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THOMAS J. LEMAY, Editor.

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NORTH-CAROLINA.—"Powerful in intellectual, moral and physical resources, the land of our sires and home of our affections."

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## SPEECH

HENRY W. MILLER, ESQ.

Delivered at South-Weaver (Orange County) before a large  
congregation of the people on the 3rd day of June, 1851, and  
published at the request of the Trustees of the Insti-  
tution of Learning at that place.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**—In appearing here to-day I am actuated by no vain desire for display. The task which has been allotted me is a pleasant one, and though it may be also difficult, I feel assured that in your generosity there will be found an ample shield against the harshness of criticism or the unkindness of too ready complaint. I shall be more than pleased—I shall be proud, if by the remarks which may be submitted in this evening the least good should be done, either in advancing the great cause of Education; inspiring the young, here present, with a generous and laudable emulation; or arousing in the breasts of parents, a more zealous devotion to the cultivation of those immortal minds which have been placed under their care.

I did not expect to find in the history of the Institution of Learning whose intelligent and respectful preceptors and patrons have invited me here, such a theme as would be afforded one, if standing in the Halls of Cambridge, of Harvard, or of Princeton, were looking back through the vista of the past, might expect to have appeared before his mental vision the faces of hundreds and thousands of illustrious men, who having imbibed there the precepts of learning and virtue, went forth upon the great stage of human action, and after performing their parts well, were taken to the world of spirits for higher action and more reward. The infancy of this Institution precludes the possibility of meeting here such inspiring visions—such overpowering objects of admiration—such splendid and varied themes for declamation and discourse—such evidences of past longings after immortality!

I have not, however, been disappointed in the hopes which were entertained, of finding, here, enough, and more than enough, to rouse to thoughtful and energetic the dull mind, and inspire with emotions of delight the coldest heart. An institution of Education is here, claiming for itself no easily pecuniary endowments, but possessing, what is far more valuable, a discipline which would find vice—science without infidelity—literature without pedantry—and religion without intolerance.

I see before me, yet another object to stimulate the heart—youth—youth of various age, differing in mind, in disposition, in hopes, in aspirations: some blessed, perhaps, with many of the goods of life, others happy though possessing but few; all, however, united together in the pursuit of science, in gathering the pearls of learning, to build for themselves foundations for future life. They are here. Some have ambition—some have none. But the heart of each beats high with hopes of some kind, and whilst a part look back to days well performed as something upon which they can dwell with delight, there may be another part who are looking forward, with joyous pleasure, to the dawning vacation, as a season when nature will revel in all her beauty before them, and when, in their sports, they will be able to dash aside, unheeded, all the cares of life. Such is youth! Alas! the stern reality of manhood will soon approach, and trample down under its iron heel many of those beautiful blossoms of hope, which have sprung up around its path. To anticipate its coming—to learn the nature of its approaching footsteps—may mar this wayward joy, but it is the part of wisdom thus to act, for even in youth,

"Pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flow—the bloom is shed."

I expected to meet here still another cause to arouse the feelings—the workings of the parent's heart. With what emotions they watch over those of their offspring, who are undergoing their early pupillage. Even though far off in body, the emotions of the heart are here! Hopes have been high—aspirations have been busy both night and day—plans of future avocation have passed often through their excited minds. At one moment the farmer, then the merchant, then the physician, then the lawyer, then the mechanic, then the clergyman, passes in rapid succession before them! Other stations and other callings come and go; but none as yet has been selected; for it is a happy subject to think of, a fruitful theme to talk on. The father craves for him the fruits of a splendid and grasping ambition, high honors and vast riches. The mother asks for him goodness, patience, forbearance—all the milder virtues—an inheritance in those riches, which "neither moth nor rust can corrupt." She should have her wish. She bore him, she nurtured him, she prayed for him, she would be the first with him in sorrow or distress, she would be the last to desert him! In her moments of loneliness, when none but the All-Seeing Eye was upon her, she has gazed upon the face of that boy and blessed him, as her future hope and protector. He may dash to pieces her cup of joy, thus brim full. He may try all the haunts of wickedness, climb all the steep of vice, kiss the rod of misfortune, until his lips have become parched like the dry leaves of the forest—wander here and there through the earth, an outcast, miserable and forlorn, with no home to shelter, no voice to soothe. Yet after thus drinking the chalice of every vice, and of all wretchedness to its very dregs, let him return to that mother, and she will, with an overflowing heart, forgive, and bless him still! Such is the beauty and constancy of a mother's love! In what striking and melancholy contrast is that heedless ingratitude of youth, which forgets the anxiety, and sports with the happiness of her who kept the nightly vigils around his infant couch, and sent him forth to meet the trials of life, under the blessing of her prayers!

It must indeed be gratifying not only to the pupils of this Institution, but to their parents and preceptors, to meet so many of the enlightened and patriotic citizens of the surrounding country, coming together to participate in the ceremonies of this occasion, and by their presence and attention, giving encouragement to their laudable exertions.

Not many years have elapsed since but few such institutions were to be found in our State.

By degrees they are increasing in number and importance, and wherever they appear society assumes a new garb. They infuse into the minds of the old and the young a love of learning, an admiration for mental improvement, an eagerness for the blessings of good education. These things begin at last to make their impression upon all and every thing around. They chasten and refine the heart, curb the passions, elevate the moral tone, add enterprise to industry, sharpen the inventive powers, expand the mental view, and display here and there instances of intellectual worth which even aged ignorance itself is proud! That this Institution is destined to produce results like these, none can doubt who may have witnessed the effects from such causes elsewhere. Cherish it, then, as a green spot and refreshing spring in a weary land. It has already sent forth many a draft to gladden and cheer the heart; and it continues to receive your care and patronage, many a rill will issue from it to refresh, enliven and invigorate all who dwell within its reach! And surely the parents of those young minds have been trained in thought, and whose tender hearts have been directed to virtue, can hardly be so remiss in the limits of our State, of such patriotism and ingenuitè among educated men, upon whose hearts one would have supposed the beauties of literature and the truths of science had stamped nobler precepts! Look at the few who, in the midst of poverty and destitution of resources, are exerting themselves to kindle a liberal spirit and literary taste! Who encourages them? Who cheers them on? Who extracts a mite even from his hoarded treasures to add to their comfort or save them from distress? Can there be pointed out, amongst the deeds of the wealthy, educated men in our State, one single act of such liberality? Alas! I fear not. Thousands and tens of thousands of dollars are annually sent abroad to foster and encourage the literature of other sections, whilst but few, if any, are willing to contribute to their possessions to advance literary efforts or to build up and sustain literary periodicals in our own State! We fill our libraries with the works of Irving, Prescott, Bancroft, Tuckerman and others, but we catch from them none of that noble enthusiasm which would induce us to foster native talent, and have recorded the deeds of our own ancestors. We readily join in weaving chaplets to crown the brows of the distinguished of other States, but no twig of evergreen is plucked for those amongst us, who are struggling up the steep of fame! We join in the loud shout of praise which is sent up for others, but when we turn to our own home, and are asked for one note of encouragement, we find our voices exhausted and our enthusiasm gone!

How long are we to remain under such intellectual despotism? When are we to hope for the breaking up of this mental vassalage? Again and again, let me repeat, if we expect our State to take her appropriate station by the side of other sisters, we must develop her resources, intellectual and physical. We must educate her youth, the poor as well as the rich. We must hold out to them inducements to learn. We must encourage amongst them a spirit of intellectual emulation. Every year which passes adds increased activity to the mass of human intellect. It is the age of action—physical action following rapidly upon the heels of mental action. The mind puts forth new inventions; quick as thought they are thrown into practical operation. Their spread is astonishingly rapid, and in a few weeks or months it is found that astounding revolutions are in progress in the physical operations of the world. These produce counter revolutions in the intellectual world, and thus an ever active, never sleeping, but ever watchful and aspiring spirit is created, the effects of which are seen and felt upon the sea and on the land, in the cabinet and in the workshop, on the high-ways and upon the rivers, in the air above and under the earth beneath us!—Alas! the entire civilized world is at work, hard work, constant work, in something, either for good or evil. Industry is calling loudly upon Indolence to come forward and work. The invitation may not be heeded, but ere long the stir, the bustle, the clatter, the passing to and fro, the changes all around, will force it to move, to move quickly, to move constantly! Has there been seen much of this spirit in our own State? We heard the striking of the hammer, the noise of the machine, the rattling of the wheels, the loud shouts and glad hurrahs of industry and enterprise from abroad, as they passed us with the velocity of lightning; but until recently we could do nothing! We stand aghast with our mouths and eyes staring, and hair standing out like the quills upon the bristly porcupine, ready to flee to the woods for shelter, to call upon the rocks and mountains to hide us, lest that boisterous and unruly crowd, with so many terrible instruments of noise and mischief, should run over and trample us under foot. We have, it is true, turned over in our sleep, but this is not enough. We must rouse up; we must stand erect; we must dismiss our weak and childish fears, look at them, do as they do, labor as they labor, throw to the winds our parsimony, learn from them, snatch some of their Promethean fire, apply it to the dead corpse of the body politic; and ere long we too shall be moving, the motion will be pleasant and profitable, and soon, very soon, we shall find ourselves going with increasing speed, over the great thoroughfare of improvement, bearing aloft a banner, the motto on which will show that if we may not be the foremost, we are determined not to be the hindmost in the race!

If there be one cause, which more than another, has kept us in the career of improvement, it is the influence of the demagogue on public opinion. Selfish in his motives, actuated by no feeling other than engendered by the baser passions, he is ever active in creating prejudice against every effort which is made to elevate those upon whom his arts can operate, conscious that the spell he has been able to throw around his victims will be dissipated so soon as education and refinement shall have gained a proper influence. The popularity of such a man may be short-lived, but others have watched his course, and learned under his teaching; and so soon as he is swept from the stage of action, they spring forward, ready armed and equipped for a like career of mischief and of meanness! "All things to all men," they are readily persuaded that public virtue is a sham, and that cunning and hypocrisy are qualities which more adorn the character and advance the interest of the professed seeker after popular applause! There is no passion, however, vile,

of condemnation, which will rest on those who stand idle in the face of such a work, so full of good to man, so clearly approved by every just reflection of reason and every generous impulse of benevolence!

There is another lamentable fact which deserves the consideration of every man who has any regard for the honor of the State. However painful and unpleasant it may be, both to him who utters it, and those who hear it, I shall not shrink from speaking the truth in connection with our duty as citizens. We have, it is well known, amongst us a large body of educated men. We have also a full share of native talent. Yet how rarely do we find amongst these very men any inclination or desire to cultivate and encourage a taste for literary and scientific pursuits! If there and there should be found one, who exhibits ambition to excel in this respect, and by application and exertion to contribute something towards elevating the literary taste and character of our people, he is regarded by many either with indifference or suspicion; and with talents, which, elsewhere, would bring competence or secure wealth, he is here left to linger out his best days in penury and want! Are there not examples near, within the limits of our State, of such parsimony and ingratitude amongst educated men, upon whose hearts one would have supposed the beauties of literature and the truths of science had stamped nobler precepts! Look at the few who, in the midst of poverty and destitution of resources, are exerting themselves to kindle a liberal spirit and literary taste! Who encourages them? Who cheers them on? Who extracts a mite even from his hoarded treasures to add to their comfort or save them from distress? Can there be pointed out, amongst the deeds of the wealthy, educated men in our State, one single act of such liberality? Alas! I fear not. Thousands and tens of thousands of dollars are annually sent abroad to foster and encourage the literature of other sections, whilst but few, if any, are willing to contribute to their possessions to advance literary efforts or to build up and sustain literary periodicals in our own State! We fill our libraries with the works of Irving, Prescott, Bancroft, Tuckerman and others, but we catch from them none of that noble enthusiasm which would induce us to foster native talent, and have recorded the deeds of our own ancestors. We readily join in weaving chaplets to crown the brows of the distinguished of other States, but no twig of evergreen is plucked for those amongst us, who are struggling up the steep of fame! We join in the loud shout of praise which is sent up for others, but when we turn to our own home, and are asked for one note of encouragement, we find our voices exhausted and our enthusiasm gone!

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How prone we are, by losing sight of the immense cost of the blessings we enjoy, to forget their value! This is not the place or occasion to indulge in reflections which might, by any possibly verge on matters of politics. If I know myself, there is no such cause; if I know my duty, there shall be no such cause of complaint. But God forbid that the day should ever come, when it shall be regarded as criminal or in bad taste to refer with commendation, with becoming feelings of gratitude and pride, to the great and illustrious deeds of our ancestors, to the beauty and grandeur of that fabric of Republican Government which they reared after years of trial and blood shed, for themselves and their posterity, and which they tendered, as an ark of shelter and safety, to the oppressed of the earth. God forbid, that the day should ever break upon our land, when to speak of the Union of these States, any where, and at any time, shall produce other than a thrill of reverence, admiration and hope—reverence for the great and good, who cemented its foundations with their blood, and built it up by their consummate wisdom; admiration for its past glories and present prosperity; and hope, high, elastic, far-reaching, and never failing, for its continued advancement in all that can adorn and ennoble the character of a nation!—It was a great, a stupendous work! Jehovah was its architect! We can but in the hope that by Him, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, it was intended to advance the civilization of nations. Should man, in his rashness, assail, may He protect! Should man, in his frenzied ambition, attempt to destroy, may He throw around it His protective arm!

Nor is it the object of our hopes alone. Other nations gaze on it from afar, in astonishment, in wonder, with rapturous delight! Anxiety, deep and absorbing anxiety, for its perpetuity, comes to us on every breeze which is wafted across the Atlantic. Amidst the classic scenes of Italy, in the forests of Germany, upon the snow-clad mountains of Switzerland, in the blighted and blasted fields of oppressed

to which they are not ready to pause; nor means too low to be called to their aid, no virtue too elevated to be assailed and traduced! They are ready, by every species of sophistry, and all the arts of deception, to persuade those whose countenance and support they seek, that *liberty in legislation is but another name for public extravagance or plunder*; that improvement, intellectual or moral, is a badge of aristocracy, and the surest means of oppressing the humble and elevating the proud! The atmosphere in which such men thrive, is infected with the foulest vapors. Without one generous or noble impulse, "some of them press forward in their career, with a self-complacency, which brooks no discomfiture, and with a brazen boldness which challenges opposition and defies resistance; whilst others, possessing none of the qualities of the monarch of the forest, adopt the artifice of the fox, and reach their object by the darkest and most devious by-paths that cunning can suggest or wickedness approve! Public position and defies resistance; whilst others, possessing none of the qualities of the monarch of the forest, adopt the artifice of the fox, and reach their object by the darkest and most devious by-paths that cunning can suggest or wickedness approve! Public position and defies resistance; whilst others, possessing none of the qualities of the monarch of the forest, adopt the artifice of the fox, and reach their object by the darkest and most devious by-paths that cunning can suggest or wickedness approve! 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