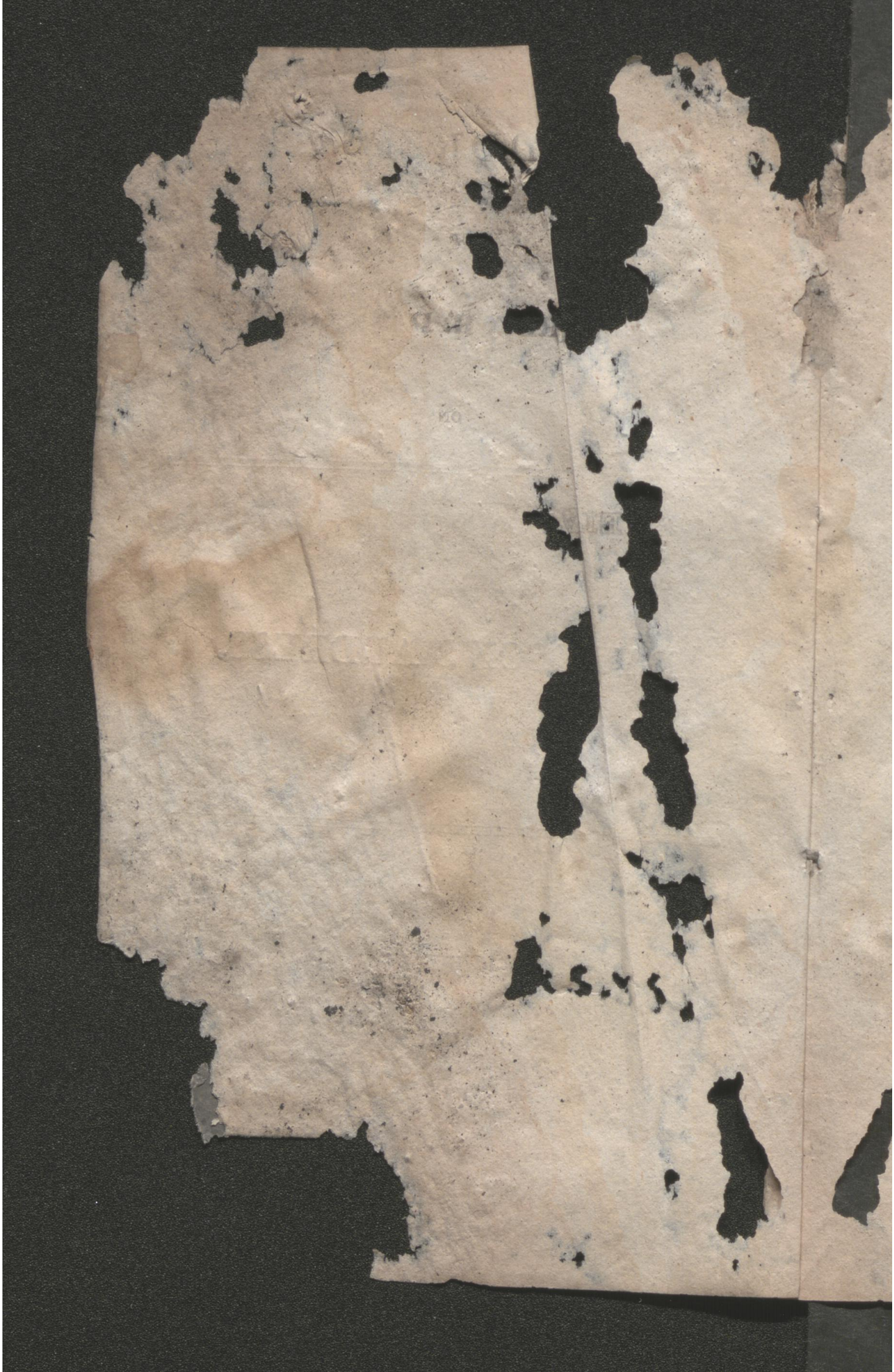
DAV SON'S ADDRESS



ADDRESS

OF

THE REV. R. DAVIDSON.

ON

THE ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

THE [illegible]Y SCHOOL OF LEXINGTON,

AUGUST 1st, 1839.

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ADDRESS.

THE Spartans being once required to send thirty of their children as hostages to a foreign court, offered in their place thrice the number of their most valuable citizens. Thus they showed their dread of the relaxing influence of foreign luxury upon their children, at a time of life when their principles and habits were not fixed. This furnishes a fine illustration of the importance of watching sedulously over that age which may emphatically be styled *the forming age*; as well as the necessity of great caution in selecting the persons to whom the care of youth is entrusted. The proper culture of the mind is, at that plastic period, of more consequence than at any other. The impressions then made, of whatever character, are lasting, and become part and parcel of the man. They compose the very warp of the mind, while all that is acquired subsequently is but the woof or filling. It will always remain uniform, however the colours interwoven with the texture may vary. The proper instruction of the youthful mind becomes, therefore, an object of the utmost importance. To neglect it is as absurd as to allow a garden to be choked with weeds, fondly trusting that it will be an easy task to extirpate them when fully grown. You might, with as much reason, leave a broken arm to itself, in the expectation that it can be readily straightened after the lapse of years has given it an incurable set.

Situated as we are, this subject can never be contemplated without the deepest interest. It cannot be too often repeated, that a republic requires intelligence and virtue to perpetuate a healthy existence. There is no [illegible] the name of a republic, nor is there any spell of [illegible] in a written constitution to secure the blessings [illegible] dently desire. The state of liberty is not a state [illegible] leges alone; it is attended with duties and conditions

Universal education, and that of the best kind, indispensable. George III. has received great and deserved encomiums for wishing that every one of his subjects might be able to read the bible. To read, write, and cypher, are, indeed, useful acquirements, and better than nothing; but for the citizens of a republic something more appears necessary. Geography, history, ethics, mental science, and the principles of political economy, cannot be dispensed with, at least to a respectable extent, in forming an intelligent member of the commonwealth. Such, or nearly such, is the course pursued in the admirable institution whose eleventh anniversary we observe this day.

All our citizens should understand the science of government. They are to preside at the helm, or, which is much the same thing, they are to choose the helmsman; and if he knows not how to steer, the rudder bands will soon be loosened, and the ship of state drift upon the breakers. A cobbler of Athens was once justly reproved for his presumption in meddling with politics, by being asked to mend a watch. He declined, on the plea of not understanding its mechanism. How then, was the application, can you pretend to direct the wheels of government, whose mechanism is infinitely more subtle and complicated than that of a watch? Were we to stop here, we might consider this, as monarchists have used it, a cogent argument against republics. But we do not choose to stop here. We advance a step further, and back of all this; and we affirm that there is no good reason why the cobbler at his bench should not have as solid an education, of the sort already described, as the nabob in his palace.

In the humblest shantee resides *a Sovereign*, an integer of the great aggregate in whom dwells the national sovereignty. His vote may decide the majority in Congress. His single voice may give the country a President. Upon his judgment may indirectly depend some act of legislation which will throw the country into a ferment, which will derange operations of commerce, which will add millions to the national revenue, or which will subtract millions

Now bear in mind how the Sovereigns of Europe are educated. The best masters are procured, and no pains or expense is spared to train them up in a manner correspondent to the exalted station which they are expected to fill. And shall a sovereign people, with whom is the fountain and original source of all power, a people who boast of their capacity for self-government, contentedly remain in ignorance of that information which is indispensable for the proper discharge of the responsibilities which they have assumed?

The rich are deeply concerned in this matter. The share which the inhabitants of the shantee or the cabin shall enjoy in the benefits of education, has a bearing on the security and value of property, as well as of life. There should be no such thing known in this republic, as the *populace* of Europe: we ought to have no *populace*; no tribe of paupers and semi-paupers, whose indolence and ignorance at once prevent them from acquiring property themselves, and place them in the power of every unprincipled demagogue who makes his appeal to their prejudices. These are the men that agitate the fierce waves of popular tumults, that are always ready to swell a mob, and that are never more happy than in the riot and the brawl.

For this reason property-holders should submit to taxation for the support of a system of common schools. They should yield their consent freely, inasmuch as it is not merely for the general good, but for their own private interest also. By the small annual contribution they would make for the purpose of raising the intellectual and moral character of the community, they may save thousands, nay, perhaps the whole of what they possess. This is the truest economy, to expend a little by way of prevention, and thus obviate the necessity of a heavier expenditure afterwards by way of remedy; as sailors in a storm throw overboard part of the cargo to save the remainder. De Calonne, the French financier, proposed to raise a tax, for government purposes, off the nobility and were bishops, instead of the people, whose burdens were already sufficiently heavy; but they resisted the attempt with

most determined obstinacy. The consequence was, that a revolution was precipitated by the discontents of the people, which shortly after not only deprived the nobles of their estates, but many of them also of their heads.

But the question has been asked, suppose property holders refuse their consent, what is to be done? Can the compulsory measures which the king of Prussia employs, be tolerated in a free country like this? We hesitate not to say, that compulsion in this respect may lawfully be used. Taxation here is no tyranny. Examine the matter a moment. The government is empowered to carry on war for the defence of the country, and for this purpose is authorized to erect forts, magazines, arsenals, dockyards, and the like. Nor can it be otherwise; since the grant of a certain power implies, of necessity, the right to provide the means essential to carry the power granted into execution. To imagine otherwise, would be to frustrate the very end and intention of government. The same reasoning has been applied to the establishment of a national bank. Such an institution is neither provided for nor named in the constitution; yet it was deemed so useful for the collection, transportation and disbursement of the public funds, and so efficient an aid to the fiscal operations of government, that a national bank has been generally regarded, and by the Supreme Court pronounced, within the implied powers granted by the Constitution to Congress. But a judicious and universal system of public instruction is, of course, much more within the scope of the implied powers of government, because popular education is vital to the permanence, safety and prosperity of the republic. The government may therefore be concluded to possess the power of establishing schools for this purpose, viz. the purpose of self-preservation, which is entitled the first law of nature; and, by consequence, is empowered to raise and collect taxes to found and maintain an adequate number of schools. Much more is it an obligation binding on the government, when a large sum of money is placed in its hands to expend at its discretion; as, for example, the State's share of the surplus revenue; thus diminishing the odium of direct taxation.

One thing, however, is certain, that in a representative government, the popular will must lead the way in imposing taxes; and this shows the imperious necessity of enlightening the public mind upon the admirable utility of a system of general instruction.

In these remarks we have spoken of the implied powers of government alone; but the argument derives additional force when we take into view the distinction which exists between the General and the State Governments as to the extent of their powers. The General Government is clothed by the Constitution with no powers but such as are expressly given to it, or such as are inferred from necessary implication; while, on the contrary, the State Governments remain in possession of all powers except only such as are expressly withheld from them. Consequently it is only necessary to ascertain that the power to found schools and raise taxes for their support, is not withheld by the Constitution of the State, in order to find the requisite authority for such foundation.

Again, taxes are imposed to erect jails and penitentiaries; the necessity of which enormous expenditures might have been, to a very great degree, prevented by previous attention to the education and morals of the people. On the present system, legislatures throw temptations, or permit them to be thrown, in the way of the people, and then punish them for yielding to those temptations. How much better would it be to adopt the preventive course, and by a smaller amount of taxes raised for educating the children of the State, save them from the danger of contamination and crime. As it is, the State Penitentiary contains more candidates for graduation than the State University.

There is another consideration which deserves notice. We want intelligent electors, who can read and think for themselves, and who, though poor, will be above a bribe—men who might say with Reed, of the old Congress, "We are not worth buying, but such as I am, the king of England is not rich enough to purchase me." It is humiliating to reflect how common the method of bribery has become. The veil of modesty is no longer thrown over the nefarious

transaction, but votes are bought and sold without shame. Candidates, or their friends, make no secret of purchasing votes, and outbidding the opposing party. You may see them sallying forth, prior to elections, with their saddle-bags stuffed with dollars, to operate upon the cupidity of the *free and independent* voters of the country. Liquor has yet a more shameful and extensive part in our elections; and the candidates on all sides, it is to be feared, with little exception, owe their elevation to office, not to the votes of an intelligent, virtuous, and high-minded community, but to the more potent virtue of the demijohn and the still.

The old Germans, it is said, had a custom of deliberating on a matter twice, once while drunk, and once while sober; and if their opinions coincided each time, they determined on the enactment. But our moderns, more sagacious, are afraid to run the risque of sober judgment at all; and having succeeded in depriving a man of his senses, and in that condition cajoled him to espouse their side, they keep him under lock and key until he has handed in his vote. After that they are ready enough to dismiss him, and he may look elsewhere for his stimulus, until the next occasion when he is wanted.

How shameful is this practice! How disgraceful to the people! How humiliating to the candidate! The successful candidate assumes his seat, not on the ground of his own merits, nor does his bosom heave with honest pride arising from the hard-earned reward of days of diligence and nights of study. No. He climbs into office on piles of money-bags; he floats into the political harbor on a tide of whiskey. Thus, it is not he that has the most brains, but he that has most brandy, that wins pre-eminence; and in a country that boasts of its being the freest under the sun, the worst slavery prevails, slavery to appetite.

Hitherto our remarks have been confined to the duties of citizenship; but it may be added that we need education to qualify men to be citizens, but to qualify them for the walks of life.

A man, for example, is an ignorant physician, who can scarcely read the labels on his jars, or prepare an intelli-

gible prescription! How much power for ill is in his hands! A physician of intelligence and education; a man of enlarged views and liberal feelings, and of that exalted generosity which so generally characterizes the profession; a man who reads and reflects, and is ever on the watch to increase his stores of medical knowledge, and who reads and reflects on other subjects also that are out of his particular range, is one of the most valuable members of society. His influence is exerted in favor of all that is elevated and good; his presence is always greeted with welcome; and the universal regret with which his loss is mourned, when in the course of nature that melancholy event takes place, is a fresh and unequivocal attestation of the popular esteem.

But how contemptible—nay, rather, how much worse than contemptible—how pernicious is the miserable wretch who, allured by the respectability of a title, or the hope of lucre, abandons the handicraft for which nature designed him, and plunges, with scarce an atom of knowledge, into the depths of medicine, to experiment upon the credulity and the lives of mankind! The humorous description given by Sir Walter Scott of such a character is calculated to provoke a smile, were not the subject too serious for jesting. The popular author just named was travelling at some distance from home, when increasing illness compelled him to stop at a country village. The village doctor being sent for, judge what was his surprize to see in the functionary an old acquaintance, being no less than a blacksmith or farrier, who had formerly been in his employ. When the first surprise was over, Scott asked him how he managed, as he knew he had served no previous apprenticeship to the pharmacopeia. "Oh," said the self-made doctor, "very easily; *I have but twa simples, laudamy and calamy.*" "But what becomes of your patients," asked Scott again, "do they never die under your hands?" "Whiles they did," replied he, "and whiles they didna, just as it was the Lord's will."

Now you can readily have a host of such practitioners in medicine, law, divinity, and politics, by discountenancing popular education, and drying up the fountains of knowledge

You wish to revive the times of Jack Cade, who was for hanging the man that wrote his name instead of making his mark, the honest plain-dealing man. And the mention of this foe to [illegible] reminds me how often extremes meet; for the hostility which despots are said to bear to the education of the people is no less conspicuous among the demagogues of an illiterate populace.

In 1761, Sir William Berkley, colonial governor of Virginia, under Charles II. in a description of the colony to Parliament, frankly congratulated himself that they were free from the evils of free schools and printing. "Yet I thank God," he writes, "there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have, these hundred years. For learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects, into the world; and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from them both!"

The lamentations of this minion of royal power bear a most striking resemblance to the invectives of Jack Cade, the English demagogue and rebel, who is represented by the great dramatist as using the following language to lord Say, when brought before him as a prisoner: "Be it known unto thee by these presence, even the presence of lord Mortimer, that I am the besom that must sweep the court clean of such filth as thou art. Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm, in erecting a grammar school; and whereas, before, our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used; and contrary to the king, his crown and dignity, thou hast built a paper mill. It will be proved to thy face, that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear."

[illegible] receive that despotism, or the lust of absolute power, is inimical to the enlightening of the people, whether [illegible] despotism of the few or of the many, of which the history of the word afford copious examples. Nor can any despotism be imagined more fierce and intolerable than the [illegible] an ignorant and unprincipled majority, who abuse

their [illegible]ntal [illegible]ph to trample down and bra[illegible]
enemy to [illegible]e co[illegible]very one who refuse[illegible]
their measures. [illegible]the lanthorne!" is [illegible]
an aristocrat." [illegible] if Jack Cade sha[illegible]
to our estimable [illegible]d, the principal of [illegible]ty Schoo[illegible]
he would infallibl[illegible]e his head; for it i[illegible]abit to [illegible]
of nouns and verbs[illegible]d all such abomina[illegible]e words as no
Christian can endure [illegible]o hear; and wo! no less, to our wor-
thy Mayor and Coun[illegible]lmen, for they have undoubtedly ren-
dered themselves o[illegible]oxious to the same charge of corrup-
ting the youth of t[illegible] realm, in erecting grammar schools;
nay worse than thi[illegible] in laying heavy taxes for the improve-
ment of the Unive[illegible]ity. But may we be long delivered
from this species of tyranny, under the [illegible]ades, the Omars,
and the Vandals of ignorance!

The best method to prevent the bushel from being filled with chaff, is first to fill it with grain; the best plan to dissipate the horrid spectres with which the hours of darkness terrify us, is to light a torch; and the best method of preventing the country from relapsing into semi-barbarism, is to send the schoolmaster abroad. The means of education must be furnished for the children of the State; and if parents neglect their duty, or are unable from indigence to perform it, the State should assume the obligation. That parental affection is not always sufficient to supply the exigency, is too clear from every day observation. Parents pretend often, that their children can acquire fortune and respectability as their fathers did before them without learning; and their immediate labor is too precious to be spared. The courts of the country hesitate not to take under their guardianship children whose parents destroy them, or who grossly fail to provide for their welfare. On the same principle parents that neglect or refuse to give their offspring a plain solid English education, should be treated in a similar manner, and their children should be educated at the public expense; for it is for the public interest to withhold the means of education from the young, is to immolate them as a most costly offering to the Moloch of ignorance.

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name through
that Lexington perseve
has entered, to recover her ancient fame as the patroness
of letters, and the focus of Western Science.

The public schools of a city like this, should be well supported. No taxes should be so cheerfully paid as those which are necessary for their maintenance. The opulent Morrisons and Mortons should remember them generously in their bequests. The citizens should take a pride in attending their examinations, and encouraging the laborious
principal and his coadjutors.

a hint might be dropped to
ber of schools suitable to
There might be a school
ainly in two of them. At
led to accommodate the 352
f instruction. The present
although large is not capacious enough; nor are the
grounds sufficiently ample for the recreation of such a multitude, while the apartments, spacious as they are, are apt to become close and unwholesome from the impure air generated by so many breathing the purer portion of the atmosphere. The whole pupils might be judiciously distributed into two schools, of about 176 each; one situated at each end of the city, convenient of access to the children in all quarters, and surrounded by ample and salubrious play grounds. By this plan one half the number can be more easily managed, and with more advantage.

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