



THE "FREE PRESS,"

By Geo. Howard,

Published weekly, (every Saturday,) at FIVE DOLLARS per year, (or 52 numbers,) if paid within one month after Subscribers commence receiving their papers—Two Dollars & Fifty Cents, if paid within six months—and Three Dollars at the expiration of the year. Subscribers at liberty to discontinue at any time on paying arrears.

Advertisements not exceeding 16 lines will be inserted at 50 cents the first insertion, and 25 cents each continuance. Longer ones at that rate for every 16 lines.

Letters addressed to the Editor must be paid for.

James Simmons, Esq. postmaster at Halifax, is our general agent for that vicinity.

Domestic.

The Speech delivered by Mr. Potter, on the 22d ultimo, (in the House of Commons,) on the bill introduced by him to establish a *Political College* in this State, having created great excitement, and lead to much conversation, in order to correct misrepresentations, and procure a fair construction of his motives, he has thought proper to submit a copy for publication.—*Raleigh Star.*

REMARKS OF MR. POTTER.

Mr. Speaker—In submitting the proposition contained in that bill, a proposition so novel in its character, and, if adopted, so important in its consequences, I trust the House will bear with me a moment, while I open to them some of the arguments in favor of it, and declare to them the motives which have impelled me to offer it. To say that the object of this measure, is to elevate and dignify the character of North-Carolina, and provide for the continuance of her safety, and the enlargement of her happiness, by enlightening and liberalizing the faculties of her people—that its ultimate scope is nothing less than the diffusion of education among the mass of her children, is at once to announce the magnitude of its importance. Sir, if it be mind which gives to man the dominion of the world—if it be that which distinguishes him from the brutes that perish, and almost exalts him to an equality with heaven, then the process, by which its mighty attributes are developed and harmonised, is obviously an object of paramount consideration. But forcible and undeniable as is this truth, and urged upon us from sources of oracular sacredness, North-Carolina seems ever to have remained most sadly insensible to it; while many of her sister States have addressed themselves to the subject with a degree of energy and zeal, which indicate their sense of the vitality of its importance; while they have most liberally devoted their best resources to the development of the moral and intellectual energies of their people, N. Carolina, in this, as in every other useful improvement, has continued to stumble and flounder on, at a lazy and a lagging pace, behind every other member of the Union. Sir, it is time she were disenchanted—it is time she was bro't to a just and full sense of her degradation—it is time that the spell which has so long sealed her energies in death, should be broken,

and her thoughts should be raised from the habitual contemplation of low and subordinate objects, and fixed upon her manlier and more exalted interests. Would you ask how this is to be done—would you ask how "a consummation so devoutly to be wished," is to be accomplished? I answer, educate the people—yes, let in upon their minds the light of science and of truth—confer upon them the capacity of thinking—enable them justly to appreciate their relation to their country—give them to see and understand their rights and interests, and the prevailing instinct of nature will impel them to assert and pursue them. If this proposition, bearing, as I conceive, upon its very face the impress of beauty and of truth, should yet be deemed to require the sanction of authority, I would direct you to the sentiments of those chiefs and sages, whose valor won, whose wisdom established our liberties.—The man who, when living, received the homage of all hearts, and whose name like a charm still enchants the world—whose form, shadowed forth upon the wall, in the attitude of entreaty, would seem to beckon and persuade you to the adoption of his favorite maxim. That sainted sage, in the last words addressed by him to his country, in language the most earnest and emphatic, invited her attention to this subject. These are his words: "tis substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric? Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened."

The Congress of '76, whose deliberations were conducted in the borough which I have the honor to represent, some of whose members were then fresh from the battles of their country, and yet reeking in the blood of her enemies—whilst the fierce and furious din of civil discord shook this mighty continent, and the echoes of the ball and the sabre were sighing and shivering in their ears—resolved as fate—calm and unmoved as gods, deciding on the destinies of mortals—even amidst those terrible convulsions, they were not unmindful of this important subject; and, in the charter furnished by their deliberations, under which we are now assembled, they introduced a provision, enjoining it as a duty on the Legislature which they then created, to provide for the general education of their people. To the misfor-

tune of the people, and the lasting shame of those who have heretofore occupied the places which we now fill, that duty has never been performed, though occasionally reminded of it by adventurous individuals of their own body, and sometimes casually invited to it in the annual messages of the executive, until our present Chief Magistrate, in his recent communication, has pressed the subject upon us with a solicitude and anxiety, characteristic of his well-known deep and virtuous sensibility to the best interests of his people. The Legislature from time to time have sported with the subject, by adopting a barren resolution in its favor; but as yet they have done nothing decisive in relation to it. They did, indeed, at the last session, set apart some trifling branches of the revenue, which they were pleased to style "*The Literary Fund*;" but if not added to, the present generation at least must pass away before it accumulates sufficiently, to afford effectual aid to the people. Sir, this is not the way to treat this matter—it is a subject not to be dallied with. I would seize upon it with the determined energy, with which, if drowning, I would grapple a plank in the surge. I would embrace it as a measure, on which depended our last, our only hope, of social improvement, or political exaltation; and if the measure I now tender you, be not accepted, or some efficient system for disseminating education among our people be not adopted, I shall set down in despair, over the irreclaimable degradation of my country. But, by heavens, I will not believe it—I cannot believe you will turn away your faces, and refuse to sanction and approve this measure. I cannot believe, you will thus impliedly decide that our people are incapable of virtue or excellence, and that they are only

"Born to eat, and be despised and die. Ev'n as the brutes that perish, save that they

Have a more noble trough, and wider sty."

I would invoke the genius of my country to my side, and aid me in persuading you to the adoption of this measure. Sir, if she were indeed to appear among us—if the genius of North-Carolina were now to present herself to you, who are charged with the destinies of her people, instead of the majesty of a guardian goddess—instead of a radiant brow, and an eye flashing light and dignity on this assembly, you would mark her with a pallid front, and "sad and shrouded eye," and in the hollow accents of despair, she would demand of you, in the language of admonition and reproof, "why sit ye here, all the while idle?" why assemble here from session to session, and expend your time upon ephemeral objects, while you neglect the very salvation of the republic: why

meet you here from year to year, to scuffle over subjects, unimportant to the public, and trifling in themselves, or to squabble about the disposition of a clerkship or a judgeship, whilst the *people*, for whom all this is intended—for whose benefit government was established, laws enacted, and judges appointed—whilst the *people* are left to rust in primeval ignorance—"rotting from sire to son, and age to age," deaf as the adder, and dark as Erebus? She would tell you, you were a degraded and despised community; but only so, because you would be so. She would tell you that North-Carolina was a lion in the net, an eagle without his pinion, fixed upon the earth and gazing at the sun in despair, and she would conjure you to make one generous, one manly effort, to redeem and disenfranchise her—to take, at this moment, a firm and noble stand in support of the most sacred rights of humanity—to silence in your hearts the suggestions of every selfish passion, and act with a single eye to the honor and the interests of your country. She would remind you of the frailty of life, and the immortality of virtue. She would tell you, that time scoffs and hisses at the grandest achievements of man, and crushes, and crumbles, the proudest monuments of his power; but that fate itself had no control over virtue; essentially eternal, it should live, like a cherub smiling above the storm, when the frail forms from which it sprung, should have returned to the clod of the valley. She would warn you that the flight of time was rapid and irrevocable; and with a voice, like the music of the spheres, she would implore you to seize upon the passing hour—to make it your own, and render it immortal, by consecrating it to patriotism. Cheered and elated at the effect of her admonition, her form now buoyant with hope, her brow brightening and flushing, and her eye dilating—tearing the shroud from her face, and stamping with an emphasis that should wake an echo in every cottage of Carolina; in a tone of encouragement and command, she would exclaim to you, as she retired, "Arise! thou can'st and must." Yes, to be great, North-Carolina has only to will to be so. She has moral and intellectual energies, which, if put into action, would command for her an honorable and an enviable elevation in the Union—an elevation, where the proudest should conceive themselves honored in her smile. She has, indeed, though all unknown to the world, names dear alike to genius and to science—names, which the all-enduring hand of fame will inscribe upon the proudest pillar of her temple, and over which the most approving smiles of virtue have been poured. The virtues of Henderson alone, might atone for the errors of a vicious