SIX ADDRESSES
ON THE
State of Letters and Science in Virginia
DELIVERED CHIEFLY BEFORE
THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
AT HAMPDEN-SIDNEY COLLEGE
AND
THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION OF
HAMPDEN-SIDNEY COLLEGE
1824 — 1835

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THIS is a Centennial Year, as well in the history of Hampden-Sidney College as in the history of Education in Virginia.

During 1817 the Literary Fund of the State, by an Act of 1816, became largely swelled, involving the inquiry ordered by the General Assembly regarding a System of Public Education for the State.

During 1817 there was built at Hampden-Sidney the structure, now the oldest existent there as a part of the College plant, a house at that time the chief subsidiary ornament of the Old College founded in 1775. And during 1817 Jonathan P. Cushing, builder of the New College of Hampden-Sidney, came to the place. It is in memory first of him and his work of energy and intellect that these pages are issued a hundred years after.

SIX ADDRESSES

I

THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AT HAMPDEN-SIDNEY COLLEGE

"January 8, 1824.

"The following gentlemen, Dr. John H. Rice, Dr. William S. Morton, President Jonathan P. Cushing, the Rev. James Marsh, Messrs. Abram W. Venable, W. W. Blauvelt, Samuel L. Venable, Robert Burwell, Thomas P. Hunt, William H. Clarke, and Jesse S. Armistead met at President Cushing's room for the purpose of considering the expediency of instituting a Literary and Philosophical Society at this place. After a free and full expression of the sentiments and feelings of those present, in reference to the object of the meeting, it was agreed that such a Society should be organized. Dr. Rice, President Cushing, and Mr. Marsh were appointed a committee to draw up a constitution for the contemplated Society to be submitted to a meeting to be held on the 16th instant. The meeting adjourned."

The State of Virginia was drawing away from old ante-bellum conditions and those due to and following the Revolution. It is not misleading to say in round numbers that it was a hundred years ago that movements began making in the State for the organized shaping of public opinion—towards a better agriculture, a better education, a better polity in general. The Revolution, beneficent certainly, had entailed many disorganizations and confusions. It was time to be getting together for concerted action. On analysis it will be found that the year 1816 is very important in the chronology of Virginia. Although there had always been such a thing as public opinion, the community had not yet grown well accustomed to the use of the term and the wide possibilities of the fact.

In 1824 the College of Hampden-Sidney was fifty years old. En-
lightened men there were saying among themselves substantially that if the place was to perform a worthy part in the State during the century that was to come, something else must be done. Dr. Rice was just establishing near the College his Theological School; Mr. Cushing had brought to completion a part of his plans for a new college, new in plant and in method; Mr. Marsh was at the time associated both with College and Theological School. It was these men who were the chief authors of the Literary and Philosophical Society at Hampden-Sidney College, something rather new in Virginia. Dr. Rice was a native of Virginia, one of the builders of the State. Mr. Cushing was a New Englander, who spent his energies to good effect in Virginia. Mr. Marsh, of New England, returned to New England, becoming president of the University of Vermont.

By mere chance the minute book of this Society, founded at Hampden-Sidney, has been preserved. Quotation from its pages is continued:

"January 16, 1824.

"The same gentlemen as above mentioned, with the exception of Mr. Abram W. Venable, met this evening at President Cushing's room for the purpose of organizing the proposed society. Dr. W. S. Morton was appointed Chairman, and W. W. Blauvelt (of New Jersey, Tutor in the College), Secretary of the meeting. The committee appointed at the last meeting to prepare a constitution made their report, which was accepted, and is as follows:

'Gentlemen:—In performing the business intrusted to us as your committee, we have been guided chiefly by the general views exhibited at our previous meeting. Our object has been to combine as far as possible in the constitution of a single body the advantages of personal improvement with those of public influence. We have aimed in the ordinary meetings of the Society to secure the free and unrestrained feelings and habits of a literary club; to give scope and encouragement for the display of intellectual powers of all kinds; and to cherish a generous enthusiasm in the pursuit of excellence. In the annual meetings and exercises, and in the more extended form of the Society, we would wish it to assume the character before the public of an extended literary association, and to maintain an eminence that shall do honour to the literature of the State. It is our object, in short, to combine the means of awakening and sustaining among ourselves a spirit of greater energy and enterprise in our pursuits; to place before those who are following in the paths which we have trodden an elevated standard of literary attainment, and to diffuse abroad, as far as the influence of the Society may extend, liberal and enlightened views, as well as a generous spirit of intellectual improvement. We are perfectly aware, however, that for accomplishing these objects, the most essential requisites are to be sought in the character and feelings of the individual members, and that the compulsory force of constitutions and laws can, of themselves, produce little effect. We have chosen, for these reasons, to make the positive forms and regulations of the Society few and simple, and to leave every member to find the motives to exertion, not in the fear of penalties, but in the hope of improvement and the proper rewards of excellence.

John H. Rice,
James Marsh,
Jona. P. Cushing,
Committee.'

"The following subject was selected for discussion at the next meeting: 'The Best Means of Exciting a Higher Literary Spirit in Virginia.' Jesse S. Armistead is to read a dissertation on the subject. The Society adjourned to meet this evening two weeks at halfpast 6 o'clock p.m.

W. W. Blauvelt, Sec.'

This Society at its organization could draw for members upon a good many graduates of the College living in the neighborhood, upon the staff of the College and that of the Theological School recently established, and upon certain students of the Theological School (known later as Union Theological Seminary). An article in the Constitution of the Society was to this effect: "The Society shall have the power of electing as additional members, any gentlemen in this State, eminent for literary or professional attainments; all resident graduates at this College; and all who from time to time complete their course of study here, provided they shall have been admitted to the first degree in the arts." Thus the institution was to serve also as an Alumni Association, of a strict construction, one of the earliest Alumni Associations in the country.

From first to last, about ten years, this Society enrolled well over three hundred members, most of them graduates of the College or graduate students at the Theological Seminary across the road. Among the honorary members appeared such names as James W. Alexander, William S. Archer, Edwin G. Booth, of Nottoway, William H. Cabell, Charles Campbell, the historian, Claude Crozet,
George C. Dromgoole, of Brunswick, Hugh Blair Grigsby, Shepherd K. Kollock, William Maxwell, and George Tucker. Not a few graduates of the College who were members of this Society (e.g. William B. Chittenden, William C. Rives, Hugh A. Garland, William Ballard Preston) got into the biographical dictionaries, which, it is understood, are a very slim standard, at best.

The list of subjects before the Society during its first most active years must be of interest:

February 13, 1824—The Utility of the Study of Language in a Course of Education. W. W. Blauvelt.
February 20, 1824—Call meeting for continued discussion of this subject. Dr. Rice.
April 9, 1824—What Measures Should be Adopted for the Abolition of Slavery in Virginia? Sam'l L. Venable.
June 18, 1824—The Consideration of Moral Philosophy as a Branch of Liberal Education. Gilbert Morgan.
July 9, 1824—The Utility of History as a Part of a Liberal Education. J. D. Paxton.
July 30, 1824—The Influence of the Christian Religion in Producing the American Revolution. Dr. Rice.
September 24, 1824 First Anniversary Meeting. Oration by Dr. Rice. Dr. Rice’s Oration follows, in part:

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*Dr. Rice had established in Richmond, in the year 1818, one of the earliest magazines published in the Southern States, *The Literary and Evangelical Magazine*, which ran through eleven volumes ending in 1828. On his removal to Hampden-Sidney in 1823, Dr. Rice continued the editorship of this periodical. Several of the dissertations above mentioned—this by Dr. Rice, Mr. Blauvelt’s and Mr. Marsh’s—were published in *The Literary and Evangelical Magazine*. 
A DISCOURSE, Delivered before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Hampden-Sydney College, at their Anniversary Meeting, on the 24th of September, 1824.
Published in conformity with a resolution of the Society. (Literary and Evangelical Magazine, VII, 1-9, 57-65.)

Gentlemen:
I am fully sensible of the honour conferred on me by the appointment which I am now about to fulfil; and duly appreciate the importance of the service which you expect me to perform. Our Society, being yet in its infancy, is but little known, and has, of course, excited but little interest. While this is the case, the Association will produce few of the benefits which were anticipated by its founders. It is your wish, then, that on this occasion the claims of the institution, and the advantages likely to result from it, should be so exhibited as to enkindle new ardour in the bosoms of its friends, and enlist the zealous cooperation of those who have not yet given us their countenance. There is no affectation in the declaration that I wish you had an able representative. But your choice has imposed this duty on me; and while I cheerfully render my best services, I rely greatly on that indulgent kindness, with which I am sure you will regard this humble effort.

It seems now to be generally admitted that Virginia is deficient, in various matters connected with her dearest interests, and her highest glory, as a State. Her sons are richly gifted by the author of nature; and they justly glory in their political consistency, and their devotion to the cause of liberty. Yet she is comparatively poor in the means of affording them the highest improvement of which they are capable. The only well endowed college within her limits owes its wealth to royal and not to Republican munificence. We have no great libraries, where the student may find means both of exciting and gratifying his curiosity. We have no extensive philosophical apparatus, to enable the votary of science to explore the mysteries of nature that are yet to be revealed. We have no great collections of subjects in natural history; no splendid cabinets of minerals; no botanical gardens; no anatomical preparations for the benefit of our young citizens, for the excitement of their curiosity, and the aid of their researches. Hence, in all these branches of natural science, we fall far behind many of our
fellow citizens in other states. And hence the interesting fields of Virginia botany, mineralogy, and geology are quite uncultivated.

In the Old Dominion, too, we are lamentably deficient in associations for literary and philosophical improvement. In other states we find Academies of the Fine Arts, Philosophical Societies, Linnean Societies, and similar institutions, where the men of learning and votaries of science meet and open to each other the stores of their minds, communicate the fruits of their research, and apply one to another a constant stimulus, by which continual progress is made in all that adorns man as an intellectual being, and gives elevation to his mental character.

These remarks direct the attention to another point wherein we are greatly defective: it is a spirit of literary and philosophical enterprise, which prompts all who feel its influences to make mighty exertions and great sacrifices to advance their favourite objects. Politics and money are the great all-absorbing interests in this part of our country; and their influence is everywhere seen and felt. To them all our schemes of improvement have reference. The student, when he is toiling in the midnight watches, is supposed to have them ultimately in view. And he who, in any pursuit, manifests indifference towards these favourite objects, is thought to lack common prudence, or to be laying some deep plan, the means of attaining which do not appear.

Various causes have combined to produce the state of things thus briefly described. Without pretending to make a complete enumeration, we may for the present advert to the following:

We have not in our State any great city, where intellect and the means of excitement may be concentrated. Men must be brought together and into collision; must be constantly in the view of their fellow men, and roused by this public observation; must have easy access to the various means of improvement, and a motive sufficient to insure vigorous exertion, before they will put forth steadily their whole intellectual strength. This is so well known as to have become a common remark. But when this concentration takes place, and mind is raised to its highest tone, a great city then is in a state, what the heart is in a human body. An influence is sent forth from this central point which is felt at every extremity of the Commonwealth.

The physical geography of our State has prevented the growth of any of our cities to greatness. The Roanoke, the Powhatan, the Appomattox, and the Potowmac must be united before Virginia can have a London or a Paris, a New York or Philadelphia. And while this is the case, our country population is thinly spread over a great surface. Our citizens are not, in the pursuit of their daily business, brought frequently into contact. Not being congregated in villages, it is inconvenient for them frequently to meet and hold intercourse. On the contrary, they are generally confined to plantations, and when out of the society of wives and children, have no intercourse except with overseers and negroes. Perhaps there is no situation in the world more suited to repress a literary spirit.

The character of our population, too, exerts an unfavourable influence on the interests under consideration. The condition of a class of men whose wits are not sharpened by necessity, who live a life of comparative indolence, and who are much given to the indulgences of sense, is not the best adapted to intellectual improvement. And perhaps, when a large part of the inhabitants of a country is shut out by political regulations from the possibility of bettering their condition, and of course feels none of the promptings of hope to vigorous exertion, the effect is greatly increased. Generally, that community makes the best progress, in which the higher classes excite the lower by example; and the lower press on the higher in their efforts to rise.

These and perhaps other causes have brought us into a situation, in which there is a deplorable want of the means of exciting a spirit of mental improvement among our fellow citizens. A survey of these means and their application may well engage the attention of the philosophical patriot. It is becoming quite obvious that perfect liberty to pursue happiness in one's own way is not of itself sufficient to rouse men to vigorous exertion. We enjoy this liberty in its fullest extent. But do we not see that they who, by the pious care of their fathers, have been blessed with good education, are obliged to exert their in-
fluence in various ways to excite others to the right use of their privileges? Otherwise, why the necessity of establishing among us a literary fund and primary schools; and of getting up that whole expensive apparatus which our State has prepared for the improvement of our fellow citizens? How has it happened that men who have the greatest facilities of procuring the means of subsistence are so very apt to degenerate? Why should they who live where the waters or forests always afford a supply of food be generally the most illiterate and rude, improvident and intemperate of our population? All human things may well be illustrated by the comparison which Virgil makes to convince the husbandman of the necessity of selecting the best of his crop for seed.

Sic omnia fatis
In peius ruere, ac retro sublapsa referri.
Non aliter, quam qui adversa vix flumine lembum
Remigii subigit, si forte brachia remisit,
Atque illum in praecessps prono rapet alveus amni.

Now it is a question of no small importance, by what means shall the people of our country be excited to make those efforts which the nature of our institutions requires. That this is an urgent case is most obvious from the facts that there are very few good schools among us; and that Virginia furnishes fewer regular students in the Colleges of the country than other states which have not one-half, nor even one-third, of her population. We see that it is in a great degree in vain to furnish a charity fund for the education of her poor. Why, to borrow the language of a man revered and celebrated for his wisdom, should we put a price in the hand of a fool to buy wisdom, when he has no heart for it? The illiterate, accustomed as they are to sensual enjoyments, and having no idea of any other kind of happiness, need some one to open before them the treasures of knowledge, and portray the flowery paths of literature before they can be excited to make the effort and practise the self-denial necessary to fit them for intellectual gratifications. They have no heart for these things; and must be driven by force, or allured by rewards to frequent the school and pursue a diligent course of study. But who will thus compel or allure the children of ignorant, and too often vicious parents?

It is true that much might be done by establishing good elementary schools in every neighborhood. An able teacher, a man fitted for his office by temper and attainments, can always rouse the minds of intelligent pupils, and enkindle in them an ardent thirst for knowledge. But we want a sufficient number of such competent instructors in the first place, and then pupils to put under them. Pupils will be found in abundance in our country, when parents shall have learned the value of education. But whence an adequate supply of competent instructors shall be derived for our growing population, I am greatly at a loss to conceive. If one-third of the children born in the United States this year should live to be old enough to go to school, they alone will require at least 4,000 teachers, at the rate of 25 scholars for one master. And if all the young men who graduate at our colleges should become teachers they would not supply at the utmost more than one-third of the adequate number. Shall we then turn from the colleges and look to the little, petty, temporary institutions, called oldfield schools, for teachers of our young citizens? Then shall we go down indeed on the scale of national improvement. Alas how many a child has learned from his teacher scarcely anything but to hate his book with a perfect hatred? Perhaps our country suffers under the pressure of no want more severely than under that of an adequate supply of competent instructors.

But to furnish this, and at the same time afford suitable places where boys can be fitted for college, we greatly need in different parts of the State a competent number of well supported academies. Institutions of this kind, where boys are kept under a closer inspection than is possible at college, where they are trained and disciplined for college life and college studies, are of very great importance. They are the proper places for that sort of grounding in elementary knowledge without which the course of study at college does not, and from the nature of the case cannot, afford half of its advantages. And I have greatly wondered and deeply regretted that the thousands, which have been and are every year squandered on what is falsely called the primary school system, have not been appropriated to the erection of institutions like these. We want academies, both male and female.
at which a course of education might be given, suited to the purposes of all, except those who wish to pass through the higher discipline of college.

Having mentioned the primary school system, I cannot help in passing, expressing my indignation and sorrow that an expedient like this, which requires every man, whose children are to partake of its proffered benefits, to give in a declaration of pauperism, should be called the primary school system of Virginia. Our country does not need a plan like that enacted by our law. We need a system that will make education cheap, so as to bring it within the reach of every honest industrious man.

In summing up these observations, I may state that we need that concentration of intellect which produces collision and creates emulation. We need good elementary schools for the first stage of education; we need well endowed academies in every county, with respectable libraries and able preceptors to afford to all classes of youth higher instruction than they can receive in the elementary institutions; and we need in suitable situations colleges with ample endowments, where a course of liberal studies may be completed. These, added to a well conducted University, whither young men who aim at the highest distinction and the greatest possible improvement, might resort to gratify this noble ambition, would complete the scheme. The first of these particulars is out of our reach. Wealth and commerce must be concentrated to make a great city. Division of land into small tracts is necessary for a dense population. But suitable efforts might produce good schools.

After all, however, the great desideratum is to excite a spirit of improvement in the great mass of our population. This might be done in some good degree by a proper attention and effort on the part of the educated men of the country. Would they but employ the influence which conciliation and kindness create, in the families of their uneducated neighbors; and would every man of substance contribute by donations and legacies to the building and endowing of good schools in his neighborhood, a great change would be produced in the intellectual character of the country. Still, however, nothing can supply the want of a body of well educated men, led by professional duty to promote the interests of morals and learning. Such a body of men is furnished by the Christian religion in its ministers. I speak now only of the intellectual effect of a well educated ministry of religion, operating merely by its moral power on the population of a country. And it may well be doubted whether any institution that has ever been tried, or can be devised, is likely to produce equal mental excitement. Among the means then for exciting a general desire of improvement, this ought on no account to be neglected. A comparison of the population of different parts of our own State would alone justify me in ascribing this importance to that institution.

It would carry me much too far to point out the measures by which these facilities of promoting knowledge might be acquired. In relation to all that regards the higher order of schools, we have a right to look to our Legislature for aid. But, from what cause it has proceeded I will not say, the Legislature has always looked on this institution (Hampden-Sidney College) with a step-mother's jealousy, and treated it with a step-mother's severity. It has rendered good service to the State, although she has left it now nearly fifty years to struggle with poverty. It is increasing in reputation and usefulness, but still its unfinished buildings and scanty library give sad tokens of continued neglect. We trust, however, that the liberality and munificence of the people will not soon be exhausted, and that this source will never fail.

We hope for much too from the increasing devotion of the Alumni of the Institution, yet it must be confessed that suitable measures have not been adopted to keep up that feeling, with which young men have usually left college. We have hitherto had no association to bind them together in one united body. We have had no societies, whose anniversaries would call them together to renew their acquaintance, to talk over the scenes of their youth, and rekindle the ardour of their love. They do not meet to lay plans and adopt measures for the prosperity of their college. Long ago there ought to have been formed here an Inunortal Band, pledged to each other by all the ties of youthful friendship to promote the interests of their Alma Mater, and ex-
tend the influence of learning, science, and taste in the Old Dominion. It was to remedy this defect that we instituted the Literary and Philosophical Society of Hampden-Sydney College.

Dr. Rice had seen much of our country as it was then, and knew what he was talking about. Nobody in the State of Virginia had its interests more at heart. Yet it is plain from the record preserved in the old saffron minute book that the new Society was not steadily supported after the first year or two. Its plans were far reaching, and difficult of any sustained execution. The members on the spot were busy with their own vexed affairs; transportation, however an accepted condition as then, was tedious; and besides, the slump tendency, the nullifying aptitudes, have always to be reckoned with. Nevertheless, the Society kept its form longer than might perhaps have been expected, discussing questions of history and politics, literature, philanthropy and metaphysics. "Because to every purpose, there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is heavy upon him," so the book of Ecclesiastes sums the matter up. The idea of the Literary and Philosophical Society at Hampden-Sydney College was there to do business, but for many reasons the idea was balked in working out to any solid rounded results. The tendency, after 1824, was towards occasional meetings, dwelling for a while upon such topics as Lord Byron's Poetry, the application of the new Literary Fund in the State, the best and safest means of removing slavery, theories of cause and effect, the principles of the Lake School, etc.; somewhat relegating the routine work of the Club as at first proposed, but never, if at all possible, neglecting the grand anniversary meeting in September. It was then that some gentleman from a distance, eminent for literary or professional attainments, could occupy the stage ably, and outline a programme which afterwards every auditor might work as he would to realize. Two members of the Club worked all the time to better
the community by this means and every other open to and by them. Those two were Dr. Rice and Mr. Cushing. And it is not to be questioned that the Literary and Philosophical Society at Hampden-Sidney College was, in the way of ideals, an important phenomenon, deserving of memory.

Dr. Rice had a firm friend, William Maxwell, of Norfolk, who was later to be associated for some years with Hampden-Sidney College as Trustee and President. Mr. Maxwell was a man of good estate, a lawyer, and a very ready and eloquent speaker. James W. Alexander called him in 1827 ‘The very best orator he knew anywhere,’ and Mr. Alexander, although then young, had heard a good many fine orators. At the September Anniversary, 1826, of the Literary and Philosophical Society, Mr. Maxwell was the orator. His address was printed shortly after, fifty-two pages, 12mo. A copy is at the Yale University Library, and its contents can only be indicated in this place. Mr. Maxwell’s subject was, “On the Improvement of the People”;* his dedication to Dr. Rice in these words:

‘If I were obliged to give any reason, besides my own fancy, for addressing this tribe to you, I could easily find a sufficient one in the consideration, that you are the President of the Society before which I spoke it, on our late occasion. I have a much better, however, I think, in the fact that you are the able advocate, and have been for some years past, of all that improvement of the people which it was, and is its object to promote. Accept it then, I pray you, as a small acknowledgment, for my part, of your public services in this cause; and allow me to add that I am, with great esteem, your sincere friend and obedient servant.”

Mr. Maxwell covered the ground, wide as it was, considering first the ordinary, and then the extraordinary means of public improvement:—first, education in common schools, academies, colleges, and a University, then the amelioration of standards in the training of lawyers, doctors, ministers of the Church, writers, publicists, legislators, and young women. A suggestion of the form and substance of Mr. Maxwell’s discourse may be had from the extracts given. The orator said:

‘But before I proceed to consider my subject, or in the Parliamentary phrase, to open up my budget of Ways and Means, I ought,

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*Mr. Maxwell in his title page quoted Cicero (De Legibus)—Ad res publicas formandas et ad stabilendas vires, sanandas populos, omnis nostra perigit oratio.
perhaps, to state, a little more clearly, who they are whom I call the PEOPLE. By the PEOPLE then, sir (taking the term in its largest and most liberal sense), I mean all 'the good and legal men,' or in other words, all the citizens of our State. For here, sir, in this happy country of ours, we have, you know, sir, no such thing as hereditary ranks. And we know nothing, and I hope we never shall know anything of that mystery by which one man, from mere fortune of birth, finds and feels himself entitled to lord it over his fellow creatures about him. But we hold, you know, sir, this truth to be self-evident, 'that all men are created equal.' Not, indeed, that we expect to realize an absolute, and literal equality either; for we know that there will always be natural differences, and distinctions, too, among men, in spite of our laws. And one man, by his greater genius, which is the gift of Providence, or his better improvement of his genius (which is another gift of Providence) will acquire superiority over another, just as in a natural forest, you see that one tree will rise and flourish over its fellow. And there will be something, too, like different classes of society among us: and some men by their more ample fortunes, and by the greater liberality of their pursuits, allowing them more scope and opportunity for the cultivation of their talents, will tower above their equals; not, however, assuredly, as lords and tyrants, to insult and debase them by their superiority, but rather as friends and patrons, if you please, to enlighten and bless them by their beneficence.

"Now the sum and substance, sir, of all the ways and means which I have to propose for the improvement of our people, thus defined, is nothing more or less than a general and generous education (taking that term also in its largest sense) extending to all classes and conditions, every man, woman, and child in our State. And here, sir, I am not about to enlarge, as you may be apprehending, upon the importance of education; for in this age, in this State, and especially in this enlightened county, and at this seat of science, I suppose I may fairly take it for granted.

"* * * * * * It would then, I say, sir, be a first and favorite object in my view, to provide instruction for the common people; and I do hope with all my heart, that I shall see some movement among us to this end before long. It was, you know, sir, the saying of Henry IV, the Huguenot king of France (expressed in his homely, hearty way), that 'he hoped to live to see the day when every peasant in his kingdom should have his own fowl in his pot.' It was the better saying of our old friend, George III, king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland (and sometime of Virginia, too), that 'he hoped to live to see the day when every subject in his dominions should have his Bible in his house.' And I, sir (though I am no king nor royalist, but only a private citizen), I will say that I hope to live to see the day when every man in our Commonwealth shall have, not only his fowl in his pot (or his ham, if he likes that better), and his Bible in his house, but his Bible in his hand (and in his heart too, of course). And I would have him able to read it (without spelling every other word), with understanding, and spirit, receiving and retaining its lively lessons of piety and morality, that must make him a better man, and a better citizen. I would have him also to know how to write plainly, and legibly at least, without being obliged to make that odious mark that is not even a proper cross. And I would have him able to cypher a little, and keep accounts in a plain way. And he should understand, moreover, the principles of husbandry, and rural economy; how to keep his land in heart, and improve his stock, and manage his slaves (until we can do something better with them by and by), with a firm and gentle discipline, treating them as 'humble friends,' for whose welfare he is bound to provide. And I would, by all means, have him know a little something about the government and laws of his country, and political economy, and the grounds of our public happiness. And he should know, besides (what is no mean part of wisdom), how to choose an honest delegate or member of congress, that is, how to distinguish between a cunning man and a sensible one; and how to tell a flatterer from a friend. All this, I say, sir, and something more, perhaps, I would have the plainest among us know. And I would have him able and apt to teach it, or a part of it at any rate (with his wife to help him), to his little children around his knees. In a word, I would have him what our constitution supposes, but education alone can make him, 'a good and legal man,' in all the fullest and freest sense of the phrase.

"But in what manner, sir, or by what means, you will ask me here, would I propose to provide this proper education for the common people? Why, sir, I will answer you at once, by establishing Primary Schools (as they are called) all over our State. For it is now obvious enough, I think, and seems indeed to be pretty generally agreed, that our present plan of granting an annual sum from the Literary Fund for the teaching of poor children, however well intended, has failed entirely to obtain its object."

[Mr. Maxwell had then touched upon the delicate question of how have a national State Literature.]
But whilst I am speaking of writings, I ought not to omit noticing here, for a moment, the power of our Periodical Press. It is most obvious indeed, sir, that in the present state of society this has become eminently great and extensive. For with what almost electrical rapidity indeed does it now circulate its impressions, through its thousands of readers, by its magazines and papers of different kinds! And here, sir, I should take occasion, if you were not within hearing, to observe that a certain monthly journal which we happen to have already, deserves, in my humble judgment, our warmest praise for the service which it has rendered to the cause of virtue and letters in our State for some years past. It is, however, a little, too entirely good (in the best sense of the word), to be altogether agreeable to many readers, who will hardly trust themselves, I am afraid, to look within its covers. I could wish, therefore, I confess, by your leave, that we could have another of equal merit, only a little more general and varied in its matter, devoted to subjects of politics, morals, manners, and elegant humanity—and such a work, if managed with proper talent and spirit, would, I think, be particularly useful at the present juncture.

And now then, Mr. President, what shall we say to these things? The field of improvement over which I have been glancing my eyes is vast—is wide—and seems whilst I am looking upon it to expand—and mingle with immensity. And here, too, as in that field of which indeed it is a part, the harvest is great and the laborers are few. But what then, sir, shall we abandon the cultivation of it in despair? God forbid! No, sir, like that old Roman, I will not despair of the Republic—our Commonwealth. I know indeed, sir, that it is the fashion with some of our friends to mourn over what they are pleased to call the degeneracy of our State—and I think, sir, I have heard even your voice amongst them (though it was but the passing humor of the moment, I am sure), lamenting in the same strain: 'We are not what we were—we have not the learning nor the talent of the good old times—our suns are set, and no others are rising up in their places—our star is retrograde—and our spirit is gone.' And our enemies, too, sir, are beginning to believe it—and they laugh amongst themselves, saying, 'the sceptre is departed from Judah.' And let it depart! What did it ever give to her but the barren laurel?—with that envy and jealousy that always entwine themselves about its flowers. And let the laurel also depart—and let it bind the brow of any other who may wish to wear it—and may she wear it with as much grace and

better fortune than our virgin Commonwealth—too fond of power perhaps in her day; but always using that power generously, disinterestedly, and for the benefit of every one but herself. Let the sceptre and the laurel go; all is not gone. The mind, the heart, the unconquerable spirit of Virginia remain—and shall remain—and whilst they continue with us we cannot despair of her nor of ourselves. No, sir, I will not despair of either. And though I am not, of course, you will believe me, in the secret of Divine Providence upon this subject, and though I have no skill to read the mystic language of the stars, I think I can see clearly that we have a better time before us than any that we have left behind. And I can see the Spirit of Improvement, at this moment—there before me—coming down from the skies—with the face and wings of an angel, as she is. And there, sir, I see, she moves along amongst us, gently, and graciously, and graciously, like herself, diffusing life and happiness about her. And there she visits the cabins of the poor, and teaches them from house to house; and she gathers their little children in her arms and makes them wiser than their fathers. And now she is planting schools, and churches, as we would have them, all through the land. And she is talking to the people with the tongue of wisdom herself—and her voice is unto the sons and daughters of men—and she points them to the skies. And still she moves along, and now, at last, she touches that all-nameless evil—the source of so many others—and the huge impediment to all her operations, and it is gone, I know not where—across the ocean—forever! And the liberated land rejoices; and the Heavens look down upon it with a brighter smile!

Is this fancy, sir, or is it fact? Does my heart deceive me? And did I not see her here, herself, but now—in form as fair and palpable as any that I have before me now? No, sir, I will not insult the beautiful apparition by doubting her existence. I will rather regard her very beauty as proof of her reality, of her divinity, and exult in all the delightful anticipations which she has authorized me to indulge and enjoy. Yes, Mr. President, banish all your fears and I can promise you now, sir, with confidence, in her name, that our beloved Virginia shall see a better and brighter day than she has ever known. And the time shall come, sir, I assure you—is coming now, sir—when she shall rise—and beam herself—and fairer than she ever was—and exalted and enlarged, and improved in all her faculties and features, shall stand out before the world in the august and admirable attitude
of a FREE, GREAT, AND GLORIOUS COMMON-WEALTH."

It is not difficult to credit the tradition that Mr. Maxwell was an orator of a very high rank, and that many years ago he was the only man who had addressed the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale without any written preparation. When a committee approached him for a copy of his full and accurate discourse, the committee was astounded to learn that there was no copy. This long address at Hampden-Sidney, also, was written out several days after it had been spoken, "almost entirely in spontaneous words."

Not so with the next following essay before the Literary and Philosophical Society at Hampden-Sidney. This, by a recent graduate of the College (1821), who had since been at Harvard for law and Mr. Ticknor's lectures, gives every evidence of the most careful elaboration, a remarkable piece of work unquestionably. Its author, Jesse Burton Harrison (who had some speech with Goethe a few years later), was in 1827 settled for the practice of the law at his home in Lynchburg.*

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THE PROSPECTS OF LETTERS AND TASTE IN VIRGINIA. A Discourse Pronounced before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Hampden-Sidney College, at their Fourth Anniversary in September, 1827.

*Tibi
Externa non meus; Italus, Italus.
Statius, Syl. IV, 5-43.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Philosophical Society:

I should be uncandid were I to express any great reluctance to perform the part which you have been pleased to assign to me on this day. I am glad at this opportunity of appearing in the presence of my old friends and well-remembered acquaintances, whose kind forbearance I have often experienced within these walls. I know that it will not be withheld at this time. Perhaps, sir, I may need it much for reasons additional to those which were the head and front of the offending of the more immature student, crudeness of thought and bad taste; with not years enough on my head to insure me against liability to these sins, I deprecate the possibility of others. I have been separated from these friends for the space of six years; for a season, far distant from them, and at no time since within the atmosphere of their opinions. If, therefore, amidst other scenes and other studies ardently pursued, it has been my chance to imbibe sentiments relative to any matters within the scope of this occasion, different from those of any among them, I shall hope to be pardoned.

I have not thought proper to undertake to entertain you with high-sounding generalities, applicable, or rather inapplicable, alike to all countries and to all times; nor to attempt to amuse you with the display of a portion of that great stock of sentiment and opinion, which after the civilians, I may call matter communis juris; opinions, which no one is so obtuse as not to have adopted, and sentiments which no one is perverse or sluggish enough not to feel. The times need minuter observation and the suggestion of palpable faults. I am sure, too, that you chiefly desire individuality in the speaker, who is called before your learned body at each returning annual meeting. Such, in a high degree, have been all the discourses hitherto delivered to the Society. And at the outset, I cannot but dread the contrast, which it
may occur to some to institute between my own humble efforts and the display which it was the good fortune of the Society to witness at its last assembling here. No one admires, more than myself, the classical propriety, the rare felicity of speech of the member to whom I allude; with you, I listened with astonishment at the elegant fluency, I will even say, the provoking fluency, with which he pours out the richest thoughts in aptest phrase; with you may I regret the occasion which draws him away from Virginia and from this Society.

I am come then to speak, as you may most naturally expect, in my humble manner of our own Virginia, with reference to the prospects of letters, taste, and refinement among us. Nothing is more frequent than to hear, even among ourselves, lamentations over the departing greatness of our Commonwealth, sad repinings at the retrospect of our fortunes, and sadder forebodings of what another and another census may unfold of our diminished importance; but the most pointed complaint is the disappearance of the old Virginia character. The mistake appears to me to consist in regretting it. Observe, sir, I do not mean to deny that there were good points in that character, or that there were many circumstances in the condition of Virginia at the period of the Revolution (for to this time I suppose the complainers look), which I should delight to see perpetuated. When I think of the princely munificence of Thomas Nelson's patriotism, of the Roman loftiness of George Mason's statesmanship, and the liberal learning of George Wythe, the last but a sample of the many ripe scholars we then boasted, I should be disingenuous indeed, did I not own with sorrow, that perhaps none of our public men may claim to themselves a near resemblance to any one of these names. But yet I must maintain, that the general condition of Virginia at that time has not been altered for the worse, and that the then prevailing character of the State, by whatever circumstances lost, need not be mourned over.

An error, which is an ingredient of the mistake of which I speak, is in supposing the old Virginia character to be a peculiar character. Whoever is familiar with the history of the literature of two or three nations will perceive a remarkable coincidence among their writers in this. Juvenile complains of the passing away of the good old time when, to quiet the mind of Regulus, the Senate voted him new garden utensils and a single servant to till his ground until his return; other writers of antiquity have lamented the departure of a happy age of contented poverty among the majority, and of affluence in a few neatly born. The Spanish gentleman of an age subsequent to that of the Knight errant, the Frenchman of the old régime on his own country estate, the old English gentleman of the seventeenth century, or the old English Squire of Fielding in the eighteenth, are characters nearly analogous to the old Virginian. Mark, however, that the bright side of the picture of Spain, France, and England in those times exhibits but little of the retainers, the peasants, the small tenants and laborers, as they respectively might be, of the people; they are always spoken of as in a happy ignorance and a stationary contentment. Now, taking this general national-character just named, as a whole (and nothing is so true as that the better part of it essentially demands the other for its counterpart), I boldly allege that no statesman ought to regret its departure in any part of the world.

I am yet too young not to feel the flow of the poet when he mourns over the pastoral simplicity of past days, and no one can have read without delight the sketch, by a living English traveller, of the quiet, insulated little spots in the mountains of Colombia. But were there no other reason for dissatisfaction with these, I should think it enough to say, that this simple state of society cannot last in the nature of things. The stranger will visit these regions, the merchant will bring his tempting novelties; and commerce first, then selfishness, then wealth unequally distributed, but constantly changing hands, lastly luxury will come, and the vision melts away. More robust than this was the state of society in Virginia, but alike dependent on the hopeless chance of escaping from the all-pervading and all-disturbing step of progressive commerce, or the equally hopeless chance of putting any narrow bounds to its inroads. The ancient condescending, kind-hearted rich will become poor and selfish, the once contented poor will be stirred up to activity and love of gain; and thus the idolized dignity of the former, and the quiet submission of the latter, pass away into that state, to which I verify trust all things are tending, a state of equality. I said, I thought it enough to allege, that this state of things could not last. Sir, it cannot last anywhere unless the great globe itself and all who inherit it shall stand still; and when I find the course of general events unerring, I believe beforehand, that there is wisdom in it and I always glad when I find out the specific wisdom to justify and make us satisfied with it.

There is a state of society far beyond any I have yet mentioned, which, too, has passed away; I mean the age of chivalry. Certainly, I am glad of it. Never, while the spirit of this so much boasted age
statute of distributions, and introduce hereditary wealth; then check
the spirit of commerce by abolishing the banks, bringing all wealth
to consist in lands and slaves; and then you will have restored it in
two generations; but for how many generations it would last I cannot
say. It is not wise in us, depend upon it, to sigh after that, which the
equal division of estates among heirs cuts up by the roots. All the
improvement now going on in the world tends inevitably to equalization,
and he who looks at the whole ground will perceive at what cost
we have bought a levelling democratic government. Some may be
appalled at a philosophical consideration of its exclusive course. I
speak most sincerely, when I declare it to be worth, in my mind, more
than all which falls before it. I do not then join in this delusive
regret; in the nineteenth century it is too late. I throw my eye on
that basis, that residuum which we have chosen for ourselves. I think
there is in the Virginia character of the present day a greater fitness
for improvement and capacity for an excellence, not only beyond what
we once knew, but, my respect for other people does not forbid me to
say, beyond that of any other nation. Let us but see our faults and
apply the remedies, and she shall one day, not far distant, be more
than she ever yet has been imagined by her sons to be. Virginia is
lower, none can deny, in the scale of the Union than she once was. I
firmly believe that a better destiny is prepared for her than she has
ever exercised, were there but sagacity enough among us to take
advantage of all her capabilities. And I would even fix upon this
event, the acknowledged and recognized decline of Virginia, however
paradoxical it may seem, as an important circumstance promotive of
the future greatness of the Commonwealth.

It must be acknowledged that from the time of the Revolution, a
period at which we boasted statesmen, orators, and scholars of the
highest rank, Virginia seems to have rested content with the honor
which had been laboriously attained for her by some of her sons, to
have abandoned a valuable standard of education, and, becoming her
own eulogist and her own worst enemy, to have reposed her high
claims upon her genius, and that genius, too, surrendered up to become
everated by indolence and imbruted by ignorance. In this state of
things the men of the Revolution pass away, yet in their career secur-
ing for Virginia high renown for philosophic wisdom and disinterested
patriotism which belonged to all the distinguished Virginians of their
generation; but while they pass away, it is not perceived that we had
made no provision for the continued reproduction of men of that same
class. Nor was it in the nature of things that they should be produced, while the vanity of believing ourselves the greatest people on earth checked our exertions to attain or preserve real greatness, and while the very worst plan of education, that ever dulness invented to pamper vanity, prevailed, as it did from the Revolution until about the year 1820. Is it not incredible that a youthful people with almost none of her energies developed, her enterprise not yet shown in any one great public work, continuing on its undiminished utility to succeeding times; her love of learning not shown by any venerable seats of learning, founded and liberally patronized by her wealth; with not one poem, one history, one statue, one picture, one work of laborious learning to exhibit to the world in rivalry of the land of Tasso and of Raphael, or of Gibbon and of Chantrey—that this people should fold its arms to dream of its secure supremacy over all others, should voluntarily cut itself off from the fountains of rich learning by means of a bad system deliberately taken and persevered in for thirty years, and should by inertness and stagnation of public spirit draw on itself, in its early youth, signs of old age?

Sir, I say these things in sorrow. You know that I say them out of love for Virginia. Such, none can deny, is Virginia from the Revolution till very lately; and the eminent men who have sprung up in that period have only become so by private means and private study, in spite of and in entire opposition to the system and notions prevalent throughout the State. I know that now, when all acknowledge that something must be done to repair our decayed greatness and lessen strength, we shall see the vigor and irresistible spirit of our own land put forth in continually increasing might; so true is it that it was necessary that we should be brought to some humiliation in order to make us begin again the career of fame, which to be true must be well earned. Such, I humbly believe, to be an impartial sketch of the varying condition of Virginia, and such the light in which Virginia's best friends regard it.

* * * * * And now, Mr. President, having pointed out these deficiencies and these much to be lamented inclinations, which none can well deny to exist in Virginia, I have no systematic plan to propose, nor any new remedy. I am waiting, with anxious expectation, for the fuller development of the effects of causes now in active, cheerful operation in Virginia. From these, I scarcely doubt that eminently good results will issue.

There is one peculiar direction to which, I confess, my mind is wholly turned on this subject. Others have directed their fertile ingenuity to plans for the advancement of popular education: it is a beneficent and patriotic object, and demands and deserves able and ardent friends. My own thoughts, I acknowledge, are exclusively devoted to another, though kindred theme: it is the prospect of raising up in Virginia a class of men of letters of the higher order; professional men, of high literary taste mingling with their professional feelings; but not without a few purely literary characters.

It is not unusual to hear it said, that America does not stand in need of men of this latter class. Sir, it is just the kind of men that we do need. What do they, who say this, think the destiny most to be desired for our country? Are we not the second branch of the Anglo-Saxon stock, that only stock of modern times fit for freedom in its purity and its perilous might, and dare we pre-ordain this to perpetual inferiority? Know we not, who we are, and what our capacity? Would we have commerce, and agriculture, and the professions, to absorb our talents, and shut up, except to occasional visits, the boundless regions of polite learning and pure science? Do they wish, by universal mediocrity in learning, to see the English language in America made disgusting with barbarisms, with professional phrases, and refinement hopelessly banished from our manners and our taste? The men whom we could least dispense with, to prevent these things, at this moment, are the few persons in America, who are of no profession but letters.

True, we want all the professions filled; but were it not a breach of professional decorum, I could tell how many advocates might be spared from the pressing emergencies of the public service, from every bar with which I am acquainted. There is but little doubt, from the latest authentic astronomical accounts, that there are lawyers enough in America at this day to settle the wars of meum and tuum in all the seven primary planets; and indeed, when, as Bishop Wilkins hoped it would be at one day, it becomes as common to call for our wings, as for hat and gloves, it is much to be hoped, that instead of the Western country, which I hear is full, nostri plena laboris, some gentlemen may essay those fine fields.

Of the learned faculty in America, who, with Molière's diploma and a whole pharmacopoeia in their pockets, and with the inestimable
beneficence of horseback ubiquity in our forests, make our days so long and so free from pain, and thus richly deserve the motto which they assume, *A Deo Salutem*, literally translated by Lord Mansfield, *God help the patient*, why, sir, I trust it is not disrespectful to say, that we do not need all of that profession whom we have.

Nor do I think, that there is a scarcity of that other class of public servants, politicians. But in fact and in seriousness, I will say thus much, and it will in a few words express the radical mischief of our system, according to my apprehension. As soon as the first ten years of our Union, under this Constitution, were past, I would that it had been engraved over the doorway of every college in America, that it is to be the error of America, that every one will think that the community needs some direct service from him; he will set out for public utility, and never once imagine that he is a part of that community, and that there is no way for promoting the public good like that of self-improvement by individuals.

We want men of refined minds in our country residences; we want accomplished writers; we want men of elegant leisure. To this last the rich only are privileged. But we want, more than all, a number of political men who are not lawyers. The humanizing influence of these classes would do everything for the cause of letters, refinement, and true philosophical policy among us.

I trust that we shall, within fifty years, have some men devoted to every single branch of liberal knowledge. I trust we shall have some lawyers, who are devoted to the curiosities of their profession; some physicians, who will love to seek into the history of disease, among all nations, in all ages; some passionate lovers of black letter; classical scholars, thoroughly versed in the higher criticism of Germany, than which metaphysics has no more interesting field, and history no more valuable supplement; scholars, who will leave no ancient passage extant unread, with all the commentators thereon; that the minute labors of prosody may not escape their microscopic search, but rather be to some a source of extreme delight; some lovers of metaphysics, who will leave not even Duns Scotus unexplored; many mathematicians, who will permit no mystery of infinitesimals to hide itself from them. In short, I desire these things because then I shall be sure that there are some among us, who love knowledge for itself. All knowledge of whatever sort, it will, I hope, be possible to find in the hands of some among us, for no knowledge is useless. No national evidence, but this extreme passion in some few for knowl-

edge most of which is not strictly practical, can be given to prove that we possess all necessary practical information. But really it is so far, that we in Virginia have to travel before we shall reach this extreme border, that it is not needful to talk of the possibility or desirableness of our ever attaining it.

I chiefly long for an ardent love to rise up for rich, diversified, and profound practical knowledge, that will be of use in all our active, in all our quiet moments, such as the nineteenth century demands and can afford us. There are some among us, who cry out for practical education, and their plan seems to be to teach the sciences only—the arts of life. I have one answer to all these: who thinks that all practical education consists in learning the sciences, is much more mistaken than he who places it solely in literature. I give it as my opinion, that if either were exclusively taught, it should be the latter. Practical to all intents will that knowledge be, that raises and keeps alive any feelings "touched to fine issues," just in the same sense that poetry is practically useful. The practical loss to man, if arithmetic were reduced to counting on the fingers, would not be so great, as if poetry, the department of fancy, were wholly neglected. Let us have, first, a love of books; then, having that in view, all experience bids us lay a deep substratum of ancient learning, to which add all knowledge apt for peace and war.

In conclusion—for I have already detained you too long—I think we do not delude ourselves when we imagine that our own Society is to become a useful agent in the progressive work of American literature. Composed wholly of persons graduated with credit, and thus advanced to no inconsiderable degree of knowledge, it is a valuable institution; first, on account of the familiar conferences on curious points of knowledge, which it enjoins at its weekly meetings; for at these will be scientifically laid the first parts of that edifice, which we must build, each with his own hands, on the foundation secured at college. But better than this is the annual assembly of its distant members, met to interchange their zealous wishes for the success of the good cause in Virginia first, and then throughout the land; to listen to the pleasing verse, and hear, besides, the sentiments of some one, who, though he be not wise, will have ever sought wisdom.

I consider the capacity of America for intellectual excellence of every sort now put beyond doubt. But few books have yet been written; still the partial exhibitions that have been made will satisfy the world, that the taunts, always illiberal, are now absolutely false.
Europe yet knows our literature only in the very respectable writings of Irving and Cooper; that much better literary talents, than either of these men possesses, are scattered through America, but few of us are ignorant. I rejoice that the spirit is now cheerily up. I rejoice at the struggling gleams of genius, that are bursting out from our large cities, and consecrating our retired places; and, above all, I rejoice at the unequivocal dawn of that crowning power, the latest and noblest mode of national refinement, the power of true poetry, in Bryant, and Percival, and Halleck.

Methinks, even now, I behold, as in solemn vision, two superhuman figures: the one an aged minstrel, that with grand and melancholy gesture, yet with greater pride, points to the receding past. First, the calm pleasure of learned contemplation stills his mind; now he fires with the abrupt and lurid flash of Scaldic genius; now, rushes, with lyric rapidity, over the glories of the tournament and the banquet. Spain lends the inspiring memory of her Cid; France, the happy buoyancy of her gay land, and Saxon England lifts up his soul with the wisdom of sturdy philosophy and the holy sentiment of long desired freedom, alas! not yet wholly enjoyed. I kneel before this vision; it is the Literary Spirit of the old world.

But behold, another! It is a youth. For a brief moment his spirit seems dim, like the sun, "unlightsome first, though of ethereal mould"; but soon he looks abroad; he contemplates, with all the delighted astonishment of inexperience, the charms of nature, the beauty and harmony of moral truth; he hears the two awful voices of liberty, those of the mountains and the ocean; his eye kindles, and his chest expands, with the first consciousness of the intruding affliatus; he extends his arm already with the swelling emotion of tragedy and the energy of epic; fresh and vivid are his sentiments, and his glance is forward; he scorns the submission of monarchy, the right of hereditary imbecility, and turns from the poor, dishonest pageant of pensioned literature; unchecked, he walks abroad, and all the good influences, piety, and patriotism, and civility, left to spontaneous growth in but one land in the world, there acknowledge his life-giving services. Him I hail with deep delight and pride. He is THE LITERARY GENIUS OF AMERICA!

THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION OF HAMPDEN-SIDNEY COLLEGE

This Literary and Philosophical Society held on alive until September, 1833.* Writing in August of that year, Edmund Ruffin said of the United Agricultural Societies of Virginia—"These have long since come to an end, according to the custom of Virginia, with every public spirited scheme which requires the persevering zeal and exertions of many individuals to sustain." [Farmers Register, I, 147.]

Mr. Harrison's discourse of 1827 stated a principle—people may do a lot for society by taking care of themselves, if they have besides pretty lofty ideas as to what that means. The Club at Hampden-Sidney had, however, served a purpose—it had gone some way forward during its ten years, and it is not impossible that Edmund Ruffin himself was encouraged by the example in his fine ideal of establishing in the State a first rate farm journal. But the Club at Hampden-

*September anniversary orations before the Society, not elsewhere mentioned in these pages, are listed below:
1825—Orations by Dr. Rice and Joseph S. Baker.
1827—Besides the Oration of Mr. Harrison, a poem by Frederick Speece (of Campbell County).
1828—Oration by Hugh A. Garland (Hampden-Sidney, 1825) and poem by Daniel Bryan, of Alexandria.
1829—Both orator and poet failed of performances; both re-elected.
1830—Oration by William M. Atkinson, of Petersburg (Princeton, 1814) and poem by Richard K. Crallé, of Lynchburg (Hampden-Sidney, 1825).
1832—William Maxwell, orator:--"Eulogy on the Character and Services of our late President, John Holt Rice, D. D. Our poet, H. A. Garland, not appearing, no poem was delivered before the Society."
Sept. 26, 1833—"Society met and held its tenth anniversary meeting. Mr. William H. MacFarland (1819), our orator, being absent, the Society was not represented. Society then proceeded to the election of a representative for its next anniversary meeting and William A. Daniel, Jr., of Lynchburg, was elected. • • • • • There being no more business before the Society, on motion Society adjourned."
Sidney did not fall to the ground before setting afoot an institution more important than itself, because more definite. Dr. Rice died the summer of 1831. Mr. Cushing followed him in the presidency of the Literary and Philosophical Society. His mind was aroused, and he, with Dr. Rice, had already done much to arouse the minds of the neighborhood, good evidence of which is to be found in the excerpt next following:

"Agreeably to previous notice a numerous meeting of gentlemen friendly to the interests of education was held in the chapel of Hampden-Sidney College on the 29th of September, 1831,* and after the usual preliminaries and some time spent in consultation, they resolved themselves into a Society to be called the Institute of Education of Hampden-Sidney College. A Committee was then appointed to prepare a Constitution for the Institute and report at another meeting to be held on the day after the ensuing College Commencement.

"At that time, September 27th, 1832, the Committee reported a

*The 29th of December, 1831, the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society was organized. Mr. Cushing was already known as a mover for such organizations within the State—"to discover, promote and preserve whatever may relate to the natural, civil and literary history of the State and to patronize and advance all those sciences which have a tendency to promote the best interests of our citizens." (Constitution of the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society—Southern Literary Messenger, I, 257.) Mr. Cushing "actively engaged in establishing and fostering" the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society. (Biographical sketch of President Cushing—Southern Literary Messenger, II, 165.) It is not going much out of the way to say that the Literary and Philosophical Society at Hampden-Sidney College, of 1834, led on to the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society of 1831. In 1833 Mr. Cushing delivered a thoroughgoing address before the Virginia Society, at its first formal assembly, enlarging upon all the grounds of its being.

And it is a curious fact that upon the reorganization of the Virginia Historical Society in December, 1847, Hampden-Sidney supplied many of the officers:

Second Vice President: William H. MacFarland, Hampden-Sidney, 1819.
Corresponding Secretary: William Maxwell, President Hampden-Sidney College, 1836-1844.
Executive Committee: William B. Chittenden, Hampden-Sidney, 1824; Thomas H. Ellis, Hampden-Sidney, 1804; Thomas T. Giles, Hampden-Sidney, 1824; Socrates Maupin, Professor, Hampden-Sidney College 1833-34.
(See William Maxwell's Virginia Historical Register, I, 47.)

 constitution which, with a few verbal alterations, was adopted. The principal features in that Constitution are exhibited in the following extracts:

"Art. I. The object of this Institute shall be, to collect and diffuse such information as will be calculated to improve the character of our common schools, and other literary institutions. * * *

"Art. V. Sec. 4. It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint gentlemen to deliver lectures at the annual meeting of the Institute, on such subjects connected with education as the Board may assign them, and to collect information relating to the literary institutions of our country and to communicate it to the Institute in their annual report. These documents are to be considered the property of the Institute, and it is made the duty of the Executive Committee to procure publication in some form of such portions of them as they think will be profitable and interesting to teachers and the community generally.

"After the adoption of the Constitution the following officers were elected:—J. P. Cushing, President; H. P. Goodrich, E. Root, and S. C. Anderson, Vice Presidents; Albert L. Holladay, Corresponding Secretary; B. M. Smith, Recording Secretary; E. Ballentine, D. Comfort, and S. Matthews, Executive Committee."

These men were college bred—Mr. Cushing a graduate of Dartmouth, 1817; Mr. Goodrich of Union, 1823; Mr. Root (later very active in educational matters in Wisconsin) of Williams, 1821; Mr. Holladay, a graduate in Schools of the University of Virginia; Mr. Ballentine a graduate of Ohio University; Mr. Comfort of Princeton, 1826; Mr. Matthews of Amherst, 1829; Messrs. Anderson and Smith were Hampden-Sidney men. Messrs. Comfort and Root were teaching in the neighborhood; Mr. Anderson was a lawyer practicing in the county; Mr. Cushing and Mr. Holladay were of the College; Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Smith, Mr. Ballentine, and Mr. Matthews were connected with the Theological Seminary near by. The Society, of which these men were representative, was the first of the kind in Virginia.*

This Institute of Education published a programme for its general meeting in September, 1833 (see Richmond Enquirer, September 6th, 1833), with some account of the transactions of the Society since its

*In 1831, of the six members from Virginia of the American Education Society, four were: J. P. Cushing, William Maxwell, John Holt Rice, and the Rev. Dr. Adam Empie, President of the College of William and Mary.
organization in 1831. In 1833 Professor Goodrich was to talk on "A Common School System for the Southern States"; J. B. Timley, of Powhatan County (Hampden-Sidney, 1823), on "The Qualifications of Common School Teachers"; the Rev. W. S. Plumer, of Petersburg, on "Female Education"; and Mr. Ballentine on "The Practical Advantages of Studying Languages." President Cushing was to make the Annual Address. The chief addresses before the Institute—in 1834, by Mr. Garnett, and in 1835, by Mr. Minor, are given below in part.

AN ADDRESS ON THE SUBJECT OF LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS TO PROMOTE EDUCATION; Delivered before the Institute of Education of Hampden-Sidney College, at their last Commencement (Sept. 25th, 1834), by James M. Garnett.*

Gentlemen, Members of the Institute of Education:

In compliance with the invitation with which your Committee honored me some months ago, and for which I desire here to make my acknowledgments, I now present myself to address you on the subject of "Literary Associations for the Promotion of Education." Thus called upon for a purpose so philanthropic, a cause so truly glorious, and one moreover of such vital importance to our whole community, I could not hesitate to comply, however apprehensive I might feel of not being able to do full justice to the subject.

Literary associations for the promotion of education unquestionably transcend in importance all other voluntary combinations of human beings that either do or can be imagined to exist for other purposes than mental culture, as far as the intellectual and moral powers of man surpass his mere animal appetites and passions: for it is by education alone, education I mean as it should be, that the former can be fully developed and perfected; by education alone at it should be, that the latter can be so restrained and regulated as to minister to our comfort and happiness, instead of overwhelming us with irreparable misery and ruin. Obvious as this momentous truth surely is, and deeply as we should imagine it would be felt by every

*Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1835. 11 pp. 8vo. double column.
rational being, it is but too certain that the number of those who do feel it in any such way, is most lamentably small in proportion to our whole population. This would be altogether incredible, were we to judge only from listening to our constant vauntings of the rapid progress of society in all the arts and sciences; of the multiplication and vast extent of modern discoveries; and the actual improvements in every branch of worldly knowledge. But when we use our eyes, as well as our ears; when we look immediately around us and view attentively our condition in Virginia, the striking want of public spirit in regard to the general instruction of the people, and the melancholy scarcity of "Literary Associations for the Promotion of Education," it inflicts a pang of deep disappointment—of bitter mortification on the heart of every true, intelligent lover of his country. Travel through our sister states to the north and east (as many of us would be much the better for doing—to remove our senseless prejudices), and we behold such associations almost everywhere. * * *

Why, my friends, why let me most earnestly demand of you, should not we Virginians "go and do likewise"? Why should not we profit by their meritorious example; and love them for it as we ought to do with a truly fraternal regard, instead of entertaining against them (as far too many of us do), dislikes and animosities which are much more disgraceful to ourselves than injurious to them? And here permit me to remark, en passant, that were such regard cultivated and cherished, as it should be among all the states of this great confederacy, we should not only improve each other rapidly in every useful art and science; but the bonds of our fraternity would be so increased and strengthened that the whole world could not exhibit a government wherein all the numerous blessings of civilized life would be so widely diffused, so highly valued, so richly enjoyed.

But to return to our neglect of associations for the improvement of education. Shall we plead utter ignorance of their numerous advantages, their extensively beneficial effects; or shall we acknowledge what I fear is the shameful truth, and what a very large majority of us may utter—each man for himself—the Heathen’s confession: "Vide meliora proboque, deteriora sequor?" Shall we not hope, however, that the glorious period of moral reform is not far distant; that the time is fast approaching when this wretched, debasing—nay, wicked habit of following the worse, where we both see and approve the better course, is about to be eradicated, in a great measure, by a vigorous enlightened prosecution of all the means necessary to
effect a thorough change among us? To you, gentlemen, members of the Hampden-Sidney Institute, I believe Virginia is indebted for the first example of a voluntary association on a large scale, to promote education—an example which I most earnestly hope will be zealously followed in every part of our widely extended territory—until the great, the vital object, which you so laudably aim to accomplish, shall be fully realized to the utmost extent of your wishes. It will be a time of heartfelt rejoicing, a day of glorious jubilee, to all who may live to see it—a day which even we of the present generation may highly enjoy by anticipation, although we have little prospect of living to participate in all its precious blessings. By the way, how do we obtain this power of anticipation, this faculty of feeling inexpressible delight in all the advantages, gratifications and enjoyments of those who are to live after we are dead and gone? Are we not indebted for it to education—to that moral and religious part of it which teaches us that we have immortal souls which connect us inseparably with future generations—which command us to provide as far as we can for their happiness—which convince us that this very occupation, more than any other, will minister to our own felicity; and which, in fact, constitutes one of our most sacred duties upon earth? * * * * * * * 

To do justice as far as I possibly can to the cause which I am now pledged to support, I feel myself here bound to assert that in almost all our attempts to educate the youth of our country a most pernicious error is committed, either in regard to the meaning of the term education itself, or else in the methods pursued to accomplish our object. Should I succeed in establishing this charge, it will certainly result in the irresistible demonstration of that which I have been invited to illustrate—the great utility of voluntary associations, in some form or other, for the promotion of education. Admit the purpose to be essentially desirable, the obstacles to its attainment such as I believe can be proved to be, and the necessity for such associations in the absence of all effective legislation, follows as an undeniable consequence. They naturally possess, in common with all other combinations of human effort to attain a particular end, far greater power of accomplishing that end, than the insulated and separate exertions of all the individuals concerned—even supposing that every one would exert himself to the utmost, in his own particular way. This truth has resolved itself into the well known adage, "United we stand, divided we fall"; and I know of no more forcible exemplification of it, than in the present state of education among us Virginians. Individually consulted, we cry out nearly to a man, "Let us educate the people!" but if called on for combined action, very few or none respond to the invitation. We have no common system—the result of general concert; no uniform plan, either as to the objects, or modes, or courses of instruction; no generally established class-books in the various studies pursued in our schools and colleges; no particular qualifications made indispensable for teachers; but each is left to the vain imaginations and devices of his own heart, or to be governed by the chance medley, haphazard contrivances of individuals, very many of whom have neither the capacity, knowledge, experience, nor inclination to devise the best practicable methods for accomplishing the grand purpose of education. Politics, law, physics absorb nearly all the talents of the State; while the vital business of instructing the rising generation, a business, which requires minds of the very highest order and moral excellence to execute it properly, is generally left to be pursued by any who list, pursued far too often most reluctantly, as a mere stepping-stone to some other profession, and to be abandoned as soon as possible for almost anything else that may turn up. The inevitable consequence is "confusion worse confounded"; driving parents and guardians to frequent changes both of schools and teachers for their children, where changes of books and modes of instruction follow, almost as matters of course; for those who are to handle the new brooms rarely believe they will be thought cleaner sweepers than their predecessors, unless they display their superiority by pursuing some entirely different method. This petty ambition would be too ridiculous to deserve serious notice, were it not for the vast amount of evil which it produces, by not only retarding the progress of all youths under a course of instruction, but by constantly and powerfully tending to bring the whole class of teachers into general contempt. Under these circumstances, the existence of which none can deny, where shall we seek an adequate remedy for evils of such magnitude; where turn our eyes but to well organized voluntary associations for the promotion of education? These would collect and combine the powers, the talents, the knowledge of a very large portion of all the individuals in our society best qualified to accomplish the object. They would create a general taste, an anxious desire for intellectual pursuits; they would elevate the profession of the teacher to that rank which its vast importance to human happiness renders essential to its success; and would assuredly extend their
influence to the remotest limits of our community, far more rapidly
than could any scheme of legislative creation. It has been so in
every other state, so far as the experiment has been tried. Why then
should we doubt their success among ourselves? We who believe
ourselves possessed of the wisest, the freest, the happiest government
on earth, are incalculably more interested than any other nation (if
our belief is true), in the cause of universal education; for on its
success, the very existence of free government itself, my individual
and national happiness so far as government can affect either, must
ultimately depend.

To this conclusion my own mind has been irresistibly brought by
the whole course of my observations and experience for the last forty
years of my life. But as some of my auditors may possibly differ from
me, I will respectfully ask leave now to state more particularly my
views of the great objects of education and the errors into which we
have fallen in pursuit of them—errors which I verily believe will
never be corrected but by voluntary and numerous associations, similar
at least in design, to the one here established.

These objects are, the perfecting of all our faculties, both of mind
and body; but chiefly, the full development of man’s moral nature, as
the means of leading him thoroughly to understand, as well as volun-
tarily, constantly, and anxiously to aim at accomplishing all the
glorious ends of his creation. Nothing deserves the name of education
which does not tend directly and intelligibly to these great objects.
Judge then, I pray you, my friends, how little what is usually called
education is entitled to be so styled.

This cannot be right. Man, in fact, must be considered and treated from
infancy to the last moment of his life as a being formed by his Maker
for a state of existence far, very far different from the present—a
state for which his sole business on earth is,—constantly to be pre-
paring, by a diligent culture of all his powers,—by the beneficent use
of all his means; and by the faithful performance of all his duties to
himself, to his fellow creatures, and to his God. This and this only
is education.

Literary institutions may bring to the
 utmost possible degree of perfection the methods of acquiring all lan-
guages, arts and sciences—they may invent matchless ways of making
accomplished scholars, in the ordinary acceptation of the term—they
may indoctrinate the youth of our country in everything usually called
scholastic learning—all this they may do with a rapidity and cer-
tainty heretofore inconceivable, yet they will fall immeasurably short
of attaining the grand, the paramount objects of all which deserves
to be called education, unless the fixing indelibly of moral and reli-
gious principles in the minds of all who are to be educated, be made
the basis, the essence, and vital end of all instruction whatever. The
idea is utterly preposterous that human beings ever can be taught to
form adequate conceptions of the great purposes for which they were
created—of the indispensable necessity of fulfilling most faithfully all
their duties, in order to accomplish these purposes; and of the ineffable
happiness both here and hereafter, that will be secured to all who do
thus fulfill them, merely by teaching them all the languages, arts and
sciences in the world,—if that be omitted, without which all else is
mere dust in the balance,—I mean self-knowledge, self-control, self-
devotion to duty as the supreme objects of our temporal existence.

Do not, I beseech you, my friends, here misunderstand me. Far in-
deed, very far am I from underrating the real advantages, the true
value of what is generally understood by the term scholastic attain-
ments. No one can estimate more highly than I do, their power of
extending our views, liberalizing our sentiments, enlightening our
minds, strengthening our intellectual faculties, and exciting an ardent
desire to increase our knowledge. Considered as the means and not
the ends of education, I would always award to them the highest
rank. But when we have said this, nothing more can justly be affirmed
in their favor—if disconnected, as they too often are, from the ulti-
mate and vital purposes of all perfect education.

That we can never hope to see so desirable and highly important
a reform accomplished without some other means, some other agen-
cies than such as we have heretofore had, seems to me demonstrably
true. It appears equally clear that they must be voluntary associa-
tions, in some form or other, for the promotion and improvement of
education, consisting of true, sincere, persevering, efficient friends to
the cause—no “sleeping partners,” (as mercantile men say), but all,
both active and zealous to the utmost of their power. To expect such
reform from legislation is a vain hope, unless we already had such
law-makers in sufficient numbers for the purpose, as that reform in
our parental instruction, schools and colleges alone could produce.
When such consummation can take place, all essential as it seems to
our national welfare, none but He who knoweth all things can pos-
sibly tell. But each of us may venture so far as to predict, that voluntary institutions and societies, similar, gentlemen, to that which you have established, hold out far more cheering promises of success than can be hoped for from any other source. They will serve as appropriate nuclei (if I may thus apply the term), for attracting around them the scattered talent, the learning and active benevolence of society. When thus concentrated, they will perform for our intellectual world what the sun does for that magnificent world of effulgent stars and constellations with which he is surrounded—by diffusing in every direction that genial light and heat, so essential to adorn, to sustain, and to invigorate both. What a glorious prospect! What a delightful anticipation! Shall we not then cherish it, my friends, as a possible event,—nay, as one which nothing is wanting to accomplish, but a general combination of the intelligence, the zeal, and active perseverance of the numerous and sincere, but too desponding, too supine friends to the cause of universal education?

You, gentlemen, members of this institution, have commenced the noble work. Let your exertions then to sustain and carry it on never know a moment's intermission, and my life on the issue, but a few years will elapse before the happy effects of such efforts will be felt and seen to the remotest limits of our community.*

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*The remainder of Mr. Garnett's Address was directed specifically to the younger members of his audience.
AN ADDRESS ON EDUCATION, AS CONNECTED WITH
THE PERMANENCE OF OUR REPUBLICAN INSTI-
TUTIONS. Delivered before the Institute of Education of
Hampden-Sidney College, at its Anniversary Meeting, Sept.
24th, 1835, on the invitation of that body, by Lucian Minor, Esq.,
of Louisa.*

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Institute:

I am to offer you, and this large assembly, some thoughts upon
Education, as a means of preserving the Republican Institutions of
our country.

The sentiment of the Roman Senate, who, upon their general’s
return with the shattered remains of a great army from an almost
annihilating defeat, thanked and applauded him for not despairing of
the Republic, has, in later times, been moulded into an apothegm of
political morality; and few sayings, of equal dignity, are now more
hackneyed, than that “A good citizen will never despair of the com-
monwealth.”

I shall hope to escape the anathema, and the charge of disloyalty
to our popular institutions, implied in the terms of this apothegm, if I
doubt, somewhat, its unqualified truth; when you consider how fre-
quently omens of ruin, overclouding the sky of our country, have
constrained the most unquestionable republican patriot’s heart to
quiver with alarm, if not to sink in despair.

When a factious minority, too strong to be punished as traitors,
treasonably refuse to rally under their country’s flag, in defence of
her rights and in obedience to her laws; when a factious majority, by
partial legislation, pervert the government to the ends of self-aggran-
dizement or tyranny; when mobs dethrone justice, by assuming to be
her ministers, and rush madly to the destruction of property or life;
when artful demagogues, playing upon the credulity or the bad pas-
sions of a confiding multitude, sway them to measures most adverse
to public good; or when a popular chief (though he were a Wash-
ington) contrives so far to plant his will in the place of law and of
policy, that the people approve or condemn both measures and men,
mainly if not solely, by his judgment or caprice; and when all his-

tory shows these identical causes (the offspring of ignorance and vice) to have overthrown every proud republic of former times—then, surely, a Marcus Brutus or an Algernon Sidney—the man whose heart is the most irrevocably sworn to liberty, and whose life, if required, would be a willing sacrifice upon her altars—must find the most gloomy forebodings often haunting his thoughts and darkening his hopes.

Indeed, at the best, it is no trivial task, to conduct the affairs of a great people. Even in the tiny republics of antiquity, some twenty of which were crowded into a space less than two-thirds of Virginia, government was no such simple machine, as some fond enthusiasts would have us believe it might be. The only very simple form of government, is despotism. There, every question of policy, every complicated problem of state economy, every knotty dispute respecting the rights or interests of individuals or of provinces, is at once solved by the intelligible and irreversible _sic volo_ of a Nicholas or a Mohammed. But in republics, there are passions to soothe; clashing interests to reconcile; jarring opinions to mould into one result, for the general weal. To effect this, requires extensive and accurate knowledge, supported by all the powers of reasoning and persuasion, in discussing not only _systems_ of measures, but their minutest details, year after year, before successive councils, in successive generations; and supposing the _machinery_ of Legislative, Executive, and Judicial to be so simple or so happily adjusted, that an idiot might propel it, and a school-lad with his first four rules of arithmetic—or even "a negro boy with his knife and tally stick"—might regulate its movements and record its results; still, those other objects demand all the comprehension and energies of no contracted or feeble mind. Nor are these qualities needful only to the actual administrators of the government. Its proprietors, the people, must look both vigilantly and intelligently to its administration: for so liable is power to continual abuse; so perpetually is it tending to steal from them to their steward or their agent; that if they either want the requisite sagacity to judge of his acts, or substitute a blind confidence in him for that wise distrust, which all experience proves indispensable to the preservation of power in the people,—it will soon be their power no longer. A tame surrender of it to him is inevitable, unless they comprehend the subjects of his action well enough to judge the character of his acts: unless they know something of that vast and diversified field of policy, of duty, and of right, in which they have set him to labor. Yes, in its least perplexed form, on its most diminutive scale, the task of self-government is a perilously difficult one; difficult, in proportion to its nobleness: calling for the highest attributes of the human character. What, then, must it be, in a system so complex as ours? Two sets of public functionaries, to appoint and superintend; two sets of machinery to watch, and keep in order: each of them not only complicated within itself, but constantly tending to clash with the other. Viewing the State government alone, how many fearful dissensions have arisen, as to the extent of its powers, and the propriety of its acts! "Turning then to the Federal government, how much more awful and numerous controversies, respecting both the constitutionality and expediency of its measures, have, within half a century, convulsed the whole Union! No less than three conjunctions within that time, threatening us with disunion and civil war; not to mention the troubles of the elder Adams' administration, the conspiracy of Burr, the Missouri dispute, or the cloud (now, I trust, about to disperse) which has just been lowering in our Northern sky. To the complexity of our two governments, separately considered, add the delicate problems daily springing up from their relations with one another, and from the mutual relations of the twenty-four states—disputes concerning territory; claims urged by one citizen of a state against another; or wrongs done to some states, by residents and citizens of others—all these, and innumerable other questions, involving each innumerable ramifications, continually starting up to try the wisdom and temper, if not to mar the peace, of our country;—and say, if there are words forcible and emphatic enough to express the need, that the popular will, which supremely controls this labyrinthine complication of difficulties, should be enlightened by knowledge, tempered by kindness, and ruled by justice?

Gentlemen, when such dangers hedge our political edifice; when we recollect the storms which have already burst upon it, and that, although it has survived them, we have no guarantee for its withstand ing even less furious ones hereafter—as a ship may ride out many a tempest safely, and yet be so racked in her joints as to go down at last under a capful of wind; above all, when we reflect that the same cankers which have destroyed all former commonwealths, are now at work within our own;—it would betoken, to my view, more of irrational credulity than of patriotism, to feel that sanguine, unconditional confidence in the durableness of our institutions, which those profess, who are perpetually making it the test of good citizenship "never to despair of the republic."
But is it ever to be thus? Were then the visions of liberty for centuries on centuries, which our fathers so fondly cherished, all deceitful? Were the toil, the treasure, and blood they lavished as that liberty's price, all lavished in vain? Is there no deliverance for man, from the doom of subjection which kings and their minions pronounce against him? No remedy for the diseases which, in freedom's apparently most healthful state, menace her with death?

If it is not ever to be thus; if the anticipations of our revolutionary patriots were not all delusive dreams and their blood fell not in vain to the ground; if man's general doom is not subjection, and the examples of his freedom are not mere deceitful glimmerings up of happiness above the fixed darkness which enfolds him, designed but to amuse his fancy and to cheat his hopes; if there is a remedy for the diseases that poison the health of liberty;—the reason—that remedy—can be found only in one short precept—ENLIGHTEN THE PEOPLE!

Nothing—I scruple not to avow—it has been my thought for years—nothing but my reliance on the efficacy of this precept, prevents my being at this instant, a monarchist. Did I not, with burning confidence, believe that the people can be enlightened, and that they may so escape the dangers which encompass them, I should be for con signing them at once to the calm of hereditary monarchy. But this confidence makes me no monarchist: makes me, I trust, a true whig; not in the party acceptation of the day, but in the sense employed by Jefferson, of one who trusts and cherishes the people. Throughout his life, we find that great statesman insisting upon popular instruction as an inseparable requisite to his belief in the permanency of any popular government: "Ignorance and bigotry," said he, "like other insanities, are incapable of self-government." His authority might be fortified by those of Sidney, Montesquieu and of all who have written extensively or luminously upon free government: but this is no time for elaborate quotations; and indeed why cite authorities, to prove what is palpable to the glance?

Immense is the chasm to be filled, immeasurable the space to be traversed, between the present condition of mental culture in Virginia, and that which can be safely relied upon, to save her from the dangers that hem round a democracy, unsupported by popular knowledge and virtue. Cyrus the Great, when a boy, among his play fellows, avoided contests with his inferiors in strength and swiftness; always challenging to the race or the wrestling match, those fleetest and stronger than himself; by which means, observes Xenophon, he soon excelled them. Imitating this wise magnanimity of Cyrus, let us, in looking around to find how we may attain an excellence, worthy of Virginia's early and long illustrious but now paling fame, compare ourselves not with States that have been as neglectful as we, of popular education, but with some which have outstript us in that march of true glory.

[Here Mr. Minor gave some indication of recent measures adopted in such states as New York, Scotland, and Prussia.]

From a comparison with no one of the eight American and European states that I have mentioned, can Virginia find, in what she has done towards enlightening her people, the slightest warrant for that preeminent self-esteem, which, in some other respects, she is so well entitled to indulge. Except England, she is far behind them all: and even England (if her societies for diffusing knowledge have not already placed her before us) is now preparing, by wise and beneficent legislation, to lead away with the rest.

Let me not be deemed unfilial or irreverent, if I expose, somewhat freely, the deficiencies of our venerable commonwealth in this one particular. It is done in a dutiful spirit, with a view purely to this amendment: and may not children, in such spirit and with such a view, commune frankly with one another?

A great and obvious difference between our primary school system, and the common-school systems of the Northern states, is, that they take in all children: while we aim to instruct only the children of the poor, literary paupers. We thus at once create two causes of failure: first, the slight value which men set upon what costs them nothing, as was evinced in the case of Connecticut; second, the mortification to pride (an honest though mistaken pride) in being singled out as an object of charity. As if these fatal errors had not sufficiently ensured the impotence of the scheme, the schools themselves are the least efficient that could be devised. Instead of teachers retained expressly for the purpose,—selected, after strict examination into their capacities, and vigilantly superintended afterwards, by competent judges—the poor children are entered by the neighboring commissioner (often himself entirely unqualified either to teach or to, direct teaching), in the private school which chance, or the teacher's unfitness for any other employment, combined always with cheapness of price, may have already established nearest at hand. There, the little protegé of the commonwealth is thrown amongst pupils, whose parents pay for them and give some heed to their progress; and having no friend to
see that he is properly instructed—mortified by the humiliating name
of poor scholar—neglected by the teacher—and not rigorously urged
to school by any one—he learns nothing, slackens his attendance, and
soon quits the temple of science in rooted disgust.

Observe now, I pray you, how precisely the results agree with
what might have been foretold, of such a system. In 1833, nearly
33,000 poor children (literary paupers) were found in 100 counties
of Virginia; of whom but 17,081 attended school at all: and these
17,081 attended on an average but sixty-five days of the year, each. The average of learning acquired by each, during those 65 days, would
be a curious subject of contemplation; but I know of no arithmetical
rule, by which it could be ascertained. That it bears a much less
proportion to the reasonable attainments of a full scholastic year, than
65 bears to the number of days in that year, there can be no doubt.

Ranging out of the schools, through the general walks of society,
we find among our poorer classes, and not seldom in the middling, an
ignorance equally deplorable and mortifying. Judging by the number
met with in business transactions, who cannot write their names or
read, and considering how many there are whose poverty or sex debars
them from such transactions, and lessens their chances of scholarship,
we would scarcely exceed the truth, in estimating the white adults of
Virginia who cannot read or write, at twenty or thirty thousand.
And of many who can read, how contracted the range of intellect!
The mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, all unexplored, though
presented hourly to the eye; the glorious heavens, their grandeur, their
distances, and the laws of their motion, unthought of; man himself—
his structure, so fearful and so wonderful—those traits in his bodily
and mental frame, attention to which would the most easily conduces to bodily and mental health, all unnoted! History, Geography, tabulae
rasae to them! and for political knowledge, upon which we of Virginia
mainly pride ourselves—choose, at random, a man from the throng in
any court-house yard, and question him touching the division of power
between our two governments, and its distribution among the depart-
ments of each: the probabilities are ten to one, that he will not solve
one in ten of your questions, even those which are to be answered from
the mere faces of the two constitutions. Take him then into that
wild, where construction has been wont to expiate, and you will
find him just able to declare for or against this or that controverted
power or measure: not because his reason has discerned it to be con-
stitutional or otherwise, but because it is approved or disapproved by

a chief of his own party, or by the leader of a hostile one. And the
aggregate of opinions thus caught by accident, is the basis of the
popular will: and it is the voice prompted by this will that is called
"The voice of God."

Do not misapprehend me. Never would I have the voice of the
people other than "the voice of God"—other than all-powerful—in
itself a sphere. I am as loyal to their sovereignty as the most devout of their flatterers can be: and it is from my desire to see it perpetuated, that I speak out these unpalatable truths. Some
roughness of handling is often necessary to heal a wound. The people,
like other sovereigns, are sometimes misled by flattery: they should
imitate also the wisdom of those monarchs we occasionally meet with
in history, who can hear unwelcome truths, and let the speaker live;
nay, hearken kindly to his discourse, and let it weigh upon their future
conduct. Do I overrate the portion of the people I now address, in
classing them with such monarchs?

Sagacious men have not been wanting among us to see the radical
defects of our primary school system: and in 1829, the late Mr.
Fitzhugh, of Fairfax, stimulated the Legislature to a feeble effort
towards correcting them, by empowering the school commissioners of
any county to lay it off into districts of not less than three nor more
than seven miles square; and to pay, out of the public fund, two-fifths
of the sum requisite for building a school house, and half a teacher's
salary, for any one of those districts, whenever its inhabitants, by
voluntary subscription, should raise the residue necessary for these
purposes; and the schools thus established were to be open, gratuitously, alike to rich and poor. But the permissive phraseology of this
statute completely neutralized its effect. It might have been foreseen,
and it was foreseen, that empowering the commissioners to act, and
leaving the rest to voluntary contributions, would be unavailing,
where the workings of the school system had so long been regarded
with apathy. The statute has been acted upon, so far as I have
learned, in but three counties of the State; remaining as to the other
107, a dead letter. I have the strongest warrant—that of actual ex-
periment, in New York and in Massachusetts—for saying, that had
the law commanded the commissioners to lay off districts in all coun-
ties where the census showed a sufficiently dense white population,
and had it then organized in the districts some local authorities, whose
duty it should be to levy the needful amount upon their people, I
should have been saved the ungracious task of reproaching my country
with her want of parental care; and Virginia would now be striding
onward, speedily to recover the ground she has lost in the career of
true greatness.

If a sense of interest, and of duty, do not prompt her people, and
her legislature, immediately, to supply defects so obvious, to coëct
evils so glaring, surely, very shame at the contemplation of her in-
fertility to those, above whom she once vaunted herself so highly, will
induce measures which cannot be much longer deferred without dis-
grace as well as danger.

I am deeply sensible that I have left untouched many topics, even
more important and more pertinent to the main theme of my remarks,
than some which I have discussed. Indeed, so wide and so varied is
that main theme, that I have found myself greatly embarrassed in
selecting from the numerous particulars which solicited my regard on
every hand. I have not presumed to offer any fully founded plan, of
that legislative action which is so imperiously demanded by the public
weal, and soon will be, I trust, by the public voice. A few hints are
all that seemed to become me or indeed that could well be crowded
into my brief share of this day's time. For a plan, both in outline and
in detail, I point to our sister states and to the European countries,
that have taken the lead of us, and to the virtues and wisdom, by
which our statesmen will be able to supply the defects, avoid the
errors, and even, I trust, surpass the excellence, of those states and
countries. That the Legislature may be brought to act, individual
influence of associations for the purpose—of whom I deem you, gen-
tlemen, the chief, because the first—must be exerted. You must draw
the minds of the constituent body forcibly to the subject. It must be
held up in every light, supported by every argument, until the people
shall be persuaded but to consider it. Then, half the work will have
been done. And in its further progress towards consummation—
when the illuminating process shall have fairly begun—still it will be
for you, gentlemen, and, for those whom your example shall call into
this field of usefulness with and after you, to exert, with no slumber-
ing energy, the endowments wherewith you and they, are entrusted.
You, and they, must become authors, and the prompters of authors.
Books, for use in the schools, and cheap, simplifying tracts as well as
books for circulation among the people, must be composed, compiled,
and selected. Lectures, plain and cheap, and suitably illustrated, must
be delivered through town and country. After the example of the
good Watts, and of our own many illustrious contemporaries in Brit-
ain and America, learned men must oblige Science to lay aside the
starched dignity and grand attire, by which hitherto she has awed
away the vulgar; and to render herself universally amiable, by being
humbly useful: as the wisest of heathens is said to have brought
Philosophy down from the skies, placed her in human haunts, and
made her discourse on the daily concerns of human life."

In this whole enterprise its undertakers should themselves resolve
to be convinced by no sneers, daunted by no difficulties, arrested by no
obstacles. Difficulties and obstacles enough, indeed, will present them-
selves to the timid or superficial glance; but they will vanish, before
calm scrutiny and brave determination. Even when the means of
solving or removing them may not occur beforehand to the mind, what
was lately said in a worse cause, will prove to be true: "Where there
is a will, there is a way." In such a cause as ours, and in reference
to the epithets of "visionary," "impracticable," "chimerical," "quix-

totic," and all the other imaginary lions which will be discovered in
our path, well may we say, with the generous confidence of Lord
Chatham, that we "trample upon impossibilities."

Has not our success, indeed, been already demonstrated? Demon-
strated, in the first place, by unnumbered instances of parallel, and
more stupendous enterprises, accomplished under circumstances less
favorable than those which attend our undertaking? Such enterprises
as the Reformation of Luther—the settlement of America—her de-

dlerance from a foreign yoke—the teaching of the blind and the
dumb to read and to write? Demonstrated, again, by actual experi-
ment, that sovereign test of practicability—experiment, seven times
repeated—with extensive, if not complete success—in New York, in
Connecticut, in Massachusetts, in Austria, in Germany, in Prussia,
in Scotland? Yes, it is not untried path we are called to tread: scarcely
a step of the way, but has been explored and smoothed before us. All
that we have to do is to look around—see what others have done—
correct our own procedure by what we perceive defective in theirs,
and forthwith open the floodgates of light, and bid the torrent pour.

Young gentlemen, foster-sons of the venerable institution, near us!

Some, if not all of you, are destined by your opportunities, and by
bomses glowing with honorable ambition and beating high with the
consciousness of talent, for a conspicuous part in the drama of life.
Your eyes, doubtless, have already often glanced around, to see in
what field you shall reap the harvest of wealth, respect, and fame,
which hope represents as awaiting you. The buzz of notoriety, the
palm of eloquence, the gorgeousness of office—those glittering bribes, which have lured onward their tens of thousands to mere splendid misery or to a shameful end after all—have, no doubt, displayed their attractions to you: but permit me to suggest, that if you will devote the powers which nature and education have gifted upon you, to the patriot task of purifying and expanding the minds of your countrymen—besides enjoying in your latter days that sweetness of earthly thoughts, the thought of a life spent in usefulness—you may have gathered laurels of glory, compared with which, all the chaplets ever won in the tilt-yard of vulgar ambition are paltry weeds.

My wealthy fellow citizens! remember, that where suffrage is nearly universal and the majority rules, if the great body of the people be ignorant or immoral, property is never secure from assaults, under the disguise of law: either agrarian schemes, or oppressive protecting systems, or advantages to certain classes, or some form of unequal taxation; all, the result of ill-informed minds, or of depraved dispositions. And if lawlessness assume not the garb of legislation, still it is always banded with ignorance in the firing of barns, the destruction of labor-saving machinery, conspiracies to raise wages, and all the terrific outrages that spring from the fury of mobs. Thus by a wise Providence, are you, who are the most able to promote the education of the people, also by far the most interested in doing so. If there can be a case, in which a judicious liberality is the truest economy, that case is now yours: and never may the ill husbandry of niggardliness be more awfully exemplified, than by your grudging a small particle of your wealth, to place the remainder beyond the reach of this peril.

My fellow citizens (if any such are before me) who do not possess wealth, and who have scarcely tasted of the cup of knowledge! You surely need no exhortation to quaff freely of that cup, when it shall come within your grasp; but I do exhort you to employ your influence as men and your constitutional power as voters, in persuading your fellow citizens, and in promptly your public agents, to adopt the requisite measures for dispelling, now and forever, the clouds and darkness in which republican freedom can never long live.

And if, at the remotest point of future time, to which we may look forward as witnessing the existence of human government anywhere, our democratic forms shall still retain, unimpaired, even their present purity, and present fertility of substantial freedom and happiness; much more, if they shall have waxed purer, and stronger, and more fruitful of good, with each revolving century—defying the power or conciliating the love of foreign states, maintaining domestic harmony, oppressing none, protecting all—and so fully realizing the fondest hopes of the most sanguine statesman, that no "despair of the republic" can trouble the faintest heart: all will be owing (under Providence) to the heartening of this generation and the succeeding ones, to that voice—not loud, but solemn and earnest—which, from the shrine of Reason and the tombs of buried commonwealths, reiterates and enforces the momentous precept—"ENLIGHTEN THE PEOPLE!"

Mr. Cushing died in 1835. The Institute of Education of Hampden-Sidney College seems not long to have survived him. He had spent nearly twenty years, about half of his short life, in Virginia. Those were critical years in the fortunes of the Commonwealth which owes him much. Let these pages serve in some degree as monument to him especially. And it is well to remember certain words of his, spoken before the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society in 1833:

"For one, then, instead of fearing a failure, I shall look forward with pleasing anticipations to the time when our library will contain all the rare and valuable materials, for a full and correct exposition of the physical resources, and the intellectual power and moral worth of those sons of Virginia, who are distinguished ornaments of their country, and benefactors of mankind:—when our cabinet and museum will have embraced all those specimens in geology, mineralogy, zoology and botany, which are necessary to illustrate our natural history and display our physical resources:—when our anniversaries shall excite a lively interest throughout the State, and call into action its genius and erudition:—when our various discussions shall elicit the latent energies of the mind and open new trains of thought:—when, in a word, the combined operations of our members, shall tend powerfully

*Professor Brookes Smith, of Hampden-Sidney College, has in his possession this autograph of James Madison: "J. Madison with his best respects to Mr. Minor thanks him for his address on 'Education, &c.' before the Institute of Education of Hampden-Sidney College. He has read it with the pleasure which could not fail to be imparted by the instructive and impressive views it takes of a subject vitally important to our popular Institutions. Montpellier, Dec. 9th, 1835."

In his youth Mr. Madison had been a Trustee of Hampden-Sidney College.
to advance the various sciences, and the useful arts, and to create and diffuse such a taste for intellectual improvement among our citizens, as will assist in giving Virginia that elevated standing among her sister states which her rich natural resources, no less than her moral worth and her political power, so justly entitle her to maintain. And with this view, sir, I shall confidently trust that every real patriot and philanthropist within her boundaries, and every citizen who loves the Old Dominion and her institutions, will rejoice to contribute all in his power to advance the great objects of our Society, and so to energize the action, to increase the prosperity, and to brighten the glory of the Commonwealth.”

VITA

JONATHAN P. CUSHING, 1793–1835. b. Rochester, New Hampshire; Dartmouth College 1817; Librarian and Tutor, Hampden-Sidney College, 1818; Professor of Natural Science and Chemistry, 1819–1835; President, 1821–1835; Vice President, Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society, 1831–1835; Member, American Education Society.

JOHN HOLT RICE, 1777–1831. b. Bedford County, Va.; Liberty Hall Academy (Washington and Lee Univ.) c. 1794; Tutor, Hampden-Sidney College, 1796–1804; Presbyterian Minister, Charlotte County and Richmond, Va.; President elect, Princeton College, 1822; founder Union Theological Seminary, Va., and director, 1823–1831; Editor, Literary and Evangelical Magazine, 1818–1828; Member, American Education Society. (See Memoir by William Maxwell, Philadelphia, 1835. 12mo. 412 pp.).

WILLIAM MAXWELL, 1784–1857. b. Norfolk, Va.; Yale, 1802; Member of the Norfolk bar; Member, Virginia House of Delegates and Senate, 1830–1838; President, Hampden-Sidney College, 1838–1844; Editor, Virginia Historical Register, 1848–1854; Secretary, Virginia Historical Society; Vice President, Virginia Colonization Society; Member, American Education Society; Author of Poems (Philadelphia, 1812, 1818), etc., etc.

JESSE BURTON HARRISON, 1805–1841. b. Lynchburg, Va.; Hampden-Sidney, 1821; Harvard Law School, 1825; in Europe, 1829–1831; Member of the New Orleans bar, and editor, Louisiana Advertiser; Member, American Colonization Society.

JAMES MERCER GARNETT, 1770–1843. b. Essex County, Va.; Member, Virginia Legislature; U. S. House of Representatives, 1805–1809; Virginia Constitutional Convention, 1829–30; President, United States Agricultural Society, 1841; President, Virginia Board of Agriculture, 1842–43. Author of Lectures on Female Education, delivered to Mrs. Garnett’s Pupils at Elmwood,

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A. J. Morrison, Hampden-Sidney.
HAMPDEN-SIDNEY COLLEGE.

Ad respublicas firandas, et ad stabiliendas vires, sanandos populos, omnis nostra pergit oratio.  
Cicero: De Legibus.