

It seems to the Commissioner that the school children and school teachers in New Jersey may wish to make a very small contribution—in the case of the children not to exceed a penny each, and in the case of the teachers not more than five cents each—to pay for the building, for its removal and the minor repairs that it needs, and possibly to establish a fund the interest of which could be used for its upkeep and to pay a small sum to a person to show the building to visitors. An amount not to exceed \$1500 or \$2000 would probably answer all purposes.

It is the plan of the Commissioner a little later to ask for this donation from such schools as would like to take up the matter.

If there should be an amount in excess of what is needed it could be turned over to the Red Cross.

Of course this whole matter of purchasing the old Clara Barton school is a sentimental one, but the Commissioner could not bring himself to feel that it would be the wish of the school fraternity of New Jersey to see the building destroyed. It was necessary to move in the matter at once, and the Commissioner, acting as he believed in the interests of and in accordance with the wishes of the teachers of the state, has taken this step.

In a recently published biography of Clara Barton, by Percy H. Epler, occurs the following pertaining to her life as a teacher in the schools of New Jersey.

Miss Norton recognized her friend's genius for teaching and in 1853 prevailed upon her to accept a post in the New Jersey village of Hightstown.

Some ten miles or so away was Bordentown. Rumors of the extraordinary ability of the little woman to conquer schools where strong men had been driven out by unruly pupils radiated wherever Clara Barton went. From Hightstown news of her power came to Bordentown.

Prejudices existed there against public schools. Some were too denominational in religion to be broad enough to desire them; others too proud to send their children to the public school, which had often been styled "free schools for paupers."

Whenever the public school system had been tried among a people divided by sectarian quarrels, the citizens themselves split over the question, while the children, catching their lack of respect for a school system, broke up the sessions and ran wild on the streets.

Miss Barton saw the need in Bordentown and she went to meet it.

"A public school is impossible," she was told. "It has failed every time."

"Give me three months and I will teach free," was her challenge.

Never was there a campaign against odds but Clara Barton answered it with this argument of action. She did not demand that something should be done; she demonstrated that it could be.

She took a tumble-down unoccupied building with six pupils. In five weeks the building was too small. Each of the six pupils had become a living advertisement. Emerson has said that it is not the school that educates—it is the schoolmate. Clara Barton recognized this truth and sought to reach out through these first pupils. She studied each child individually. . . . In this was the magic of her success.

Something of the way in which she was regarded is shown by the following letter from a member of this first class—George Ferguson, now of Brazil, Indiana. "My memories of Miss Barton are certainly the most pleasant. She was kind to her students, pleasant in her work, gentle in disposition and took an interest in us all. We loved her almost as much as we loved our mothers, and it was not without pangs of regret that we saw her give up her pupils and school work on account of failing health. . . . I don't think she ever had a pupil but that loved her. Bad boys interested her as much as the good ones. The first letter I ever wrote in my life I wrote to Miss Barton. When she went away on her vacation she asked her students to write to her. We all did, and she answered all with personal letters. I can remember myself writing that letter as if it were only yesterday, and I was mighty proud of the answer I received. Since then I have been corresponding with her and have letters from her which I prize highly." . . .

"Remembering that fully one-fifth of my life has been passed as a teacher of schools," she remarked twenty years after, "it is not strange that I should feel some interest in the cause of education, some sympathy with those who labor in it as its teachers, some affiliation with the parents and people who bear its expenses, and secure its benefits, and some interest in the children and youth who receive them."

What community in New Jersey will be the first to honor itself and to honor Miss Barton by attaching her name to a public school building?

VISIT-THE-SCHOOLS WEEK

To Local Boards of Education, Superintendents of Schools, Principals and Teachers:

During each of the past three years a week has been designated as Visit-the-Schools Week. Last year more than thirty thousand persons visited the schools during the week set apart for this purpose.

The week which is designated as Visit-the-Schools Week this year is the one beginning Monday, February 16. It is hoped that a larger number of persons will visit the schools this year than visited them last year.

This week comes at a time of the year when fathers are not so busy as they are at some other seasons, and they, as well as the mothers, can visit the schools.