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Silas Sadler Packard (1826-1898)

Brief Sketch of Career.

Mr. Silas Sadler Packard departed this life at his home in New York on the morning of Oct. 27, 1898 from a complication of disorders, the chief of which was acute gastritis. He had been ill for some weeks at his summer residence at Twilight Park in the Catskill Mountains, and was removed by special car to the city about a fortnight preceding the end. Funeral services were held at the residence and later at the West Presbyterian Church on Saturday, Oct. 29. The services were conducted impressively by Rev. Dr. A., H. Evans, pastor, assisted by Rev. Dr. Wm. Lloyd, Rev. Dr. Robert Collyer, Bishop John H. Vincent and Rev. Dr. R. S. MacArthur. The interment was at Greenwood Cemetery.

Silas Sadler Packard was born in Cummington, Mass., April 28, 1826, the fourth son of Chester Packard. He was a direct descendant of Samuel Packard, who came from Higham, England, and settled in what is now West Bridgewater, Mass., in 1638. In 1833 Chester Packard went to Fredonia, Licking County, Ohio, with his family. The boy Silas had the ordinary advantages of the district school until the age of fifteen, when he went for two terms to the Granville Academy. -He had a natural taste for grammar and mathematics, and was always the best penman in school. At the age of sixteen he began to teach, taking his first classes in penmanship. In 1845 he went to Kentucky and remained there over two years, teaching school and painting portraits. He removed to Cincinnati in 1848, and was employed as a teacher of penmanship in Bartlett's Com'l College. Mr. Bartlett had only recently removed from Philadelphia, where he had also conducted a commercial school. Mr. Packard always spoke of him as the father of the American Business. College Idea. In 1851 Mr. Packard went to Lockport, N. Y., to teach writing, bookkeeping and drawing in the Lockport Union School, and two years later removed to Tonawanda, N. Y. Here he established The Niagara River Pilot, which he conducted with success until 1856, when he became associated with Bryant & Stratton in the management of their Buffalo college. From Buffalo he went to Chicago. In May, 1858, Mr. Packard began his work in New York City by establishing, in connection with Bryant & Stratton, his business college. In 1859-60 Mr. Packard prepared a bookkeeping series, which were leading textbooks on that subject, and more recently 11 The Packard Manual of Bookkeeping and Correspondence, "The Packard Arithmetic," and other well known commercial textbooks.

The business schools of France, particularly those of Paris and Rouen, under the management of the Chamber of Commerce at Paris, were founded on Mr. Packard's model, and the Bureau Commercial of the Antwerp School has taken some of its features from Mr. Packard's scheme of "Business Practice."

. In 1893 he was appointed by Dr. Bonny president of the Congress of Business Education, held under the auspices of the World's Fair Congress at Chicago.

An interesting incident in the life of Mr. Packard occurred on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, when some six hundred of his former students, fellow teachers and personal friends gave him a Delmonico dinner and presented to him a beautiful loving cup. A short time prior to this his friends had presented to him a bronze bust of himself made by J. Q. A. Ward, the eminent sculptor. Many years ago he educated, without cost to themselves, thirty young women, for no other purpose than to prove to the business community that he had at command a number of well-trained and efficient women clerks, who were not only able to work, but were willing to do so, and who could readily supplant inefficient office boys and young men, who depended upon, their sex to hold their own, as against women, of whatever qualifications.

"He has been called," says the N. Y. Tribune in a late issue, "a schoolmaster, professor, lecturer. None of these titles fit him. He was a father, in the highest sense, to thousands of young men and women. He was an inspiration greater even, at times, than the best home influences. He molded character, and had given impulse toward high ideals, cleanness of conduct and morality in business."

Mr. Packard was a member of the following clubs and societies: Union League Club, Lotos Club, Ohio Society, Patria Club, Colonial Club, Schoolmasters' Club, Twilight Club, Commercial Teachers' Federation, Institute of Accounts, West Side Republican Club, New York Commercial Teachers' Association and Eastern Teachers' Association.

Mr. Packard was twice married and leaves a widow and grown daughter. Miss Marian Helena Crocker, to whom he was married in 1870, died in 1878. There were two children by this union, a son who died in infancy, and a daughter who died at the age of 19. The shadow of that great grief clung to him through life. His second wife was Miss Lottie Hill, with whom he was united in marriage on April 24, 1884. Congeniality of tastes and unity of purpose in business matters as well as in those things pertaining to the social life made the union a singularly happy one. Mrs. Packard, herself a skilled teacher and business woman, for a long time in charge of one of the chief departments of the Packard College, was in the closest touch and sympathy with her husband's work, and rendered him invaluable aid in the rounding out of his brilliant career. She was familiar with every detail of his business and in connection with the highly efficient corps of teachers, most of whom have been connected with the school for years, the business will go on without jar or friction. Those who were not born when the Packard College was founded now have sons following their foot steps as students at that school, which will continue to be one of the great educational landmarks of the metropolis.