Gentlemen of the Literary Societies,

I am here, in obedience to your flattering summons, to add my humble contribution to the instructive pleasures of your anniversary. I might well indeed have shrunk from the task which your partiality has assigned me, in considering how little of entertainment or of judicious counsel it would be in my power to impart to young men accustomed to the teachings of the learned and able Professors of this time-honored institution. But a request, so courteous in its character and emanating from a source so highly respectable, could not be lightly declined. I will confess, too, that I have anticipated a certain degree of intellectual gratification in mingling with you, for the first time, to celebrate the festivities of literature upon a spot consecrated to the muses. With this anticipation, and that I might become better acquainted with a section of my native State justly reputed as one of the chosen seats of elegant scholarship, I have come among you, even though at the hazard of subjecting my unpolished periods to the critical perception of minds fresh from the investigation of Athenian models.

But, gentlemen, there is cast upon your anniversary the gloom of a painful event—the sombre wings of the Dread Angel overshadow your collegiate haunts—the very bell that has summoned us together has but just tolled the departure of a kindred spirit which God, in his inscrutable but all-wise Providence, has removed beyond this transient sphere. It was my good fortune to have met with your

*Mr. William O. Dabney, of Campbell county, a student of the college, died on the morning of the 18th June.
lamented young friend in other scenes than this, and I had looked forward to the privilege of seeing the light of his glad eye, and feeling the pressure of his warm hand, among your ranks to-day. Alas! that eye flashes no more, that hand is cold: and I come only to mingle my sorrows with your own over his untimely death-bed. Death, terrible in all his visitations, seems never so horrid as when he fixes the impress of his repulsive signet upon the brow of youth, and, in the first burst of our grief, we may perhaps be inclined to murmur that one so young, so gifted, so beloved, should be the victim of his shaft:

In the locks his forehead gracing,
Not a silvery streak,
Not a line of sorrow's tracing
On that fair, young cheek;

Eyes of light and lips of roses,
Such as Hylas wore—
Over all that curtain closes.
Which shall rise no more!

But, gentlemen, let us submit to the decree of the Most High, who orders all things well, however bitter the pang it may cost us. Let us take to heart, while we weep above the bier of the departed, the lesson we are so impressively taught in his early death; let us feel that Time, as he carries us along, is mindful of his scythe as well as of his glass, and let us recognize, with melancholy conviction, how fleeting and unsubstantial are the phantoms we have followed with our love.

And here, gentlemen, it may be deemed, perhaps, a venial departure from established usage, if, before entering upon the subject of our present discussion, we turn from the consideration of your sad bereavement to indulge, for a time, in those delightful reminiscences which the scene and the occasion are so well calculated to call up. The seminary of learning with which you are connected is one of rare histori-
sidered as not having reached the period of maturity—what though it boast not the prestige of ill-sustained reputation—what though no imposing piles of elaborate architecture, such as overhang the banks of the Cam and the Clerwell, here greet and gratify the eye of the visitor? You may look back upon half a century of unobtrusive usefulness. You may count over a long list of distinguished men, here trained for service in the State, who recognized with pleasure the obligations due to Alma Mater. You may point now to a body of men, composing the faculty of the college, well fitted by long study—the viginti annorum lucubraciones—for the honorable positions they so eminently dignify. And you may say, in reviewing the history of the institution, from its inception to the present day, that it has done nothing unworthy of the name of Washington.

But you may go further than this. The name which distinguished this academy, before it rose to the rank of a college, is suggestive of high patriotic resolves and "fragrant of Revolutionary merit." It was no idle thing that they, who directed the instructions of the school, should designate it as "Liberty Hall." For here they sought to teach the great doctrines of constitutional freedom, and to imbue the minds of the youth of Virginia, amid the troublous and stormy period of our great struggle, with that spirit of "resistance to tyrants" so happily expressed in the proud motto that encircles her agis. Nor was it long before an opportunity was presented for the practical illustration of these noble sentiments.

The historian,* who has recorded the incident, after alluding to the general confusion and embarrassment which prevailed, and mentioning that the services of every man were required for the exigencies of the campaign, goes on to say "The clergy, indeed, were exempted by law; but they did not exempt themselves. They, laying aside the badge of their order, assuming the habiliments, and girding on the armor of the soldier, marched to the tented field, or to the field of battle. The principal of Liberty Hall, himself a clergyman, is known to have volunteered his services, on a pressing occasion, in concert with other volunteers, who, being destitute of officers, appointed him their captain and marched to meet the enemy. The enemy had retired, and they were discharged. The students of the academy, too, were called forth in common with the other militia. On one occasion, not yet forgotten, leaving the hall of science, exchanging Homer and Hesiod for the rifle, they hastened with their associates to the head quarters of the Southern army; and, soon after arriving, were led on to battle. Placed in open ground, they faced the British regulars for hours together, contending with chivalrous bravery for the mastery of the field, alternately advancing or retreating, as the rifle or the bayonet prevailed.* But war did not endure forever. The Ilecyon days of peace returned. The cruel instruments of Mars were laid aside, and the implements of husbandry and the arts were resumed. The doors of Liberty Hall were again thrown open, and students resorted thither in greater numbers than at any former period."

These are indeed glorious reminiscences for you, gentlemen, animating you to increased devotion to the interests and welfare of your collegiate foster-mother. An institution, cradled in the Revolution and touched with the baptism of blood and fire, can never we trust be unworthy of the steadiest attachment of her sons, nor cease to impart the lessons of patriotism to the rising youth of the country.

But in this retrospect, in which we are indulging, let us not forget the honorable mention of a name, which one of your societies has done well to keep in remembrance as its distinguishing appellation; I mean the name of William Graham. He it is whom we must consider as the Father

* For an interesting account of the part taken by the students of Liberty Hall in the Southern campaign, see Foote's "Sketches of Virginia." The engagement here spoken of was the battle at Guilford Court House.
of Washington College; he was the principal of "Liberty Hall," of whom we have just read, as laying aside the badge of the clergy and going forth, in the hour of danger, to meet the British steel—a man, if ever there was one, who labored to be useful without caring to be renowned, and whose actions, never dazzling when performed, yet "smell sweet and blossom in the dust." "The world," says quaint old Sir Thomas Browne, "does not know its greatest men." The same idea has been happily expanded by poets and philosophers, both before and after the author of the Religio Medici. Who of us has not gone often with the elegist into the churchyard, to muse with him over the "village Hampdens," who sleep in obscure corners; men, unrecorded in historic annals and uncanonized in song? But a short time since, I stood beside the grave of William Graham, and I could not repress a melancholy reflection upon the emptiness of human applause, in thinking how little is now known or said, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, of one of her most useful and faithful servants. He rests in the crowded burial ground of St. John's Church, at Richmond, in immediate contact with the building which the eloquence of Patrick Henry illustrated, with the forefathers of the hamlet sleeping around him. No costly expression of sculptured grief marks the spot. A simple tablet of white marble tells the unpretending story of his life. Yet to the eye of him who estimates greatness by results, and who has read understandably the past records of the Commonwealth, there are few tombs that possess a higher interest within her borders. Such an one will feel, too, the abiding assurance that as the works of Graham live after him, his name will not be altogether forgotten, and that, in after times, the spirit of philosophical history, whose observation nothing escapes, "that spirit to which the half-obliterated figures of a procession upon a wasting architectural fragment reveal intelligibly and instructively, some glory

of some sorrow of a past age," in pondering the manifestations of the day in which he lived, will delight, in the person of another Old Mortality, to wipe the dust from his antiquated urn and to freshen the inscription which it bears. But to leave these local recollections, which, pleasing as they are, have I fear already detained us too long, I proceed to lay before you the topic, which I propose, for a brief portion of time, to discuss. You will extend to me, I trust, the largest indulgence, if, as I proceed, you find me but repeating what you have heard very often before. I can advance no new theory, nor build up any novel and ingenious argument. The path is beaten and will doubtless prove familiar, but there are some truths so essential in their character, and it is to be feared, so much neglected, that they cannot be too often dwelt upon, and it will better subserve, in my judgment, the object which has brought us together to talk over these, than to indulge in the most fanciful and finely-wrought of all rhetorical devices. Prenouncing thus much, I invite your attention to a few remarks on the Present Condition of Education and Literature in Virginia.

Humiliating to our State pride as may be the confession, it must be admitted that Virginia has done little as yet in the cause of Popular Instruction. While the people of New England, by their system of universal education, have prospered, morally and physically, Virginia, the magna mater virum, the first of the colonies to resist the encroachment of the mother country—whose sword, drawn upon the firing of the first volley at Lexington, was never sheathed more till night had fallen upon the silent and shattered re-
doubts of Yorktown—has steadily declined in influence and standing, from her neglect to provide adequate means for diffusing knowledge among her citizens. More than two

* Hon. Rufus Choate.
hundred years ago, in the year 1647, the pilgrim settlers of Massachusetts, poor and unfriended, passed an act for the establishment of an uniform system of common schools. No legislative action in the matter was ever taken by Virgin ia until within forty years past. The college of William & Mary, it is true, was established at an early day. But no academies, nor common schools met with favor at the hands of the State, and it has not been until within a comparatively recent period, that the subject has been recognized as one demanding the attention of the government. And what has been the consequence? How stand we in the comparison with our sister commonwealths? Let us look at the matter fairly and speak of it with candor.

From a recent editorial of the London Times, embracing some judicious remarks upon an educational movement of Mr. W. J. Fox, in the House of Commons, I take the following passage in allusion to the state of general information among the people of England—which presents a parallel only too painfully obvious with the same class in the Old Dominion:

"There can, at least," says the Times, "be no harm in ascertaining, in bringing to light, and in recognizing the facts of the case. Whatever our opinions, at all events let us get at the facts. There is a force in facts. They speak for themselves, and often settle a question about which opinions were ever divided. The first fact that we have to deal with is the actual state of secular education in this country. On this point, we will speak as if there were no such things as blue-books, and as if controversy had never laid its rude hands on the question. We speak not as politicians, philosophers or religionists, much less as partisans, when we record our sorrowful experience that the laboring classes of this country are more ignorant than it would be decent or even possible to describe. What they know of religion it is not easy to say, for they are little in the habit of expressing their thoughts, and least of all able to do so under scrutiny. What may be called their professional knowledge

is highly respectable. The British laborer is the best living tool in the world. But here all his knowledge and intelligence end. Beyond his field or his workshop, he generally knows nothing. There is no amount of ignorance or of error, of which he is not capable. To him literature, science and art—the progressive history and the accumulated discoveries of several thousand years—are to him as they had never been. He knows nothing of the face of this globe—nothing of the history or constitution of his country—nothing of its poets, its philosophers, and its divines. The enthusiastic young clergyman, who enters on the care of an agricultural parish fresh from the studies and honors of the university, finds as great a gulf between himself and the minds of his flock, as if they were the newly-converted natives of New Zealand. SHAKESPEARE, MILTON, POPE, GRAY, and even the sweet and simple GOLDSMITH, ADDISON and JOHNSON—in fact, all our other national names, are as utterly unknown to the mass of our people, as they are to the population of China. The Bible and the prayer-book, the hymn-book, the spelling-book and arithmetic, with some theological and devotional tracts, constitute the whole of the village literature; and it is far from our purpose to dispute their value, when they are studied with sincerity and zeal. But, as we have said, of all other literature, all other history, all other poetry, all other science, the rustic knows nothing. If he is old enough to remember GEORGE IV., he may possibly be shrewd enough to conclude that there was also a GEORGE I., but beyond that, he knows nothing; and, in general, if he was informed by a gentleman that GEORGE I. was established in this kingdom by Cesar, or Alexander, or Abraham, he would swallow it without the smallest hesitation, just as he would any other absurdity in history or science. In truth, so far as regards all these things, he is an utter barbarian."

Now, is not much of this applicable to our own laboring population? They are agriculturists and not artisans; but will not the description answer to many of them with singular and melancholy fitness? How many are there of those who make up the monthly assemblages upon our courtyards, whose minds are in the dark, not only as to the his-
tory of the past and the general condition of the globe they live upon, but as to the first doctrines of moral accountability and the benign truths of religion? I recollect to have been somewhat startled, about eighteen months since, at the statement made by the eloquent Assistant Bishop of Virginia, to a crowded congregation in Richmond, that within a day's ride of that city, there was a county in which neither a clergyman nor a place of worship could be found. One would surely think that the village literature of the courthouse of that county was destitute alike of prayer-book and spelling-book. Not to weary you with statistics, it may convey a just notion of the benighted condition of our State to say, that on the 1st of October last, there were thirty thousand poor children, over the age of five years, in one hundred and seven counties and towns, without any means of instruction whatever. I know no more painful reading, in the whole range of documentary publication, to an educated Virginian, than the Report of the Second Auditor on the State of the Literary Fund, with the accompanying proceedings of the school commissioners throughout the commonwealth. The cold indifference of some—the neglect of others—the alternations of hope and despondency, and the struggling aspirations after a better system than as yet obtains, with those who think and feel in the matter—and the almost unanimous expression, in the written reports, of a sad sense of the gloomy and abiding present, make up a story of the most melancholy character. "The question will present itself to every man," writes the county superintendent of the county of Smyth, "Can nothing be done to remedy this great, this crying evil, which is increasing every year? And unless something is speedily done to remove it, and to shed light upon so many minds now in darkness, it will be impossible to conjecture to what it will lead. Can any be willing to trust their rights, their liberties and their lives, to such hands? Many of these persons, when grown up, will be called upon to serve on juries, and in other capacities, to settle all the important questions that may arise. Is it not, then, of the utmost importance that they should be educated?" "Virginia," says the county superintendent of the county of Marion, "has a name to live in point of public education, while she is in fact dead. Her literary fund figures in the statute books, while her poor children figure in ignorance. 'Knowledge is power.' While other States are becoming powerful by the liberal support they give to public education, Virginia is growing impotent in every thing that pertains to national greatness. Develop the intellect of the children of the rising generation, and they will develop all the natural resources of the State. In short, it is useless to try to conceal the miserable rickety system of public education in this commonwealth by flaunting reports and abstracts of its condition. We may grow up with our minds familiarized to these, while our children may grow up as ignorant as barbarians, as far as the practical effect of the public education is concerned." But let us quote no more from the disheartening record. When we consider, beyond all this, that there are seventy thousand white adults in our State who cannot read and write, we need add nothing to what has already been submitted to justify us in saying of our poor, benighted Old Dominion, in connection with the sombre outline of the London journalist, "Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur."

Now I must and will call this a deplorable state of things. We cannot shut our eyes to it. We may meet on occasions like the present, to partake of intellectual repasts, but the spectral embodiment of ignorance rises before us, like the death's head at the banquet. We may cajole ourselves with the delusion that much that has been said of our degeneracy is but idle slander, and we may essay to walk on with manly stride in the procession of the nations, but the fiend is ever behind us, tagging at our skirts, and we
cannot bid him away. With what portentous evil does it not threaten us at the present important juncture of our State politics? A Convention is soon to assemble to retouch and modify the Constitution under which we live. Without presuming to inquire into the counsels by which the deliberations of that body shall be guided, it is not too much to assume that great changes will be made in the right of suffrage; that this inestimable privilege of a freeman, indeed, will be universally extended without regard to property qualification. Now if a change of such magnitude as this is to be made, should we not look well to its consequences, and see to it that those upon whom this privilege is to be bestowed are well qualified to use it to advantage? If we cast pearls to swine, we may expect that they will turn again and rend us. Is there not a fearful risk in committing the destinies of our sovereign State into the hands of unqualified and uneducated voters? The principle, broadly established and demonstrated by our own confederacy, that "man is capable of self-government," is true only conditionally. If the inquiry were made of some of the islands of the Pacific, where man exists in a semi-barbarous state, or of a community such as we find at Botany Bay, deprived by crime, whether or not they were fit to govern themselves, we should not hesitate to say that they were as little so as the brutes that perish. Now, man in his primitive condition is the same everywhere, and unless his susceptibilities of moral and intellectual improvement have been quickened and nurtured by a proper system of training, would be as dangerous a governor in Virginia as beneath the skies of New Zealand. Recognizing this, we come, for the first time, to see our apathy in its true light. Horace Mann, the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, who did noble service for the good of his race before he enlisted in the ranks of folly and fanaticism, has said, among other excellent thoughts on this subject, "The hu-

man imagination can picture no semblance of the destructive potency of the ballot-box in the hands of an ignorant and a corrupt people. The Roman cohorts were terrible; the Turkish Janizaries were incarnate fiends; but each was powerless as a child, for harm, compared with universal suffrage, without mental illumination and moral principle. The power of casting a vote is far more formidable than that of casting spear or javelin." Let us ponder well these truths, and they may incite us to new efforts. We hear much in these days of Art-unions, and we have been told that the arts can never flourish in a Republican government. I will not stop to discuss the question, though I believe that the arts always follow the advancing steps of civilization and refinement. But if this be true, if it require all our energies, in all time to come, to teach the people the rudiments of knowledge, and progress in the arts be incompatible with universal education, then I say, be it so. Let us have the people enlightened; let us have Education-Unions; and we may resign, without a sigh, the glorious creations of the pencil and the sweet idolatries of the chisel. We may give up to the monarchical governments of the Old World all the painting and all the sculpture that ever adorned the slavery of a people. We may give up to them all the music that ever lulled a nation into the repose of despotism. The storiest pictures of the Madonna, wrought by men immortalized in art—the marble triumphs of Canova—the dulcet harmonies of Bellini—shall be theirs. I say that we might willingly resign all these for the blessings of universal education, for we are invoked by no mean considerations to activity in the cause. The preservation of our good name calls to us in its behalf. The consecrated soil of Virginia has found a tongue, and the graves of our fathers are not dumb; we may find a Dodona at Mount Vernon, if we would but listen to its oracles, and catch an inspiration beyond any Delphic revealing at Monticello; there are voices from the
past and voices from the future, and with one sound, like
the rush of many waters, they cry out to us, as did the
prophet of old to the chosen of God, "Go through, go
through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast
up, cast up the highway; lift up a standard for the people!"

It may be urged, it is true, in mitigation of our negli-
gence that there have ever been in Virginia serious and
peculiar obstacles to the universal diffusion of knowledge.
They, whose efforts have been directed to the establish-
ment of a general plan for the State, have been met in limine
with these obstacles, which are well summed up by another
as consisting in "the irregular density of population, the
variety of social pursuits in different sections of the State,
and the existence of that anomalous institution under which
population taxed as property may not participate as persons
in the advantages of the system of education established; the
slave excluding the scholar, and the owner being required to
pay a tax upon the very subject which deprives him often of
the opportunity of enjoying the results of his own contribu-
tion."
* Looking at these difficulties in the way of educa-
tional reform, it may, perhaps, be expected of me that I
should give a practical direction to this inquiry by suggesting
some mode of removing them. But it will be recollected
that this was no part of my purpose in the outset. It might
be shown, I think, that there are great defects in the present
system. It has already been established by one who has
thoroughly investigated this subject, the able Professor of
Ancient Languages in this institution, that a radical defect
exists in the want of provision for the children of the mid-
dle class, and that many children really indigent are kept
away from the schools now in operation from an indispo-
sition on the part of parents to accept aid upon terms which
they consider degrading. It would not, in my judgment,

* Wm. M. Burwell. Address before the Society of Alumni, University
of Virginia.

be difficult to show that this might be remedied by the
gradual adoption, on the part of the Legislature, of a sys-
tem of free schools for all classes, proceeding, however,
with due caution, with direct reference to place and circum-
cstance, and mindful of the wise admonition of Lord
Bacon,* that "it is good not to try experiments in States,
except the necessity be urgent or the utility evident; and
well to beware that it be a reformation that draweth on
the change and not the desire of change that pretendeth the
reformation." It might be shown, also, I think, that the
instruction of the people is clearly one of those great pur-
poses for which all should be taxed for the common benefit
of all, and that the capitalist and factor should no more
object to pay for the increased protection extended to his
property by educating the poorer classes, than to pay a pre-
mium for its insurance against fire or the perils of the deep.
It might be useful, too, in this connection, to inquire into
the practical working of district free schools in those coun-
ties where they have already been put in operation. But
I leave to able men such duties as these, content with
merely exhibiting to you the actual condition of affairs
without any speculations whatever. The time is not far
distant I trust when other friends of education, such men
as Garnett, and Fitzhugh, and Campbell, who have passed
away, will rise up to wipe out this brand sinister from our
escutcheon, and restore Virginia to the proud position which
she once occupied, as first in all the elements of greatness
upon the roll of independent sovereignties.

There is, however, one branch of the subject to which I
will make a passing reference, as perhaps the most im-
portant in any system of education. I mean the provision
of competent teachers for the management of the established
schools. The want of men in all respects qualified for this

* Essay on Innovations.
responsible duty, has been seriously felt even in the Northern States of the Union. In Virginia we need not only a larger supply of such men, but a more rigid discipline of pre-examination for those who are admitted to teach under the present regime. The same Professor, to whom I have already alluded, has shown that teachers, as public servants, occupy the same footing with candidates for practice in law or medicine, and that government is bound to protect society against empirics in instruction quite as much as against the pettifogger and the quack. With reform in this matter might be judiciously combined an extension of the system of normal schools, of which we have seen the auspicious results in the happy operation of the experiment recently commenced at the University and before tried successfully at the Military Institute at this place, an establishment firmly seated in the affections of the people of Virginia. The college of Emory and Henry presents another instance of the wise adoption of this plan of educating teachers, which might well be made a part of the system of instruction at every collegiate institution asking State aid. Let each college receive a moderate annuity, to be repaid by the gratuitous board and education of deserving young men, selected impartially from all parts of the State, subject to the sole condition that they should open and teach a school somewhere in Virginia for a term of years after the expiration of their collegiate course, and a large number of young men might thus be annually returned to their respective counties, qualified to teach and to raise the standard of educational requirements among those who, however incompetent, are now engaged in teaching. Our colleges, too, thus banded together in support of a common system, would feel the impetus of a new spirit of emulation, and labor in the same noble cause, unimpeded by unworthy jealousies, and we might soon look for the appearing of the auroral light of that auspicious day, whose meridian bright-ness shall overspread the land as the gleam of a supernal glory.

This consideration brings me, gentlemen, to another and more congenial division of my subject—education considered as it is pursued in our colleges. And I turn to this grateful theme, with much the same sensation of relief, as that with which the eye that has been oppressed with the glare and desolation of a desert, rests upon the grassy slopes of the vernal landscape. In such a mental wilderness as we have been regarding to-day, the quiet retreats of a college, though seen at wide intervals, are indeed as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." There is something, too, in the local influence of such a place that brings up to me a thousand associations of buried years that cluster around a spot which was brightened with the mellowest and holiest sunshine of life. The collegiate career is with every one who has gone out into the busy world a cherished recollection—a picture framed and hung up in the gallery of memory on which he loves to gaze—and let the interval which separates him from that happy period be long or short, the slightest link—the meeting of a class-mate—a distant view of the old haunts, such as Gray caught of the antique towers of Eton—more especially such kindred rites as now engage us here, will strike out of the account the intervening pilgrimage and recall the spring-tide, even though the "bliss" be but "momentary." To review, then, in a cursory manner, so that I shall not trespass upon your patience, the studies of a collegiate course will be to me doubly pleasurable, as in itself a grateful topic, and as reviving the impressions of a halcyon period now shut out from me by the barriers of the past.

And here let us inquire, preparatory to our glance at collegiate studies, what are the legitimate objects of University education? The most obvious arrangement of them is twofold; first—the acquisition of knowledge in all the ramifica-
tions of letters and science as a general training for the liberal professions and other elevated pursuits of life, and the development of the intellectual faculties by their constant exercise: and, secondly—the inculcation of pure and lofty principles of conduct, by which alone the student can secure the esteem and confidence of good men, or achieve, in any undertaking, great or permanent success.

Foremost among the branches of collegiate instruction stand what are called Dead Languages, the study of which, like the magic syllables of the Eastern enchantor, opens to us untold treasures and inexhaustible wealth. No system of education, indeed, from which the languages are excluded, should ever find favor with those who legislate for seminaries of learning. As the cultivation of a pure style is properly regarded as an important point in academical progress, it becomes a matter of moment that the student have access to those immortal works, whence he can best draw power, perspicuity and taste. He should have at ready command all the illustrious thoughts and deep wisdom that lie enshrined in the poets and historians of bygone ages. We will suppose him upon his entrance at college to have acquired the rudiments of the classics—to have read some Latin authors—and to have been introduced into a respectable acquaintance with the Greek verbs. Here, then, should begin his studious vigils. If he would have music of Demosthenes to ring in his ears and the morals of Seneca properly impressed upon his heart—if he would appreciate the terrors of the tragic Aeschylus and enjoy the beauties of Virgil—he must now apply himself with zeal. Hic labor, hoc opus est. Let him take courage, however, in considering that the acquisition of the Latin and Greek will be to him "its own exceeding great reward," and more than repay him at last for the years of assiduity that he may devote to it.

I am aware that I now stand on debatable ground—that classical instruction has been the peculiar field where for years past the most stirring educational battles have been fought, and that the contest has not yet by any means subsided. To meet and refute the objections of cavillers, would be a tedious office; nor do I deem myself competent to discharge it. The most prominent and oft-repeated of them all may perhaps be better met in a few words of Mr. Everett, than by any lengthened argumentation on the subject.

"There may be," says he, "a considerable portion of these educated at our Universities, who complain that their youth was passed in studies which have afterwards yielded no fruit. But the true ground of complaint ought generally, I suspect, to be rather a matter of self-reproach. It is not that the studies pursued at the University are of no use in life, but that we make no use of them. The Latin and Greek—to instance in these branches—are indeed often thrown aside as useless; but is the lawyer, the statesman, the preacher, the medical practitioner or the teacher, quite sure that there is no advantage to be derived in his peculiar pursuit from these neglected studies, either in the way of knowledge directly useful, collateral information, or graceful ornament? Is not the fault in ourselves? We have laid a foundation which we neglect to build upon, and we complain that the foundation is useless. We learn the elements, and neglecting to pursue them, we querulously repeat that the elements are little worth. We pass years at school and college in the study of languages, till we are just able to begin to use them for their chief end, the reading of good books written in them; and after a life passed without opening a Greek or Latin author, during which time what we knew of the languages has gradually oozed from our minds, we reflect with discontent, if not with bitterness, on the loss of time devoted in youth to what we stigmatize as useless studies."

But, gentlemen, while we thus recognize the importance
of the ancient languages, let us not shut our eyes to the fact that they may be made too considerable a portion of the collegiate course. While we would have the student become perfect master of the classics, we would not have him consider the structure of sapphics and hexameters, as it is considered in some colleges, the chief end of existence. He should not permit his acquaintance with the best authors of Greece and Rome to be obliterated by lapses of time or what he knew of their teachings to ooze from his mind; but it does not follow that the best years of his life should be spent in a servile and mechanical imitation of Ovid and Tibullus. It does not follow that he should strive with patient labor to transform himself into a machine for the production of verses, when after all, the ingenious contrivance of wood and iron, invented some years since, will arrange more unexceptionable cesuras, and in a profession that will mock his most industrious efforts. The colleges of Virginia have done well not to borrow this feature of the system of the English establishments which has called forth the just and stinging satire of some of the most observant Englishmen of the age. The poet Cowper, who has left us many finished and pleasing specimens of Latin verse, himself laments "this childish waste of philosophic pains," and tells us that the boy of his day was reared with

No nourishment to feed his growing mind
But conjugated verbs and nouns declined,*

and Sidney Smith has lodged his complaint against the prevailing custom of "catching up every man—whether he is to be a clergyman or a duke—beginning with him at six years of age and never quitting him till he is twenty; making him conjugate and decline for life and death; and so teaching him to estimate his progress in real wisdom as he can scan the verses of the Greek tragedians."

*Tirocinium, or a Review of Schoole.
subtle transmutations and exhibits the results of her wondrous analysis, or bidding him survey the panorama stretched out beneath the canopy of heaven, with all “its pump of woods and garniture of fields,” proceeds to show how every object around him—the rock, the flower, the cataract, the cloud—is but a new combination of primordial elements. Of this science, it may indeed be said that “there is neither speech nor language in which its voice is not heard,” for its simplest experiments are practised by the barbarian “deep in the unpruned forest,” while the most remote extremities of each enlightened continent are brought by its magic influence into instantaneous communion, and we may confidently expect that, in spite of Neptune and his retinue, it will yet surpass the boast of Puck, and “put a girdle round the earth” in a second of time! Nor does geology fail to assert her claim to the student’s attention, with her museum of monsters now happily extinct, whose names are of proportionate length to their vertebrae, and placing a hammer in his hand, bid him get at the arcana of the earth by hard and well directed blows. Last of all, moral philosophy, with its collateral branches, bringing the student to the study of man himself, would not only teach him the powers of his mind and the faculty of properly arranging his thoughts, but lead him to the contemplation of a loftier reason and a more glowing rhetoric in his holy affections and his immortality!

Such, gentlemen, are the studies of a collegiate course; but let it be recollected that they are to be pursued only as a means to an end—for the development of the intellectual faculties by their constant exercise. In the study of Latin and Greek, it should be borne in mind that the object proposed to be achieved is not so much the acquisition of an immemorial language, as the discipline of the mental powers to an aptitude of thinking, and to the perception of the most delicate shade of moral excellence. So, too, in the study of mathematics, we should apply ourselves not merely to angles and cubes, but to the attainment of a mode of thought which will make us able to apply severity of reasoning to the most exalted of all human researches—the pursuit of actual truth. And the same rule may be applied with equal advantage to mental philosophy, and to the aspiring researches of the astronomer, that the design in directing the telescope and seeking out the hidden motives of human action, is not so much to achieve a great discovery or to show “how noble a piece of work is man,” as to arrive at juster conceptions, through such agencies, of the attributes of that high Intelligence, whose handiwork is shown in the firmament and whose glories are declared in the heavens.

There is yet another view of collegiate education that I feel myself impelled to take, and here, gentlemen, you will pardon me, if I assume the Mentor, for I shall speak to a certain extent from the records of a sad experience. I would warn you, in ranging over the vast field of the expanding sciences of which we have just taken so rapid a glance, against the danger of not acquiring a substantial knowledge of any, in striving after a smattering acquaintance with all. Believe me, there is no humiliation so great as the exposure of the scoiety. Superficial education is the crying evil of the day; and if the isms and ologies of our Northern brethren increase with the same alarming rapidity in time to come as heretofore, we may soon fear that there will be no real scholars in any one branch of scientific or classical investigation. The worst of it is, that your smatterer is for the most part wholly unconscious of his deficiencies, and is quite ready, upon all occasions, to take a prominent stand in any movement that may invite his co-operation. Such men are public evils, and if it be true, as the poet has told us, that “a little learning is a dangerous thing,” they, like my lord Hamlet, “have in them some-
thing dangerous indeed," which communities and commonwealths may well beware of. How many of our young men are there, who, with the most respectable abilities, become the merest pretenders from this false idea of universal acquisition, and who, with just enough of algebra to unsettle their school-boy arithmetic, and just enough of Archbishop Whately to enable them to mix their figures, can neither make an argument nor solve a problem, but go on, nevertheless, rendering themselves the objects of public derision, until at last they awake too late to a dreadful consciousness of the distressing fact? What they know of the classics, it would be difficult to conjecture; but their recollections of history may be summed up in the words of the song,

Old Homer wrote Virgil's Bucolics—
The blind poet begged for his bread—
King Charles the First cut up such frolics,
That Bonaparte cut off his head.
Wellingon's cat had his day out,
Milton declares 'twas a tabby,
Garrick found Botany Bay out,
And Hamlet built Westminster Abbey.

Folly could not farther go than such learning as this. Rely upon it, it is better to know that two and two make four, and to be able to prove it, than to talk flippantly of sine and cosine. It is better to know thoroughly the simplest elements of grammar, than to discourse obscurely of syllogisms and enthymemes. With the unlettered many, the smatterer may perhaps pass for a profound scholar; but the really well-informed gentleman will instantly detect the false plumage which he displays. Among the inimitable essays of Elia, there is none more charming, as a revelation of his inmost being, than that in which he describes a ride with "one of the old school-masters," whose superior depth of information overwhelmed him with confusion at every advance.

But we will suppose the student to have completely mastered the whole circle of the sciences, and to have made the beauties of ancient and modern literature his own. We will suppose him to have overcome every obstacle in his way, and to have written himself a man of letters, as far as thorough scholarship can make him so. In the view which we have already taken, he is still but half-educated; for to all this there must be superadded a far better and more enduring portion—a "something more exquisite still"—the safeguard of pure and lofty principles of character. Without these, he will find science a delusion and fame a snare. Philosophy in their absence will shed but a dubious light, and science, with its full effulgence, will but "dazzle to blind." "Wisdom," we have been told by one who walked in wisdom's ways, "is more of the heart than of the head." "The mind," says an eloquent writer, "may be likened to a majestic altar, which the hand of Deity hath built up within us for the solemnity of his worship. The heart is as the votive lump, which burns before the shrine, giving light, and softness, and warmth, to what, without it, would be a dark and cold, although a glorious thing. Strive, then, to light the flame." Need I add any thing to such language as this? Then would I say that every consideration of patriotism should impel you to do so. Remember that it will be of little avail to diffuse "useful knowledge" among the people, unless we also enlighten them with the precepts of a Divine morality. The records of the past will assure us, on every side, that something more is necessary than mere knowledge among the people, to make great and prosperous States. These same records are not wanting in the names of highly cultivated men, who have sent forth the most fatal and delousing principles that ever poisoned the waters of social life. Who will say that in

* S. Teazle Wallis.
that carnival of crime, with whose horrid pageantry France bewildered and terrified mankind, Science did not join in the frantic procession. Learning in the garb of a Bacchante, did not move to the vibrations of its stormy music and lift up an Io Peran amid the outcries of its mob?

I come, now, gentlemen, at this late stage of my remarks, when, without protracting them to a most unreasonable length, I can assign myself but a few moments more, to say something of the other branch of the subject with which I started out—Literature, as it exists in Virginia. It happens, fortunately, that a very few moments will be quite enough for the treatment of this topic, for in approaching it I can say with Canning's Knife-grinder,

Story, God bless you, I have none to tell, Sir.

One of our recent historians, Mr. Howison, it is true, went out with commendable zeal in search of this phantom, to dignify it with the honors of history, but labored only to find it at last shadowy and impalpable beyond all former ghostly apparitions. He began, indeed, with the beginning, going back to the times of the early colonists, when Mr. George Sandys beguiled his leisure hours with rendering into English the Metamorphoses of Ovid, but in the long lapse of two hundred years, he found only sufficient material to occupy a small portion of a single chapter. There is a pleasant custom in some sections of our country, to issue, now and then, a volume of literary miscellanies, made up exclusively of articles written by natives or residents of the place where the book is published and called after the name of the place itself, as the Boston Book, the Charleston Book. The contributors are, in general, limited to two articles each. In an attempt to compile such a volume, not in any one of our towns, but from the whole State, how meager a range of selection should we have! Should the extracts be of the ordinary length, what arts of the publish-
find at home, or making them object pensioners upon the bounty of the Federal Government. And it is not until this influence can be in some way allayed, and a division of labor effected among us, that we can look for the signs of returning prosperity—that we can hope to see either our material or our intellectual resources developed.

It cannot be denied, I think, that there exists at this time a peculiar necessity for a home literature, and by this I mean a literature adapted to the institutions by which we are surrounded, and to the general framework of our society. Fanaticism in all its forms, but worst of all in that fell shape of modern abolition, which, with impious tread, has dared to confront the presence of the Divine Majesty itself and mock at its revelation, stalks abroad through the land. Its pestilent doctrines are sent among us through every conduit, and our utmost vigilance is necessary for self-preservation. Among all its agencies, there is none so active or so potent as the press; and no man can deny that the entire Northern press is anti-slavery in its tone and spirit. The political journalists may, indeed, observe a show of neutrality, such of them (perhaps half a dozen,) as are not avowedly hostile to Southern interests upon party issues; but the literary and religious papers, with few exceptions, are tinged with the fanatical blue, relying, as they do, in great part, on Southern patronage for support. Now, is it not humiliating to the Southern character that all our reading should be drawn from such a source as this? There is but one way to counteract this influence, and this is by a literature of our own, informed with the conservative spirit, the love of order and justice, that constitutes the most striking characteristic of the Southern mind. In such an enterprise, worthy of the best efforts that we can make, Virginia is impelled to take the lead, as well by every consideration of pride and self-interest, as by the thronging recollections of the past.

I would not be understood, gentlemen, in these general remarks, as counselling any one of you to the choice of literature as a profession in life. I know too well the doubtful issues of success and failure and the certainty of inadequate reward in authorship, not to strenuously advise against such a course. Indeed, any one who should choose the making of books as a means of support in this day, with his eyes open to the bankruptcy of thousands before him, might well, in my judgment, be made the subject of a commission of lunacy. He should be taken care of. The greatest of modern essayists* has shown that by the increased facilities in the art of printing and the consequent multiplication of readers in the cheapness of books, a great change has been effected since the days of Boileau, in the relations of patron and protégé, and that the public now supplies the place of Mecenas to the youthful author. It would be difficult to say whether this change, as far as the author is concerned, has been for the better or the worse. The dear, good-natured, pensive public, is quite as capricious a patron and demands quite as much adulation as a Halifax or an Augustus. The author's independence is compromised as much now as ever, and the pithy saying of old Dr. Fuller is just as true as when it was first uttered, that "learning has made most by those books on which the printers have lost." The consequence is, that there are few prose-writers whose productions have escaped the pastry-cooks, that have made an honorable maintenance, and still fewer

Poets that deserve the bays
And do not dread the dunce.

Authorship, in the cant phrase of the times, "does not pay."

But while the cultivation of letters as a profession may not invite you with the hope of recompense, it holds out to

your grasp substantial honors and offers to you a wreath of fadeless verdure. As a relaxation from severer toil, it will be to you inexpressibly delightful, and it may not be denied you to add to the stores of your country’s literature some contributions which it will not willingly let die. As a professional man, as a planter, as a merchant, in any pursuit of life, you will find abundant intervals of leisure for literary cultivation; and as a proof of what may be accomplished in this way, by even the most laborious men, I need only refer you to Mr. Wirt, whose dalliance in the “primrose paths” of Belles-Lettres was always at odd hours, snatched from the toils of an irksome and most absorbing profession.

It has been said, indeed, again and again, that the age of Belles-Lettres, like that of chivalry, is gone—that we may look no more in this prosing age of Benthamism for the early light—the lumen purpureum juventae—that gilded the courts of Elizabeth, and Anne, and the pontificate of Leo—and we are now told that poetry has shed its last ray across the surface of Windermere in the death of the bard of Rydal Mount. It was vain to discuss the idle question whether another Milton or Shakspeare will probably arise in our time, or in a succeeding age, in the Hesperian longitudes of our Western hemisphere, for the result is not to be attained by any reasoning. Genius is like the wind—it bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. It found Burns “walking in glory and in joy” by his plough along the mountain side, and it encircled his head with its aureola in the mists of Scotland. Its next celestial re-appearing may be in our own mountain glories. One thing is certain. The same inspirations which have produced poetry in times past, will continue to produce it. The objects that surround us in the changes of the season, the efflorescence of spring, the maturity of summer, autumn’s glories of the forest and winter’s freezing chill, the surge of the ever-lasting sea, the cold light of stars, the “hopes and fears that kindle hope,” in the heart of man himself, and more than all, the sweet affections of woman, will always abide, and these will touch the poetic chord until the end of time.

—The power of spells
Still lingers on the earth—but dwells
In deeper folds of close disguise
Than baffle Reason’s searching eyes.
Nor shall that mystic power resign
To truth’s cold sway his webs of guile.
Till woman’s eyes have ceased to shine,
And woman’s lips have ceased to smile,
And woman’s voice has ceased to be
The soul of earthly melody.

Poets we shall have, and, perhaps, philosophers and historians—there may be yet, if not another Milton or Shakspeare, an American Wordsworth, to teach the primal duties amid the stillness of his native hills, made immortal in his verse, some Scott to weave the legends of our early history into enduring narrative, or some Macaulay, in whose luminous and resplendent memory the mighty actors of other centuries shall live and move again, and whose glowing descriptions shall present as on a frieze a procession of historical figures in vivid relief, thus bringing before a distant posterity the images of our Revolutionary Sires in bright succession, and showing, as Sergeant Talfourd has well expressed it, “the embossed surfaces of heroic life.”

Literature has, indeed, to contend with one serious obstacle in America arising out of the exceeding cheapness of modern publication—the alarming circulation of infamous books. These dangerous pests are showered upon the land from a thousand vile presses that work off their ten thousand impressions per hour, in the cellars of certain printing offices of our largest cities, where the light of day never shines, and they infest the public thoroughfares—the public conveyances—even the penetralia of our houses—as a plague worse
than any visited upon Pharaoh in the hardness of his heart. The worst of them are borrowed from the French, and the miscreants, who prostitute their talent to the base use of rendering them into English, have succeeded so far that there seems nothing of the original grossness lost in the translation. The Arch-enemy of our race has selected France as the point from which to assail mankind with two of the most destructive "infernal-machines" ever constructed by the amoueurs of the pit—the Encyclopedia and the Feuilleton. The latter is likely to prove by far the more efficient and deadly engine. The Encyclopedists, skilled as they were to "make the worse appear the better counsel" and apt in all the arts of sophistry, made a bold and open assault upon religion and morality, which was met and repelled. Their damnable books still exist, but the mercy of a divine Providence, which has placed an antidote by every poisonous weed and armed us against the venom of the rattlesnake, has counteracted, through the agency of man, the deadly juices of this aconite. But the feuilleton, insidious in its approaches, has already undermined the citadel before we are aware of the danger, as when Pompeii was buried beneath the lava of Vesuvius, the tempest of wrath, as Bulwer tells us, fell upon those who were yet unconscious of impending peril. And so it was not when Satan revolved schemes of leading the serried hosts of the fallen angels against the cherubim who stood at the gate of Eden, but when he entered himself, in subtle guise, and with honied speech, that a Paradise was lost. It is on this account that we must watch narrowly and discriminate between true and false literature—between the beacon and the ignis fatuus. True, sound, wholesome literature—that which recognizes the Bible as the best and only true source of its inspiration, will be to you a solace in hours of depression, a companion in solitude, a "guide, philosopher and friend," in all the vicissitudes of life, while the false, frivolous sentiments of the times will only debase your understandings and corrupt your morals. The one is a savour of life unto life, the other of death unto death; the one reflects the smile of Beatrice, the other the grin of Mephistopheles; the one hands us the perspective glass through which we see afar off the gleaming gates of the celestial city, the other opens the seventh seal and unfolds the horrors of the Apocalyptic vision; it is the difference between Timotheus and Cecilia in the ode of Dryden,

This raised a mortal to the skies,
That drew an angel down.

In the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris, there is an apartment devoted to bad books of all ages and countries, which bears the appropriate name of Hell. The ingenious librarian, who bestowed upon it so fitting an appellation, might have written above its entrance the dread inscription which the Italian poet affixed over the portals of his Inferno, "They who enter here, leave hope behind." To us the whole temple of the Litterature Extravagante is such an apartment; let us not darken its vestibule; let us hold no communings with its hierophants; let us close our ears to the fevered rhapsodies of Lamennais and the insane ravings of Proudhon, to the vile teachings of Fourier and the debasing sentiments of Sue.

And now, that my theme has died into an echo, I would mingle with its parting tones a few words of admonition in considering the interesting attitude that you occupy to-day. Some of you now stand on the coterminous boundaries of two distinct periods of human life. To-morrow sever your connection with college, and the day after, you go out to the cares and realities of the busy world. This consideration invites serious thoughts. Important duties await you in the tortuous and intricate labyrinth of this world's occupations, and there are honors, too, in reserve for those who will win them. But be not deceived. There is a natural
tendency with young men at college to form an impression, which meets with only too chilling a corrective in the experience of after life, that society awaits their advent with eager expectation, when the fact is, that society, ever engrossed with its own concerns, moves on without a thought of them at all, until some exhibition of superior abilities establishes their claim to public regard. Pardon me, gentlemen, if in advancing this opinion, I have mistaken for a general truth what is, to the extent of the disappointment, the record of my own individual case. I am aware that in offering the plain and somewhat desultory reflections I have submitted to-day, I have employed a tone of counsel which nothing but the position I occupy could warrant in this presence; but I would again warn you that if you would rise to places of usefulness and distinction, you must be “ever earnest, still pursuing,” letting no hour slip by unimproved to reproach you in the future with their waste. Unless you resolve upon such a course as this, your early training will have been in vain, even the diploma, which shall be given you to-morrow in testimony of your studious application here, will be an idle mockery in coming years, as

Some mournful talisman, whose touch recalls
The ghost of time in memory’s desolate halls,
And like the vessels that, of old, enshrined
The soil of lands the exile left behind,
Holds all youth rescued from that native shore
Of hope and promise, life shall tread no more.

The age is one of great incidents and not without alarming portents of disaster to come. The distracted condition of our beloved country fills every patriotic bosom with the liveliest apprehension. California, a golden apple of discord, has been thrown in among us to alienate hearts that should only beat in unison, and the jubilant clarions of our onward march to greatness are drowned in the din of frater-