall of 1868 he moved back to New York City, where he bought for his wife, with the proceeds of her dower section, at the West,—recently sold,—a house in which they both lived quietly down to the time of their death. In summer, when his wife and family went to some place in the country, they could hardly ever persuade him to leave with them, as he said he preferred the run of the house with the air circulating through it, and bathing facilities, to a cramped room in some country hotel or boarding house.

"About 1879 he again took charge of his lands at the west which his oldest son had meantime had almost entirely broken up, ditched and rented out; and thereafter for a number of years, he insisted on going West and spending his summer at Odell and Pontiac, Illinois, to look after his lands, and in winter returned to New York."

"In 1904 his wife died, and as all his children were married, they persuaded him, about a year later, to have an attendant, who most kindly and faithfully took care of him during the six remaining years of his life. Her thoughtful and efficient care and judicious management undoubtedly prolonged his life several years. He died on January 10th, 1911, at the ripe old age of 93 years, the same age at which his faithful friend Turner had died.

"He always retained a lively interest in the University of Illinois, down to the time of his death.

"He never held public office, his father, who had had some experience along that line, having filled, among other offices, that of President of the Board of Health of New York City during the cholera epidemic, when a chain had to be stretched across the city at Canal street to prevent communication between the upper and lower part of the city, and people sprinkled red pepper in their stockings to escape the dire de-

stroyer,—having warned him on his death bed, against accepting public office.

"He was survived by five children, James B., living at Yonkers, N. Y.; Caroline M., who married Lucius K. Wilmerding of New York; Olivia M., who married the late W. Bayard Cutting of the same city; John Archibald, lawyer, of that city; and Annie M., wife of C. Wickliffe Yulee, also of that city.

"He was a devoted father,—sacrificing his comfort, ease, means and even life for the best interests of his children, who also were devoted to him, whose company and companionship they ever enjoyed, and who were only too pleased when they could persuade him to leave his home in the city and visit them in their country places,—which however, they seldom succeeded in doing."[21]

DR. JOHN A. KENNICOTT

Dr. John A. Kennicott was associated with J. B. Turner through the most trying years of the campaign that ended in the establishment of the land grant system of industrial universities.

He died in 1863, when but a little over sixty years of age. He had lived to see the federal government make, what to him appeared a munificent grant to agricultural and mechanical education and to know that Illinois accepted her share; but to see the institution itself with young men thronging its halls was denied him.

Kennicott was a good fighter; unafraid, direct, impulsive, often tactless, with a native simplicity which no experience in the duplicity and double-dealing that he saw practiced in political life, was ever able to cloud. When he fought he fought with pleasure, but he was always a generous foe. During his residence in New Orleans he was once challenged to a duel. He accepted heartily, chose pistols as the weapons with enthusiasm, and looked forward to the affair with such interest that his opponent made an apology.

Kennicott had scant opportunities for education in early youth but he instinctively gave a close attention to flowers and

[21]From biographical sketch by James B. Murray.