



AND
North-Carolina State Gazette.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1804

No. 255

VOL. V.

From the National Intelligencer.

TO THE LEGISLATURES OF THE RESPECTIVE STATES.

Letter Second.

The great objects of state legislation are,

1. Education.
2. Internal improvements.
3. The security of property; and the
4. Punishment of crimes.

On the manner in which these objects are accomplished must eventually depend our liberties, our personal happiness, and the wealth and respectability of the community.

It is to awaken the attention of the legislatures of the several states to the accomplishment of those objects that I have undertaken to make this address.

1. On the subject of EDUCATION, little can be said which has not been said already. There is not, there cannot be a dissenting voice on its importance. It would seem to be sufficient to shew, what no man has denied, that a free state cannot exist without the wide diffusion of knowledge which can alone flow from education, to awaken every mind to its magnitude.

"Knowledge," says General Washington in one of his earliest official addresses to Congress, "is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one, in which the measures of government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the community as in ours, it is proportionably essential. To the security of a free constitution it contributes in various ways by convincing those who are entrusted with the public administration, that every valuable end of government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the people: And by teaching the people themselves to know, and to value their own rights; to discern and to provide against invasions of them; to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority; between burthens proceeding from a disregard to their convenience, and those resulting from the inevitable exigencies of society; to discriminate the spirit of liberty from that of licentiousness, cherishing the first, and avoiding the last, and uniting a speedy, but temperate vigilance against encroachments, with an inviolable respect for the laws."

That governments directly rising on principles calculated to ensure the preservation of equal rights should be indifferent to such a vast object can only find a solution in the complicated machinery of human actions. When too are added the inducements growing out of personal convenience, and economy, our surprise naturally rises.

In exploring the causes of this indifference we shall probably discover the most efficient means of overcoming it.

They are principally found in the erroneous impression that a general system of education, under the direction of the public, involves a great and unnecessary expence; and in the want of individuals disposed, with becoming zeal, to devote their minds to devising suitable plans, and carrying them into execution.

That a greater expence is incurred under a general system of education, than that at present incurred is not true. This will abundantly appear from a view of the great number of schools at present in existence, from the little time which is too often devoted by the teacher to instruction, by the small number of pupils, from the imperfect style of their education, & from the excessive expence in many cases incurred by individuals in the education of their children. When all these circumstances are taken into consideration, it will be found not un-

safe to affirm that more money is at present laid out on the education of youth, imperfect and limited as that education is, than would be sufficient to provide for the establishment of a general system, so comprehensive as to embrace every child in the country.

But there are other additional sources of expence which, though not usually regarded in examining this subject, merit the first place in our reflections.

In a country where labor is at all times convertible into money, it is a great expence unnecessarily to consume time. The time at present taken up, owing to the unskilfulness of instructors, is generally twice as much as is necessary. When, therefore, the child has attained that age, that gives a value to his services, the whole of this value is so far destroyed, as his time shall be uselessly consumed. Let the cultivators of the soil, those who are the most reluctant to come into a general system of instruction, seriously weigh this consideration, and they will not fail to perceive how deeply, even on the score of gain, they are interested in its accomplishment.

The distance at which common schools as well as respectable seminaries of learning are placed, from those who send their children to them, are sources of great, of almost incalculable expence; so great as frequently to impoverish those whose enlarged minds induce them to give their children the advantage derived from them. Hence the unfortunate state of things which virtually disqualifies the poor and even men in moderate circumstances, from properly educating their offspring; whereby the advantages of education are monopolized by the rich. And hence the long train of political evils that threaten the subversion of all governments indissolubly connected with the enjoyment of equal rights, only to be maintained by a wide diffusion of knowledge.

Let us, in order to test the accuracy of this statement, enquire into the probable expence of a system of education that should embrace all the male children at present within the United States between the ages of ten and sixteen. The number of children between these two ages is taken, because it constitutes a class in the last Census, and because it is considered that a good system of education, conducted during that period, would be adequate to giving all the necessary elementary knowledge. The number of male children between 10 and 16 years old in the United States, at the taking of the census, appears to have been about 340,000. A well qualified preceptor, with the assistance of a young man between the age of 18 and 21, could easily teach reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography, to three classes, each consisting of thirty pupils. Such a preceptor and assistant might be got for a salary of 550 dollars. Add fifty dollars for the rent of a school room; making all together six hundred dollars. The education of 340,000 youth would require 3,771 schools, the establishment of which, being computed at 600 dollars each, would cost in the aggregate, 2,262,000 dollars. This sum sounds large; but on comparing it with the magnitude of the object, and with our numbers, it, at once, appears, very moderate.

If it should be raised by a poll tax it would not exact from each person in the United States more than fifty cents; and if assessed on property would not impose a burthen of more than thirty cents on a hundred dollars. Families would pay on an average four dollars a year.

There is one view of this subject, evincive of the lightness of this imposition, which must be conclusive with all men of sound judgments.

Such are our habits that we pay from choice on single imported articles of consumption sums as great or greater than would be required for the attainment of this important object.

On Spirits we pay above four millions of dollars which is double the estimated expence of education.

On Sugars above four millions, also double.

On Wines about two millions and a half. Here then are three articles of consumption, two of which are absolute luxuries, and the other not a necessary of life, for which individually we pay without a murmur, more than would be enough to educate all our children, and for which, in the aggregate, we pay five times as much. And will any rational being say that the gratification of animal appetite can be put in competition with the education of a whole nation?

It is not then because the establishment of a system of general education would impose intolerable burthens upon the people that it has not been yet adopted. No. It is because, no man has hitherto taken the pains to investigate the subject, to analyse it, to lay it before the people in the plain and popular aspects of which it is susceptible. Occupied almost exclusively with party considerations, our great men have not condescended to exert their powers on subjects so unimportant as the diffusion of knowledge, though of all the instruments of individual happiness and true national glory, it is the mightiest! Much may be said, in apology for this apathy. During our revolution all was action. Then indeed, it was the duty of the patriot to concentrate every atom of resource into exertion. The triumph of our political principles depended upon the strength of our arms. Since the revolution, we have had much external, and not a little internal danger, to guard against. Let us then drop the curtain upon the feeble efforts which have heretofore been manifested on the subject of education! Overlooking the past, let the present and the future command our whole attention. NOW is the TIME for doing that which duty commands. Addressed to the people, these remarks are feeble. However disinterested or philanthropic the views of the writer, they are not supported by that weight of character, or surrounded with that lustre which he, whose talents and virtues unite the affections of the nation, stamps upon whatever he suggests.

To such men then I address myself. Does the zeal, you have heretofore so conspicuously exhibited for the welfare of your country still glow in your breasts? Does that country, in proportion as it rises to importance, animate and invigorate your attachment? Do you feel a more tender love for it, from many of its best blessings owing their origin to your labours and sacrifices? By all these proud feelings, I conjure you to seize the auspicious moment for accomplishing that great work, which by educating the whole nation, by equalising and diffusing knowledge, shall give the stamp of immortality to your labours. All great men are ambitious! Be yours the ambition of doing that good whose effects shall be imperishable! Say not the people are prejudiced, and the plan will be unpopular! If they were prejudiced, it would be your peculiar duty to enlighten them, and banish their prejudices. But they are not prejudiced! They are sufficiently liberal to appreciate the value of knowledge. Give them but the means, and they will bestow its blessings on their children! They are a rich mine, fraught with precious ore beneath the surface, however rugged to the

eye. Dig deep and you will find it. Give them an object worthy of their liberality, and you will not be troubled with their prejudices. Does the expenditure of ten annual millions, to support the credit and defend the interests of the country, and of many more millions on its interior concerns, excite their prejudice? Will then the expenditure of a sum infinitely smaller, on an object equally great, fail to gain their approbation?

American Cotton Saleable in China.

In 1794, Mr. Jay made a treaty with England, in which he very imprudently stipulated that Cotton should not be exported from the United States for 10 years. It is no justification to the negociator, whether he knew that cotton was produced in this country or not. His ignorance, in this particular, ought not to shield him from censure. A man invested with ministerial or diplomatic powers, is presumed at least to be well acquainted with the subjects on which he is to negotiate, and if he sacrifices the important interests of his nation, lays himself open to the just reproach which weakness or folly deserves when exhibited in a great public character. The wisdom of Congress, or rather the just policy of the southern senators, (for it is understood that some of the northern members had other and perhaps less liberal views) saved us from the disgrace of accepting the injurious stipulations of the 12th article, and the exportation of cotton, sugar and coffee has been most advantageously continued. Had the contrary conduct been pursued, the best branch of our carrying trade would have been lost, and incalculable mischief must have resulted. Since that period the southern states have turned their attention to raising cotton, & it already forms the largest and most valuable article in our list of exports; and is destined to increase in a few years to double its present quantity.

For the year ending the 1st of October, 1802, there was 27,501,075 pounds of cotton exported from the United States, and in 1803 for the year again ending on the 1st of October no less a quantity than 41,405,023 pounds making an increase of 13,734,548 pounds in the last year, which is equal to 50 per cent. on the quantity sent out of the country in the former year. Great Britain consumes the greater part of the whole quantity exported, and it may be presumed she will always require large supplies, but her merchants and manufacturers have it in their power almost to fix the price of what they purchase—from an idea that they are the principal consumers, that there is little or no demand on the continent of Europe, and that no other great market can be found. They are supposed to have combined to depreciate its value, and it has been reduced below its prime cost in the United States, without reckoning the charge of freight or insurance. And if these were not the causes of its depreciation in England, it might be expected that large shipments of the same article being made to two or three capital ports in the same country, the prices would necessarily be much lessened and advantages would be taken by the purchasers of that circumstance alone, disconnected from every other.

Every person the least acquainted with commercial affairs, must know that the merchants generally seize with avidity the least circumstance which will serve to benefit their particular interests, and neither those of Great Britain, France or Holland have ever yet been considered as deficient of that knowledge in the commercial art, the complete want of which has often exposed our own to their imposi-

tions, making them in some instances the greatest sufferers by their placing unbounded confidence in European Price Currents, and statements of markets, purposely made out to deceive the unwary and unsuspecting individual. If the price of cotton could be supported in England, the exportation of this article would materially benefit the country, while it greatly enriched the planter; but it is feared that the quantity being augmented to double or treble its present amount, combined with the causes above referred to, and others which might be named, the value of it might be much reduced. But if the European market could be relieved of a part of the quantity; and if a market could be procured for the surplus on reasonable terms, though in a distant country, it is conceived important advantages would result to the planter in the first instance, and remotely to the whole community, especially to the shipping interests of the middle and eastern states.

It is well known that cotton has been for a long time past, sent from Bombay to China, where it is manufactured in immense quantities. In late years it has been shipped from Bengal to Canton, and it is probable that English policy will endeavour to extend the commerce. The Chinese find it more for their interest to pay for cotton of a foreign growth than to devote their lands to its cultivation, & the experience of the last fifteen or twenty years has confirmed them in pursuing a practice to which it is said they were once compelled to resort, from the dreadful effects of a famine which happened among them in consequence of a neglect in raising a regular supply of rice, so necessary an article of food in all parts of the East.

In the Canton market, it is presumed, we may find a ready sale for all that portion of our cotton which England does not want. The quality called upland cotton is supposed to be superior to the best from Bombay or Surat. In time of war the Indian cotton cannot be sold in China much under eighteen or twenty cents per pound, as it is then subject to a high freight and insurance, when shipped on English bottoms. As the English, by Mr. Jay's treaty, had secured the carriage of cotton from India to China (with all other articles from their settlements, in the direct course to every part of the world, the United States excepted) this trade has been almost exclusively in their hands, and we have seen our merchants driven to the necessity of exporting hard money as the only means through which the United States could be supplied with nankeens and teas, which are now so generally used by the people of this country—while the English pay for theirs chiefly in cotton. Certain op-articles from India, the administration from England sends, after July 14—first year of the annual festival of Hayti. The minister Bayard, has just quantity is knit into my hands the menacer, considerable wrote him, Sir.

of your country, who wish to one fact relative to the purpose of open-worthly of merely to sell the cargoes, was only a few safety and protection. their China of, by no means suffer, Sir, Sir Edward Hu have taken for the interest New-York, and that he shall be permit-away nearly a million of govern-the greater part of w in every city, mer-first instalment promise, well as those of lieu of the sixth, and for the right of val of the seventh article of goes, and of fish treaty, for the spoliating our American property, the prospect of pur-ings on which in London had been sus-pended. Cotton of the second, or inferior quality in the southern

* This it is presumed must be an error: certainly if true it must be of very late years; for a very few years ago, cotton was imported into Bengal from the Malabar coast. Cotton has been already exported from the United States to China with profit.