



THE "FREE PRESS,"

By Geo. Howard,

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

Domestic.

REMARKS OF MR. POTTER.

(continued from our last.)

Let it not be supposed, that because I thus allude to the characters of mean men, who hold high stations in the country, that I am the less regardful of the honor of my country. I love my country, and would die for her. Yes, sir, if the offering of my poor life could in aught advance her interests, or her honor, heaven knows I would lay it down, as promptly and as cheerfully, as ever gallant entered the bower of consenting maiden; but though "with all her faults I love her still," I will not flatter those faults—I will not flatter her rank vices and follies—I will not "bend to her idolatries a patient knee, nor cry aloud, in worship of an echo;" but rather hold a mirror up to her, which, by reflecting her moral deformities full in her face, shall teach her, if possible, to turn away, in shame and terror from them. It is right—it is necessary, she should see how she is gulled and dishonored. She does not know it—she does not feel it—and all the ills she bears, are to be traced to her profound insensibility to her political character and political rights. I affirm, that such a sentiment, as an enlightened regard to the dignity and the interests of their country, does not exist among the mass of the people of North-Carolina; and, in the name of God, I would ask you who are assembled here, under the sacred and responsible obligation to guard their rights; and to provide for their welfare, if you will continue to sit quietly here, with your arms folded, and wait for heaven to inspire them with it! The days of inspiration are no more, and it will be vain and idle in us, to expect our people to become wise and virtuous, until we give an impulse to their slumbering energies. To impart that impulse, is the object of the measure I now tender you. It is founded on the admission of our inability, at this time, to extend the benefits of education to all our people, and proposes, therefore, to select from the several sections of the State such a portion of our youths as we can conveniently educate, and assemble them in a common college, that we may qualify them to instruct the others. Let not the plain and prudent men of the

house be startled at the name of the institution—nothing extravagant, nothing grand in the common sense of the word, is intended. It is not proposed to instruct our young men how to decorate their bodies, to shine in drawing rooms, and prattle about literature and the sciences, but to instil into their hearts the chastest and severest principles of virtue and philosophy—to teach them, as the cardinal principle of education, that the first and most sacred obligation of a citizen is his duty to his country, and qualify them, at the same time, efficiently to perform it. All is to be conducted on the most rigid principles of economy—a farm is to be established, and plain wooden buildings constructed, as the only outward signs of the college; and, as a fundamental rule of discipline, the young men are to be divided into five classes, and in turn to be constantly engaged in agricultural labors on the college farm. The influence of an institution, founded and conducted on these principles, would not be limited to its own members. It would have an exalting effect on the morality of the whole community, and strongly tend to create an enlightened tone of sentiment, and a just sense of excellence. Who can say, that such a sense now exists among us! I affirm that it does not. We are magnanimous enough in professions. We say we are republicans, and profess to live for virtue and for liberty; but when we come to act—when we are called upon for that true touchstone of the heart, we show at once the emptiness of these professions. Every man's experience must have satisfied him of this. I have myself had striking exemplifications of the fact. I have met with those, who were all magnanimity in professions, but real meanness in conduct—who, under an appearance of simplicity approaching to childishness, and generosity bordering upon enthusiasm, concealed a degree of guile and of selfishness, that would have augmented the address of the primeval seducer. Yes, sir, the great Don Juan of Eden himself, who triumphed over the virtue of our first mother, was not more wily and more artful, and, like him, it is their greatest luxury, with insidious creepings, to wind their way into the unsuspecting heart, only to deposit their poison there, and leave it blackened, if not blasted by the contagion. I call upon you all to look around you in the world, and see if its dignities depend on virtue. Do you not every where behold villains, insensible to all the obligations of morality and patriotism, whose wealth alone secures to them the smiles and honors of the world, when, too, in the very acquisition of it they have violated not only the kindly feelings of nature and humanity, but the sternest principles

of truth and justice! Yes, it matters not, though a scoundrel may have robbed his mother, his father, his brother, his friend, or his country, if he has done it in a way to screen himself from prosecution, and save his ears, though he may basely have put into his pocket ten thousand dollars of the money of the people, for which he never rendered a single act of service, yet having secured it, he may furnish feasts, and honest men will condescend to share them. Nay, more, he may obtain a place in the Legislature of his State, and there procure the passage of an act, for his own private and especial benefit—an act, bearing upon its very face a lie, and having for its object nothing more nor less than the securing a legal fee in his dishonest and "itching palm;" and yet not only escape the vengeance due to crime, but continue to legislate for the very people he has betrayed and dishonored. I call upon you, the guardians of the morality, as well as the rights of the people, to put your faces against these abominations; and by adopting the system of education before you, prepare the way for exterminating these evils. The people should be instructed to respect nothing but virtue; to despise and tread upon a villain, though his limbs be arrayed in gold and fine linen.

The mere contemplation of such an institution as the one proposed, would strongly tend to accomplish this result. It would be a sublime and noble spectacle to see a body of young men, associated together under the sanction and patronage of their country, the direct and exclusive object of whose education, should be the attainment of excellence. It would relieve them, too, from the degrading consciousness of dependence, to know that while they were qualifying themselves to serve their country, they could, in the course of healthful exercise, produce what was necessary to sustain and support themselves. It would dignify labor, and make it respectable, not only in their eyes, but those of the community; and would thus furnish a powerful incentive to general industry. It is impossible to detail, or even to anticipate, the many advantages which might result to the country, from the agricultural department of the college. Agriculture, the most important interest of North-Carolina, for we are essentially a body of farmers, would there be systematised & reduced to science: the professor of agriculture would be chosen for his knowledge of the elementary principles, as well as the practical details of the science; and, in the conduct and government of the college farm, might throw a body of new light on the subject, which would be eminently serviceable to the whole community. Next in importance to the department of agriculture,

is the military professorship. It is admitted to be incompatible with the spirit of our government to keep on foot a body of mercenaries; and hence it has been laid down as one of the cardinal principles of our republican policy, that to the militia should be left the defence of our liberties. Is it not greatly important then, that they should be efficiently disciplined and instructed? Who that has attended the arrays of our militia, and witnessed their clumsy and ungraceful evolutions, but must laugh to scorn the idea of their offering effectual resistance to a disciplined foe? I am sure I do not err, when I say that ten thousand men, who had seen service—ten thousand courageous and disciplined troops, thrown upon the coast of North-Carolina, might overrun the State with fire and sword. Let not my sentiments be misunderstood. The light of heaven no where shines upon a braver or a hardier race than that of North-Carolina. I do not believe there is on earth a people, with bolder hearts, or stouter hands, than those we represent; but the history of all time has shewn, that, in the field, the best and noblest efforts of valor are vain without discipline. If we would be wise, therefore, and act upon the lessons of the past, let us now, when it is in our power, lay the foundation of a general military education for our people. If it be desirable that they should be disciplined at all, and our policy is mainly founded upon that principle, then it is obvious they should be well disciplined; so that, in time of need, they may stand forth, the guardians of our liberties, our women, our children, and our firesides. Among other interesting results, this important one would inevitably attend the adoption of the system before you. It does not propose to make enlightened citizens of those merely, who shall be immediately educated under it; but, through them, to reach and instruct the great body of our people. It is to be remembered, as the condition on which their country is to undertake to educate them, that she is to have a paramount and indefeasible title to their services, for six years from the day on which their education commences; and that, after they shall have been supported and instructed for three years at the Political College, they are to be distributed through the State, at such stations as the Rector and Visitors of the college shall think proper to assign them, and there serve the other three years in disseminating among their countrymen the benefits of that education, and that discipline, which their country shall have conferred upon them. We shall thus have created for ourselves a body of instructors eminently and efficiently qualified to superintend the morality and intellect of the State,