THE NORTH-CAROLINA STAR.

THOMAS J. LEMAY, Editor. NORTH CAROLINA—"Powerful in intellectual, moral and physical resources, the land of our sires and home of our affections." WILLIAM C. DOUB, Associate Editor

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AGRICULTURAL.

THE PLACE FOR ORCHARDS.

A friend asked us the other day, "what is the best situation for an orchard?" As a general answer to him, we would say, "where can you raise corn. There is one requisite that should not be overlooked, in choosing the site for an orchard. It is this. The land should be well drained. Flat lands, where the water stands, however rich they may be, are improper for an orchard, as the apple tree will not flourish with water about its roots.—Hence the slope of a hill is eminently fitted for an orchard. It does not make so much difference which point the orchard lies on, as many suppose, if the land be good. You will find orchards, and very good orchards, too, on all our hills, and on the very pinnacle of some of them. The easterly slopes, as a general thing, are earlier in the Spring, but then they are subject to the south east gales in the Fall, which sometimes knock the apples off at a sad rate. Let no farmer be without an orchard because he does not happen to live on the south side of a hill. Plant good healthy trees on a well drained soil, and with attention to them afterwards, you will soon have fruit from them.

While upon this subject, we would say a word about planting trees on the side of walls and fences. We, last winter, lost some young trees by the weight of snow which drifted upon them and crushed them down, breaking them off near the ground. We have noticed that many others have lost trees in the same manner. In order to obviate this, it will be a good thing to place stakes round them in the Fall, together with brush applied in such a way as to take most of the weight, instead of bearing on the young tree. By a protection of this kind, until the tree is large enough to resist such action, it will be saved from hurt.—*Maine Farmer.*

PRUNING APPLE TREES.

BY A. MARSHALL.

This may be done in the months of January, February, or March, at very little expense, as the orchardist in this season of the year, is very apt to have some leisure on hand. Apple trees ought to be pruned, more or less, every year. It is difficult to give explicit directions, as trees of different sizes require different treatment. Suckers and dead wood should always be cut off; branches that show a disposition to extend beyond their neighbors should be shortened, or "headed back:" weak branches should be trimmed out, and the upper surface of the head of the tree be kept somewhat in the shape of an open umbrella. By pruning every year, there is no occasion to cut very large limbs—thus large wounds are avoided.

Many orchardists commit a great error in pruning old trees by cutting out all the lower branches near the stem of the tree—this should not be done. The upper branches should be headed back and so thinned as to admit the Sun's rays and a free circulation of air.

Be careful not to prune too much in any one season, lest you destroy the equilibrium between the branches and the roots, and thus check, instead of promoting the growth of the tree.

Pruning in the summer, by removing a part of the foliage, always checks the growth of the tree. This operation may performed to advantage on young, thrifty trees, disposed to too much growth, at the expense of fruit bearing. By heading back the extreme branches in the months of July or August, you will cause them to form fruit buds for the next year's crop. Remove about half of the present year's growth.—*Village Record.*

STOWELL'S SWEET CORN.

This is a new sort, and is every way superior to any other we have seen, for after being pulled from the ground, the stalks may be placed in a dry, cool place, free from moisture, frost, or violent currents of air, (to prevent drying,) and the grains will remain full and milky for many months. Or, the ears may be pulled in August, and by tying a string loosely around the small end, to prevent the husk from drying away from the ears they may be laid on shelves and kept moist and suitable for boiling, for a year or more. This corn is a hybrid, between the Menomony soft corn, and the northern sugar corn, and was first grown by Mr. Nathan Stowell, of Burlington, New Jersey.

The ears are larger than the usual sweet corn, and contain twelve rows. To save the seed it is necessary to place them in strong currents of air, freed from most of the husks, and assisted slightly by fire heat when nearly dry. In damp places this corn soon moulds and becomes worthless. The seed, when dry is but little thicker than writing paper, but is a sure grower. The stalks are very sweet and valuable as fodder. The seed may be procured of Mr. Stowell.

Working Farmer.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL FOR SEEDS.

The ground for the reception of fine seeds of vegetables should be broken up the preceding year, and well manured in Autumn, and rendered fine in the Spring by repeated plowing, and harrowing, or raking. Plow and manure deep, for deep rooted vegetables; but manure near the surface for all others. Potatoes and Indian Corn answer well, and produce large crops in ground newly broken up. Very fine seeds should be sown in a newly prepared fresh soil, and covered only a quarter of an inch deep; larger seeds deeper in proportion to their size; and the ground to be trodden hard, or rolled with a heavy roller. This enables the earth to preserve its moisture at the surface, where at the same time the seeds may receive the necessary degree of heat from the Sun, and vegetate at once, striking root downwards. Fine seeds, if sown too deep, are liable to perish.

Kendrick's Orchardist.

LEAVES FOR MANURE.

Among the many resources the farmer has for supplying himself with materials for manure, we may enumerate as not the least valuable, the fallen foliage of the forest. This he can at all times obtain and in any quantity desired. The most suitable season, however, for their accumulation, is the spring, for then they lie in a solid and compact mass in consequence of the weight and melting of the winter snows, and may be much more easily gathered than when light and dry, and moved by every air. When it is practicable, however, enough should be gathered in the fall to furnish litter for the horses, oxen, sheep and swine, as they will be found much better for this purpose than straw, and besides straw is too valuable; it should be chaffed, and being mixed with rasped ruta baga, carrot, pumpkin or beet root, will make a most nutritious and salutary feed. By substituting leaves as litter, this may all be economized, and converted to a valuable and important use. The decomposition of forest leaves, as they are deposited in the forest, is slow and tardy. This arises from the concurrence of several circumstances. First, they are tough and indurated in their fibrous texture; and second, they are kept cool and constantly moist by the dense shade of the overhanging trees. But when they are removed to the yards of the farmers or accumulated in large and compact heaps, with other matter of a fermentable nature their decomposition is readily effected, and they are resolved at once into their elementary constituents, and furnish one of the best articles known as food for growing plants. In removing leaves from the forest, where the object is manure, it is advisable to take with them as much of the surface soil, or "*scuff*," as it is called, as practicable, as that is already in a condition to be immediately appropriated and assimilated by the plants. There are also generally, large quantities of rotten wood in most lots, and this also should be taken; it is an excellent absorbent, and will take up the liquid voidings, and thus facilitate its transportation to the fields. I have known many people ridicule the idea of making manure out of so dry and unsuccelent a substance as leaves; yet one year's experience will satisfy them of the fallacy of this view. Leaves are all soluble; or, in other words, there is not a particle of their texture which is not capable of being converted readily into the food of plants, with the exception of a very slight residum of earthly matter, and even this is not wholly without its value in the economy of reproduction. We know that in our forests the decaying foliage furnishes the only measure received or appropriated by the trees, and that this is amply sufficient to push forward the most gigantic productions, and with a rapidity rarely observed in those which are transplanted into cultivated lands, and tended with the most scrupulous care. Let every one, therefore, who has crops to feed, or lands to enrich, think seriously of this subject.

EXPERIENCE.

SPEECH OF MR. WILEY,

On the "Bill to Provide for the Appointment of a Superintendent of Common Schools and for other Purposes."

MR SPEAKER: It is not my purpose to make a set speech: nor am I ambitious of notoriety in this Assembly. My desire is to do good—to carry a purpose which I deem of much importance to the people of North Carolina. To educate the people of the State should be, it seems to me, a subject of great concern to her politicians and statesmen: a subject which ought to engage the serious and anxious attention of this Assembly. By common consent, however, this matter seems to be left to my special care—at least no one seems willing to go before me, and I am, therefore, compelled to perform a task from which I would gladly be delivered.

Diffident as I am, however, I will not shrink from the performance of my duties to the public; and I will endeavor in as brief and plain a manner as possible, to convince this House of the necessity and importance of the Bill under consideration.

It has been well considered and strongly recommended by the very intelligent Committee on Education; and though a great many other bills and propositions were before them, they not only selected this one as best suited to the exigency of the times, but have endorsed it without recommending a single amendment or alteration. This sanction might ensure success to ordinary bills; but the one before us, proposing to create a new office and being of general interest, ought to be well understood by those to whom its fate is now committed.

Mr. Speaker, since I have been of an age to take an interest in public matters, I have given a good deal of attention to the subject of education. I regard the education of the masses as necessary to the stability of free institutions, and as especially necessary to the comfort and happiness of the people themselves.

The establishment of Free Schools in North Carolina gave me more pleasure than I have experienced from any other public event; and I have watched with increasing interest and anxiety, their progress and effects.

The system so far has not fulfilled public expectation; complaints are heard in all quarters, and a remedy is loudly demanded.—What is it? To solve this question, I have personally examined the systems in other States—have even gone, for information, to the yankees, holding it to be right to get useful information, if I can, from an enemy, and knowing that the New England people, with all their faults, have been eminently successful and judicious in regard to the subject of education. I have witnessed their systems and those of Pennsylvania and Delaware; conversed with their officers and corresponded with them. I have also attentively examined our own system, and compared our laws and their effects with those of other States. After all these pains, I have arrived at this conclusion: That our laws, as far as they go, are generally good and suited to the subject and the State. *I say as far as they go*; and the radical defect of the system is, that it is not complete. There is no head to it; there is an excellent machine, but it is inert matter and has never been provided with a motive power.

The wisest laws will not administer themselves—the finest systems need a controlling, governing, sentient principle or agent to put them in operation.

Our school laws are good, and they provide for the appointment of local and inferior agents and officers; but these inferior officers act without concert, are, in a measure, irresponsible, because there is no one to call them to account, and the Legislature, the author of the laws, is ignorant of their effects.

Nobody knows any thing of the operations of the system beyond his own neighborhood; and when complaints are made to the General Assembly, from time to time, it has to legislate in the dark and at random and never afterwards knows the result of its policy.

Is any one able to report progress so far? We are beset by clamors for reform. Can any one tell the precise nature of the evils to be reformed? Have we any authentic information before us?

Sir, we are informed by the report of the President and Directors of the Literary fund that upwards of one hundred and eighty thousand dollars is unaccounted for in the hands of chairmen of boards of county superintendents; and they say that besides this immense sum there is an "indefinite amount" in the hands of private individuals who have filled these county offices. What does this mean? That a sum twice as large as the whole revenue of the State is in possession of men who fail to inform you, and are not called upon to inform you of its application; and that a sum unknown and which cannot be ascertained by our present laws, is applied doubtless to the purposes of private speculation and may be lost to the State. Who are they—who have this money belonging to the State and raised for a sacred purpose? How much have they of the common property? How long have they used it? Who can answer these questions? Who can tell what is done with the known sum of $180,000, not accounted for? Is it doing good for the public? Is it diffusing light and knowledge among the poor? Or is it used to oppress the poor, in note shaving and private speculations? I mean no reflections on any one: but as a representative of the people, I have a right to ask these questions, and it is the duty of us all to ask them. Who will answer us?

Here, sir, we see at once the necessity of a head; here we have overwhelming evidence that laws will not administer themselves.

All these chairmen of county boards who are county treasurers are required by law to make an annual report; this year, about forty-one out of seventy-nine have complied with the law, and in years past about a dozen.—The law commands them to report; but at present its command is a mere *brutum fulmen*, and little heeded.

Now one object of my bill is to appoint an officer to attend to this very important matter; to have a head officer, who handles no money, to call to account those who do, and who will be the officer not of a county, but of the State, and accountable to this body. The bill makes it his duty to ascertain the amount, location and condition of the "indefinite sum" alluded to in the report of the President and Directors of the Literary fund; and to take steps for its immediate recovery. He is also to look after the $180,000 in the hands of existing officers and unaccounted for; and yearly to hold all these county chairmen to a strict account, to enforce the law against those who mis-manage the funds, and to keep the representatives of the people fully informed of the situation of all the monies distributed from the literary fund.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is another, and as I conceive a conclusive argument in favor of the appointment of such an officer. It is an imperative duty which we owe to our own selves and the State to find out the operation of our own laws and to amend them if they are defective. The subject of education is all important; and the State bestows about one hundred thousand dollars annually on this object. What good has it done? What good is it likely to do? We ought to know; and we can be informed only in the manner pointed out in my bill.

Applications for a change of the laws are numerous and increasing daily; in what particulars can we change them for the better?

Frequent changes are injudicious; uniformity and certainty, things greatly to be desired in all laws, cannot be attained when the laws are often changed. Why not then complete our present system and give it a fair trial before we change it? Why act in the dark if we can have light? The people are beginning to understand the system as it is; if we often change our common school laws, they will continue to be inoperative and prove a constant failue.

Let us, therefore, infuse a living soul into this body; let us apply a motive power to this machinery, and then if it works badly we can wisely abandon it for a better. The Legislature, too, before it acts, will be well informed; it will know what has been done, what is doing and what may be expected. The officer provided for in my bill will report progress to the next meeting of this body; he will present a great many facts which we ought to have and which he only can furnish, giving us a minute, comprehensive and complete picture of the operations of our school system, of its defects and of its results up to that time.

If we can obtain such information we should certainly make no material alterations in our school system until we get it; we should not act without it, and yet the cries of the country demand that we should act in some way. Then it is most safe, most prudent, most statesman-like to move first to obtain information; we can obtain the requisite information by the provisions of my bill and we cannot obtain it without some law of this kind.

Desiring, Mr. Speaker, to propose measures that would make our common school system meet the just expectations of the public, and having anxiously deliberated on the matter, I have concluded that we ought to appoint a General Superintendent; and the reasons on which this conclusion is based have been partially given. I am satisfied our laws are in the main good, and need only an officer to see to their faithful execution; and I am equally well satisfied that if they are defective we cannot so pronounce them, nor judiciously change them, until the law changing and law making power is put in possession of facts which can be obtained easily by an officer appointed for that purpose, and which cannot possibly be obtained in any other way.

Other duties are assigned to this officer in my bill; and the mention of those duties will show the necessity of such an agent.

He is required, by the advice and concurrence of the President and Directors of the literary fund, to prescribe a uniform set of books to be read as text books in each county; and in the discharge of this duty he would of course consult economy and prescribe works best suited and most easily obtained. He cannot prescribe without the concurrence of the President and Directors of the literary fund, and the object, in giving these a *veto* power in this matter, was to prevent the possibility of improper speculations in books, or of any attempt to effect political purposes.

The frequent change of text books has become an intolerable nuisance; it imposes a heavy tax on the community, and retards the progress of Students, and especially of young children and new beginners. The Free Schools are kept open about three months in each year: and as things now go, the students can study only three months in any one book.

It is a familiar fact, that a child can learn best in his own book; and if he is allowed the same book, he will continue to make progress, though often interrupted in his studies. As it is, he is just beginning to learn and become familiar with his book when the school is closed; he is then kept at home for nine months, and when he starts again, a new book, which is all a mystery to him, is put into his hands and he begins again, not where he left off before, but at the beginning.

Thus is his progress retarded; and text books cost as much as it would take to keep up the school.

A remedy for this evil is loudly demanded; but it is nobody's business to redress it and if any one has the will, he has not the authority.

The sum annually disbursed is small; but with the taxes levied in each county, it is sufficient to keep at school, three months in every year, every child in the State. With this three months schooling he can, in ten years, become a scholar, if properly taught, and we should, therefore, see that his book tax does not keep him at home, and that he gets the full benefit of the money appropriated by law for his tuition. To do good it must be well, faithfully and economically applied; and to effect these objects, do I desire a general superintendent.

It is also made his duty to issue circular letters to the Examining Committee of each County; the object of which is to ensure, by his instructions, better teachers.

He is also required to publish an annual statement of the number of licensed teachers, of each sex, in every county in the State, and of the average salaries paid: by which means a generous rivalry to increase the salaries of their teachers will be created among the Counties, and teachers wanting employment will know where to go to find it.

Having, Mr. Speaker, satisfied myself of the absolute necessity for a General Superintendent of Common Schools, I was met by the grave question, how is he to be paid?—Legislators generally are extremely close in money matters; they are ever watching the treasury and ready to clamor against any bill that proposes a new appropriation.

I will not say that other motives than a desire to serve the public, sometimes prompt opposition to appropriations; though I may be permitted to remark, that such opposition is not always true economy.

I was once present in the House of Representatives in Washington City, when a bill proposing to expend $500 was introduced, and I saw a member, (I should call him a demagogue,) beg the House for two days to prevent the passage of the measure; interspersing his discourses with many fond and endearing terms applied to the people, and with many fervent professions of regard for their interests and their fiscal concerns. I made a calculation of the cost of his efforts to save $500, and it amounted to some six thousand dollars, each day's session of the House costing some three thousand dollars.

This man wished to pass, in his district, for a great economist! and doubtless he secured his object a re-election.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my bill actually proposes to save vast sums of money that are in a way to be lost; and it is also designed to render more efficient and more useful, sums that are disbursed according to law.

Any necessary expenditure of money to save a greater amount, is true economy; and such, I believe, will be the operation of my bill.

The Literary Board disburses annually, a sum greater than the whole Revenue of the State; and to guard the latter, and manage it, and account for it, we have a Treasurer and a Comptroller; who have to report to this body, while their accounts are also semi-annually investigated by a Finance Committee, who sit for days and weeks scanning every item, and reporting to the Legislature the results of their anxious and searching examination. Of the former and larger sum, which is nearly doubled by school taxes laid in different Counties, no account is rendered to the Legislature beyond the general statement of the Literary Board; and this general and meagre report tells us that an indefinite sum is annually misapplied to private speculations, and that one hundred and eighty thousand dollars has stuck to the hands or in the pockets of officers who do not care to tell what they have done or mean to do with these monies. We are told that they are all respectable gentlemen; no doubt they are, but I have never heard that any amount of respectability is a sufficient guaranty, in well-governed States, for the faithful conduct of Treasurers of the Public.

It certainly, in my judgment, would not be an extravagant, a or wasteful use of the public funds to appropriate a sum sufficient to enforce the accountability of agents with whom are annually deposited the interest in two millions of dollars, and a sum nearly equally as large, raised from the people by taxation. Still, Mr. Speaker, I did not wish to come in conflict with those who might think differently: I did not wish any Bill, which I deem of so much importance, to have to encounter the proverbial indisposition of North Carolina Legislatures to the making of new appropriations. After casting about for the means of avoiding this bar, I happily found them; I was enabled to fix on a plan by which to pay the General Superintendent without taxing the Literary Fund a single cent and by which something will even be saved.

Under our School laws the County Courts are annually to elect a Board of Superintendents of Common Schools for each County; and these Superintendents appoint School Committee men for each School district in their respective Counties. It is the duty of the School Committee men to build Schoolhouses, employ teachers, &c. &c., and to make returns to the Superintendents. The Superintendents elect one of their number for Chairman; and with this Chairman are intrusted all the School monies of his County.

The Committee men and the Superintendents, with the exception of the Chairmen, get no pay; the Chairman, who generally resides at the county town, receives for his services the sum of two and a half *per cent*, on all monies which pass through his hands.—His duties, Mr. Speaker, are by no means arduous; he performs but little more labors than the other officers and does not perhaps consume ten whole days in the year, in the business of his office. And yet for this he is most liberally rewarded; and his compensation in some counties amounts to more than one hundred and fifty dollars! Gentlemen can cipher for themselves; let them take the amount disbursed in any one county and add to it the sum raised by taxes, and they can easily find out the sum paid to the Chairman of Superintendents.

My bill proposes to tax the salaries of the county Chairmen; to allow them but one and a half *per cent*, and the sum saved amounts to the salary proposed for the General Superintendent. One and a half *per cent*, will be an ample salary for these Chairmen; and I'll answer for it there will be found in every county good men, intelligent men, who will discharge faithfully all the duties of this office for such a compensation. The Chairman of my county is an active, faithful and intelligent officer; he takes a lively interest in the Com'n School system, and is in every way well qualified for his post. He is one of the best officers in the State; and I feel perfectly sure that for one and a half *per cent*, he would, if called for, continue the discharge, with undiminished fidelity, of the duties of the station he now fills.

But, Mr. Speaker, the very small counties may be exempted; the four or five Chairmen who do not receive in all more than twenty five dollars may be allowed to receive two and a half *per cent*, on the monies they disburse, and still we will save enough to meet the appropriations contemplated by my bill. We will not only be able thus to raise a salary for a General Superintendent, but as the sum disbursed for School purposes increases, we will actually save something, in addition, to the Fund; and still we will have as faithful, discreet and intelligent county Chairmen as we now have.

As the system now works, some of those Chairmen use for years the funds deposited with them, applying them to private purposes; and then when they come to settle with the Treasurer of the State, they doubtless retain two and a half *per cent*, for each year, for the trouble of having applied the money to their private speculations!

The Sultan of Turkey, as you know Mr. Speaker, used to keep in his employ a numerous body of soldiers called janissaries; and these troops came, in time, to be the masters, in fact of both sovereign and people. It is said that when a troop of them marched on any service of the Sultan they would seize and appropriate to their use the poultry, eggs, beef and butter of the poor farmers and villagers, whose houses the passed; and if called on for payment, instead of making it they would present a charge and force its collection. This charge was for *teeth-money*; and the peasants whose substance had been devoured, had to pay the consumer for the application of his teeth to this purpose! I do not mean to compare the non accounting Chairmen as a body to the janissaries; many of them are honest, correct, conscientious men. But instances have occurred and might occur under our system of a practice similar to that alluded to.

Mr. Speaker, why not make the experiment which I desire? It will cost nothing—it can do no harm, and it must necessarily furnish us with information. Are we to acknowledge that our system is defective and refuse to amend it? Are we to declare before the world that we cannot make a good system of common schools? to confess that we have made a failure and cannot do better? If we were the first who had tried the experiment of establishing free schools we might make such a confession and avoid disgrace by declaring the scheme impracticable and visionary; but others have succeeded and if we proclaim ourselves incompetent to the task of framing a good system and give up the cause, we will but publish our own shame.

But it has been said several times that the sum appropriated by law is too small to do any good; and *therefore*, attempts at improvement are objected to and even ridiculed. This, Mr. Speaker, is to me strange logic—I dont see the force of this reasoning. It is as much as to say, as the sum is small we'll permit it to be wasted—we'll tell the people we could not manage the Literary Fund because it was small, and ask for more that we may be enabled to husband it more carefully and apply it with more prudence.—I supposed that he who is careful over small things is entitled to be advanced to higher responsibilities; and that he who misused his single talent should have taken from him even the little that he hath.

I supposed, and still think, that the surest way to induce the people to increase the Literary Fund would be to satisfy them that the present Fund is doing good, and is prudently applied; I believe that the strongest and most telling appeal to the generosity and public spirit of the community would be an efficient system, managed to the best advantage;

The very fact that our Fund is small is an argument in favor of careful legislation; this very fact appeals to us to see that it is not squandered, that it is closely watched, judiciously applied and strictly accounted for.

But, Mr. Speaker, I must say, and I say it with due respect for the persons alluded to, that our Literary Fund has been spoken of contemptuously in this Hall, without proper consideration; that they who so speak have either not examined a matter which they condemn in such sweeping terms, or are not sufficiently familiar with the interests, situation, wants and habits of the masses as to enable them to initiate or understand a system of beneficient legislation.

They who are educated at a cost of five hundred or a thousand dollars a year may possibly be unable to understand how others can be instructed for two dollars a year; but, sir, their inability to understand this matter does not disprove the fact.

The amount distributed by the Literary Fund and raised by taxes will average two dollars *per* head for all the children in the State who cannot or do not attend subscription schools; and two dollars *per* head, if properly managed, will keep the schools open for three months out of twelve. A child who goes to school three months in every year for ten or twelve years will be extremely stupid if he does not become a good scholar; and you know, sir, and I know, that thousands of bright and useful intellects have received their polish with fewer opportunities.

In Philadelphia, where they have an admirable system of free schools doing an incalculable amount of good, the average *per* scholar of the sum distributed is a little over six dollars, and in these schools, with this sum, where the cost of living is at least three times as great as it is in the country, in this latitude, the students are thoroughly taught in all the branches of an English education, and in most of the practical and useful sciences. In some of the Northern States the sum does not average more than five dollars; and with this is educated a race of men and women who outwit us in every thing, who supply us with all the fabrics that we use, and who are our engineers, our miners, our geographers, and historians, our mathematicians and astronomers.

The salaries paid to the teachers of our free schools have been characterised as pitiful; and we are told that no one fit to teach will engage for such paltry sums. The teachers get, Mr. Speaker, about fifteen dollars *per* month, sometimes more—a sum which, I acknowledge, is very inconsiderable, compared with the income of eminent attorneys, owners of factories and extensive planters; but it would be a matter of vast importance to three fifths; aye to three-fourths of the respectable men and women of North Carolina.

We cannot all be great lawyers and doctors—but a small portion of us are born to rich inheritances; and three-fifths of the men and women of North Carolina toil at occupations more laborious than that of the schoolmaster and for much less than fifteen dollars per month.

We may not now be able to get first rate teachers for such salaries; but as the masses become educated poor young men and poor young women will become our teachers, and we will be most abundantly supplied. A great many boys, with dispositions as liberal as ours now follow the plow and handle the axe for less than fifteen dollars per month; and many thousand girls, whose veins are crimsoned with blood as rich as that which mantles the cheeks of the proudest legislator, and whose hearts are as pure, whose instincts as refined as those of our fairest belles, have to toil at the loom, to delve and drudge in the open fields, for less than one-third of fifteen dollars per month. Many of these have already been rescued from their hard condition by our free schools; have been well instructed at them, and are glad to make forty-five dollars in three months in a manner more lady-like, more suitable to the tenderness and delicacy of the female constitution than are the occupations by which they were making but forty in the year. With this forty-five, they are enabled to go awhile at higher and better schools; then they teach another three months and again return to the dearer Seminary or Academy, thus learning others and accomplishing themselves.

Those, sir, who understand the wants and the interests of the people will know that this is a true picture; they know that this is beginning to be the practical operation of our own system of free Schools, and that in a short time the competition for the charge of the schools will be very great, even at a salary of fifteen dollars per month.

In Massachusetts, where all classes are educated and all occupations crowded, their teachers generally do not average more than fifteen dollars per month, as the report which I hold in my hand will show; and yet for this sum they employ the most shining talents and the most varied and thorough accomplishment.

Mr. Speaker, it may be too late in the day to speak of the general importance of our free schools; and I must confess sir, that I feel awkward in making the attempt

But I have heard expressions in this Hall that I feel bound to notice—general and sweeping charges which must not go unanswered. Our system has been denounced as a humbug; and we have been told that it is better to give up our literary fund and apply it to other purposes.

Suppose, sir, it were given back to the Treasury; what would we do with it?—Would we not be in the condition of the man who won an elephant at a raffle? Could we dispose of our money? Ten thousand plans would be proposed, and all of them bitterly opposed—a thousand clashing interests would call loudly for appropriations—sectional feuds and sectional animosities would be roused to a fierce intensity, and these halls would be disgraced by scenes of strife that would split our State into baneful factions, and tell with lasting injury upon every industrial and every liberal pursuit. The moral effect, too, would be equally disastrous; and North Carolina would be justly entitled to the derision of the world. I can never consent to this retrograde movement; as long as I am honored with a seat in this Assembly I will fight against such a policy.

We are, Mr. Speaker, the most ignorant State in the Union, and are we not just as far behind in every kind of improvement?

But, Mr. Speaker, when I say N. Carolina is the most ignorant State in the Union, I ought to explain why she is so; and, for this purpose, and to do her justice, I must beg the indulgence of the House while I make a short digression. The State was colonized in an age of bigotry, and it was settled by those who could not endure the fashionable "conformity" of the times. Other States were colonized by fugitives from persecution; but these fugitives had cherished creeds, and they came to the American shores to enjoy their creeds, and to force others to embrace them. Every one believed himself right, and all others wrong; and it was charity to reclaim the erring by force, and to destroy those who were in a state of utter reprobation. It was an age of fierce theological controversy, and of wild political speculations; and the schools and seats of learning were nurseries of bigotry and intolerance. The witch doctors, the jesuits, and the bigots of Oxford and Cambridge threw a discredit on literature in the estimation of some; and those were the select few, the un-lineal progeny who wished to attend to their own affairs in their own way. In the language of Mr. Bancroft, the historian of the United States, these were the freest of the free; and we have his authority for saying they took up their abode in North Carolina. These simple people, differing from all the propagandists of the age, desired simply to be let alone, to be left to follow nature and their own consciences; and before they came here, were like travellers lost at midnight, in mountain passes, bewildered by the glare of a thousand glancing torches, and the bawling of as many wrangling guides. To escape from the uncertain and flickering lights of jarring creeds and of fighting sectaries, they fled in search of a land where nature shone with unclouded light; and they found it in this sequestered and even now not much frequented region.

Learning and bigotry were with them synonymous terms; and as might be supposed, they made no efforts to promote education.

The subject was totally neglected; and that stupendous failure, the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, the emanation of genius perverted by Art, following and oppressing them in their exile, brought a still farther scandal on Literature. For a long time there was not an incorporated public school in the Province; and the ignorance of the inhabitants became proverbial. A palpable effect of this was the slow advance which they made in the arts and comforts of life; and yet they are as moral, and as industrious as any people on earth.

About forty years ago, the Editor of the Raleigh Star sent out circular letters to all the counties in the State, asking for information of various kinds, and among other things, concerning the progress of popular education. Eight or ten answers were returned, and are still preserved; and I observe that they all complain of the general prevalence of ignorance, most of them intimating the number of illiterate people at one-third of the whole population.

In 1840, we had made some advance—the census returns of that year show that there were fifty-six thousand six hundred and nine white people over twenty-one years of age, who could not read and write; and the total white population over 20 years old, two hundred and nineteen thousand four hundred and eighteen. At that time, therefore, a little over one-fourth of the adult white population could not read and write. The same returns show that there were at school—including those at colleges and academies, nineteen thousand four hundred and ninety-three students; and that the whole number of white children over five years old and under twenty, was one hundred and eighty-five thousand one hundred and thirty-five.

Shortly after that time, our Free Schools began to operate; and though, for the want of just such an officer as my bill provides for, we have no authorized statistics of their effects, and though they had necessarily to contend with many difficulties, I am enabled to assert that they have vastly diminished the ratio of illiterate children.

I am confident that not less than forty thousand children now attend our schools every year; and I am equally confident that the number annually increases more rapidly than the population. Indeed sir, many of the new recruits who swell each year, the number engaged in seeking the education at the common fountain, come from the ranks of those verging towards twenty; and as I know from actual observation, not a few are above that age, and some even advanced in life and accompanied by their own children! Sir, contemplate this picture for a moment. These schools have been open some seven or eight years, and they have not diminished the number at academies and colleges, which from tolerably correct data, I can safely estimate at no less than five thousand; and in that time they have shed on thirty thousand darkened souls, the invigorating and healthful light of knowledge.

Three thousand school houses have sprung up in desert places and are now humming with embryo poets, historians, statesmen, philosophers and sons and daughters of Progress; and among the increasing throng that seek these sacred portals of light, come cautious age, and glowing manhood, mingled with airy youth and simple hearted innocence.

Each one who returns "healed of his infirmity," sends at least two others in his place; and before the census-taker shall have started upon his third tour after the first opening of these schools, fashion and public opinion will have declared in their favor, and from Macon to Currituck there will be found no secure resting place for ignorance.

Mr. Speaker, I make my deductions from *facts*, and facts which I have hunted up for myself. But, sir, how many know these facts? How many, even of our professed philanthropists, take the pains, the tedious and expensive pains to ascertain them?

These are facts; and yet so totally ignorant are we of them that intelligent men can boldly, in this hall, assert our system to be a humbug: quacks and demagogues can attack it with impunity elsewhere, and the enemies of education be listened to and tolerated and sometimes applauded, when they talked of taking away the fund altogether. This last party is increasing through our ignorance of the operations of our own laws; ambitious interests have fixed covetous eyes upon the school monies, and their hope to clutch them, daily increases. Every body is proposing changes—legislators make random changes and get random information from local orators; and such a clashing of views, such a variety of propositions was never heard on any subject before. All this can be easily prevented by my bill; the mouths of the enemies of the system can be stopped, and legislators can think and look and act for themselves. The reports of our superintendent would also vindicate our State before the world; and his reports and his statistics, showing each County what its neighbor was doing, would be certain to create an honorable rivalry among them, and would stimulate friends of education throughout the State. At present this great and leading interest of education is without a head and a tongue; its voice cannot be heard in the Halls nor over the Commonwealth, while enemies tinker, and injudicious friends are bringing it into contempt at home and ridicule abroad. For myself, I can say that in the vicissitudes of a life not long, but somewhat chequered, it has been my fortune to have seen a good deal of North Carolina. I have had a taste of all conditions of society, and been a tolerably close observer of the condition, wants, feelings and progress of the common people, the laboring classes who form the great staple of humanity in every State. I have found that light is breaking in upon them, and that they are beginning to appreciate our Free School system which is invading all the strong-holds of ignorance, slowly but surely cutting off its out-posts, beating its quarters and shaking the very foundations of its ancient power.

This is the true picture which this humbug of heated fancies presents to the careful spectator who takes his observations on the proper level; but perhaps there are some who believe that the book of knowledge should be a sealed book to the million. I have heard such opinions expressed, even by politicians; to combat them is not my province. I can only say, in answer now to those who may *think* so, that in all my observations of human life, I have found health, comfort and intelligence dwelling together; and I have found, in looking into the history of North Carolina, that the education and the amelioration of the condition of the masses of the people have kept even pace with each other.

We have always had an educated class in the State. Our lawyers are as learned as any in the Union, our physicians are skilful, and though the fanatics of Ohio have kindly volunteered to instruct us in religious topics, I have always believed, that from the intelligence and piety of our ministers we needed no missionary aid from Ohio, Massachusetts or any where else. Our statesmen too are astute in political lore, and can scales on the wings of the wind as long speeches and as learned speeches, with as many well-turned periods and rumbling sounds, as any other professors of sound or authors of words: but