

THOUGHTS

ON

POPULAR AND LIBERAL EDUCATION,

WITH SOME DEFENCE OF

THE ENGLISH AND SAXON LANGUAGES,

IN THE FORM OF AN ADDRESS TO THE PHILOMATHEAN SOCIETY
OF INDIANA COLLEGE;

DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 28TH, 1836.

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PRINTED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

LEXINGTON, KY.
INTELLIGENCER PRINT.
1836.

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GENTLEMEN:—It has been your pleasure to honour me with an invitation, very flatteringly communicated to participate in the ministry of this Festival of Letters. Pursuant to that action on your part, I now rise, on mine, with such resources as I can bring to the task, to redeem the pledge, which my acceptance of the proffered invitation implied. In the discharge of this duty, I feel it incumbent on me, to conform, as far as practicable, to the spirit of the occasion which has called us together. That spirit, as just intimated, is literary and scientific; and as such I shall regard it.

Education has been the principal business of *your* lives, and of the *lives* of those associated with you in the celebration of your anniversary; education has called us into this sanctuary of the Muses; the patrons of education have assembled at the summons; and every thing around us is redolent of education. It seems proper therefore that it should constitute the theme of the discourse I am to deliver. Nor, in the entire circle of earthly concerns, vast and multifarious as they are, can another to equal it in importance be selected. In the grandeur and sacredness of its object, the mightiness of its power, and the magnitude of its effects, it is unrivalled and alone.

Extravagant as this representation may appear, to those who have not duly considered the subject, and unwelcome as it may possibly be to the self-esteem of others, who are engaged in pursuits which they think outrank education—not-

withstanding these and all other considerations that may array themselves against it, the statement submitted to you is true to the letter. And I am the more resolved to defend its truth, on account of the opposition in sentiment it so uniformly and illiberally encounters. Neither is education itself, nor the able and accomplished conductors of it in our country, held in that high esteem, nor elevated, in public opinion, to that distinguished rank, to which they are entitled. There are Jack Cades in America, as well as in Europe, and at the present, no less than in former times; who, to propitiate the untaught multitude towards themselves, and prejudice them against the more cultivated and enlightened, exult in their own uneducated condition, decry the fruits of education in others, and endeavour to make a glory of their shame, by converting their illiteracy into a stepping-stone to power. Nor is this all. The statesman and the lawyer, the physician, the divine, and even the merchant and the planter consider themselves and their callings superior to the teacher and his calling—though they are nothing in fact but the *creatures of education*. In the practical pursuit of his profession, the teacher moulds and fashions them, as the sculptor does his marble, or the potter his clay. Nor have they a shadow of ground for preferring their vocations to his, but because they are less laborious, and more lucrative. That they are either more honourable in their nature, more weighty and responsible in the duties they impose, or more useful in their effects, they will not contend. That I may not, however, commence my discourse with a position deemed doubtful by any one, it is requisite that I adduce a few facts in its defence. It will be borne in mind, that, in the remarks I have already made, as well as in those I am about to make, I allude to education in the *full and entire signification of the term*. Enlightened and cultivated mind, and *acquired* dexterity of every description, are essentially its products.

The paramount "grandeur of the object" of education just referred to is incontestible; because it is nothing less, than to rescue the human family from the ignorance and ferocity, degradation and profligacy of brutish savagism, and exalt them to

civilization, science and virtue. And this, neither legislators nor lawyers, physicians nor divines, are able in their special vocations to effect. The "mightiness of the power" of education is evinced by its achievement in part of this arduous enterprise. And the "magnitude of its effects" is sufficiently demonstrated, by all that is vast, magnificent, and glorious, in the works of civilized and cultivated man, which are exclusively its offspring—by productions in poetry and philosophy, history and eloquence, radiant in all that genius can impart; by the pyramid and the column, the "solemn temple" and the "gorgeous palace;" by the "cloud-capt tower," the perforated mountain, the excavated lake and river, and the wonders of navigation by wind and by steam—these and the innumerable sublime and exquisite creations of painters and musicians, sculptors and other artists, sufficiently attest the mightiness of education. And they are so many stars of the highest order and brightest emblazonry, in the heraldry of the teacher. So powerful indeed is education in the work of improvement, that it is second only to *Creative Power*, in making the most illustrious of our race what they are. It *completes* what *Creative Power* had only *begun*. From the universality and absoluteness of its dominion over human affairs, it may be regarded as the Vicegerent of the Deity on earth. Without it, man would be one of the most vile and ferocious, yet helpless and miserable of sublunary beings. With it, he is "monarch of all he surveys."

To form yet a more clear and definite conception of the sway of education over the character and destiny of human beings, compare the Laplander or the Kamschadale, the Bosheseman or the Papuan, with the highly cultivated European or American; and mark the issue. The difference in intellect and efficiency, morals, manners, and corporeal attributes, between those members of the human family, you will find to be striking even to amazement—may appearances be trusted, quite as great, as that between the uncultured savages, and the misshapen Golok or Wild Man of the woods. And this difference, I say, is in no small degree attributable to the influence of

teachers. Yet in this comparison, neither is education *perfect* in the European or the American (for it may be still improved in them,) nor altogether wanting in the beings contrasted with them. The absolute debasement, therefore of uneducated man, and of course the utmost potency of that agent, which, from such deep degradation raises him to such a height in the scale of existence are hitherto unknown to us.

But to understand the power of education in its entire extent, and in all its modes and forms of influence, we must take a different and less restricted view of it. We must contemplate it in its action, not on individuals, and at given times, but on communities and nations, and at all times; and on the world in the aggregate. Under this aspect of the inquiry, adverting in retrospect to a far distant period, the mystical grandeur of Egypt and the wonders of ancient Persia and Palestine, the glories of Greece and the mightiness of Rome, present themselves as a few of the trophies of education. Compare these with the portentous gloom of the Dark Ages, which, like a second chaos, overspread the earth, when education and its products lay prostrate under the tread of the Goth and the Vandal—and the contrast is rich in instruction, and interest. As the noon-day brightness of the sun, suddenly extinguished in a total eclipse, testifies to the loveliness and value of light in the material world, so did the nightfall of the Dark Ages in the world of the mind. And as the departure of the sun from the heavens summons to their banquet of blood the monsters of the forest, so did the going down of the sun of education awaken to the work of desolation and ruin, that fiercer and more insatiate monster, **UNCULTIVATED MAN.**

Descending through later ages to the present era, take a survey of the globe by land and by water, and mark how it is studded, and ornamented, and changed, by the miracles of education. No tongue can describe, no pencil paint, nor scarcely can the most vigorous fancy conceive, the differences in science and sound government, civilization, moral order, literature, and the arts, between France and Great Britain now, and at the time when they were subjugated by the legions of

Cæsar. From those nations have issued streams of living light and knowledge, and other prodigies of mind, which nothing can extinguish or destroy, short of the wreck of the earth which they adorn. The fearful grandeur and consolidated power of Prussia, Austria, and Russia, more especially the latter, form another monument of the sway of education, to which antiquity had nothing to compare. Before the military array of those nations, *educated* as they now are, Alexander and his Macedonians, Cæsar and his cohorts, would have been but stubble in the fire, or chaff before the storm. Nor is our own country without her wonders from the same source. Within the last two hundred years, education has perhaps done more for the glory and happiness of the New World, than even of the Old,

When our forefathers arrived on the shores of the country they had selected as their home, they encountered but a wilderness; where the lights of intellectual, and the sobrieties and courtesies of moral and social nature were unknown and disregarded; and which was trodden only by the savage and his prey. But, since that period, marvels of improvement, of every description, have followed each other, with a rapidity and constancy of march, and have spread abroad through the land, with a width of diffusion, which superstition, in former times, would have ascribed to agencies higher than human. Of these multiplied products of education in our country, the most striking and stupendous were the war of the Revolution, and the formation and establishment of the Federal Government. With them, considered in their principles, economy, and relations, the world presents nothing, in the same line, that will bear a comparison. In their display of courage and fortitude, wisdom, talent, and moral grandeur, they far surpass all other similar achievements that history records. Other Revolutions indeed, in other lands, have rolled their bloody rounds; and other forms of government have been erected on the ruins of preceding ones; but nothing like those of the United States, have been presented to the admiration and wonder of our race. And, I repeat, that they are the offspring of all-controlling education.

Here a question vitally important, not only to ourselves, but to the citizens of all free governments now existing, or to exist hereafter, presents itself for solution. Has education completed its work in the United States? Has it so far enlightened the intellects, and improved and confirmed the morals of the people, as to fit them for the enjoyment and exercise of the privileges they possess, under the institutions that have descended to them from their fathers? In simpler language; has it fully prepared them for that great work of sovereignty, the highest of social and political achievements, the task of *self-government*? Interesting as this question is, as a mere theme of inquiry, and momentous as is its *affirmative* to our individual rights and immunities, and our national welfare, a decided *negative* is the only reply, that truth can sanction or honesty render. As a people, we are not educated in a degree corresponding to the privileges we enjoy, and the duties they impose on us. Those privileges therefore will be forfeited and lost, unless the caste of our education be greatly improved. Of the truth of this prediction, evidence crowds on us in a ratio fearfully increasing with the progress of time. Nothing can save us from the fate of all Republics that have gone before us—corruption, misrule, anarchy, and despotism—but improvement by education in our intellects and morals. History warns us, that they fell for want of this; and so shall we—an event as unquestionable, and as directly the product of a law of nature, now in operation, as that the approaching winter will strip your magnificent forests of their leaves, and your prairies of their verdure—unless, I say, the catastrophe be averted by the agency referred to.

Does any one reply to me, that this is but empty prophesy—as groundless and visionary, as it is gloomy and disheartening?—that sixty years ago our liberties were won for us, by the swords of our fathers?—and that we are as resolutely determined, and as amply prepared to maintain them now, as were the heroes and patriots of SEVENTY-SIX, with Franklin, and Hancock, and Washington at their head?—that, enjoying as we do, the franchise of electing our public servants, and in-

structing and controlling them, in the discharge of their duties, our freedom and its concomitant privileges are secure; and that therefore all apprehension and gloomy foreboding in relation to them are imaginary and futile? Is such the answer prepared by any one to the remarks here submitted to you?

My rejoinder is simple, and, I trust, satisfactory. The danger arrayed against the liberties of our fathers in 1776 was totally different from that which threatens ours in 1836; and much less insidious and likely to destroy. The danger then was open assault and violence from without; and the eye could descry, and the sword repel it. But the danger now, assuming no visible shape, is from craft, intrigue, and corruption within; which nothing but intelligence and virtue can resist—an ample measure of those protective qualities, I am compelled to add, than is possessed, at present, by the general population of the U. States.

Let me entreat you to understand me, as not addressing you thus, in the spirit, or with the feelings of a political partisan. Far from it. An act of the kind would be as indelicate and unbecoming in me, as it would be unworthy of you, and of the occasion we celebrate. I speak of the political condition of our country, not merely as it now is, but as I know it to have been for the last thirty or forty years. No administration of our government is, more than another, exempt from the charge, except the administration of Washington, which was alone paternal and patriotic, virtuous and pure,—founded in wisdom and conducted in the spirit of rectitude and honour—alone free from the sordidness of self, the injustice of favouritism, and the plague-spots of party. The reason is plain. No more could corruption or intrigue, or any form of dishonesty, political or moral, subsist under the frown of the Chief Magistrate then in power, than can the pestilent vapour endure the radiance of the mid-day sun! The lightning of his eye was as fatal to *them*, as had been that of his sword to the *enemies of freedom*. Nor did the boldest partisan dare to approach him with an unhallowed request, to procure the promotion of the *incompetent* or the *unworthy*. He was truly PRESIDENT of the *United States*, *above party influence and feelings*, doing justice to *all*, and fa-

vors to none—and aiming exclusively at the *welfare of his country*. His successors *in office* (*in standing and virtue*, he has had no successor) have been but the *chiefs of parties*—upheld by their *trains of feudal retainers*, whom they have rewarded for their services by *appointment and place!*

As respects the subsequent administrations, the charge just preferred is true; some of them being more deeply amenable to it than others. And faithful history will say hereafter, whether the evil does not increase with the progress of time. When one of the heavenly bodies departs from its track, there is reason to apprehend that it would tumble into the sun, did not the others, acting in concert, and co-operating with its own laws, restore it to its place. In like manner, unless the influence of education arrest our government in its erratic career, and replace it in its proper orbit, it will, as already predicted, plunge through anarchy into the grasp of despotism. But to return.

Did the danger to our liberties, I say, proceed as it did in SEVENTY-SIX, from the bayonets of an external foe, its duration would be transient, and its issue certain. It would be met as courageously, and repelled as triumphantly, by the heroic spirits of the present day, as it was by the INVINCIBLES of our revolutionary conflict. For it need not *here* be told by *me*, *hundreds of well fought fields, and blood-red decks* having proclaimed *it elsewhere*, that Americans always do their duty in battle. But there is a danger to our freedom, invisible I say to the physical eye, and immeasurably greater than that of the sword. It is the danger of intrigue, corruption, and bribery, in some of the forms they habitually put on, and of the wily and treacherous practices they pursue. Nor can this be successfully opposed by personal bravery, or any thing pertaining to the profession of arms. It must be met and overthrown by the resources of education, else its triumph is certain; and despots and their minions, scoffing at our experiment of self-government, and exulting in its failure, will aid in rivetting on us the letters of slavery.

From these remarks on the general power and usefulness

of education, and its peculiar importance to ourselves, as citizens of a free representative government, I shall proceed to the consideration of the manner and means, by which its benefits may be most readily secured to us. In other words; how it may best be improved in its character, and most readily diffused throughout the States of the Union. This view, if fully followed out, would eventuate in a scheme of national education. But I must not now attempt an enterprise of such compass. Even when contracted to its narrowest limits, it is still a subject so extensive in its range, and so abundant in matter, that I can do nothing more, in the time and space within which I must restrict myself, than hastily sketch an outline of my opinions. That order and method may not be altogether wanting in the discussion, education will be considered under the usual division of *Popular and Liberal*—Classical education making a branch of the latter.

By Popular education, I mean, as you must be aware, that which is accessible to the people at large, and which many of them receive. From the nature of the case, therefore, it be neither extensive nor profound. By Liberal education, that which is attainable, only, or chiefly, by the wealthier classes. This, as its denomination imports, and as will be made to appear more fully hereafter, is of a higher order. Which of these two castes of education is most essential to the public welfare, is a question I leave to the scrutiny of others. They are both so essential, that a lack of either can never fail to be pernicious in its consequences.

Popular education, I say, belongs more particularly to that great class of the community, which, from its majority in numbers, has the command of social and political power, and is privileged to delegate it for special purposes. When competent in amount and sound in condition, it prepares its possessors for the judicious and successful transaction of *private* affairs; and, in the exercise of their public immunities, it enlightens and directs them, and ministers essentially to their interests and security. More especially, in the employment of their elective franchise, it is their buckler and their shield—their

most effectual safeguard against the devices and intrigues of demagogues, who would mislead them, and their most trustworthy monitor, in the choice of candidates for public stations. Without it, they are unqualified for such choice, and liable to be made instruments in the hands of designing and unprincipled men, for the accomplishment of selfish and pernicious ends. For, in free governments, the illiterate and uninformed are but ladders for the intriguing to climb into power. And when their object is attained, they look down in scorn on the dupes, if they do not spurn them, on whose shoulders they had ascended. This truth should be made known to the people *in their youth, as a part of their education*, that their pride may unite with their intelligence, to protect them alike from the insult and deception, with which they are threatened.

Though it may not be asserted, that all who are destitute of the benefits of a liberal education are unfit for public station, nor that every one possessing such benefits is fit for it; yet none will deny, that, other things being equal, the liberally educated are best prepared for all the higher operations of mind, in public as well as in private life. In the United States much more than in any other country, all offices and appointments are open alike to men of all forms and degrees, of education—and even to those who can hardly be said to be educated at all. Nor is the measure perhaps altogether disadvantageous. It gives scope for action, in many cases, to genius and laudable ambition, which they could not have had without it, and thus develops latent powers, which would otherwise lie dormant and be lost to society. That it has also however its concomitant evils must be obvious to every one. It is the chief source of the swarms of crafty demagogues and aspirants to office, that inundate our country, fan into perpetual flame the fires of party, make a business of intrigue themselves and teach it to others, and breathe but in the atmosphere of discord and strife. And these flocks of harpies, as foul and detestable as those of the poet, and of much worse omen, are most fearfully on the increase. Their number now, compared to that which annoyed us at the commencement of the present century, is probably in the proportion of a hundred to one. And their skilful-

ness in deception and the perpetration of mischief has augmented in perhaps a corresponding ratio. From this condition of things arises the alarming truth, that the people of the United States, *as a body*, are more deeply infected with the spirit of political ambition, trickishness, and fraud, than any other people now in existence—or that ever did exist.

The very fact, that State preferment is open to every one, excites hundreds of thousands to aspire to it, and to become agitators and annoyers of the community, who would otherwise pursue some humble but useful vocation, for which alone they are fitted by nature. Nor have they a *right* to aim at any thing higher. It is not true, that all men are born with "*equal rights*," any more than that they are born with *equal talents*. As far as *public station* is concerned, *rights* and *talents* are the measures of each other. No man has a right to an *office*, which he wants *talents* to administer. Nor can the suffrages of the people confer on him such a *right*; because the proceeding is in violation of a *law of nature*, which is tantamount to the WILL OF GOD. And the aspirants here referred to, being unable to succeed in their designs, from a want of strength of mind and character, united to an entire destitution of personal worth, have recourse to cunning and artifice; or, from a spirit of servility, added to other traits of meanness, become panders to the ambition of higher and stronger jugglers of State, and descend to the sycophancy and vileness of parasites and retainers. In this way is the whole community, I say, becoming imbued, to a fearful extent, with the rank leaven of political corruption. Nor is all yet told. Of this career of petty and misplaced aspiration to power, intemperance rarely fails to be the issue. For the tavern and the dram-shop are the places of resort of vulgar politicians; where, after having forged their calumnies, and concerted their plots against the upright and deserving, they hold high carnival, and celebrate their orgies. Thus is useful industry abandoned by them, honesty and moral observances neglected or violated, and habits of dissipation and debauchery formed. And thus do sottishness and beggary prove the lot of some of them, guilt and the

penitentiary of others, and ruin in some shape of nearly all. Such is and must be the fate of the idle, unprincipled, and designing, who, pursuing no productive employment themselves, and contributing in no shape to the welfare of society, but disturbing its harmony by personal slander and party excitement, seek to subsist, by the arts of deception, on the labour of their fellow men.

For these evils the only remedy is a system of Popular education, wisely planned and digested, faithfully pursued, and skilfully executed, and extended throughout the Union. If any thing should be strictly *national*, in compass and character, under a federate and representative government, it is the mental discipline of those who *constitute* the nation. On no other principle can union and harmony, order and prosperity be so certainly attained by them. Discrepant views, jarring interests, and incongruous elements are known to be incompatible with the welfare of families. And a nation is but a family on an extended scale.

But Popular education in the United States, on which the moral, intellectual, and political soundness of the country so essentially depends, is in a deplorable condition. Three or four States perhaps excepted, this is true of the Union. And even of the excepted States, it is true to an extent sufficiently ominous. The reason is plain. Except in the cities, and a few of the larger towns of the Union, the teachers of *primary schools* are as unfit for their vocation, as imagination can conceive. Their want of knowledge and letters, manners, dignity, and character can hardly be surpassed. They are therefore disqualified alike to instruct and govern, set example and command respect. In truth they are disqualified for every thing connected with education; because they are wholly uneducated themselves. Too indolent to labour with their hands, and too ignorant or feeble-minded to be concerned in business where intellect and knowledge are requisite, they become "school-masters," and teach their scholars bad English, bad habits, bad manners, and too often bad morals. I do not aver that this is the case with all of them. But I pronounce it

true of a very large majority of those of them I have personally known, or of whose character and standing I have been correctly informed.

Vitally important to us as Popular education is, it is more miserably provided for, than any other form of business in the community. And we sustain and tolerate more abuses in it, than in any other. To this the lowest mechanical trade forms no exception. True; large sums of money are annually expended on it, by many of the States. Each State in the Union, I believe, possesses its "*education fund*," and freely disburses it, no doubt from patriotic and beneficent motives; and under the belief that much good is effected by it. But the money thus disposed of is virtually wasted, by being bestowed on men, who do little or nothing in return for it—many of whom indeed do more harm than good—for bad teaching is worse than no teaching at all; error, prejudice, and incorrect practices being its principal products.

To an extent so amazing is this evil carried, that it is neither unfounded nor extravagant to say, that, in thousands of instances, in the United States, much more attention is paid to the breeding and improvement of domestic animals, than to the education of children. And men are employed to teach the latter, who would not be intrusted with the care of the former. In a far distant country, it is well known that the celebrated Oberlin found an ignoramus training *children*, who had been dismissed for incompetency from the supervision of pigs. He was unfit to be a *swine-herd*—the most ignominious of herdsmen! yet he was teaching human beings! Nor is our own country free from the disgrace of school-masters *equally unqualified!* The stock-fairs, which abound in our country, may be offered as evidence, not easily set aside or refuted, that more solicitude is felt for the improvement of cattle, than for that of the human race. At those shows, which are instituted with much pomp, and at no little expense, premiums are awarded to the breeders of the best horses, cows, mules, sheep, and other sorts of domestic animals. But no public provisions are made for doing suitable honors to the best instructors of

boys and girls. Such I mean is the neglect of this vital interest through the country at large—laudable exceptions being found in a few places, where the people are more enlightened, and mental cultivation more liberally prized. No wonder then, that Popular education is in so degraded a condition.

For the lamentable deficiencies of the teachers of common country schools, two substantial reasons may be rendered. As already stated, those teachers are themselves *untaught*, and *must* therefore be deficient; nor are the salaries they receive sufficiently ample, to secure and reward the services of competent men. As a general rule, the emoluments of country “school-masters” are inferior to those of journeymen mechanics; and greatly below the receipts of dram-selling grocers, pedlars, and overseers. That their abilities are humble, therefore, and their performances of little value, is not surprising. It would be matter of surprise, if the case were otherwise. In instruction, as in other forms of business, the rank of talents employed, and the worth of services rendered, are usually found to bear a fair proportion to the salaries received. And that it will continue to be so, comports with the principles of human nature.

It has been observed that large sums of money have been expended annually, by most of the States of the Union, on Popular education. To this may be added, that much time has been consumed, innumerable Resolutions passed, and volumes of Reports made and published, in devising and maturing suitable schemes for that caste of instruction, by Legislatures, societies, and well-meaning and public-spirited individuals. And still but little improvement has been made in it. For this there must be substantial reasons. Nor do they appear to me to be deeply concealed. When canvasses are held for the selection of teachers, the choice usually falls, not so much on those who are *best qualified to teach*; as on those who are willing to *attempt* to teach for the *meagerest salaries*. Thus does the process assume a puny, chaffering, “cheap-shop” character, and, like every other effort, where miserly meanness usurps the place of liberal economy, terminates in

disappointment, if not in some other more pernicious form of mischief. Those again who have been engaged in preparing schemes of education, have been not only unqualified for the task, from their deficiency in the knowledge of *mental philosophy*; but they have begun the business at the wrong end. The prevailing notion seems to be, that Popular education must be first provided for and commenced, as the basis of education of a higher order—that, in fact, the “higher order” rests on the lower and is sustained by it, as the arch-work of the bridge is sustained by its abutments and piers. But this is a mistake, as must be obvious to every one, who will examine the subject, under the guidance of reason, and with the deliberation it deserves. Nor can any thing be simpler or easier than to rectify it. In rearing the fabric of general education, the common order of construction must be reversed. The architect must build from the top downward. In no other way can he complete his edifice. In less equivocal language; the higher caste of education must be patronized and matured first, for the formation of suitable teachers for the lower—teachers I mean for primary schools. Without such instructors, as already mentioned, common schools are a nuisance. And those teachers can be formed only in institutions of a superior order.

Nor will *common* high schools, colleges, and universities answer for their production. Such institutions produce *scholars*; but are they calculated for the formation of *competent teachers*? I reply that they are not. Every scholar, however richly his mind may be stored, is not fitted for the work of instruction. Teaching is an *art*; and, like other arts, it can be learnt only by preparation and practice. In further resemblance of other arts, moreover, it requires in those who would excel, or even be respectable in it, certain given native qualities, without which failure is inevitable. Some of the qualities indispensable to the teacher, are patience, perseverance, evenness of temper, self-command, a fitness to govern and conciliate, a strong sense of moral duty, dignity of deportment, a turn for order, punctuality, and method, and a promptness, perspicuity, and agreeableness in the communication of knowledge. He

who does not possess most of these, should never enter on the work of instruction.

As relates to this point, I deem it my duty, on the present occasion, to speak in terms of deep reprehension, of many of our candidates for political favours. More or less at all times, but especially when they are soliciting the suffrages of their fellow-citizens for places of honour and profit, those characters disseminate error through the community, and lay the foundation of much mischief in respect to education. They more certainly to propitiate the illiterate and uninformed portion of the people, and render them favourable to the objects of their ambition and cupidity, they profess themselves ardent friends and advocates of "Popular education," which, as already stated, *belongs to that class of the people*, and often depict "Liberal education" in such colours, as to excite prejudices against it in the *common mind*. Instead of representing the latter form of education in its true character and relations, as the *parent and sustainer* of the former, they even, in the *reckless spirit and Vandalic temper* which characterize the partizans and demagogues of the day, denounce it as the source of an "*aristocracy of learning*," unfriendly to the "*rights and interests of the people*," and incompatible with "*republican simplicity*"—as if *such simplicity, ignorance, and illiteracy* were the same! By representations of this sort, they prejudice the populace against the *higher seats* of learning, and against liberal learning itself, and render them hostile to the only course of policy by which Popular education can be brought to its proper standard and effect, in improving the public mind in intelligence and virtue, and be diffused as a blessing throughout the community.

The mischief moreover thus engendered does not terminate here. By the artifices alluded to, not only are the populace rendered inimical to high schools, and the higher style of mental cultivation, but also to those who possess such style, or who, from wealth, or other causes, move in a sphere superior to their own. Thus, between the different classes of the community, who are but elements of the same body, whose inter-

ests are of course the same, and who ought therefore to live in harmony with each other, and in the interchange of kind and useful offices,—between these separate castes, which are equally essential in constituting the aggregate of the State, and which should cultivate toward each other a spirit of *fraternity*, and sentiments of good will, are awakened and fostered, by the sinister practices of the aspiring and unworthy, those feelings of envy and jealousy, and that collision in measures, which virtually amount to a *war* on the part of the poor against the rich, and of the ignorant against the informed, and constitute, at the present eventful crisis, one of the most ill-favoured omens that threatens our country. Nor is it possible for this evil to be removed, and its consequences averted, unless a new system of public instruction be introduced, dispread throughout the Union, and administered with the faithfulness and ability it demands.

In a word, Popular education will never attain in our country the perfection it requires, and of which it is susceptible, until those employed to instruct shall be compelled to *serve an apprenticeship to their art*, in common with all other artists, whether of the mechanical or liberal classes. For instructors alone are exempt from such training. My meaning is, that this form of instruction will remain imperfect, until suitable institutions shall be established, maintained, and skilfully administered, for the formation of teachers. And it must be *for the formation of teachers alone*—not for the mere production of scholars. As already intimated, college and university pupils, destined ultimately for the learned professions, are unsuitable teachers for popular schools. The reason is plain. They are not bred specifically to the business; which, in all cases and employments, implies, in a higher or lower degree, *a want of fitness*. And in no calling is the implication, or the fact, stronger or more certain, than in that of education. Common College scholars take the direction of schools, without any peculiar preparatory discipline; they are of course unskilled in teaching; and, by the time they have become somewhat experienced in the art, and fitted to be useful in it and have acquir-

ed the means of prosecuting their professional studies, they abandon it, and prepare themselves for their final pursuits—and other inexperienced instructors succeed them, to follow a like unproductive career. Thus does the chain of succession go on, unexamined and unsuspected, because it is forged within the walls of a college, where the workmen are believed to be competent, though each link of it is imperfect in itself, and unskillfully fitted to the place it occupies. Yet are these college-bred youths, by far the best teachers that have usually the charge of popular schools, because they have some knowledge of letters, in which other teachers are shamefully deficient.

Let schools for the education and practical discipline of teachers alone, then, I say, be established in the United States, as is now done in Prussia, Austria, and elsewhere, under the superintendence of qualified instructors. Let the pupils to them be selected, on account of the suitable qualities they possess, and let there be an understanding, that they design to follow teaching as a *life-profession*, not as a temporary or occasional employment. In completion of this arrangement, when their education, which should be appropriate and thorough, is finished, and their diplomas conferred, they should not, except under peculiar circumstances, be employed as teachers, without giving a pledge, that they will continue their instruction in the same school, for at least six or seven years—unless permitted, for substantial reasons, to retire from it at an earlier period. Few occurrences are more injurious to schools, than the frequent change of instructors. Each change is accompanied by some corresponding change in the mode of instruction, by which the mind of the pupil becomes unsettled and perhaps dissatisfied, and his progress in his studies more or less obstructed. A material advantage, moreover, to Popular education, arising from the establishment of schools for teachers, will be the introduction into schemes of teaching of the requisite degree of uniformity and concert. All schemes of the sort should, to a certain extent, correspond to such general system, as may be deemed advisable, and be adopted as a standard.

The situation and construction, size and furnishing of school-houses, are objects worthy of much more attention, than is usually bestowed on them. So is the number of pupils, which each teacher is allowed to superintend, as well as their division into classes, and the number of hours they are required to study, without relaxation. On no account should school-rooms be crowded, especially during weather when the doors and windows are closed. Though these details are small *in themselves*, they are often momentous and lasting *in their consequences*. For we should never forget, that, in the words of the poet,

“Little things are great to little men;”

and more especially to little children.

In fine; popular schools, where every thing practicable should be well and faithfully done, for the promotion of intelligence and virtue in those who are to be, in *power and influence*, the “lords of the land,” should be under the supervision of the *wisdom and talent* of the land; and be no longer left, as they have heretofore been, and still are, to the direction of those, who are incompetent to the direction of their own affairs—or who direct them, at best with but little ability—and who, through weakness and ignorance, are still more incompetent to *public* affairs.

The system of education practised by the ancient Persians was in some respects wiser, and in all respects much *better adapted to the end for which it was designed*, than any system now in vogue in modern nations. Among that great and war-like people, the education of youth was *compulsory*. No one was allowed to remain *uneducated*. Hence ignorance and rudeness were banished from the State. And the training of the moral faculties was as strictly attended to, as that of the intellectual.

Better—ininitely better, that Popular education, properly conducted, should be rendered *compulsory* in the United States, than be marred as it now is, or entirely neglected. Ignorance and its concomitants, which are prolific sources of vice, misrule, and misery are not only disgraceful to a people; they are among

the greatest of evils; and, like other evils, they should be extirminated or prevented by public authority. The mode of effecting this, I may not venture to prescribe. But the correctness of the principle I fearlessly maintain. If parents neglect to educate their children, or if they set them a flagitious and ruinous example, those children should be taken from them, and be educated at their expense—provided they have the means; and if not, at the expense of the State. The children of the poor should be treated in the same way. I am aware that evils might attend this proceeding. But, in a free representative government, no evil is so great as an *uneducated populace*. At every hazard, therefore, it should be put down—*voluntarily* on the part of the parents, *if practicable—compulsively, if necessary*. If a father can be compelled to provide for his children corporeal food; why not in like manner, food for the mind? No scheme of *personal freedom*, should be carried so far, as to *put in jeopardy the freedom and safety of the State*—which an ignorant populace unavoidably does. Though the Prussian system of education is believed to be the best now existing; it is not so perfectly calculated to subserve the purpose for which it is designed, as was that of Persia, under the control of her arbitrary government.

Should schemes of Popular education, founded on principles like the foregoing, and ably administered, be established throughout the country; and should the system be duly persevered in; the nation will become enlightened and improved; our liberties will be secure; and our government will remain a permanent beacon-light of freedom—an object to be admired, and an example to be imitated, by freemen throughout the world. But if the people be allowed, from the want of suitable schools, to continue ignorant, and under the sway of impulse and passion, rather than of enlightened intellect and sound morals, they will be fit instruments in the hands of the unprincipled and ambitious; misrule will invade us; anarchy and state convulsion will ensue; and the drama will close by the surrender of our liberties to some victorious military adventurer. Such has been the fate of other Republics, from like

causes; and the same will be ours, unless we avert it, by the discipline recommended. And should *we* fall, the victims of our wanton neglect, we shall involve in our ruin the freedom, rights, and interests of our race, perhaps for centuries—possibly for ever. The open champions, and secret friends of liberty, in every climate and country where the seed has been planted, discouraged by our failure, will abandon hope, and sink into inaction. Nor is it easy to conceive how any other people can hereafter make an experiment of self government, under auspices more favorable and promising, than those we have enjoyed. I need scarcely add, that the system of education here advised, can never be established and rendered available, without such an increase of the salaries of teachers as may enlist men of talents in the cause, reward them for their services, and secure to them in society the consideration and standing, to which the dignity and usefulness of their profession entitles them.

As respects the *moral* education of the community, which offers the surest guaranty of all that is most estimable in social, safe and valuable in political, and desirable in individual life, we must look for that to other sources than popular schools. In no public institutions of any description can that be satisfactorily cultivated and matured—though it may be aided in them. Its birth-place and only source of salutary nurture and training, is at home—in the nursery where it should begin—by the family-fireside where it should be continued—and in every spot, and under the influence of every object and action beneath the parental roof. For to produce the result so important in all respects, and so earnestly to be coveted and toiled for, every family should be in itself a *school of morals*. And *parents must be the teachers*. This is true, more particularly of mothers, whose influence over their children, for good or evil, may be rendered almost boundless. Hence the weight and sacredness of maternal responsibility, in relation to the moral training of children. And deep and condemnatory is the delinquency of that mother, who neglects her offspring for any other engagement short of necessity—more especially should she neglect

them from motives of vanity and perverted taste, to run the round of pleasure and fashion, and to mingle and shine among the gaudes of the day. I shall only add, what every body knows, that morals and manners are taught to much better effect, by example than by precept—though both are requisite. That parent who leads himself a correct and virtuous life, and protects his children from profligate society, though he reads them but rarely a moral lesson, does much more to restrain them from vice and rear them to virtue, than he whose lips distil perpetually, in the most solemn and persuasive accents, the soundest precepts, while his life is a tissue of irregularity and crime.

As it is now administered throughout the country, Popular education is so defective in its elements, that the benefits derived from it are exceedingly limited. In proof of this, it does not furnish matter to fit those who receive it for any one mode of life, or form of business, more than for another. It communicates nothing but general instruction; and even that on a scale extremely contracted. It instructs those who avail themselves of it in reading, writing, and ciphering, and gives them perhaps a smattering of geography and bad grammar; and there its lessons end. Not another element does this petty scheme of instruction contain. An acquaintance with nature, her powers and modes of action, which alone constitutes practical and useful knowledge in the concerns of life, makes no part of it. The art of *observation*, which is but another name for a *perusal of the Book of Nature*, and which is the most unerring means of attaining correct and solid information, forms no share of the discipline practised in our popular schools. Instead of being taught and encouraged to use their *senses*, as the natural inlets of knowledge from every thing around them, children are taught to believe, that books alone should be the objects of their attention.

Am I told, that it is incompatible with the order and good government of schools, for the pupils to do aught but attend to their books, during the hours of study and recitation? I reply; be it so. Let the importance then of active and accurate observation, during hours of leisure, and throughout the

whole of life, be impressed on them, as an indispensable element of their education; and let them be disciplined in the practice of it, when opportunity permits. I refer to this the more earnestly, in consideration of the immense mischief, which all men do, at times, both to themselves and to society, by means of loose and incorrect observation, or by not observing at all. To such an extent is this evil carried, that it is hazardous to repose implicit confidence in reports, even when their authors have been eye-witnesses of the events, and have no disposition to falsify or deceive. Surely then the art of observation (which is only to *see*, and *hear*, and *taste*, and *smell*, and *feel* things *as they are*) cannot be too early taught to children, nor its importance too sedulously inculcated on them, as a part of their education. To show further and more forcibly the importance of this injunction, let the following simple experiment be made.

Take, from the common walks of life, twenty men, without selection, and make them spectators of the same *general event*, which shall be marked by a variety of incident and detail. Within an hour after the close of the scene, let them be examined on their knowledge and recollection of the particulars of it; and it will be found that scarcely *two* of them will concur in their narratives. Why? Because they have been *inattentive* and *inaccurate* in their *observation*. They have not so employed their perceptive powers, as to collect by them the matter of information, which they are calculated and intended by nature to receive. Hence the discrepancies of the testimony often sworn to by witnesses in Courts of Justice; and hence also the frequent and gross misrepresentations of the substance of the discourses of public speakers, by those who have *heard* them—but not *listened* to them. This evil can be removed only by *strictness of attention* and *accuracy of observation*; which ought, I say, to be inculcated, as elements of education.

As far as I have gained a knowledge of their contents, the school-books used in our primary institutions, are exceedingly defective. They contain nothing that can be called *appropriate* or *well-defined knowledge*—such knowledge, I mean, as is

calculated to qualify for business those who receive it, by its affinity to any definite and practical end. The matter contained in them is fitted much better for momentary amusement and pastime, than for useful instruction. Yet such are the constitution and character of the minds of children, even at an early age, that it is easy to find subjects that will impart to them both pleasure and useful information at the same time.

Such, however, are not the subjects treated of in the torrents of juvenile school-books now gushing from the press, under popular and imposing titles, and with pompous recommendatory certificates, to impose on the ignorant and unthinking, for the benefit of the artful. Those subjects, as well as the manner in which they are handled, address themselves to the feelings much more than to the intellect.

Nor, apart from books intended for education in schools, is there any hazard in asserting, that the abuse of the press, as respects both the quantity and quality of its general issues, constitutes one of the most formidable evils of the time. It is a fountain, that seems inexhaustible, of heterogeneous matter, a large portion of which not only ministers to frivolity, and vitiates the taste, but tends to demoralize the mind of the community. It pampers and strengthens the animal passions much more than the moral sentiments, or the intellectual faculties, and thereby directly panders to vice. And all this, to inflate the vanity of conceited scribblers, and gratify the cupidity of speculating publishers. For there is abroad a spirit of speculation, in *book-making*, almost as flagrant, as that which maddens the land-jobbing, stock-breeding and cotton-planting part of the community—and it is infinitely more pernicious.

With all my admiration of the talents, and veneration of the virtues of Sir Walter Scott, I am compelled to believe, that he has unintentionally done more mischief to English literature, and its readers, than any other man that has ever lived. And Bulwer is pursuing a similar career.

Those two mighty authors are the parents of the clustering swarms of novelists, romancers, and tale-tellers, that are so

fearfully overspreading Great Britain and America. And, for every writer of any merit they have given birth to, they have produced by the score, if not by the hundred, (with Byron, however, to assist them,) rhymers, and prozers, whose works should be burnt, by the common executioner! The frost is not more fatal to the latter harvest, than are the productions, of some of those writers, to whatever is praiseworthy in morals, or substantial and tasteful in polite literature. But to return from this digression.

I have said that the selection of school-books for the primary schools of our country, is injudicious. In one respect I consider it peculiarly so. I allude to the almost universal use of the Bible as one of them.

Under a calm and unprejudiced inspection of the effects produced, by introducing that volume into popular schools, as a common lesson-book, I feel persuaded that the impropriety of the practice cannot fail to be satisfactorily perceived. The Bible should be read only to be venerated and loved, and for the improvement of the readers in morals and piety. But how can veneration be produced in children *for*, or instruction and improvement be received by them *from*, a book, the meaning of many, perhaps most parts of which they cannot comprehend, and over which they are compelled to toil and puzzle, amidst the innumerable disagreeabilities of a crowded school-room—the monotonous din of their school-fellows mumbling over their hated tasks, in every discordant key-note, from lowest base, to highest treble—the angry frowns and threats of the master—the punishment inflicted by him—the cries and sobs of the chastised—and the general panic and sympathy produced by the infliction—are not scenes like these, which are daily occurrences in country schools, calculated to produce any sentiments rather than those of veneration and love toward the exercises associated with them? Most assuredly they are. Aversion and dislike are a much more natural product of such causes. Bitter associations beget bitter remembrances, and extend almost necessarily to all connected circumstances, as well as to the grounds and elements of events. Even the *close*, perhaps it may be

called the *gross* familiarity, which children contract for the Bible, by thumbing it, soiling it, cat-earing it, and tossing it about rudely and wantonly in schools, detracts of necessity from the regard and veneration, in which it should be held by them. That volume should never be placed in the hands of the young, for familiar perusal, until their *reflecting* and *moral* faculties are sufficiently developed and matured, to fit them to *understand* and *feel* its *value* and its *sanctity*. Nor is this all. Even its *binding* should be more than usually neat and handsome, if not rich and costly, as a token of the preciousness and importance of its contents. And it should be read by the youthful at first, under the supervision, and accompanied by the comments, of suitable instructors. Let the Bible be introduced to the knowledge and familiarity of the young, under precautions and associations like these; and I hazard nothing in asserting, that the sentiment of veneration for it will be greatly increased. That Mahometans venerate the Alcoran much more highly than christians do the Bible, cannot be questioned. Nor is it doubtful, that this is owing, in no small degree, to the respectful and solemn manner, in which they are obliged to handle it; and the superb binding in which it usually appears. To make a common school-book of it, they would deem almost as unholy, as open apostacy from the Prophet and the Faith.

I have said a'ready, and now repeat, that public seats of learning, whatever be their grade, are not the places, where, either morality or religion can be successfully inculcated. By withholding the Bible from them, therefore, *as a school-book*, nothing will be, in these respects, forfeited or lost. On the contrary, much may, in my opinion, be saved and gained, as far as a regard for the SCRIPTURES is concerned. For these reasons, and others which might be offered, I am constrained to consider the arguments, urged by many learned and excellent individuals in defence of making a "school-book" of the Bible, *groundless* and *invalid*.

That the elements of common education, in its present condition, are scanty and defective, and that the books of instruc-

tion used in our primary schools, may be greatly improved, has been already asserted, and will not, I think, be denied or held doubtful. In the United States, where there are but few large hereditary possessions, and where of course idleness and a comfortable subsistence are hardly compatible with each other, all persons are educated for some contemplated end—I mean for some given walk or occupation in life, where an independence may be acquired by industry and care. It is reasonable, therefore, that, as far as may be practicable, they should receive, as a part of even their early education, such knowledge as may be most relevant to the business they mean to pursue, and such as accords best with the state of society, where they design to reside.

Of this description, as a general rule, is the knowledge of domestic, agricultural, and horticultural economy; which includes branches that children, at an early age, can easily understand; and which, by skilful management, may be rendered exceedingly useful and attractive to them. So may every other form of knowledge, which embraces visible and interesting objects of nature. For, when correctly and judiciously delineated, nature is always pleasing to childhood. Works on these branches, prepared for schools, should contain appropriate wood-cuts or lithographs, and comprise so much of botany and natural history, as may be necessary to give a suitable acquaintance with domestic animals and plants—their appearance, characters, habits, manners, mode of rearing, training, and general improvement, marks of distinction between the more and less perfect and valuable of them; and such other points respecting them, as may be most pleasing and useful. Nor should other leading matters, which I have not time to specify, but which will readily present themselves to intelligent inquirers, in domestic, agricultural, and horticultural economy, be neglected. To this might well be added some account of the most interesting and useful wild animals and plants, that inhabit our own woods and waters, and are made to contribute to our subsistence or comforts. A boy skilfully educated in this way, will be better prepared, at *fourteen*, to enter on

the business of common country life, than a young man, at *four-and-twenty*, furnished only with the common school knowledge of the present day. The propriety and necessity of giving to all boys, as a part of their education, some knowledge of agricultural affairs, in the United States, are the more obvious, in consideration of the fact, that, not only is agriculture the great business of the country, but that many resort to it ultimately, who had been previously engaged in other pursuits. Our agriculture, moreover, compared to that of certain other nations, is crude and defective. We can hardly run to excess, therefore, in any schemes we may devise, to encourage the spirit and cherish the love of it.

For boys possessed of a native turn and endowed with talents for mechanical pursuits, corresponding provisions may easily be made. School-books, judiciously prepared, containing familiar expositions of the simplest, and most intelligible principles of mechanics, illustrated by suitable plates or prints, may be placed in their hands with propriety and advantage. And it will soon appear, that whatever may be their habits as to other studies, they will be devoted to this. To meet the early discovered genius of others, whatever bent it may take, kindred arrangements may be readily made. And here the benefits of Phrenology will become invaluable.

Thus, to the *usual* forms of elementary instruction, which common-school education every where imparts, let it unite such *special* forms, as may aid in fitting pupils for definite pursuits, and the improvement in it will be important. This will give it an object and an aim, which it does not now possess; and without which its defects are palpable. Such are some of the principles, which reason seems to prescribe on this subject; and experience and reflection will furnish the details.

Lessons as well as examples for the discouragement and prevention of *falsehood*, *profane swearing*, and *intemperance*, cannot be too early inculcated, or too earnestly impressed on the minds of youth. For it is on the *prevention* of these evils, and not on their cure, that reliance can be safely and reasonably placed. Among the children of the United States, the two

first named vices are disgracefully prevalent. The first of the three more especially may almost be said to reign as an *epidemic* in the morals of our land. Children are not instructed as they should be in the sacredness of truth, and the culpability of violating it, whether by actions or words. A leading reason of this is, the *dissoluteness* of adults on the same subject. For what but gross practical falsehood are the want of punctuality in engagements, insincere professions, breeches of promise, and the countless forms of overreaching and deception in barter and trade? And such practices are revoltingly fashionable. School-books, I say, ought to be prepared, with lessons condemnatory of these vices, which should be solemnly commented on by teachers to their pupils. And, as already stated, as soon as children can be made to comprehend the subject, they should, as a part of their education, be put on their guard against the manifold falsehoods and devices, by which demagogues and their satellites may defraud them, first of their rights, and ultimately of their freedom.

One suggestion more shall finish my remarks, under the present head of my subject. In every form of education, for whatever end it may be intended, lessons should be given, and engraven on the mind by illustration and example, of the paramount importance of *practising industry*, and *economizing time*. Without this, nothing truly great and useful can ever be achieved. Time is infinitely the most valuable of our possessions. Yet how lightly is it estimated, and how wantonly squandered!—especially by the youthful! Nor, as relates to this point, are parents and teachers free from heavy and manifold delinquencies. While children are strictly cautioned by them to be careful of their clothes, books, and pocket-money; they are but rarely lessoned on the saving and correct application of their time. Yet, compared to the latter, the former are but baubles, unworthy of regard. It is the saving and virtuous employment of time that make a Titus or a Washington; while the waste, and the vicious use of it make an Arnold and a Cataline.

Of a Liberal education the elements are much more numer-

ous, and of a higher order. In their full extent, they embrace the entire Science of nature, united to such a command of language, as is sufficient for all the purposes of writing and speech. I mean of course the higher purposes as well as the lower; for no man is a liberal scholar, whatever may be his other attainments, who has not a perfect knowledge, critical, philosophical, and practical, of his native tongue. Though an Englishman or an American be steeped to the core in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, Syriac and even Sanscrit; and in every modern language of continental Europe; and in all the aboriginal tongues of the New World; if he be deficient in English, he has but a spurious claim to liberal scholarship. Nor can I think favourably of either the taste or patriotism, judgment or self-respect of him, whatever may be his name or nation, who wastes his time in an engrossing pursuit of foreign languages, whether ancient or modern, and neglects that, in which he lisped his earliest wants and wishes, and received the earliest soothing of affection. Our "mother tongue," *because it is* our "mother tongue," bears to us a relation, which deserves to be held sacred. In the sentiments of regard and attachment, which it claims from us, it is virtually identified with the land of our birth. Any defection from it in favour of another tongue might well be deemed treason.

As far as language is concerned, then, a thorough knowledge and command of English is the highest qualification of an American Scholar. It is the choicest element in his literary chaplet, and its attainment should constitute the height of his ambition. But, owing to an antiquated, and I think a perverted, condition of things, it is much to be lamented that such is not the prevailing sentiment. Too many American scholars pride themselves more on a mere smattering in the languages, in which Demosthenes and Cicero declaimed and wrote, than they would do on the most thorough acquaintance with their native tongue—that tongue, in which I fearlessly assert, that modern poets have equalled the ancient ones, and in which British and American orators have, in some respects, surpassed the boasted models of Greece and

Rome. How heretical soever this may be pronounced by the adorers of the ancients, all the facts that bear on the subject proclaim it to be true. Yet, in certain coteries that call themselves *classical*, Busby and Parr are all but *idolized*, because they wrote in Greek and Latin better than in English! But more of this hereafter.

I have said that a Liberal education includes the whole science of nature, as far as it is developed. It comprises therefore a knowledge of the properties of matter both living and dead, with their relations, powers, and influences; of the general principles and laws, by which that portion of material creation subject to our scrutiny is actuated and governed; and of so much of practical and experimental details, as may be necessary for illustration and proof, in further researches. Nor does it stop here. It embraces also an acquaintance with mind, so far as relates to its faculties and functions, their connexion with living organized matter, and the forms of action resulting from the union. The following then may be regarded as a catalogue in part of the leading elements of this caste of education, stated somewhat in the order in which, from the progressive development of the mental faculties, from infancy to adult age, they may be most advantageously studied.

The knowledge of language, and a free and correct command of it in reading, writing, and speech, constitute the common foundation of every sort of intellectual discipline. The reason is, that language is the main channel for the *reception*, and the only one for the *usual communication*, of other kinds of knowledge.

Arithmetic, and the lower branches of Mathematics may be properly enough studied at an early period of pupilage. So may geography, mineralogy, botany, and natural history; and, under a proper arrangement, these may be rendered delightful to children, and no less so to those more mature in years. So may every other branch of knowledge, in the acquisition of which the perceptive faculties are chiefly concerned. Of this description are chemistry, the experimental

and demonstrative part of natural philosophy, and so much of astronomy, as does not include abstruse calculations. Of the same rank, and suitable as studies at the same period, are music and drawing to those who possess the requisite faculties, travels, voyages, biography, and so much of civil, military, and political history, as relates chiefly to events and descriptions. Book-keeping, chronology, and such other branches as involve dates, facts, numbers, and details, constitute also at this time appropriate subjects of Liberal Education.

A knowledge of these branches, and a few others, which a want of time forbids me to enumerate, being attained, and the *higher* faculties of the pupil being sufficiently matured, a corresponding class of studies may succeed. These lie within the region of philosophy, and call for the exercise of reason and judgment, in those who would master them. In more definite terms, they embrace relations of the higher and more scientific order, generalizations and abstractions, and are the special objects of the *reflecting* faculties. Of these faculties, Causality, which traces the connexion of cause and effect, climbing the chain of *past* events, and descending prophetically the links of the *future*, is the chief. It is that faculty, in a particular manner, which gives to the mind of the ripened sage, profundity and wisdom, and an extensive reach into coming occurrences; and which enables him, turning backward, to "look through Nature up to Nature's God." It was that which gave to Socrates and Aristotle, Bacon and Franklin their never-dying renown.

At this period of life, moreover, the moral organs complete their development, and their corresponding faculties become matured for action. Hence the fitness of the individual to enter on the study of moral science, and to improve himself in practical morality and virtue. In brief, he is now a *rational and moral* being, and is held responsible as such to his country and his fellow men; which, during his *causal* and *ethical non-age*, if the phrase be admissible, was not the case.

Some of the principal elements of Liberal education to be now incorporated with it, are the principles of natural philoso-

phy, and the philosophy of history, civil, political, and military, with mathematics and astronomy, in all their departments. To these add metaphysics and logic, as far as they deserve to be cultivated as distinct branches, *physical*, which might be better termed *philosophical* geography, political economy, and the science of government—in this country, the science of *free representative* government, without which Liberal Education would forfeit its name. Now is also the time for cultivating anthropology as a science—for studying I mean with higher and more philosophical views the structure, functions, and capabilities of the human body, as subservient to the promotion of health and strength, and the prevention of disease, and for forming an acquaintance with human rights, and with the new scheme of mental philosophy, under the heretofore scoffed-at name of Phrenology. For that that once derided, abused, and anathematized branch will yet become a portion of Liberal Education, is as certain, as any other coming event. Add to this, a knowledge of the philosophical history of man, as far as it is made out, that some acquaintance may be had with the varieties of our race, and reasonable views be formed of their relative standing, rights, and privileges, as participators of a common nature. Nor is this all. The study of Philology, including philosophical grammar, criticism, rhetoric and eloquence, poetry, and polite literature generally, with the *art of composition*, constitutes now appropriate exercises. The latter especially is of immense consequence—much more than it is generally allowed to be—because without it, pushed to an extent far beyond what is usual, no American Scholar can have a competent command of his native tongue, or can use it with that elegance and semi-omnipotency, of which talents and practice can render it the instrument. By skilful and persevering discipline in this art, hundreds of Americans might become, with certainty, Jeremy Taylors and Swifts, Bolingbrokes and Addisons; whereas, at present, we have scarcely perhaps one!

The last element I shall add, which may be safely announced as both splendid and important, is the PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE, as far as it is developed, usually called the "Philosophy of

Natural History," moulded into the form of NATURAL RELIGION—unfolding, I mean, the grandeur of creation, with its exquisite workmanship, faultless adaptation, and beneficent intent, manifesting the perfections of the Deity, in its production—his omnipotence and omnipresence, omniscience and immaculate goodness,—and eliciting toward him, through that channel, the gratitude, adoration, and homage, which are due to him from our race. Subjoin to this, a knowledge of the principles of Revealed Religion, free from the dogmas and perversions of sectarianism, and from the embittered and intolerant spirit they engender, and the work will be sufficiently complete, for all the purposes of cultivated life.

One of these purposes is to furnish a suitable foundation for the learned professions; for it will be seen, that I have not taken professional knowledge expressly into my estimate. I do not however hesitate to remark, that the learned professions in our country will never occupy the lofty and substantial ground that ought to belong to them, and on which it should be the pride and resolution of their members to place them, until they be erected on the basis of a Liberal Education. Professional knowledge, at the present day, destitute as it is of the preparatory attainments which ought to attach to it, is too meager and cheap to be highly estimable, useful, or honorable. The road to profession is not only too short in the United States; it runs through a barren and uncultivated region. Nor do appearances bespeak a disposition in the country to lengthen or enrich it. Such is the eagerness, with which young men hurry into professional and public life, and such the entire disregard of the time for elegant, refined, and substantial knowledge, that an attempt to enrich and perfect education, so as to render it what it should be, seems all but hopeless. That being the case, it is but reasonable that it be encumbered with no unnecessary, or superfluous element. In a special manner, none such should be crowded into it, to the exclusion of others more useful and essential.

This brings me not unnaturally, to offer a few remarks on a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, as one of the

elements of a Liberal education. On this subject it is my lot to differ in sentiment from a vast majority of my most able and learned contemporaries, not only in this country, but throughout Christendom. I am not unapprized, therefore, of the opposition I am to encounter, the hazard I am to run, and the unkind feelings I may possibly awaken, even in some of the individuals in this assembly, by an open discussion of it. But the topic being abundantly ripe for discussion, I shall not shrink from it, however far it may be from being an enviable task. The responsibility of opposing public opinion, when deemed erroneous, must be met by some one; and I am perfectly content to bear my share of it. All I ask, on the present occasion, which, from the courtesy of my audience, I am sure I shall receive, is a patient hearing, and an impartial examination of the thoughts I may express.

Treading as I am on precarious ground, I am peculiarly solicitous not to be misunderstood, either in the views I may present, or in my reasons for presenting them. My sensitiveness and anxiety on this point are the more intense, from a lively recollection, that, when speaking on the same topic, on a former occasion, I *was* misunderstood, and grossly misrepresented. From the sentiments I then uttered, I have been declared to be hostile to the study of Greek and Latin. This is a mistake. I am hostile only to the *misapplication* and *abuse* of that study—to an excessive consumption of time in it, in some cases, and to the pursuit of it, in others, to the neglect of more useful and important studies. I am opposed, moreover, to the compulsory study of Greek and Latin, by all the pupils in a seminary, without discrimination; while it is obvious that, to some of them, the task is irksome and vexatious even to distress; and that with all their industry and toil, their progress in it is slow, discreditable and mortifying to them. In such cases, let Phrenology be consulted, and it will show, that the pupils thus foiled and perplexed, are palpably deficient in the organ of Language, and can never become ready and respectable linguists, by any kind or degree of discipline. As well may an attempt be made to form a musician out of a

youth who has no ear (more properly, no *organ*) for music; or to make an expert opera dancer or tumbler, of one who is deformed in his person and limbs, rickety in his bones, and feeble in his muscles.

Yet may the youth, thus disqualified from making progress in the knowledge of the dead languages, have splendid talents for other studies, and may rise to renown in them. Such precisely was the case with Newton, who fell behind most of his school fellows and college mates, in his *classical* studies, nearly as far as he surpassed them, in numerical calculation, mathematics, and astronomy. While he was sometimes called "the *dunce* and the *calf*," in the former pursuit, he was a miracle in the latter. Other similar instances might be cited in abundance. In truth they are so common, that school boys are familiar with them.

It is a dictate of common sense, as well as of experience, that youths should be educated, not altogether according to the notions of their parents, guardians and instructors; but according to their own talents, and somewhat in accordance with their tastes, and the pursuits to which, as adults, they purpose to devote themselves. Let those, therefore, whom nature has endowed with a peculiar fitness, and a predominant love for the study of languages, indulge their inclination, and become *polyglots*, and even *pedants*, if they please. For the knowledge of the dead languages makes more pedants, than all other sorts of knowledge. But let youths, who are differently endowed, pursue a different course. Let their minds be mainly directed to those branches, for which they are most peculiarly qualified. It is thus and thus alone, that the educated portion of the community can attain to the highest eminence and usefulness, for which their faculties have fitted them. A contrary course has often driven young men from colléges and universities, who, had they been indulged in their favourite studies, and liberated from those toward which they had a native and unconquerable aversion, might have become ornaments to science, and benefactors of their race. And I venture to say, that toiling and puzzling over Greek and Latin has

disgusted and discouraged more young men, and frustrated their education and hopes of distinction, than any or all other forms of study. Indeed I have rarely seen a youth driven from college by his dislike of any particular exercise, other than the study of Greek and Latin—some abstruse branch of mathematics perhaps excepted. One reason of this is, that when a youth has no taste for the dead languages, he consults his judgment on the subject, and that tells him that the study of them is *useless*. And as respects himself, it tells him *truly*; for *to him*, with his *unfitness* and *aversion*, it is useless; and can never be turned by him to any purpose of either profit or honour. As regards other sorts of knowledge, the case is different. Though they are not exactly to his taste, he notwithstanding sees that he can employ them usefully in after life, and therefore labours cheerfully to attain them. It may be observed, as a general and important truth, that a strong and steady aversion in a pupil toward any given form of study, is testimony of a high order, that his capacity for it is weak. He should not be forced to pursue it, therefore, except for reasons unusually cogent. His *aversion* sufficiently discloses the cause, in manifesting his *unfitness*. It is the declaration of nature to that effect. The converse of this is equally true. It is a fundamental principle in the constitution of our minds, that if we have strong attachments to given studies, we have corresponding capacities for them. Nothing in our nature is more certain, than that we take pleasure in the exercise of our master faculties—and the reverse.

But I have other and yet stronger objections, not indeed to the *study* of the “Dead Languages,” (for to that, in given cases, I say, I do not object,) but to the extravagant and deceptive views that are entertained and propagated, on the score of its usefulness. A few of these notions, therefore, I shall briefly examine.

It is asserted that the study of Greek and Latin, like that of mathematics, is an *excellent*, if not an *essential* mode of exercise, to *strengthen all* the faculties of the mind, and fit them for the performance of other tasks.

This *allegation* (for it is nothing more) involves two mistakes. Even the study of mathematics does not exercise and strengthen *all* the faculties of the mind. It strengthens indeed but a very few of them, and forms therefore only a partial mode of mental cultivation and improvement. These few are chiefly Number, Form, Size, Comparison, and Causality—five only out of *thirty-six*; leaving the other *thirty-one* unexercised, and of course unimproved. No one will contend that a devotion to mathematics improves the votary in the faculties of Constructiveness, Taste, Time, Colour, Locality, Individuality, Eventuality, Wit, Imitation, or in any of his *moral* or *religious* faculties. Did time permit me to adduce facts and furnish details, these truths might be easily established beyond controversy. Many excellent mathematicians are exceedingly defective in the general compass and powers of the mind. One of the ablest practical mathematicians I am now acquainted with, is peculiarly limited in his other faculties.

Much farther is the study of Greek and Latin from exercising and invigorating *all* the faculties. The study of them, as *mere languages*, exercises the faculty of *Language*; and there the matter ends. That exercise moreover may be derived as well from the study of modern as of ancient tongues—from the study of English and German, as of Greek and Latin. If I am mistaken in this, the mistake can be corrected; and I will regard that man as, at once, my instructor and obliger, who will kindly perform the acceptable office. But in doing so, he must use other means than *mere assertion*, which has been hitherto *exclusively* employed. He must pursue a course of rigid analysis, deriving his facts and arguments either from the *nature of the case*, or from the resources of *actual experience*. It will be incumbent on him to make it clearly appear, that the study of Greek and Latin exercises more of the human faculties, than the study of other tongues. He must prove moreover that there exists between language and ideas something more than a *conventional* relation. In a word; to sustain his case satisfactorily, he must make good *an absurdity*—that the exercise of a *single faculty* of the mind is *tantamount to the ex-*

ercise of many or all of the faculties. Such is the task; but where is the champion who will attempt its performance?

Language is but the garb and drapery of ideas, and the means by which they are made manifest, and communicated from one mind to another. Articulate and written speech is altogether *artificial*, while ideas are the *immediate product of nature*, art having no more concern in their origin, than it has in the origin of fruit and flowers. To contend as many do, that any form of words, *as such*, can *produce* ideas, and invigorate all the idea-forming faculties, is as palpable an error as man can commit, or fancy conceive. Were the notion true, every individual would understand every language when first heard, and be instructed by listening to it. The words addressed to him would impart the ideas they were formed to represent. And this would be as true of one language as of another—of the language of the *Winnebagoes*, as of that of the *Greeks*. Language being the mere representative of ideas, but recalls those that have been previously formed. It generates none. As well may it be contended that the apparel generates the man who wears it. For language, I repeat, is but the apparel of thought.

There is in all ideas, moreover, or rather in their sources, a native fitness to exercise, gratify, and strengthen the faculties to which they correspond, as language strengthens *its* faculty. Thus tune gratifies and strengthens the faculty of Tune, colour the faculty of Colour, single objects the faculty of Individuality, facts or occurrences the faculty of Eventuality, and the relation of cause and effect, the faculty of Causality. Neither of these sources or agents, however, can exercise or improve any faculty but that to which it is immediately appropriate. Tune cannot excite to action the faculty of Colour; colour has no influence over the faculty of Eventuality; objects themselves, independently of their relations, give no exercise to Causality; nor has the mere study of language the slightest effect in giving action and strength to either of the faculties just cited; or to any faculty but that to which it immediately belongs.

I fearlessly appeal to any scholar, whether by toiling and puzzling, till his head has ached and his body reeled, over some knotty sentence in Homer, Pindar, Horace, or Juvenal, he has ever found his mind refreshed and brightened as to other studies—or improved and informed in any respect, except as to the interpretation of the passages he was examining? And if he be candid and independent, I confidently assert, that his answer will be no! He will even add—or I will take his place, and add for him, from my own experience, that such a scene of labour and perplexity, not unfrequently so confuses and muddles the brain, as to unfit it for a time, for any further intellectual action. And it never invigorates or in any way improves it. It is the *substance* of a book, and the manner in which it is handled, not the language in which it is written, that exercises and strengthens the principal faculties of the mind. The works of Euclid are as instructive, under an English translation, as they were in their original Greek attire. And so are the productions of Aristotle and Plato, Cicero and Seneca. Nor is the assertion less correct, when applied to the *Novum Organum* of Bacon, the *Principia* of Newton, or to any other work written originally in an ancient tongue. The *Traite de Mecanique Celeste* of Laplace, moreover, loses nothing of its instructiveness and sublimity, by being clothed in a suitable English dress. So certain is it that no one language exercises the intellectual faculties more profitably than another.

All this is unquestionably true, if the translation from one language to another be good. And it will hardly be contended, that every smatterer in the dead languages, or in French, can render the works referred to into better English, than even a *common* translator—much more an *able* one. Away then with the assertion, that the study of Greek and Latin improves *all* the human faculties! Such a *notion* is at open war with every principle of mental philosophy, and is unworthy of an enlightened era—or an enlightened individual! When teachers shall have learnt to invigorate the sense of *vision*, by the mere exercise of *hearing*, the sense of *hearing*, by the exercise of *smelling*, the sense of *smelling*, by the ex-

ercise of *touch*, or to invigorate either of the other senses, by the exercise of *taste*, then, and not before, let them talk of strengthening *all* the other faculties of the mind, by exercising that of Language, in the study of Greek and Latin! Or, let the same project be conceived and its practicability asserted, when horsemanship shall have been taught, by the exercise of the pen in writing, or of the pencil in painting! Nothing in the philosophy of man is more certain, than that each faculty of his mind has its specific mode of acting, and an appropriate and special subject in nature to act on; that no one faculty can act on the subject of another; nor can a faculty be strengthened in any other way, than by the exercise of itself. The faculty of Tune is improved only by the cultivation of music, the faculty of Number, by practice in calculation, the faculty of Eventuality, by an attention to facts, the faculty of Causality, by tracing the connexion between cause and effect, and the faculty of Language, by the study of language. But, by merely studying language, no one will learn to reason, play on a musical instrument, attain eminence in arithmetic, or paint a portrait. The truth of these remarks is proved by the fact, that the best linguists in college, who seem to acquire the knowledge of language by intuition and instinct, are often the worst arithmeticians and geographers, composuists and logicians.

But, say my opponents, without a knowledge of Greek and Latin, no one can have a thorough understanding of English. That no one can comprehend the etymology of a large portion of the English language, without an acquaintance with Greek and Latin, as fully as with it, is not denied. That however is of no avail in the present discussion. To be acquainted with the etymology of words, and so to understand their meaning and uses, as to apply them with readiness and correctness, elegance and force, to all the requisite purposes of speech, are different and independent attributes of mind. Hundreds of individuals, familiar with the derivation of the English tongue, are unable to use it with any degree of fluency or effect, in either conversation, writing, or public address; while, on the

contrary, *thousands* who are utter strangers to its derivation, employ it, in every form of communication, with great correctness, eloquence and power. And such are the only knowledge and command of it, that are either useful or desirable in the business of life. No man under the impulse of sprightly conversation or keen repartee, the flush of composition, or the impassioned excitement of public debate, thinks of the roots of the language he employs. Thus to divide his attention, would be to fail in his effort. The correct, and definite meaning of his words, with a choice selection and ready command of them, is all he requires. And that he can attain, without a knowledge of Greek and Latin, as fully as with it. Were I to say that a critical acquaintance with Greek and Latin may even mislead a scholar respecting the meaning of an English word, there would be nothing in the assertion paradoxical or unsound. The signification attached to many English words, by *custom*, which is the *law of speech*, is materially different from the signification of their Greek and Latin roots. The classical scholar, therefore, recollecting their original meaning, and conforming to it, in his employment of them, will sometimes go astray; while the mere English scholar, adhering to the custom of the best writers, will use them correctly.

Do you ask me, how a mere English scholar can acquire a perfect knowledge and command of his native tongue? I reply, that the process is equally plain and certain. Let him render himself familiar with his English dictionary, his English grammar, and the writings of the best English and American authors; let him become equally familiar with the style of the best public speakers of every description, whether in the pulpit, at the bar, or in popular assemblies; frequent the most cultivated and intellectual society, to which he can have access, and participate in its conversation; and, above all, let him practice perseveringly the arts of composition and speaking, employing in every case his best style and manner, and striving to improve them—let him do this, under a confirmed resolution to excel, and his task is achieved. He will become according to his native endowments, an able and elegant

colloquist, writer, or public speaker, or all of them combined, without the slightest knowledge of the dead languages. This, and not the study of Greek and Latin, is the true and only way to acquire a thorough knowledge, and a ready command of the English tongue. On the contrary; be the discipline here referred to neglected, and those who are called British and American scholars, may pour by day over the venerated tomes of Greek and Roman lore, and pillow their heads on them and dream of them by night—they may become soaked and embalmed in the dead languages, and be novices still in the knowledge and employment of their mother tongue. Sundry examples of this kind have been known to me.

Time was when a knowledge of Greek and Latin was necessary to a thorough knowledge of English; because the latter language was in an immature condition, and dependent on the former. But that time has gone by. The English language is out of its *minority*, and amply prepared to *set up for itself*. Our English dictionaries and grammars, though they may be yet greatly improved, are much more full and perfect, than our Greek and Latin ones, by the aid of which those languages are learnt. In like manner, English is also already learnt by similar aid from its own dictionaries and grammars; a mode of studying it, which may be likewise yet improved. Of English literature the same is true. In the extent, variety, and value of its matter, as well as in vigour and profundity of thought, it surpasses all that antiquity can boast. Nor are numerous specimens of it, that might be cited, at all inferior in beauty, sublimity, and exquisite finish. Were I to say, that in some of these latter qualities also it is superior to any thing bequeathed to us by Greece or Rome, the assertion could be backed by powerful testimony. It is nothing but an idolatrous veneration of the ancients, co-operating with a sentiment of disparagement toward the moderns, that can induce enlightened scholars and men of ability to deny these truths. In the *weak* and *superficial*, pedantry and an affectation of scholarship produce the same effect.

Distance, whether in *time* or *place*, increases our admiration

of men and things. *Familiarity* and *proximity*, on the contrary, detract from it. Time has thrown over the ancients a sacred and mystical veil, which, by half concealing them, magnifies and elevates them to our mental vision, somewhat on the principle of an "*optical illusion!*" And our assumed familiarity with the moderns, because they are nearer to our own date, cheapens them in our estimation. Americans imagine the distinguished men of Great Britain and France superior to their own countrymen, until they form an intimacy with them; when they become convinced of their mistake. In like manner, an intimate acquaintance, could it now be formed, with Zeno and Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, would prove to us *their inferiority* to many modern philosophers. Nor can any thing but the causes here referred to, so far mislead judges, otherwise competent, as to induce them to pronounce the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, superior to those of Chatham, Burke, Sheridan, Pitt, Fox, Henry, Ames, Pinckney, Webster, and other modern orators, that might be easily named. In a word; in all mental productions, except architecture and statuary, the ancients are far surpassed by the moderns. Nor is it certain that Canova was not equal to Phidias or Lysippus. As far as the ravages of time have left us the means of deciding, the palm must be awarded to *modern* painters; and, in poetry, the ancients have nothing to compare with the miracles of genius transmitted to us by Dante, Shakspeare, and Milton.

Taken in its present condition then, elaborated and matured for centuries, by many of the ablest philologists and scholars the world has produced, the English language is, in all respects, as perfect as either of the three, Saxon, Greek, or Latin, from which it is derived. It is moreover, *now*, as independent of them, as they are of each other, or as either of them is of it; because it has assimilated to its own nature, and converted into its own being, all it has received from them. Not more completely is the food we derive from the flesh of our domestic animals converted into our own persons; nor are our persons more distinct from the animals we feed on, or more capable of acting and being employed in entire independence

of them. It may therefore be studied as successfully alone, and without reference to them, as they can without regard or reference to it. Having its own structure, its own spirit, and its own peculiar idioms and forms of expression, it is now a *self-sustained* production, and could exist and be improved, were Greek and Latin annihilated and forgotten. It is matter of amazement, therefore, that able scholars, and enlightened and reflecting men, should still contend for the necessity of a knowledge of these two languages to a full understanding of English. Beyond all question, if an acquaintance with Greek and Latin, which are but mere *feeders*, be necessary to the formation of an accomplished English scholar, an acquaintance with Saxon, which is the PARENT STREAM, is immeasurably more so. Let us be consistent, then; and if our youth *must* dwell for years on the languages of Greece and Rome, let them not neglect entirely that of our bold and enterprising ancestors, which as a language, is more closely allied to our own, as well as far more important to it, than either of the other two. On this point let me not be misunderstood. I do not contend that the Saxon language is either as perfect, rich, or elegant, as the Greek. I know it is not. But I do contend, that it is more concise, spirited, expressive, and vigorous; and, in its genius and structure, I repeat, much more assimilated to English. It is a rough and hardy product of the north, exhibiting in its frame and character, much of the iron nerve, abrupt manner and irresistible force of those who spoke it. It bears in it nothing that smacks of the feminine softness or languid repose of a southern clime. It sighs not in zephyrs, distils not in "accents bland, and tones mellifluous," and murmurs but sparingly in tenderness and love. If it ministers to music, it is chiefly to that, which inflames the warrior, and invokes him to the use of the spear and the sabre. It is, moreover, as tense and unyielding as the Saxon steel, and as keen and cutting, as the blast from the icy ocean—and capable of being rendered almost as boisterous. Hence, by far the most pungent, pithy, and expressive phraseology in our language, is that which is composed of Saxon English. So, I say, is the most *concise*;

because a very large proportion of that form of English consists of words of *one* and *two* syllables; while those derived from other sources are much longer. Greek and Roman English is as far beneath it in vigour and intensity, as are the other varieties of man beneath the Anglo-Saxon race. Our best English writers, therefore, whose works bear without injury the trials of time, and even increase in reputation under them, are those who have drawn most abundantly on our *ancient mother tongue*. Of this class, Swift and Addison, Bolingbroke and Jeremy Taylor are exemplifications. It is to be lamented, however, that owing to the peculiar and tasteless spirit of the age in which he wrote, the last named author has deformed and injured his admirable Saxon-English style, by squadrons of intrusive Greek and Latin quotations.

Nor should it be forgotten, that, in no other language, which scholarship can adduce, Greek and Latin not excepted, is the sound so perfect an "echo to the sense," as in Saxon-English, and the source it is derived from. Proof of this we have in the words—*bang—clash—slap—slash—crash—dash—lash—thrash—crack—crush—hurl—rush—roar—loud—creak—shriek—screech—scream—groan—moan—hoarse—jar—thunder—tramp*—and in thousands of others, whose sound alone, when pronounced singly, is a comment on their meaning, which can hardly be misunderstood, even by those who are strangers to them. And those phrases and clauses in our literature, whose sounds are most strikingly in keeping with their signification, are composed almost entirely of Saxon-English. Thus, what can be more perfectly significant, than the cant phrases, *hurly-burly—hurry-scurry*—"Ran *hurry-scurry* through the room, and *pop* into the parlour entered" (Gray.) And again—"Sharp misery had *worn* him to the *bones*."

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"And when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
"The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar."

* * * * *

"With many a weary step, and many a groan,
"Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone.

"The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
 "Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground."

* * * * *

"The curfew tolls! the knel of parting day;
 "The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea;
 "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
 "And leaves the world to darkness, and to me."

Though these quotations contain several words of *Roman-English*, yet the terms, which give them nerve and character, are of *Saxon* origin.

As another objection to the views I am advocating, we are told that all our best English writers have been versed in Greek and Latin.

That there is a strong semblance of truth in this, is certain; but that it is *strictly* and entirely true, may be safely denied. And that writers have excelled in English composition, and in composition in other modern languages, in proportion to their knowledge of Greek and Latin, is without *a shadow of foundation in truth*. Shakspeare knew neither Greek nor Latin. Yet, as a writer of English he is unrivalled. William Cobbet, whose style, for purity and conciseness, perspicuity and strength, (qualities of the highest order in writing,) is not surpassed by that of any of his contemporaries, was entirely unversed in the dead languages. So were Franklin and Washington, who wrote with great and peculiar excellence; and so are many female authors of distinguished merit, whose names are too well known to need a citation. To Washington, in particular, I here refer, not only in a spirit of intense admiration; but with a sentiment of the loftiest pride and exultation, as an American. His letters and other productions, as various and interesting, as they are extensive and important, have entwined around his brow the CHAPLET OF LETTERS, in splendid relief with the laurels of the hero, and the time-worn and venerable locks of the sage. They give positive proof, that he wielded his pen, as gracefully and vigorously, and almost as gloriously, as he wielded his sword. His "WRITINGS," whose publication is now in progress, are by far the most distinguished and valuable contribution that American Literature has

received during the present century—if not the most valuable it has ever received. To the few names here adduced, might be added hundreds of others, who, unversed in the languages of the Greeks and Romans, have acquired in Great Britain and America, both as writers and speakers, the most enviable standing, and brilliant renown. To this number belong Patrick Henry, John Marshall, and the great surviving *Orator of the West*. To extend my remarks on this subject; neither Buffon, Moliere, nor Cuvier had the slightest acquaintance with Greek or Latin. Yet do they stand, each in his own sphere, in the foremost class of French writers. And General Foy, the most commanding orator in the Chamber of Deputies, was also a stranger to the dead languages. So, I *think*, was Mirabeau, the Pericles of his nation. Assuredly he was very limited in his knowledge of Greek and Latin, if not entirely wanting in it.—But why multiply names in proof of my position? *One* serves my purpose as well as a *thousand*. If, without a knowledge of the ancient tongues, a single Briton or American has become consummately great, in writing or speaking, or both, my end is attained. The fact shows, that such knowledge is not *essential* to the most powerful, useful, and fascinating command of the English language—and that is all I am endeavouring to prove. A knowledge of Greek and Latin gives a more precise and critical acquaintance with English words, in a philological disquisition, or any other form of mere verbal inquiry. But, that it gives the slightest aid in the readiness of command or the tastefulness of selection, the power of combination or the appropriateness of the application of words, in writing or speaking, may be safely denied.

I have been told indeed, that, though Franklin, Washington, and others wrote well without a knowledge of Greek or Latin, they would have written much better with it. This is a mere *conjecture*, employed as a *cavil*. No one knows how they would have written, as Greek and Latin scholars; because the experiment was not made. The notion is but one of the hundred expedients, which artful disputants employ, as a substitute for something better, in a cause that cannot be

sustained by facts. It is intended to darken, not to elucidate—to puzzle, not to convince. I dismiss it, therefore, without further notice, as unworthy of a discussion, where facts alone are of any avail.

As respects my second position, that authors do not excel in English composition, in proportion to their attainments in Greek and Latin, it is already so palpable, that to cite examples in proof of it, would be a waste of time. I have rarely known a thoroughly drilled Helenist or Romanist, who could write or speak English with very high effect. And I have known many such, who spoke it miserably—and who never wrote it, but in violation of the rules of composition and grammar. Those who idolatrously worship the “golden calf” of Greek and Latin, hold English scholarship beneath their dignity, and therefore do not excel in it. Even Sir Walter Scott, a miracle in English literature, had but a meager acquaintance with the dead languages. Many a school-pedant, unable to pen a correct paragraph in his native tongue, greatly surpassed him in what is called, by way of *pre-eminence*, CLASSICAL LEARNING—but which is far from being justly entitled to the pre-eminence conceded to it. The kind of learning, which, in an Englishman or an American, greatly surpasses every other, in high and commendable qualities, is that which best prepares him, to wield the mightiness of his mother tongue, with correctness and utility, splendour and power. And shame to the renegade, who would forego or exchange such learning, for the comparatively petty ability to compose epitaphs and sonnets in the language of Cicero! Yet it is not long since a criticism met my eye, emptying on an author of certain productions of the kind, the most fulsome panegyric. He was proclaimed quite a miracle of scholarship, though, with all the aid of his Greek and Latin, he was but a smatterer in the literature of his native tongue. Finally; in our own country, the author of the *Sketch-Book*, pronounced in England the most graceful and polished writer of the day, is but slightly versed in the ancient languages.

Am I asked, is not a knowledge of Greek and Latin essen-

tial to eminence in the learned Professions? I answer no—certainly not to eminence in Medicine and Law. That, *when possessed*, it may be matter of convenience, as well as in some degree *useful* in them, is not denied. But its usefulness is overrated. When fairly estimated, taking into the account the only ends to which it is applied, it is doubtful whether it is worth the time and trouble of acquiring it. And that it is not *essential*, appears from the fact, that some of the most distinguished members of Medicine and Law, have been destitute of it. John Hunter stood formerly, and Sir Astley Cooper stands now, at the head of one branch of the medical profession. Yet an acquaintance with the dead languages made no part of their acquirements. And it is well known that the same is true, of some of the most eminent lawyers in the United States. Even Alexander Hamilton, one of the first civilians and lawyers of the age, had such a limited acquaintance with Greek and Latin, (if indeed he had any at all,) that it was never felt by him in his professional operations, or in any other of the exercises of his mind. He was far above all such puny assistants—or rather above a reliance on such *trivial things*, which *could not assist* him. Had Greek and Latin been blotted from existence before his birth, the event would have had no effect on his greatness. He would have been HAMILTON without them. The knowledge of Greek was no more necessary to his greatness, than was a knowledge of English to the greatness of Demosthenes. A notion the reverse of this, would be equally the reverse of common sense. Such men have the elements of greatness implanted by their Creator in the constitution of their minds; and those elements may be as certainly developed, and brought to maturity, under the influence of one cultivated language, whether ancient or modern, as under that of another. The mental powers are much less under the sway of language, than is generally imagined. The celebrated William Lewis of Philadelphia, who stood long at the head of the American Bar, could not translate correctly a sentence of *and Latin*, was a stranger even to the Greek alphabet. Yet, as an advocate, he was illustrious, and as a counsellor profound.

And the late Dr. Rush, though his Inaugural Dissertation was in Latin, and though, as an elegant writer of English, and an able and successful practitioner and teacher of medicine he was one of the most distinguished physicians of the age, knew but little of the Roman language, and much less of the Greek. On this point I speak confidently; because I speak from personal knowledge.

True; most of the technical terms in Law and Medicine are derived from Greek and Latin; especially from the former. Those who have a knowledge of that language, therefore, experience from it, in the *commencement* of their professional studies, some facility in the understanding of those terms. But this advantage over pupils, who are ignorant of Greek and Latin, is of short duration. It was gained by the long and laborious process of consulting and conning Greek and Latin books. It was therefore the reward of much time consumed, and much toil endured. But the meaning of those terms can be learnt by others, in a tenth part of the time, and with a like disproportion of labour, by consulting *professional dictionaries or glossaries alone*. I know this to be true; because I have seen it verified in hundreds of instances. As respects medicine in particular, whose technical nomenclature is most voluminous, I am far from having found Greek and Latin scholars to be always the most successful students in it. In that respect, I know from observation, that their acquaintance with the dead languages does not uniformly or highly avail them.

Respecting other branches of science, the same is true. Their nomenclatures can be learnt, and pre-eminence attained in them, without a knowledge of Greek and Latin. Sir Humphrey Davy, by far the most illustrious chemist of his time, was a stranger to those languages. And some of the ablest botanists, mineralogists, and *general* naturalists in the United States have been in the same condition.

Mere nomenclature excepted, there is no more essential connexion between Greek or Latin, and any branch of science that forms an element of a Liberal Education, than between

Sancrit, or Gaelic, and that branch. And, as already stated, the nomenclature can be learnt, without the formal study of those languages. To contend then, that a knowledge of Greek and Latin is indispensable to a Liberal Education, of the highest order as respects science and the command of English, is to reject the fruits of observation and experience, to cling to prejudice and be deaf to reason, to follow custom and fashion to the abandonment of common sense, and to advocate an error as gross as can be imagined.

Still am I told, however, that by far the greater number of able and distinguished modern authors have been Greek and Roman scholars. Granted; and the reason is plain. An overwhelming majority of writers (in the proportion of *one hundred to one*, and perhaps higher) have been thus educated. Had they failed therefore to produce either a greater amount of fruit, or fruit of higher qualities, the failure would have been astonishing. The Greek and Latin scholars, who have become authors, have been also in other respects educated men—familiar, I mean, with science, as well as with language; while those who have achieved authorship, without the dead languages, have been, for the most part, equally strangers to science—except what they have acquired by their own unassisted labours. Contending then on terms so fearfully at odds, it might be pronounced *impossible* for the latter class of writers to equal the former. Cultivated fruit is always the most valuable; and of a hundred fields thoroughly tilled, the product must be, of necessity, both better and more abundant, than that of a single field, or even of several fields, scarcely tilled at all.

Be it distinctly understood, however, that while I acknowledge the superiority of the works of authors educated in the dead languages, my allusion is to their *literary* superiority, not their *scientific*. Had I leisure for the investigation, it might be easily shown, that, astronomy alone excepted, the most useful and splendid discoveries in science have been made by men not thus educated. Assuredly by far the most numerous and important discoveries have been made by them, in proportion to their number. And had they disciplined themselves in

English, to the extent they might have done, even the literary qualities of their writings might have equalled those of the productions of their more learned rivals. As far as I am informed, no polyglot scholar has ever been the author of a single discovery, except one touching the genealogy, inflection, or newfangled signification of a verb, noun, or pronoun, or something else respecting parts of speech! True, some of these literati have attempted to trace through language the origin of nations—to show, for example, that the aborigines of America are the descendants of Tartars, Malays, Egyptians, or Chinese. And on each of these points, their labours have been alike successful. In plain terms, they have failed in them all. After their multiplied toils through the tangled wilderness of lingual identities and differences, analogies and synonymes, the subject reposes under the same gloom now, that enveloped it on the eve of the Revival of Letters. The most singular result of these *wordy* researches is, that they have rendered it doubtful, in the minds of several inquirers, whether America was not inhabited at an earlier period than Asia or Europe. The truth is, that the researches are founded on an insufficient basis. A similarity in their languages *may* show that nations have *held intercourse* with each other; but not that they sprang from the same root. There are many words common to the languages of Greece and Rome. That however does not prove the common origin of the Greeks and Latins. The same is true of the Spaniards. Their language resembles not a little the language of the ancient Romans. The two people however are not descendants of a common stock. The *craziest* hypothesis I have known, on this subject, is that of a writer of some note, who has attempted to *trace* all *known* languages, and to *suppose* the same of all *unknown* ones, up to the *Hebrew* root, which he asserts to have been the language of Adam in Paradise! On what grounds this assertion is made, I leave to our Parrs and Busbies to decide! I shall only add, that, in giving names to common and striking objects, such as the *sun, moon, stars, fire, light, darkness, father, mother*, and others of a like character, where an effort is usually made to render *sound* sig-

nificant of *sense*, nations and tribes neither descended from the same stock, nor having had the least intercourse with each other, may readily invent analogous terms. It would be matter of surprise if they did not.

One of the most pernicious errors prevailing on this subject, is the belief, that a familiarity with the *structure* and *genius* of the Greek and Latin languages, but more especially with the *style* and *manner* of Greek and Latin composition, is highly useful, as a model for imitation, to an English writer. To such an extent do some scholars carry this notion, as to assert, that the ancient classics are the only *source* of *taste* in *composition*; and that none therefore but classical scholars can *write* with taste. Were it an object to analyze this extraordinary fancy it would be easy to show, that it arises from a want of knowledge, in those who entertain it, of the true import of the term taste, the objects it acts on, and the ends it subserves. But such analysis is unnecessary, and would attach to the error more consequence than it deserves. The position is in contradiction of all experience of the past, and all observation of the present. The Jewish writers never drank at the Hippocrene of Greek or Roman literature; nor did they repair for inspiration to Helicon or Parnassus; yet some of them, especially their poets, have manifested, in their compositions, a taste as exquisite, as that which marks the most finished productions of Athens or Rome. So have a number of Persian writers. Many English and American authors, moreover, entire strangers to the dead languages, have written with excellent taste—far surpassing the taste in composition of a large portion of classical scholars. Nor is this *all*. A farther refutation of the error is found in the fact, that the style of no English author, who has patterned after the writers of Greece or Rome, has continued long to be approved and admired. In proof of this, Milton and Young, Gibbons and Johnson, may be cited in contrast with Addison, Swift, Bolingbroke, and Scott. The four latter authors have written in the straight forward and unaffected simplicity and ease of Saxon-English, and will be admired while English literature shall last. The four former, on the contrary, have imitated the

stiffness, pomp, and transposition of Greek and Roman writers, to say nothing of their hackneyed mythological allusions,—and their *styles* have grown obsolete. And such will be the inevitable fate of every effort, whether in literature or art, that violates the truth and simplicity of nature. For *nature*, and not Greek and Latin, is the object which true taste will always admire, and the exemplar it will always faithfully imitate. Nor will it condescend to imitate any thing else. Nature gives the *principles* of taste, and art teaches and produces conformity to them. To pronounce Greek and Latin the only fountain of taste and refinement in English composition, is indicative of ignorance and a want of taste in those who do so.

The sentiments avowed on this occasion I have long entertained, and, in consequence of them, have been charged with a wish, to have the study of the dead languages excluded from our colleges; and the course of education in them *correspondingly abridged*. To the former charge I have replied already in the negative; and I now pronounce the latter equally unfounded. Instead of abridging, I would greatly amplify the course of instruction, in our colleges and universities; but I would make it all available for usefulness, or elegance, or both. It should be an education of substance more than of sound—of science rather than words. The languages taught to American scholars, in addition to their own, should be chiefly *living* languages—those of nations with which we hold intercourse and transact business; and which may be repositories of knowledge, not to be found in our own literature. Of this class are French, Spanish, German, and Italian. Under two of these tongues in particular, (French and German) is concealed much matter of great importance, not yet transferred to English books. Of Italian, to a certain extent, the same is true. But is it equally true of Greek and Latin? Certainly not. These languages are no repositories of science, and contain nothing that is new to us. All that is valuable or even interesting in them has been long since introduced into our own literature. They are now studied therefore *as languages*, and nothing else. They communicate to the students of them not a thought, that

may not be had through another channel. All they contain of ancient customs, manners, arts, and sciences, is before the world in an English dress. Nor should it be forgotten, that to the minds of scholars, who have not a peculiar turn and capacity for them, a crowd of languages becomes *lumber*, and excludes from them more interesting and useful matter.

Shall I be told again, as I often have been, that there are beauties in ancient literature, which cannot be introduced into our own? I do not receive the assertion as fact. There is more of *pretence* and *affectation* than of reality in it. It is the product of learned vanity, egotism, and pedantry combined. Those who pretend to have made the discovery, pay, in the annunciation of it, much more homage to their own assumed sagacity and taste, than to truth. At any rate, if such beauties really exist—beauties I mean which cannot be introduced into English, and thus made available to taste, fancy, or feeling, in conversation, writing, or public speaking, they are *useless*,—and might as well *not* exist. If the Helenist and Romanist feels them himself, but can communicate nothing of his feeling to any body else, they are at best a fruitless possession, unsocial, unprofitable, *undesirable* and *unblest*. For who, endowed with benevolence, or human sympathy, would wish to brood, in solitude, over incommunicable pleasures. The miser and the misanthrope are alone capable of such repulsive selfishness. But the allegation is groundless. No such mystical beauties exist in Greek and Latin. Such are the power and copiousness, the delicacy, flexibility and accuracy of expression of the English tongue, that it can set forth intelligibly every feeling, thought, and conception of the mind, whether original or derivative. For an American scholar, therefore, to contend that he perceives in Homer or Pindar, Euripides, Horace, or Virgil, literary beauties which he cannot express, is a confession (which should mortify him,) that he is deficient in the knowledge and command of his mother tongue. For that tongue, I repeat, is richer and fuller, more fruitful and varied in its resources of expression, than the tongues of Greece and Rome united. Assuredly there are turns of expression in English,

much more felicitous and beautiful, than any *I* have ever been able to detect in the dead languages. And by what occult power other persons, of but moderate penetration, and no better versed in those languages than myself, have succeeded in making such detections, is left to those skilled in casuistry to decide.

I repeat, that my *earnest desire* is, to see the *compass* of education expanded and its *period lengthened*; not that it should be narrowed in the former respect, or shortened in the latter. This truth is sufficiently evinced by my brief exposition of a Liberal Education heretofore given. The branches of knowledge there enumerated, as necessary elements of such an education, are amply sufficient, if thoroughly studied, to employ the whole time of a youth of the best talents, from the age of *twelve or fourteen*, to that of *eighteen or twenty*, the proper time for the commencement of professional studies. Of that period, a much larger portion should be devoted to the thorough cultivation of English literature, than is now done, in any seat of learning, with which I am acquainted. I mean its cultivation more especially in the form of studied-composition, and extemporary speech. The latter mode of exercise, which, under a government like ours, forms so much of the business of public and professional life, is too much neglected in our colleges and universities. Were it there practised and improved to the proper extent, under the supervision of teachers possessing a sound and critical judgment, and a cultivated and well matured taste, we should have our pulpits, courts of justice, deliberative assemblies, and other places of public and popular address, purged in time of much of that turbulent and bottomless flood of rant and declamation, which too often disgraces them. American eloquence *in general*, like that of the FOURTH OF JULY breaking from the lips of undisciplined striplings, is too rank and gorgeous in leaves and flowers, to be abundant in fruit. It has in it much more of fume and fire, trope and figure, than of substantial matter, or of judgment and taste. Words substantive are too gaudily ornamented by the pomp of adjectives; there is too much of mouthing, with long and

sonorous terms, often of recent and spurious coinage; and its *display* is beyond its *solidity* and *strength*. I should indeed lament to see it stript of all its bright imagery and flowery garniture, and reduced to entire nudity and barrenness. Nor do I deem it desirable that iciness should succeed to its tropical heat. It would rejoice me, however, to witness its ebullition quieted, its storminess calmed, its gaudiness chastened, and its superabundance retrenched, without any diminution of its manliness or vigour. And this may be easily done. Were youth strictly taught the mode in which men should speak, and practised in it themselves, they would not afterwards forget the lesson. And much of this improvement may be effected by judicious training in our seats of learning. Let the work of reform begin *there*, and it will be carried out in the pulpits, courts, and deliberative institutions of our country, which are so many practical schools of oratory. Nor are they schools of common rank, or ordinary promise. Far otherwise. If conducted under the influence of well-directed ambition and enlightened taste, they will become the most illustrious the world has produced, and cannot fail to confer, in time, on American eloquence, a splendour and perfection, that have never marked the eloquence of any other people. This is not to be regarded as the mere outpouring of buoyant hope, or as an indulgence in wanton and thoughtless prediction. It is offered as matter of a higher caste. It is a deliberate announcement, by fair inference, of what causes now in operation may be made to produce. No people have a happier turn for eloquence, than those of the United States. Nor, from the number and character of our deliberative and other oratorical institutions, and our modes of administering them, does any other nation now possess, nor has any one ever heretofore possessed, a tithe of the advantages that we do, for improvement in eloquence. The means are in our power; and we are not only privileged to employ them—we are invoked to that effect, by incentives that should be irresistible—our pride and ambition as individuals and as a people, our love of self, and our love of country—to say nothing of our abstract duty to our race. If we do

not then surpass, in this glorious accomplishment, the people of all other nations and times, the fault will be our own, and our own the disgrace.

But through what language must American genius shine in oratory, charm in poetry, and instruct in history, philosophy, and other forms of literary composition? Through Greek and Latin? No certainly; but through our mother tongue, forgetful of its descent from any other language. For the time is certainly coming, when that descent *will* be forgotten—or disregarded. The remembrance will not hang, a perpetual incubus on our speech, detracting from its independence, and preventing its maturity. For the English tongue never will nor can be completely mature, until rendered so by *independent* cultivation. This is as true, as that we should never have emerged from immaturity, as a nation, had we continued in our colonial dependence on Great Britain. An independent condition is essential to the perfection of all that is human. To suppose that the English language, which, in less than a century, will be spoken by three hundred millions of souls,—first in standing among the races of men—to suppose that it will still be considered the nursling of the languages of those specks of earth, called Italy and Greece, whose pride, pomp, and power have long since passed away, is the consummation of romance—*not* to pronounce it the height of absurdity! Ages on ages after those languages shall have become—as become they *must*—the Sanscrit of letters, will the English tongue continue to improve in all the higher qualities of speech—and it will improve I say the more rapidly, from being cultivated alone, without any reference to the source from which it sprang.

By being treated in its relations to other languages, English sustains a two-fold injury. It is adulterated by foreignisms; and the estimation it is held in is below what it deserves. Some of our puny and conceited book-makers, who have passed a few months in France and Italy, make a perfect jargon of their style of writing, by an affected and tasteless admixture of foreign phrases. Nor is this all. We attach lingual honours to Greek and Latin, and hold in comparative degradation our

mother tongue. Hence, on him alone, who is versed in the former, do we bestow the epithet *learned*; while he, whose knowledge of speech is confined to the latter, (no matter how ripe and ample may be his knowledge of other things,) is humiliatingly pronounced by us, a mere "*English Scholar!*"—with a view to the depreciation of his literary standing. I have heard that phrase repeatedly affixed to the venerable names of Franklin and Washington! And I have heard the term SCHOLAR coupled with the names of dabblers, because they had looked into Sallust and Xenophon; who, notwithstanding, misspelt even *monosyllables* in their mother tongue, and violated its grammar, in almost every sentence they spoke, and every clause they penned! To say nothing of their *judgment, sense of justice, and veneration of the names of the good and the great*, how can the *pride* of Englishmen and Americans tolerate this! "English Scholar" employed, at this period, as a phrase betokening *illiteracy, and disrepute!* while the time is approaching, when it will be one of the brightest spots on the escutcheon of letters!

I have appealed to the "*pride*" of Englishmen and Americans, on this subject; and I address myself to it again, in the hope that I shall be heard. And I assert with confidence, that there is nothing in their history *more worthy* of their pride, than their *matchless* language—for it is matchless,—assuredly *unmatched* in many of the choicest qualities of speech—in its copiousness and flexibility, variety, accuracy, and power of expression. It is unequalled moreover, as already mentioned, in the richness and profundity of its literature, and not surpassed in its sublimity and splendour. It is the language, in which the history of Great Britain and America has been hitherto written, and will be written hereafter, through the lapse of ages, recording the extent and glory of their achievements, in peace and in war; and it is that, in which, amidst the tempest of arms, their warriors have *cheered*, and *been cheered* to the combat; and in which their triumphs have been proclaimed, in the shouts of victory, on the quarter-deck and in the battle-field!

It is worthy, then, I say, to be an object of the highest pride and exultation, as well as of veneration and love, to every loyal and high-minded Briton and American. And until it shall be thus regarded and gloried in by them, it will never be cultivated with the earnestness it deserves; nor be brought to the perfection, of which it is susceptible. For that perfection it has not yet attained. Wherefore was Greek rendered the most beautiful and perfect of the languages of antiquity? Because those who spoke it took pride in it, loved it, venerated it, and cultivated it in itself, in perfect independence of all other tongues. They resolved to make it the most perfect and powerful of then existing languages; and they succeeded, because they laboured unremittingly, in conformity to their resolution. And it has proved in consequence the instrument at once of their renown and salvation. But for her much admired language, where would be the celebrity of ancient Greece—or even the knowledge of her existence? Take away her language, and, in despite of the splendour in intellect and arms, which once distinguished her, and her still subsisting architectural wonders, she would be entombed in the darkness, which broods in the catacombs and pyramids of Egypt.

And what Greek has been to Greece, is English to America. It is one of her choicest possessions now; for ages to come it will be the record and instrument of her power and grandeur; and, at a period still more remote, it may be her only conservator from the shoreless and bottomless sea of oblivion. Paintings, as memorials of greatness, have their end; bronze disappears under the corruptions of time; granite and marble dilapidate and crumble; but language may be rendered as lasting as our race.

Be it the pride and ambition of American Scholars, then, not only to cultivate their native tongue, but to render it perfect. For that purpose, without discouraging the study of Greek and Latin in other institutions, let colleges be established, in which modern languages alone will be taught, English being the chief of them, united to a full course of modern science. Let the trial be fairly made, under competent provis-

ions, and persevered in or abandoned, according to the issue. But its abandonment is not to be apprehended. Let the teachers and the taught, in aid of suitable abilities and means, be faithful and strenuous, industrious and persevering—true to their duty, themselves, and their country—and I peril my reputation that the experiment will be triumphant. Within the influence of these schools, whose motto might be “ANCIENT PREJUDICES SUPERSEDED BY MODERN IMPROVEMENTS,” the phrase “English Scholar” will be no longer uttered in token of literary contempt or disesteem. On the contrary, it will be hailed as an earnest of thorough, and useful, and elegant scholarship. And, under the arrangement, to which it shall owe its honours, I fearlessly repeat, that the English tongue will reach, in America, an elevation and perfection, to which it has never attained in its native land. But its cultivation, I say, must be in all respects faithful and *thorough*; the want of which is a leading cause of failure *in all things*. The faithlessness of teachers and pupils is infinitely more injurious to letters, than their inability.

That an experiment of this description will be made, I cannot doubt; because I consider it the suggestion of reason; and it accords, as I persuade myself, with the spirit of improvement abroad in our land. And I should rejoice at its being made in the Mississippi Valley, where it will have fewer prejudices to encounter, than in the States of the Atlantic. Nor is any place better suited to it, than the State of Indiana, which, united to an enterprising and liberal spirit, is already displaying the courage and strength of an infant Hercules, sustained by the firmness of manhood, and tempered and directed by the wisdom of age.

I speak not in flattery, but sincerity, when I say, that Indiana is destined by nature to be great—great in herself, the projector of great and useful enterprises; and the producer of great and important effects; and that marks of that destiny are stampd on her features. Extensive in her territorial dimensions, and compact in her form; favoured with a temperate and genial climate, and a soil unsurpassed in its fitness for agriculture; washed on her borders for several hundred miles, by two

of the noblest rivers in the Union, giving her in one direction a passage to the ocean, and intersected by several other navigable streams; rich in valuable mineral productions, and peculiarly adapted to the excavation of canals and the construction of rail roads; abounding in excellent water powers for the working of machinery; in contact with the waters of an inland sea, uniting her to the Atlantic in another direction; and rapidly filling up by a population hardy and enterprising, industrious and intelligent—thus circumstanced and provided for, how, I say, is it possible for the State of Indiana, not to become great? To hold the question doubtful, would evidence want of reflection and foresight—not to employ harsher terms, and call it weakness and folly. As well might it be doubted whether the sun that shines, and the dews that descend on her, will continue to cover her plains and prairies with an abundant vegetation. The laws of nature in her favour are as positive in the one case, as they are in the other.

Already moreover has she given substantial evidence, that she understands her resources, and is resolved to employ them in furtherance of her greatness, by the magnificent scheme of *Internal Improvement*, which she has recently projected. Let me here, however, respectfully suggest to the directors of her destiny, that that scheme does not embrace what should be the *first*, because it is the most important, of all Internal Improvements—the IMPROVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC MIND. This, I say, is the “most important” and ought to be the “first;” because it is the source of all other improvements; enlightened mind being the projector and promoter of every thing in science and art that is useful to man. Let *it* be executed on a suitable scale, and in a skilful manner, and other improvements will flow from it, as certainly and naturally, as the stream descends from the fountain, or the rain drops from the cloud.

In simpler terms; the first duty of a free and enlightened government, and the soundest act of wisdom it can perform, is to educate and improve, intellectually and morally, in the highest practicable degree, the mind of the community. The

way to do this has been specified already. It is to give to the *many* a *common education* of an appropriate character, and a *Liberal* one to the *few*. And let it be ever borne in mind, that the former grade of education depends essentially on the promotion of the latter. If there be not *high* schools to prepare suitable teachers, common schools will continue to be a disgrace and a nuisance. To commence the system by an attempt to establish *primary* schools *first*, is to begin it, I repeat, at the wrong end—a mistake which must inevitably eventuate in failure. Multiply colleges and other forms of high schools to the requisite extent, and valuable common schools may be made to grow out of them, as naturally and certainly, as day succeeds to the rising of the sun.

Gentlemen of the Philomathean Society: Our acquaintance has been brief, and our intercourse limited. We met first in Society this morning, and shall part in a few minutes, never, it is probable, to meet in it again. Trusting however that we cherish toward each other that kind and confiding spirit of fraternity, with which institutions formed for the promotion of science and letters, and the cultivation of the social and civic virtues, should ever be instinct, I shall presume on the privilege of an elder brother, to offer to you, in the shape of parting advice, a few of the suggestions of experience and years.

Some of you will shortly bid adieu to this calm and peaceful academic retreat, where, for years, you have held converse with Egeria, and dallied with the Muses, to mingle in the Comitia, or the Forum, or both, and take part in the busy and exciting scenes, that await you in life.

From the very commencement of this active, and, it may be, perturbing and tempestuous career, three glittering points will be likely to attract your notice, and become perhaps, one or all of them, objects of your ambition—WEALTH, PLACE, AND FAME. I mean *real and lasting* fame, the reward of a *life-time* of uninterrupted toil, and high, honorable, and useful achievement; not the "*bubble reputation*"—that empty product of popular breath, destitute alike of substance and merit, which, like

the plant of the prophet, may rise in a night, and perish in a night. Nor is it possible for that fame, to which I allude, and which is alone worth labouring for or possessing, to be attained in any other way than that just indicated.

As correctly represented by the poet, whose very fictions wear the stamp of philosophy and truth, especially in his descants on human nature, true fame is perched on a pinnacle as lofty as it is brilliant; the path to it is steep, and rugged, and arduous, and can be ascended only by those who are strong and resolute, ambitious and deserving—who, with the young Raleigh, “will never think of dull earth, while there is a heaven to soar in, or a sun to gaze at;” but are prepared to attempt the precipice, with fearless spirits; and, at every hazard, contend for a dwelling, amidst the storminess of upper air.

In this country, and in these times, I lament to say, that that pinnacle and its glorious prize are too seldom made the aim of youthful ambition. Ends of an humbler order, and of easier attainment receive a preference. Still, permit me most earnestly to commend it to you all, as the meed most worthy to be aspired to, and contended for; and to express my hope that some of you will attempt and fortunately reach it. Though, while in pursuit of it, you must exercise untiring patience, practise deep and sometimes painful self-denial, and sustain years of intense and exhausting labour; and though you must do this, in the midst of those, who are enjoying what the world calls pleasure and amusement—notwithstanding these and other trials and privations, to which you will be subjected; still, duty to your professions, your country, and your race, united to an enlightened and high-minded self-esteem, invoke you to the enterprise. And success in it will abundantly remunerate you for all you may do and endure in the effort. It will inscribe your names on the roll of renown, with those of the luminaries and benefactors of the world. But your highest and surest reward—that which man can neither give nor take away; but which will cling to you in all vicissitudes of fortune, as an attribute of your nature; your joy in prosperity, and in adversity your consolation—that choicest and most unfading reward, will be the

whispered "well done" of an approving conscience—a sustaining and gladdening remembrance, that you have devoted the noblest faculties, which the Creator has bestowed on you, to the high and beneficent purposes, for which he designed them.

But what shall I say to you of "wealth" and "place"—those objects of idolatry in the eyes of "the million?" I may not pronounce them *positive evils*; because the charge would be unsustainable. Neither however are *they positive goods*. They put on the one character or the other, according to the manner in which they are obtained, the purposes they are held for, and the ends and uses to which they are applied.

When wealth is acquired by upright and honorable means, and employed for useful and praiseworthy purposes, it is a boon of great value, because it may be made an instrument of benefits and blessings. And the same is true of political power, the product of *place*. But when, under a profligate disregard of every right and interest, save those connected with self and party, the former is compassed through the fraudulency of speculators, and the latter by the artifices and machinations of demagogues—under these circumstances they change to evils of fearful magnitude, and cannot fail to prove a source of disaster. In a special manner, when *cupidity of gain*, and the *love of place* become the ruling passions of a people, that people is rushing blindfold into some catastrophe big with calamity, and will inevitably meet it, unless it be staid in its career by wiser counsels and worthier motives.

In such a community, stranger as it is to true refinement, and elevated pursuits, literature and science have no foothold, and can never flourish. The desire of the people is to have just as much knowledge, as may enable them to gratify their predominant passions; and that being attained, however small its amount, they wish for nothing more. They covet no elegance or accomplishment of mind, for its own sake, for the dignity it confers, or for the abundant sources of rational and refined enjoyment, which always accompany it. *Hence the low and humiliating condition of their mental cultivation.* Nor does it comport with the governing principles of human nature,

that the case should be otherwise. In a state of society so ungenial and withering to them, no more can the higher orders of science and letters take root and flourish, than the palm-tree can spring from the waterless desert. The reason is plain. Scientific and literary characters are usually poor. They can give neither routs nor racket-parties, can keep no gaudy equipages, nor join in the costly dissipations of the day. Nor will a spirit of independence permit them to accept invitations to entertainments, should they even receive them—which is seldom the case. Under these circumstances they and their families are excluded from society, and treated with neglect—perhaps with an air of vulgar haughtiness, and assumed superiority. As respects *himself*, a man conscious of high talents and extensive attainments, personal rectitude and moral worth, might regard with indifference or even disdain, such unbecoming conduct in his purse-proud neighbours—but *not as respects his family*. He cannot bear to see them in what the world considers a *degraded condition*. He therefore either abandons the society, which is incapable of appreciating the riches of the mind; or he surrenders his studies, and mingles with the busy, huckstering herd, in the accumulation of wealth. Thus does Mammon triumph over Apollo and his train!

How does this picture, unsightly as it is, accord with the state of society in America, especially in the great valley of the West? Would to Heaven! I could reply, that it bears no resemblance to it! But such a reply would be unfounded. As a people, we are already proverbially *mercenary* and *avaricious*, and covetous of *political preferment* and *place*, and are daily becoming more so. To acquire wealth and climb into power are our *master passions*. To these all other ends are held subordinate, and, as far as possible, all our actions are rendered subservient. This assertion is fully sustained by every fact that bears on the subject. The Valley is overrun by land-jobbers, speculators, office-hunters, and their concomitants, as was the valley of the Nile, by the *frog* and the *locust*. Nor shall I attempt, at present, the solution of the problem, which evil is

greatest, the *physical* or the *moral*?—the *loathsome reptile* and the *devouring insect*, or the *practised over-reacher* in trade, and the habitual *perpetrator of dishonesty* in politics?—Go where you will—mingle in what society you may, throughout the entire region of the West, what are the topics of conversation around you? The reply is as easy, as its substance is degrading. The price of public lands and the modes of securing them—the value of negroes and cotton-plantations—the construction and advantages of rail-roads and canals—the shortest route to political preferment—the comparative profits of grazing-farms, the productiveness of the soil of Texas, and such like subjects, constitute the only themes of discussion. All that relates not to filling the purse, or conferring some form of rank in the Government, is forgotten or neglected—perhaps despised. Neither literature nor science, patriotism nor philanthropy, nor improvement in the intellect and morals of the country, is ever introduced as a topic of conversation. Or, if aught be said of education and improvement, it is of the mode of improving and training domestic animals—especially the breed of *running horses*, which constitute one of the portentous evils of the day. The improvement of the human mind, in its higher faculties, seems a forbidden subject. If to this occasional exceptions offer themselves, they are *but* occasional—like angels' visits, “few and far between”—or, to indulge in a Latin quotation, the more conclusively to show that I am not a foe to that language—they are, like the scattered fragments of the classical shipwreck, *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*.

The lamentable consequence of this state of things is, that rank and influence in society depend not on strength of mind, extent of knowledge, and maturity of wisdom; nor yet on high breeding, refinement, purity, and elevation of sentiment, or moral rectitude and personal worth—they depend on nothing that talents of the most distinguished order, united to the noblest and best dispositions, and the highest style of education can give. No; their only basis, in the estimation of the “million,” whose numbers enable them to dictate opinion, and give the rule of

action, is the size and fulness of the purse—the quantity of lands, and the number of negroes, horses, mules, and horned cattle possessed—and the amount of the annual product of hemp and cotton crops. In fine; it is not I say intellectual wealth and moral excellence, but pecuniary wealth and political place and power, that give standing and influence in the Mississippi Valley. Nor can a condition of things more humiliating in itself, or more inauspicious to the continued soundness and maintenance of our free institutions be represented or imagined. We are apprized in history, that a state of society very strikingly similar preceded the downfall of the Roman Commonwealth.

Does any one question the correctness of this statement? He is referred for proof of it to the mental condition of those who rule the fashion, to which we all conform, enact the laws we are bound to obey, and fill a large majority of the offices of the State and General Governments. And he will there find such proof, in the degrading fact, that perhaps nine out of ten of those who, in these several modes, influence society, and control the destinies of our country, are strangers to all that deserves the name of literature and science.

Such, Gentlemen, is a faint picture of the state of that society, into whose giddy vortex you will shortly be drawn. I have deemed it my duty, thus hastily to sketch it to you, in the strong relief of its lights and shadows, showing what *is*, contrasted with what *should be*, that you may be the better prepared to protect yourselves from the evils of the one, and turn to your advantage the benefits of the other. And should my humble effort produce that effect, even in a limited degree, the event will be matter of cordial rejoicing to me, and will unite hereafter with other kindred recollections, to gladden my retrospect of the present occasion.

Unintentionally lengthy as my discourse has already been, indulge me in a few more sentences before we part. Among educated young men of ambition and enterprise, the current of migration to the south is quite overwhelming—far beyond what either reason dictates, or experience invites. But few

of the hope-inspired adventurers to the land of the pomegranate, the fig, and the orange-tree, find there the el Dorado, which they all anticipate, and hurry to enjoy. Early death, shattered health, and fell disappointment constitute the lot of a large proportion of them. Yet still does the stream of adventure roll on.

Why is this—especially why should the migration continue, while prospects to the enterprising, in these more northerly and healthy regions, are so bright and promising? True; as a general rule, more wealth can be amassed, in the south, in a given time, than in this northern section of the Valley. But there the benefit of removal ends. In all other respects, the advantage is greatly in favour of the north. If the winters are more severe, the summers are less enfeebling; and if agriculture is less profitable, manufacturing industry is more so. Nor ought certain well known evils, not now to be mentioned, inseparable from the condition of society in the south, to be overlooked by those who think of migration. Be it remembered, moreover, that in Indiana, as certainly as in Mississippi or Arkansas, an honorable independence may be secured, by industry, perseverance, and laudable economy.

As relates to the improvement of the mind, and the attainment of distinction in science and letters, professions and the arts, these northern States have a great ascendancy. And that is a consideration not to be overlooked by those who set a correct estimate on matters of mind. In most parts of the South, there is a lamentable neglect of mental cultivation, and a corresponding want of literature and science. Young men, who are allured by the love of gain, to repair to that gay and relaxing region, abandon their studies, the moment of their arrival, and devote all their leisure to social enjoyment—or waste it perhaps in wild carousal, and fatal dissipation. Added to other barriers, the force of fashion, and a want of the excitement of mental competition, are opposed to study, under the bodily exhaustions of the south. In a word; the entire habits and feelings of that region must be revolutionized, before it can be the birthplace or nursery of intellectual pre-eminence.

For, let it never be forgotten by the youthful and aspiring, that such pre-eminence is much more the product of labour and perseverance, than of talents and genius—though, for the attainment of it in the highest degree, both are essential.

Considerations like these should lead you to pause and ponder, before you exchange for the beamy and flower-clad land of the sun, this soberer and less brilliant State where you have been educated, which called into existence and bounteously and affectionately sustains and cherishes your ALMA MATER, and in which perhaps most of you first saw the light. If your preference be for “golden gains,” shattered health, and minds comparatively empty and enfeebled, hasten to the south. But in case, your choice be, sound health, “golden opinions,” a competent—perhaps an affluent independence, and minds well stored with science and learning, and accomplished in the arts, remain where you are, practise industry corporeal and mental, and economise your time and means, and your end will be attained, and your desires gratified. Your course through life will be useful and honorable, the esteem and applause of contemporaries will await you, and posterity will enrol you in the list of their benefactors.

FAREWELL!—and, in whatever spots of earth you may fix your abodes, and whatever occupations it may be your pleasure to pursue, of this be assured; that my affectionate and fraternal regard will attend you, accompanied by my earnest wishes, that your lots may be as prosperous, and your days as happy, as they can be rendered by competency and reputation, the recollection of well-spent lives, peaceful consciences, and an approving Heaven!