

# SOUTHERN CITIZEN.

WHAT DO WE LIVE FOR, BUT TO IMPROVE OURSELVES AND BE USEFUL TO ONE ANOTHER?

VOLUME III.

ASHEBORO, (N. C.) FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1839.

NUMBER 4.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY:

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TERMS.

Two Dollars per annum, in advance, or Three Dollars, if not paid within three months from the date of the first number received. No subscription to be discontinued till all arrearages be paid; unless at the discretion of the Editor. Failure to order a discontinuance before the expiration of the subscription year, is equivalent to a new engagement. All Letters, Communications, &c. to come post paid.

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REMARKS OF MR. F. J. HILL, of Brunswick, delivered in the House of Commons of North Carolina, December 10, 1838, on certain Resolutions submitted by him on the subject of the Public Lands.

(Concluded.)

The object of the institution and maintenance of every form of Government ought to be to secure the existence of the body politic, and to afford to the individuals who compose it, personal protection, security of property, and the undisturbed enjoyment of the blessings of life. In popular Governments, of which ours is an example, the body politic is formed by a voluntary association of individuals. It is a social compact, by which the whole people covenant with each citizen, and each citizen with the whole people, that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good. The first clause in our bill of rights declares that all political power is vested in and derived from the people only. Here it is, where the popular will is the only fountain of power, where the governors are the servants of the governed, where the avenues to promotion are open to character and to talent, where the character of the representative is but the reflection of the mind and feeling of the constituent body, it is all-important that the public mind should be enlightened by the general diffusion of the blessings and advantages of education. Here, general intelligence is essential to wise legislation—wise legislation to good laws—which are, everywhere, indispensable to national prosperity. These three propositions, I think may be put down as axioms in our political system. Just and wholesome laws can only be expected from honest, vigilant and well informed legislators, and from such laws alone, can prosperity and happiness be enjoyed by any people.

By the term Education, Mr. Speaker, I do not mean the mere communication of knowledge. This is but giving the power to act, whilst the question whether it will be for good or for evil; whether the acquisition will be a blessing or a curse to the recipient and to others, will depend upon the manner in which the principles and disposition of the individual will influence him to employ it. Teach the art of writing to the man, in whose heart every other consideration is absorbed by the love of money, and he will use it in counterfeiting the name of his friend or his neighbor. Give it to him, in whose bosom the light of divinity has shed its benign and hallowed influence and he will employ it in the propagation of the saving message to "Earth's remotest bounds." The Philanthropist will employ his knowledge of Geography and Navigation, to discover and supply the wants of his fellow man; while the Pirate will use his to direct and to guide him to the work of murder and of death. The term, education, then, means something

more than the mere imparting of instruction; it is the engrafting of knowledge upon a good stock, the application of all those means calculated to develop the physical, moral and intellectual faculties of man. It implies instruction, it is true, in all the branches of knowledge which are necessary to useful and efficient action in the sphere of the individual; but it must also include physical training, which is to render the body capable of executing the purposes of the mind; the skill which is requisite, in order to apply our knowledge and strength to the very best advantage; and above all, the moral discipline, by which the character and the direction of our efforts are to be decided.

Such, sir, is the character of the training I desire; and which it is the tendency of the resolutions to impart to our people; and who can doubt the salutary influence it would exert upon individual happiness, social enjoyment and national prosperity!

Let us, for a moment, contrast the condition of an educated, well-ordered family, with its opposite, in the common walks of life. In the one, prevails peace, harmony, and comfort; a mutual disposition to please, and to benefit, to impart, and to receive instruction. In the other, brutal passions, belligerent wretchedness and strife, reign with terrific sway. On the part of the parent, imprecations and menaces, for want of resources for occupying, amusing, or interesting the younger minds, who, in return, receive from the children rudeness, strife, insubordination, and even violence. Home has no attractions for the children of such a family; and all the leisure which can be had from the daily toils and engagements imposed upon them by the stern necessity of working for a subsistence, is spent in wandering abroad in pursuit of amusement suited to their sensual, and too frequently, vicious propensities.

Personal dignity of character, and individual happiness, are not less promoted by education than the peace and harmony of families and communities. It confers a quickness of conscience, a strength of principle, a liveliness of sympathy, an erectness and an independence of character, which enlarges the capacity of the individual for usefulness in any sphere where he may be called to act. "Man, ignorant and uncivilized, is a ferocious, sensual, and superstitious Savage. The external world affords some enjoyment to his animal feelings; but it confounds his moral and intellectual faculties. External nature exhibits to his mind a mighty chaos of events, and a dread display of power. The chain of causation appears too intricate to be unravelled, and the power too stupendous to be controlled. Order and beauty, indeed, occasionally gleam forth to his eye from detached portions of creation, and seem to promise happiness and joy; but more frequently, clouds and darkness brood over the scene, and disappoint his fondest expectations. Nature is never contemplated with a clear perception of its adaptation to the purpose of promoting the true enjoyment of man, or with a well founded confidence in the wisdom and benevolence of its author. Man, when civilized, and illuminated by knowledge, on the other hand, discovers in the objects and occurrences around him a scheme beautifully arranged for the gratification of his whole powers, animal, moral and intellectual. He recognises in himself the intelligent and accountable subject of an all bountiful Creator, and in joy and gladness, desires to study the Creator's works, to ascertain his laws, and to yield to them a steady and a willing obedience. Without undervaluing the pleasures of his animal nature, he tastes the higher, more refined and more enduring delights of his moral and intellectual capacities; and he then calls aloud for education as indispensable to the full enjoyment of his rational powers."

Such, sir, are the benefits and advantages of a system of general education, such as is worthy of the name. The objection most frequently urged against its adoption, is the expense; and even this, I would urge as a weighty argument for the passage of the resolutions, and the disposition of the public lands, as contemplated by the... But if it can be shown, that such a liberal provision, as will secure the benefits of sound education to all the people, is a nation's best economy, we not only destroy the objection, but we build upon its ruins a strong argument in favor of the system. I have said that wise and wholesome legislation is dependant upon general intelligence; and the connexion between the wealth of a nation and its laws are not less intimate. By them ingenuity is quickened, industry is encouraged, and the quiet enjoyment of its fruits secured—the resources of a country are developed; and the prosperity and wealth of the nation increased. In illustration of this position, let us look for a moment into the history of those countries where the laws are oppressive and unequal in their general bearing. Look to Italy, to Turkey, to Spain, and to Mexico—those highly favored portions of earth's surface, where the salubrity and congeniality of the climate to the production of vegetable and preservation of animal life is no where surpassed and rarely equaled—where the fertility of the soil supplies almost spontaneously the necessities of human life—and yet, from defect in the Government, partiality and injustice in the civil law, incentive is destroyed, industry is paralyzed; and man is as wretched and as comfortless as he is oppressed and injured. Here the husbandman has no security for the enjoyment of the fruits of his labor—all that is certain to him is that the luxuries of those in power must be abundantly administered unto, and that the imperial Treasury must be supplied even at the price of the confiscation of his property and the sacrifice of his life.

But the advantages resulting from a general diffusion of knowledge are not confined to those countries where defective legislation operates a bar to the progress of improvement. Even in those where the laws are more wholesome and equal, its influence is discovered in rapid advancement of the arts and other means conducive to the acquisition of wealth. Those nations, where the general intellect has been most cultivated, and the light of science most widely diffused, have also been distinguished for the number of their labor-saving machines, and their improvements in the various branches of industry; and it is by means of these, principally, that one nation surpasses another in this respect.

In illustration of this point, I copy from a valuable little treatise on Popular Education, (and I avail myself of this opportunity to acknowledge my indebtedness to this work for many of the remarks I have had occasion to use on the subject) a comparison made by President Young, of Kentucky, founded upon authentic statistics between the commercial and manufacturing condition of England and France. He observes: "From this calculation it appears that the muscular force employed in commerce and manufactures in those two countries is about equal, being each equivalent in round numbers, to the power of six millions of men. Thus if the productive enterprise of the two countries depended solely upon the animate power employed, France ought to be as great a commercial and manufacturing country as England. But the English by means of machinery, have increased their force to a power equal to that of twenty-five millions of men, while the French have only raised theirs to that of eleven millions. England then, owing to her superiority in discovering and inventing, has more than quadrupled her power of men and horses; France, on the other hand has not quite doubled hers." Is it then any wonder, the learned Professor pertinently enquires, that these Islanders, with a narrow territory smaller population, and less genial climate, should immensely outstrip their less intelligent and ingenious neighbor; and can we conceive a stronger proof of the actual pecuniary gain than accrues to a nation from cultivating the intellect of her sons than is furnished by such a fact?

Let us look a little into this fact to ascertain if possible how much England gains by her superiority in this matter over France. The actual commercial and manufacturing power of the latter

country is only two-fifths of that of the former. The present annual value of the cotton manufactured in Great Britain is estimated at about 35 millions of Pounds sterling. Three-fifths of that sum, or more than 20 millions of pounds is England's clear gain over her less skillful rival—an amount more than 3 times as great as the whole present annual revenue of the United States—and for this vast and ever increasing tide of prosperity, England is clearly indebted to Popular Education, which is the parent of intelligence and the ultimate cause of all those improvements in the cotton manufacture by which these amazing results have been secured.

The ingenuity of a single intellect, which, but for the influence of Education, might have slept forever in ignorance and obscurity, sometimes saves a State more than it would require to educate all her sons. The genius of Middleton, it is estimated, by inventing a plan for supplying the City of London with water, saves an annual expense of 40 millions of dollars. But why go a-broad for facts to illustrate this position? To what other source are we indebted for the thousand modern improvements which have so wonderfully increased our capabilities over the vast resources of this great country? Whittemore's Card making Machine and Whitney's Cotton Gin have added to the profits of labor, millions upon millions. To the science of Chemistry (which is but a department of knowledge) is due the discovery of that principle in heat, which enables the artist to convert the rough and shapeless masses of metal into numberless articles of elegance and of usefulness. By the discovery of another property it possesses, by the illustrious Black, and its application to purposes of machinery by the immortal Fulton, are we enabled to connect the distant points of our extensive Territory by Steam Boats and Rail Roads, whereby the bonds of the Union are strengthened, and the value of the products of the whole country increased to an incalculable extent.

Sir, estimate but for a moment the increase of national wealth which has flowed in on us from this branch of knowledge alone, by its effects in that Egypt of our country, the valley of the Mississippi. Planters there, living 3,000 miles from market, carry to it the avails of their industry with less expense than many of our citizens of the middle counties of our State, residing within 150 miles of the great Atlantic. The application of Steam to the propulsion of Boats, Rail Road cars and other machinery, has already done more for our country than all the power of industry, working by the old methods could have effected for it in a whole century. It has filled houses with the productions of every country and climate,—it has increased the value of our lands and almost every article of our produce—it has given a powerful impulse to commerce, manufactures, agriculture and all other branches of industry, by which man seeks to create or increase his fortune. Truly, knowledge is power, and if from a single department of it, such mighty benefits are to be derived, how stupendous must be the results when the whole field is explored!

But, Sir, one of the strongest considerations which presents itself to mind in behalf of a system of sound popular education, is its connexion with the purity and perpetuity of our political institutions. To the people of this great country is committed the solemn charge of perpetuating that liberty and maintaining those institutions, civil, social, literary and religious, which it cost our forefathers so much blood and so much treasure to establish—Institutions which are at once the pride of our own country, and the hope and admiration of the world.

We stand, Sir, upon an eminence which few nations have ever reached. The eyes of the world are upon us—one portion regarding us with trembling, but anxious hope—the other, with a hellish desire to see our prospects blasted, our honor prostrate in the dust; and our greatness and very existence among the things that were. Our fall then will be the triumph of despotism, and the knell of liberty throughout the world. To maintain our free institutions and

to transmit them unimpaired to posterity, is no light trust to be committed to rash hands and rash heads. It is a trust most solemn in its nature; the due execution of which, requires in every citizen, knowledge, and judgment, as well as patriotism and vigilance.

Sir, it is not to be disguised, that our political fabric is in danger—that there are elements of destruction among us—I speak not of any party—they are peculiar to none, but common to all—they are inherent in our political organization as a nation, and our moral constitution as men. These dangers are numerous and multifarious, but the two which I deem most formidable, are the facility with which foreigners are permitted to vote at our elections, and the want of a proper independence of judgment and action in our own people; with a consequent liability to be swayed to their own lust, by artful, selfish and unprincipled party leaders.

Sir, I am aware that we have naturalized citizens, whose talents and whose virtues are an ornament to any country. Men sound to the core in their political and moral principles—Men whose public services are a part our national glory. It is not of such I speak—I allude to that overwhelming tide of emigration which disgorges upon our shores its annual thousands of Europe's most degraded population; men without principle, without patriotism; and with nothing to lose in the issue of an election. Can these be fit depositories of political power? Have they any of that attachment to our political institutions; and that knowledge of our form of Government, which are essential to its safe exercise?

What remedy can we present; what antidote do we possess against this great and growing evil. As we cannot conveniently alter the law of naturalization, the only practicable means is that thorough system of Education for our own people which will nullify this noxious foreign influence; and secure real personal independence in the native of the soil.

Intelligence and virtue are the bulwarks of a free Government—Education is the parent of all true personal independence; and in proportion to the universal prevalence of these principles, will be the chances of surviving in perpetual manhood, the operation of the causes, which have undermined all preceding Republics, and which are already at work in our own.

In a Government founded upon the popular will, Education is necessary for all classes, and for each individual in the community—and it is the duty of such Government to take care that this great end be secured. Under a sense of this duty, Mr. Speaker, I have introduced the resolutions which lie upon your table—and I would say to the members of this House—let us act for the best interest of our constituents—let none be overlooked, neglected or forgotten. Let the Education of the people receive, as it deserves at our hands, the earliest, deepest, and most unremitting attention. It is the sheet anchor of our system—the bond of our Union—the ward and keeper of our constitution—the charter of our happiness, our safety, and our rights.

The following piece of advice is from the Washington Madisonian:

"We humbly and sincerely admonish all who are opposed to the present misrule that harmony, union and cordial co-operation should be seriously inculcated and observed, or we shall utterly fail of attaining the common object, for which patriotism cries aloud. The interests of the country, the wants of the people, demand that we should look to the present and the future, not to the past—ahead, not behind. We should sacrifice every thing for the cause; nothing for men. Bring such laborers into the field, as are capable of rendering the republic the most efficient service. Cast every selfish prejudice or predilection into the sacrificial flame; and uniting every where with one sentiment, one object, and as one man, come in one firm, solid and indivisible phalanx to the rescue of the public liberty. Without this concert of patriotic action, we might as well lay down our arms, give up the fight, and tamely submit to a virtual despotism for half a century to come.

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\* Fisher's essay on the evils of popular ignorance.  
§ Combe on Education.