

WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE.

To the Editors of the Enquirer.

Gentlemen: Many young men in the State, will, in a few days or weeks, leave their homes for the purpose of entering some College. It is the anxious wish of many parents and guardians, and of many young men themselves, that they should go where they can get all the advantages to be derived from able and accomplished teachers, and be at the same time, protected from those bad influences that often sap the foundations of their good morals and destroy their simple and well regulated tastes. And, well may they fear; for when we consider that their College trainings, both as regards morals and learning, is to bias their whole lives, it will make the stoutest tremble, if they fully comprehend the dangers to which they are exposed. Under these circumstances, I will call attention to William and Mary College, and ask the papers throughout the State to notice the institution as they think it deserves.

After the death of the lamented Dew, the Professors of this old College, forgetting that they ought to have sustained the dignity of the mother of Jefferson, of Randolph, and other great and distinguished men, fell to quarrelling among themselves. As a necessary consequence to this division among professors, the rules for the government of students were not enforced, dissipation ensued and the College lost that public confidence which it has so long enjoyed. The Visitors seeing this state of things called on every member of the faculty to resign, and they appointed an entirely new one, with the exception of Judge Tucker. The Judge died just before the commencement of the last session, and his place was filled by an able and accomplished lawyer but too late for that class to be opened during the session.

The faculty now consists of Rev. Bishop Johns of Virginia, Professor of Moral Philosophy and the Evidences of Christianity; Benjamin S. Ewell, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, (this gentleman is a graduate of West Point, and for many years a Professor there;) Morang J. Smead, Professor of History and Political Economy; Rev. Silas Totten, Professor of Intellectual Philosophy, Belles' Lettres and Rhetoric; Robert Gatewood, a graduate at the Virginia Military Institute, Adjunct Professor of Mathematics, and at the head of the Law Department, Judge Scarborough.

Few Colleges in the Union have faculties that stands so high as this, either morally, for learning or intellect. Not a whisper was ever raised against one single member of the faculty on account of any action of their lives. No College, I believe, offers greater inducements to parents or guardians, who wish to protect their charges from the evil influences that too often surround institutions of learning, and very few hold out equal advantages of acquiring thorough educations. The society of the town is most excellent, and the spare-time students have can be spent in the company of agreeable and accomplished ladies and gentlemen.

I wish, however, particularly to call attention to the law department of the College. There is, perhaps no department of learning where a student depends, and necessarily, more upon his professor than this. No young man with ordinary ability and industry, and a desire to learn, under an able and practical lawyer, can fail to receive such instructions as will finally win for him success and distinction. And on the contrary, very few young men, however great their abilities, will ever succeed in their professions as

well as their desire, who are trained by a professor deficient either in knowledge or practical qualifications.

The present able professor of law has filled high stations with so much success and ability, that no one will doubt of the valuable aid he will be to students who have heard of his career and much less if they know him.

As soon as he finished his studies, Judge Scarburg commenced the practice of the law. Dependent entirely upon his profession, success became absolutely necessary. To succeed is an easy matter when a man comes in contact with men whose minds grasp only at the spirit and philosophy of the law, however great they may be, or men who study merely business and the practice of the law. But when a man is thrown with men of the greatest grasp and power of intellect, with men of the most thorough business qualifications, and practical knowledge of the law, success bespeaks a superior mind and knowledge of the profession.

Upon the bench of Judge Upshur, and at the bar were lawyers who have never failed to gain reputations for themselves in any situation which they have been placed, while others who have not been known beyond the sphere of their practice, were as fine business men, and are well versed in all the legal forms and the art of maturing cases for trial as any men in the State. Such was the field upon which he commenced his career; and it demanded of the aspirants to the first place to understand the transactions of life in all their ramifications, and to have the most critical knowledge of legal proceedings. And when cases were [illegible]ured for argument, he was always sure to meet men of the greatest ingenuity and the soundest logic – while, above all, presided one of the first men Virginia ever produced; one whom it required a depth of view and power of argument to satisfy, that any man might be proud of. It was under such circumstances that Judge Scarburg commenced, and marched steadily forward under the rigid training, until his practice was the best at the bar, and his hold upon the confidence of the community unsurpassed. This position attained, proved both the able lawyer and the powerful mind. Such was his standing, that it of itself wrung an execution appointment to the vacancy judgeship from the Governor, unbacked by influence of any sort, and unsought for by the Judge himself. The legislature, at their next session, confirmed the Governor's appointment, to the satisfaction of its circuit, and that, too, when others were making strong efforts to defeat him, and bringing all the power of political combatants to bear to effect that purpose.

As a Judge, he not only gave the greatest satisfaction to the people of his circuit, a part of whom had never known him before, but won the admiration of the entire bar. He was, at that time, one of the youngest men upon the bench of Virginia, and met all the Judges at the General Court. Here he came in contact with some of the first lawyers of the State, and most experienced Judges; and here, too, he soon won the confidence and respect of the first men upon that bench. Had the old General Court been continued, and he remained a judge, none who knew him, for a moment doubt that he would have gained a general reputation equal to that enjoyed by the first men in the Commonwealth. But in a test years after he went upon the bench, the General Court was abolished, and, in a few more years, he was appointed, unanimously, by the Visitors of William and Mary, Professor of Law to succeed Judge Tucker.

Who can doubt that such a man is capable of rendering the greatest assistance to young men? Who can doubt that old William and Mary will now turn out some of the first lawyers in the State?

Were I to stop here, any reasonable man might be satisfied, but I would not be doing Judge S. full justice. Added to this, he is one of the hardest working men the profession can boast of, and is so fond of it, and derives so much pleasure from its study, that he cannot fail to plant a spark of the same feeling in the hearts of his students that will light them on to success and usefulness. This, of itself, is worth ten thousand pages perused and well culled over, as a task. His is no selfish or morose love of study for his own gratification; and he is so kind in his manners, so accessible, that the most timid and diffident would have no hesitation in approaching him and seeking a solution of such difficulties as suggested themselves. While this is the case on the one hand, on the other, the boldest and most forward would never, for a moment, think of presuming to treat him in any other manner than with the profoundest respect. And if, perchance, he should ever feel it his duty to reprove any of them for their faults, it would be done in such a manner, and with so much truth, simplicity and justice, as to make the strongest appeal to conscience, while none would ever feel hurt, except at their own actions.

Nor must I fail to add the brightest trait to his character, the brightest any many can have. Judge S. is one of the most moral and scrupulously just men that lives – not only in his profession, but in every action of life. Any young man who can receive a tincture of these qualities, added to the love of the profession, is better fitted to go forth and practice the law, with honor to himself and benefit to the community, than the most powerful intellects can ever be without them.

The student will enjoy peculiar advantage, at Williamsburg beyond these. Under the new Constitution, the State is divided into sections, districts and circuits. A district court must be held at such place as the legislature prescribe, at least once a year. Williamsburg is the place established by law for holding the 3rd district court, and it will be composed of one Judge of the Court of Appeals, and five Circuit Judges. It is itself a Court of Appeals from the Circuit Courts, and will hear cases brought up from twelve counties and the cities of Richmond and Williamsburg. The Circuit Court for the city of Williamsburg, over which will preside a single Judge, is held twice a year and will have its jury trial. These advantages, of themselves, might be sufficient to build up a law school. The students will read with peculiar interest, the principles contained in their text books, when they know they will hear them discussed three time in the year, in a Court held by six Judges, and the cases argues by the best lawyers from twelve Counties and Richmond and Williamsburg. The district Court will furnish them with examples of eloquence at the bar and decisions on points of law. It will show them practically how appeals are taken from the Circuit Courts to the District Court, and carried up still higher to the Court of Appeals. It will also furnish them with cases to argue in their moot Courts, and give them the real living transactions, (some will know the parties themselves,) to fix the subtle principle of the law in their minds.

Under such a man as Judge Scarburg, all these advantages cannot fail to be turned to the best account, and the young then trained at William and Mary, will be fully competent to enter at once upon the practice, and attend to business.

In a few years from now, Judge Scarburg will be beyond mere newspaper notices. A few laborious young men will soon put the power into his own hands, and establish his reputation as a professor. I cannot anticipate anything else than that he who has always succeeded in every undertaking, will send forth young lawyers whose qualifications and legal knowledge, will win for them success, that will speak more in his praise than any words could do. And I can but believe that so much attached will they become to him and to the institution, that each will be eager to send students to him, and will look back upon their days at College as the happiest of their lives. They tell us too, that Virginia is steadily completing her internal improvements, that in a few years her territory will be unlocked, and her bread be thrown upon the bosom of the deep – and the State that was dead, will be alive again. If this be so then our young men may well commence now, for which commercial influence will come great commercial suits – suits that will find their resting place in the Supreme Court. There was a day when our Marshalls railed upon that bench, and when our Randolphs could sit for hours and listen to our Tazewells, who were as powerful at the bar, and feel satisfied when they had finished, “that Old Virginia had [illegible] the day!” But these men have passed away with Virginia’s importance; and now the Taney’s of Maryland, the Joneses of Washington, the Sargeants and Binnys of Philadelphia, the Websters of Massachusetts, and such men, will be the court. If there is still a spark of ambition left in our young men’s breasts, let them to to Williamsburg and prepare themselves thoroughly, to greet the dawn of Virginia rising greatness, and put her back into the first position, from which she has unhappily fallen.