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An Address on Education, as Connected with the Permanence of Our Republican Institutions

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AN ADDRESS ON EDUCATION; AS CONNECTED WITH THE PERMANENCE OF OUR REPUBLICAN INSTITUTIONS.

Delivered before the Institute of Education at Amherst College, on its Anniversary Meeting, September the 23th, 1835, on the invitation of that body,—by Linnaeus T. Mason, Esq. of Langdon.

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Institute:—

I am, I hope, to offer you, and this large assembly, some thoughts upon EDUCATION, as a means of preserving the Republican Institutions of our country.

The sentiment of the Roman Senate, who, upon their general return with the shattered remains of a great army from an almost annihilating defeat, thanked and applauded him for not despairing of the Republic, lies, in later times, been inscribed into an apostrophe of political morality; and few sayings of equal dignity are now more hackneyed, than that "A good citizen will never despair of the commonwealth." All experience proves indispensable to the preservation of more haclmeyed, than that of disloyalty to our popular institutions, implied in the long silence of its advocates and strong adherence to their principles. This apothegm, if I may, somewhat, its limits unless they comprehend the subjects of his action well. What then must it be, in a system so complex as ours? Two sets of public functionaries, to appoint and superintend: two sets of machinery to watch, and keep in order: each of them not only complicated within itself, but constantly tending to clash with the other. Viewing the State government alone, how many fearful dissensions have arisen, as to the extent of its powers, and the propriety of its acts! Turning then to the Federal government, how much more awful and numerous controversies, respecting both the constitutionality and expediency of its measures, of duty, and of right, in which they have act him to labor. Yet—in its least perplexed form, on its most diminutive scale, the task of self-government is a perilously difficult one; difficult, in proportion to its nobleness: calling for the highest, and most abstract attribute of the human character. What, then, must be done, to maintain in our northern sky. To the complexity of our two governments, separately considered, add the delicate problems daily springing from their relations with one another; and from the mutual relations of the twenty-four states—disputes concerning territory; claims urged by citizens of one, against another state; or wrongs done to some states, by citizens and residents of others—all these, and innumerable other questions, involving each innumerable ramifications, continually starting up to try the wisdom and temper, if not to mar the peace, of our country;—and say, if there are words forcible and emphatic enough to express the need, that the POPULAR WILL, which supremely controls this labyrinthine complication of difficulties, should be enlightened by knowledge, tempered by kindness, and ruled by justice?

Mr. Randolph's Speech in the Virginia Convention, November, 1829.
Gentlemen, when such dangers hedge our political edifice; when we recollect the storms which have already burst upon us, and that, although it has survived them, we have no guarantee for its withstanding even less furious ones hereafter—as a ship may ride out many a tempest safely, and yet be so wrecked in her joints as to go down at last under a capful of wind; above all, when we reflect that the same censors which have destroyed all former commonwealths, are now at work within our own:—it would betoken, to my view, more of irrational credulity than of patriotism, to feel that sanguine, unconditional confidence in the durability of our institutions, which those professors, who are perpetually making it the test of good citizenship “never to despair of the republic.”

But is it ever to be thus? Were then the visions of liberty for centuries or centuries, which our fathers so fondly cherished, all deceitful? Were the soil, and treasure, and blood they lavished as that liberty’s price, all lavished in vain? Is there no deliverance for man, from the doom of subjection which kings and their minions pronounce against him? No remedy for the diseases which, in freedom’s apparently most healthful state, menace her with death?

If it is not ever to be thus; if the anticipations of our revolutionary patriots were not all delusive dreams, and their blood not vain in the ground; if man’s general doom is not subjection, and the examples of his freedom are not mere deceitful glimmerings up of happiness above the fixed darkness which envelops him, designed but to assuage his fancy and cheat his hopes; if there is a remedy for the diseases that poison the health of liberty—the reason—that remedy—can be found only in one short precept—ENLIGHTEN THE PEOPLE!

Nothing—I sample not to now—it has been my thought for years—nothing but my reliance on the efficacy of this precept, prevents my being, at this instant, a monarchist. Did I not, with burning confidence, believe that the people can be enlightened, and that they may so escape the dangers which encompass them, I should be for consigning them at once to the calm of hereditary monarchy. But this confidence makes me no monarchist: makes me, I trust, a true Whig; not in the party acceptation of the day, but in the sense, employed by Jefferson, of one who trusts and cherishes the people. Throughout my life, we find that great statesman insisting upon popular instruction as an inseparable requisite to his belief in the permanency of any popular government: “Ignorance and bigotry,” said he, “like other insanities, are incapable of self-government.” His authority might be fortified by those of Sidney, Montesquieu, and of all who have written extensively and luminously upon free government; but this is no time for elaborate quotations; and indeed why cite authorities, to prove what is palpable to the glance?

Immeasurable the space to be traversed, between the present condition of mental culture in Virginia, and that which can be safe.

*"The parties of Whig and Tory are those of nature. They exist in all countries, whether called by these names, or by those of Aristocrats and Democrats—Old dragoons and old guerilles—Ultran and Radicals—Serviles and Liberals. The sickly, weakly, timid man, fears the people, and is a Tory by nature. The hearty, strong, bold, cherishes them, and is a Whig by nature.” Jefferson.

ly relied upon, to save her from the dangers that bawl round a democracy, unsupported by popular knowledge and virtue. Cyrus the Great, when a boy, among his play fellows, avoided contests with his inferiors in strength and swiftness; always challenging to the race or the wrestling match, those faster and stronger than himself: by which means, observes Xenophon, he soon excelled them. Imitating this wise meekness of Cyrus, let us, in looking around to find how we may attain an excellence, worthy of Virginia’s early and long illustrious but now paleling fame, compare ourselves not with States that have been as neglectful as we, of popular education, but with some which have outstripped us in that march of true glory.*

The Common-school system of New York, which has been in operation since the year 1816, is in substance this: The counties having been already laid off into tracts of five or six miles square, called townships,—each of these, upon raising one half the sum needed there for teachers’ wages, is entitled to have the other half furnished from the state treasury; and each neighborhood in the township, before it can receive any part of this joint sum, must organize itself as a school district, build and furnish a school house, and cause a school to be taught there for at least three months, by a teacher who has been examined and found duly qualified, by a scrutinizing committee, appointed for that purpose. To the schools thus established, all children, rich and poor alike, are admitted without charge. Mark the fruits of this system. In 1829, there were in the state 508,678 children; of whom 494,819 were regular pupils of the common-schools: leaving fewer than 14,000 for private or other instruction, and reducing the number who are unschooled, to an inappreciable point. In Massachusetts, the townships are compelled by law to defray the whole expense of their schools; the common-schools: leaving fewer than 14,000 for private or other instruction, and reducing the number who are unschooled, to an inappreciable point. In Connecticut, with a state fund yielding 180,000 dollars annually, and with common schools established by law in every township, furnish their efficacy in a great degree, merely by a single congress to oversee it. The error is, that the whole expense is defrayed by the state. In consequence of this, the people take little interest in the schools; and the children are sent so irregularly, as to deprived of a great amount of beneficial instruction: so clearly is it shown, that a gratuity, or what seems to be one, is but lightly valued. The statesmen of Connecticut, convinced that the only method of insuring the people from their indifference, is to make them contribute something for the schools in their own immediate neighborhood, and so become solicitous to get the worth of their money, are meditating the adoption of a plan like that of New York.

Even in Europe, we may find admirable, many wonderful examples, for our imitation.

* Montesquieu, mentioning the adoption, by the Romans, of an improved buckle from a conquered nation, remarks, that the chief secret of Roman greatness was, their renewing any usage of their own, the moment they found a better one. "Il est rassuraux moment bien usage, sans en etant trouvé de meilleure." Gründel et Decadence des Romains—Chap. 1.

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Russia has a system, strikingly analogous to that of New York; with some respects, superior to it. As in New York, the superintendence of popular education is entrusted to a distinct branch of the government; to a gradation of salaried officers, whose whole time is employed in regulating the conduct of study, compiling or selecting books, examining teachers, and inspecting the schools. At suitable intervals, are schools expressly for the instruction of teachers: of which, in 1831, there existed thirty-three—supplying a stock of instructors, accomplished in all the various knowledge taught in the Prussian schools. In no country on earth—little as we might imagine it—in there probably so well taught a population as in Prussia. Witness the fact, that in 1831, out of 2,013,000 children in the kingdom, 2,021,000 regularly attended the common schools; leaving but 22,000 to be taught at their homes or in private academies.* Prince, in 1833, adopted the Prussian plan, with effects already visible in the habits and employments of her people; and similar systems have long existed in Germany, and even in Austria. The schools for training teachers (called, in France and Germany, normal schools) pervade all these countries.

In England, government has yet done little towards educating the common people: but Scotland has long enjoyed parish schools equalled only by those of Prussia. Germany, and some of our own states, in creating a virtuous and intelligent yeomanry. Throughout Great Britain, voluntary associations for the diffusion of useful knowledge, in which are censured none of the most illustrious minds not only of the British empire but of this age, have been for years in active and statutory operation; and, by publishing cheap and simple tracts upon useful and entertaining subjects, and by sending over the country competent persons to deliver plain and popular lectures, illustrated by suitable apparatus, they have, as the North American Review expresses it, "poured floods of intellectual light upon the lower ranks of society."

From a comparison with no one of the eight American and European states that I have mentioned, can we see a greater difference between the education of their children and the common-school systems of the northern states, in that they take in all children: while we aim to instruct only the children of the poor; literary professors. We then at once come to the first, the slight value which was set upon what costs them nothing, as was evinced in the case of Connecticut; second, the mortification to pride (an honest though mistaken pride), in being singled out as an object of charity. As if these fatal errors had not sufficiently ensured the impotence of the scheme, its solvents are the least efficient that could be devised. Instead of teachers retained expressly for the purpose,—selected, after strict examination into their capacities, and vigilantly superintended afterwards, by competent judges—the poor are set to the expense of failure of a hiring commissioner (often himself entirely unqualified either to teach or to direct teaching,) in the private school which chances, or the teacher's unfitness for any other employment, combined always with cheapness of price, may have already established interest at hand. There, the little protege of the commonwealth is thrown amongst pupils, whose parents pay for them and give some heed to their progress; and having no friend to see that he is properly instructed—mortified by the humiliating name of poor scholar—neglected by the teachers—and not rigorously urged to school by any one—he learns nothing, shirks his attendance, and soon quits the temple of science in rooted disgust.

Observe now, I pray you, how precisely the results agree with what might have been foretold, of such a system. In 1833, nearly 33,000 poor children (literary professors) were found in 100 counties of Virginia; of whom but 17,081 attended the common schools: leaving but 15,969 to teach or to direct teaching,) in the private school which chances, or the teacher's unfitness for any other employment, combined always with cheapness of price, may have already established interest at hand.

Rumpling, out of the schools, through the general walks of society, and among our poorer classes, and not seldom in the middle, we see an unfeeling, unthinking, unreasoning, and one, who at the age of 72, has taken upon him to teach 12 or 14 boys; more than half of them without compulsion—"What you say here, is verified," said a venerable friend to me, on reading these sheets as they were preparing for the press—a friend who at the age of 55, has taken upon him to teach 12 or 14 boys; more than half of them without compulsion—"What you say here, is verified in my school. Those who do not pay, attend hardly half their time: and one, who is anxious in learning, and would learn if he came regularly, is kept by his father to work at home, and has not been to school now for more than a twosight. And it was just so," continued he, "when I managed the W. trest fund for a charity school, 20 odd years ago. The parents could not be induced to send their children. Sometimes they were walled at home: sometimes they were forced to go abroad: sometimes they had no schools to carry to school. And when we offered to furnish them provisions if they would attend, the parents said yes, that was being too dependent. In short, the school produced not half the good it might have done. There was the same striking difference between the charity school and those who paid." Similar testimony as to such schools may be obtained of hundreds.

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And of many who can read, how contrasted the range of intellect! The mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, all unexplored, though presented hourly to the eye; the glorious heavens, their grandeur, their distances, and the laws of their motion, unthought of; man himself—his structure, so fearful and so wonderful—than truths in his bodily and mental frame, attention to which would most essentially conduces to bodily and mental health—all unnoted; History, Geography, tabula rasa to them! And for political knowledge, upon which we of Virginia mainly pride ourselves, the following extract from any court-house yard, and question him touching the division of power between our two governments, and its distribution among the departments of each: the probabilities are ten to one, that he will not solve one in ten of your questions. Even to very young minds, the structure and powers of the sun, the moon, and the stars, are sometimes mistied by flattery: they should imitate also the wisdom of those monarchs we occasionally meet with in history, who can hear unwelcome truths, and let the speaker live; may, hearten kindly to his discourse, and let it weigh upon their future conduct. Do I overreach the portion of the people I now address, in chassing them with such monschees?

Sugacious men have not been wanting among us, to see the radical defects of our primary school system; and in 1829, the late Mr. Fitzhugh of Fairfax,stimulated the Legislature to a feeble effort towards correcting them, by empowering the school commissioners of any county to lay it off into districts of not less than three nor more than seven miles square; and to pay, out of the public fund, two-thirds of the sum requisite for building a school house, and half a teacher’s salary, for any one of those districts, whenever its inhabitants, by voluntary subscription, should raise the residue necessary for these purposes: and the schools thus established were to be open gratuitously, alike to rich and poor. But the pernicious phraseology of this statute completely neutralized its effect. It might have been foreseen, and it was foreseen, that empowering the commissioners to act, and leaving the rest to voluntary contributions, would be unavailing, where the workings of the school system had so long been regarded with apathy. The statute has been acted upon, so far as I have learned, in but three counties of the State; remaining, as to the other 107, a dead letter. I have the strongest warrant—that of actual experiment, in New York and in Massachusetts—for saying, that had the law commanded the commissioners to lay off districts in all counties where the census showed a sufficiently dense white population; and had it then organized in the districts some local authorities, whose duty it should be to levy the needful amount upon their people;—I should have been saved the ungracious task of reproaching my own country with her want of parental care; and Virginia would now be striding onward, speedily to recover the ground she has lost in the career of true greatness.

If a sense of interest, and of duty, do not prompt her people, and her legislature, immediately, to supply defects so obvious, to correct evils so glaring; surely, very shame at the contemplation of her inferiority to those, above whom she once vaunted herself so highly, will induce measures which cannot be much longer deferred without disgrace as well as danger. In addition to normal schools (for training teachers,) an able writer in the Edinburgh Review (to which I owe the particulars of the Prussian, German, and French school systems) suggests, in my opinion very judiciously, the attaching of a Professorship to Colleges, for lecturing upon the art of instruction; to be called the professorship of Didactics. Such a chair, ably filled, would be invaluable for multiplying enlightened teachers, and for enhancing the dignity of that under-estimated pursuit. Conjointly with the normal schools, it would soon ensure an abundant supply of instructors for all the common schools.

The kinds of knowledge which should be studied in the schools, and diffused by books, treatises, and oral lectures, among the people, form an important topic of consideration. It is not for me, at least now and here, to obtrude an inventory of my favorite subjects, or favorite books: but the chains of a few subjects upon our regard are so overwhelming, as to make dissent scarcely possible, and their omission wholly unpardonable, in any extensive view of the connexion between popular education, and popular government.

Foremost of these, is the subject of Constitutional Law, and Political Right: something of which might be taught, even in childhood. If the children of Rome were obliged, at school, to lay up in memory the laws of the Twelve Tables, with all their ferocious absurdities; how much more should the children of our country learn those fundamental laws, which guarantee to them the noble inheritance of a rational and virtuous freedom! Even to very young minds, the structure and powers of our two governments may be rendered intelligible by familiar and impartial treatises, with clear oral explanations. The merit of impartiality in these political lessons, is illustrated by the odiousness of a departure from it, which startled me the other day, in reading the thirty-fifth edition of a popular and in other respects an excellent History of the United States; I do

* William H. Fitzhugh—whose death cannot yet cease to be deplored as a public calamity; omitting, as I did, a career, which his extraordinary means and his devoted will alike bids fair to make a career of distinguished usefulness.

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signed for schools; where that section of the Federal Constitution which declares the powers of Congress, is presented thus: "The Congress of the United States shall have power to make and enforce all laws which are necessary to the general welfare—AS to lay and collect taxes," &c. going on to enumerate the specified powers, as mere examples of Congressional omnipotence! And the myriads of tender minds, which probably already owe all their knowledge of the Constitution to the abstract where this preluding moral of political doctrine occurs, can hardly fail to carry through life the impression, that the powers of Congress are virtually as unbounded as those of the British Parliament. Now, to make patriots, and not partisans—upholders of vital faith, not sectarian doctrine—treatises for the political instruction of youth should quote the letter of every such controversy passed, with a brief and fair statement of the opinions and reasons on both sides. The course of political study would be very incomplete, without the Declaration of Independence, and Washington's Farewell Address: and occasion might readily be found to correct or guard against some fallacies, about among mankind, and often mischievously used as actions.

"That the majority should govern," is an instance of the myriads of that precious morsel of political doctrine, of vital importance, not of sectarian doctrine—treatises for the historical instruction, instead of being filled with sieges and battles, should unfold, as were salutary in that name: the monuments of democracy—the priest's resentment or ambition—against the doctrine of precedent, and that of false reasonings—against the false pretences of mistaken and false greatness, to little appreciation of or the bane party spirit, which has been so early imbued with the rational sentiments contained in the "Barring Out." In short, to be familiar with the mass of that lady's incomparable writings for youth, and not have the principles and feelings of economy, industry, courage, honor, and fraternal love, engrained into his very soul! Or how can he fail to find, in "Sandford and Merton," for the daily occasions of life, the happiest lessons of duty and humanity, and for those great conjunctures which never occur to the most restless incentives to a more than Roman heroism?

Other branches of knowledge are desirable for the republican citizen, less from any peculiar appositeness to his character as such, than from their tendency to enlarge his mind; and especially because, by affording exhaustless stores of refined and innocent pleasure, they win him away from the haunts of sensuality. "I should not think the most exalted faculties a gift worthy of heaven," says Junius, "nor any assistance in their improvement a subject of gratitude to man, if I were not satisfied, that to inform the understanding, corrects and enlarges the heart." Felix Neff, the Alpine pastor, whose ardent, untiring benevolence, ten years ago, wrought what the indolent would deem miracles, in diffusing knowledge, and a love of knowledge, has in his uninterred penury, found their indiffERENCE towards foreign missions ininnovable, until they had learned something of geography: but so soon as they had read the

**Laud Masfield.**

"The "order civile et iusceleum," not less than the

**valentiae etiamvta."**
description of distant countries, and seen them upon the
map, they conceived an interest in the people who dwelt
there, and entered warmly into the scheme of benefi-
cence, which before had solicited their attention in vain.
"Their new acquirments," observes Neff, "enlarged
their spirit, and made new creature of them; seeming
to triple their very existence." Geometry, he remark-
ed, also "produced a happy moral development,"
doubless by the beauty of its unerring march to truth.
Aristotle it is superfluous to recommend: but its ad-
junct, Algebra, deserves cultivation as an exercise to

ience, which before Imd solicited their attention in vain.

description of distant countrics, 

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doubtless by the beauty of it;; uncrring march to tl'Uth.

peculiarities of distant lands, and the modes of remedying those de-
fects of soils, and the modes of remedying those de­
effects-the natimes and propcrtics of minerals and vege-
tables-the modes in which different bodies affect each other—the mechanical powers—the structure of man's

own frame, and the causes which benefit or injure it—
the utility of these cannot escape any mind.

For books, and lectures, and lectures for the people,
there will be no want of materials or models, or even of
the actual fabrics themselves. The publications of the
British and American Societies for the Diffusion of
Knowledge, are mines, in which selection, compilation,
and imitation, may work with the richest results to
this great cause. Many of these productions, and still
more eminently, the scientific writings of Dr. Frank-
lin, afford most happy specimens of the style, suited to
the prosecution of several other studies; and as open-
ing a unique and curious field of knowledge to the
view.

The physical sciences, showing the composition and
defects of soils, and the modes of remedying those de-

A quick can use the lanceet, and knows it to have been
successfully employed for severe contusions and excres-
centive heat; but does not know the general fact, that un-
der extreme exhaustion, indicated by a suspended pulse,
stimulants, and not depleitives, are proper. Seeing a
man just fallen from a scaffold, or exhausted with heat,

the patient dies. Again—a

lounger at judicial trials, having picked up a few legal
documents and phrases—perhaps being master of a "Hlen-
ing's Justice" conceives himself a profound jurispru-
dent; and besides tiring the ears of all his acquaintance
with technical pedantry, he persuades a credulous neighbor,
or plunes himself, into a long, expensive, and minis-
tious law-suit. The worthy Mr. Saddletree, and Poor
Peter Peckles, are masterly pictures of such a per-
suasion: pictures of which few experienced lawyers
have not seen originals. The storm so lately (and per-
haps even yet) impending from the north, and several
other conspicuous ebullitions of fallatieism, are clearly
remnble to the perversion of a text in our Declaration
of Independence and Bills of Rights, detached from its
natural connexion with kindred and qualifying truths,
by minds un instructed in the general principles of civil
and political right. The mind which has been accus-
tomed only to a microscopic observation of one subject,
or one set of subjects, is necessary constructed, fantas-
cial, and indolent: as the wrinkled crone, who, during
a long life, has never passed the hills environing her


acquaintance with outlines, and general principles. A

quick can use the lanceet, and knows it to have been


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that a wise doubt of his own infallibility will make him tolerant of dissent from his opinions: that he will be prepared at all times to extend his acquisitions easily and judiciously, and to connect them well with previous acquisitions—proving how truly Blackstone has said, in paraphrase of Cicero, "the sciences are social, and flourish best in the neighborhood of each other." In short, that he will approach most boldly to that "healthful, well proportioned" expansion of intellect and liberality of character, which Locke terms a large, sound, roundabout sense. In this point of view, it will be found that "a little learning is not a dangerous thing." I am deeply sensible, that I have touched upon many topics, even more important and more pertinent to the main theme of my remarks, than some which I have discussed. Indeed, so wide and so varied is that main theme, that I have found myself greatly embarrassed in selecting from the numerous particulars which solicited my regard on every hand. I have not presumed to offer any fully rounded plan, of that legislative action which is so imperiously demanded by the public weal, and soon will be, I trust, by the public voice. A few hints, are all that seemed to become me, or indeed that could well be crowded into my brief space of this day's time. For a plan, both in outline and in detail, I point to our sister states and to the European countries, that have taken the lead of us: and to the virtues and wisdom, by which our statesmen will be able to supply the defects, avoid the errors, and even, I trust, surpass the excellences, of those states and countries. That the Legislature may be wrought up to act, individual influence, and the more powerful influence of associations for the purpose—of whom I deem you, gentlemen, the chief, because the first—must be exerted. You must draw the minds of the constituent body forcibly to the subject. It must be held up in every light; supported by every argument; until the people shall be persuaded but to consider it. Then, half the work will have been done. And in its further progress towards consummation—when the illuminating process shall have fairly begun—still it will be for you, gentlemen, and for those whom your example shall call into this field of usefulness with and after you, to exert, with no abating energy, the endowments wherewith you and they are entrusted. You, and they, must become authors, and the prometers of authors. Books, for use in the schools, and cheap, simplifying truths as well as books for circulation among the people, must be composed, compiled, and selected. Lectures, plain and cheap, and suitably illustrated, must be delivered through town and country. After the example of the good 'Wults, and of our own many illustrious contemporaries in Britain and America, learned men must oblige Science to lay aside the starched dignity and grand attire, by which hitherto she has held away the vulgar; and to render herself universally amiable, by being humbly useful: as the wisest of heathens is said to have "brought Philosophy down from the skies, placed her in human havots, and made her discourse on the daily concerns of human life."

In this whole enterprise, its undertakers should resolve to be convinced by no means, daunted by no difficulties, arrested by no obstacles. Difficulties and obstacles enough, indeed, will present themselves to the timid or superficial glance; but they will vanish, before calm scrutiny and rational determination. Even where the means of solving or removing them may not occur before hand to the mind, what was lately said has worse cause, will prove to be true: "Where there is a will, there is a way." In such a cause as ours, and in reference to the epiphanies of "visionary," "impracticable," "utopian," "intractable," "Quixotic," and all the other imaginary lions which will be discovered in our path, well may we say, with the generous confidence of Lord Chatham, that we "trample upon impossibilities."

Has not our success, indeed, been already demonstrated? Demonstrated, in the first place, by unnumbered instances of parallel, and more stupendous enterprises, accomplished under circumstances less favorable than those which attend our undertaking? Such enterprises as the Reformation of Luther—the settlement of the universities—Illinois, and New York, in Connecticut, in Massachusetts, in Austria, in Germany, in Prussia, in Scotland? Yes—it is not untried a path we are to tread: scarcely a step of the way, but has been explored and smoothed before us. All that we have to do, is to look around—see what others have done—correct our own procedure by what we perceive defective in theirs—and forthwith open the floodgates of light, and bid the torrent pour.

Young gentlemen, founders of this institution near us! Some, if not all of you, are destined by your opportunities, and by bosoms glowing with honorable ambition, and bent high with the consciousness of talent, for a conspicuous part in the drama of life. Your eyes, doubters, have already often glanced around, to see in what field you shall reap the harvest of wealth, respect, and fame, which hope represents as awaiting you. The buzz of notoriety, the palm of eloquence, the gorgeousness of office—these glittering bribes, which have lured on many of thousands to more apodal misery or to a shameful end after all—have, no doubt, displayed their attractions to you: but permit me to suggest, that if you will devote the powers with which nature and education have gifted you, to the patriotic task of purifying and expanding the minds of your countrymen—besides enjoying in your latter days that sweetness of earthly thoughts, the thought of a life spent in usefulness—you may have gathered harvests of glory, compared with which, all the chaplets ever won in the tilt-yard of vulgar ambition are petty weeds.

My wealthy fellow citizens! remember, that where

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"Quodam sitere, quae ad humanae pertinent, habent quodam communem viiudinem, et quidam cognitiones quidam inter se communicant." ONST. QUE ARCH. Poet. Conduct of the Understanding. Socrates. "Primus ille philosophorum deraecavit e calc, et in multos collocavit, et in dominos introductit, et caegit de vita et moribus, rebusque bonis et alea quæreret." Cic. Tressal. 5. Dr. Johnson, after having witnessed the surprising performance of the pupils in a College for the deaf and dumb at Edinburgh in 1775, concluded that such a triumph over an infirmity apparently irreparable, left nothing hopeless to human resolution. After having seen the deaf taught arithmetic," says he, "you would be afraid to cultivate the Hebrew." Journey to the Western Islands.

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suffrage is nearly universal and the majority rules, if the
great body of the people be ignorant or immoral,
property is never sure from assaults, under the dis-
guise of law: either avaricious schemes, or oppressive
protecting systems, or advantages to certain classes, or
some form of unequal taxation; all, the result of ill-
formed minds, or of depraved dispositions. And if
lawlessness assume not the garb of legislation, still it is
always hallowed with ignorance in the firing of barns,
the destruction of labor-saving machinery,* conspiracies
to raise wages, and all the terrific outrages that spring
from the fury of mobs. Thus, by a wise Providence,
are you, who are the most able to promote the education
of the people, also by far the most interested in doing
so. If there can be a case, in which a judicious liberality
is the truest economy, that case is now yours: and never
may the ill husbandry of niggardliness be more awfully
exemplified, than by your grudging a small particle of
your wealth, to place the remainder beyond the reach
of this peril.

My fellow citizens (if any such are before me) who
do not possess wealth, and who have scarcely tasted of
the cup of knowledge! You surely need no exhortation
to quaff freely of that cup, when it shall come within
your grasp: but I do exhort you to employ your influ-
ence as men, and your constitutional power as voters,
in persuading your fellow citizens, and in prompting
your public agents, to adopt the requisite measures for
dispelling, now and forever, the clouds and darkness in
which republican freedom can never long live.

And if, at the remotest point of future time, to which
we may look forward as witnessing the existence of hu-
man government any where, our democratic forms shall
still retain, unimpaired, even their present purity, and
present fertility of substantial freedom and happiness;
much more, if they shall have waxed pure, and stronger,
and more fruitful of good, with each revolving century,—
defying the power or conciliating the love of foreign
states—maintaining domestic harmony—oppressing
none, protecting all—and so fully realizing the fondest
hopes of the most sanguine statesman, that no “despair
of the republic” can trouble the faintest heart—all will
be owing (under Providence,) to the hearkening of this
generation and the succeeding ones, to that voice—not
louder, but solemn and earnest—which, from the shrine
of Reason and the tombs of buried commonwealths,
reiterates and enforces the momentous precept—"EN-
LIGHTEN THE PEOPLE!"

*"Labor-saving machinery" refers to inventions and technologies that aim to reduce the physical labor required for manual tasks.