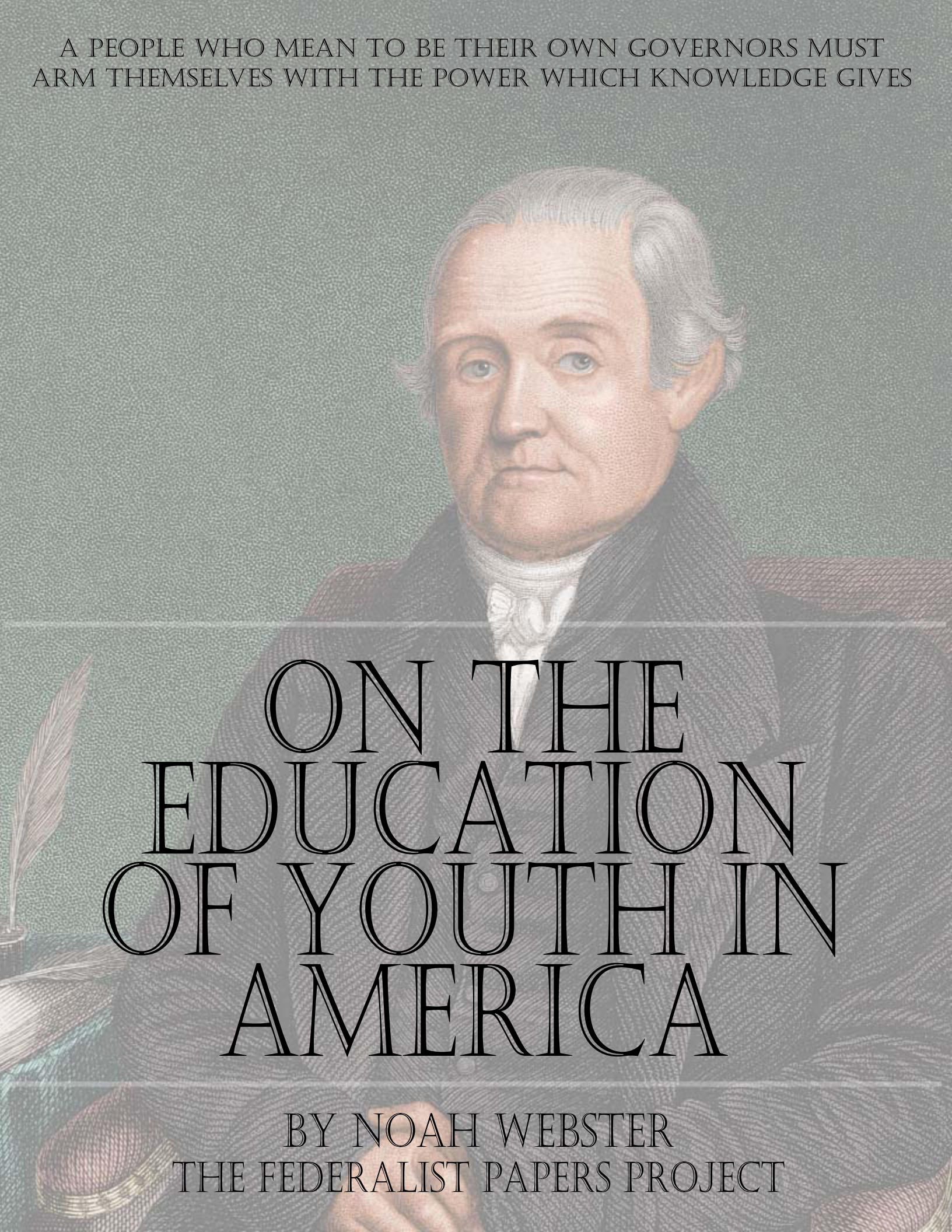


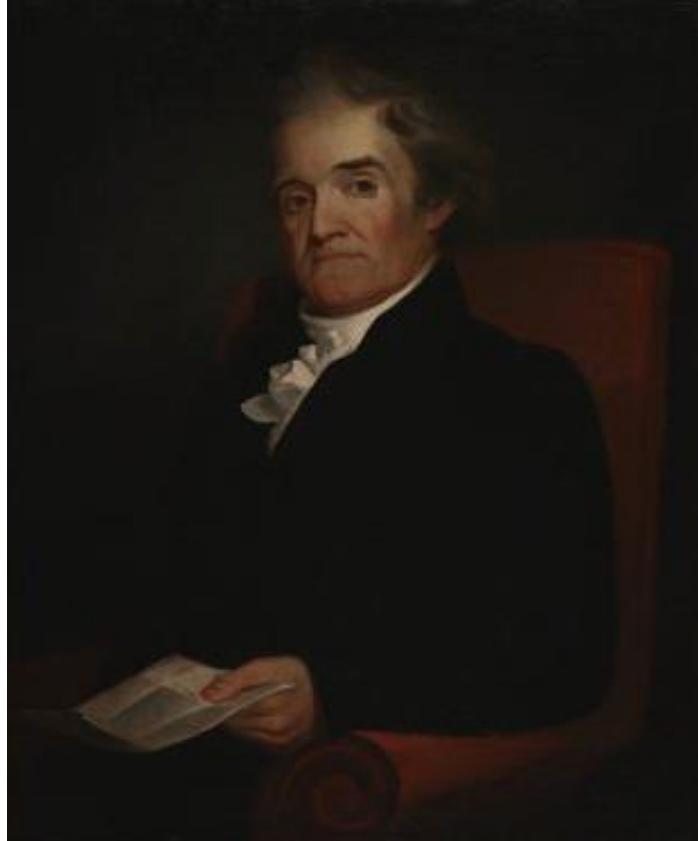
A PEOPLE WHO MEAN TO BE THEIR OWN GOVERNORS MUST
ARM THEMSELVES WITH THE POWER WHICH KNOWLEDGE GIVES

A detailed portrait of Noah Webster, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat. He is seated at a desk with a quill pen and a book. The background is a textured, light greenish-grey.

ON THE
EDUCATION
OF YOUTH IN
AMERICA

BY NOAH WEBSTER
THE FEDERALIST PAPERS PROJECT

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General Remarks

THE Education of youth is, in all governments, an object of the first consequence. The impressions received in early life, usually form the characters of individuals; a union of which forms the general character of a nation.

The mode of Education and the arts taught to youth, have, in every nation, been adapted to its particular stage of society or local circumstances.

In the martial ages of Greece, the principal study of its Legislators was, to acquaint the young men with the use of arms, to inspire them with an undaunted courage, and to form in the hearts of both sexes, an invincible attachment to their country. Such was the effect of their regulations for these purposes, that the very women of Sparta and Athens, would reproach their own sons, for surviving their companions who fell in the field of battle.

Among the warlike Scythians, every male was not only taught to use arms for attack and defense; but was obliged to sleep in the field, to carry heavy burthens, and to climb rocks and precipices, in order to habituate himself to hardships, fatigue and danger.

In Persia, during the flourishing reign of the great Cyrus, the Education of youth, according to Xenophon, formed a principal branch of the regulations of the empire. The young men were divided into classes, each of which had some particular duties to perform, for which they were qualified by previous instructions and exercise.

While nations are in a barbarous state, they have few wants, and consequently few arts. Their principal objects are, defense and subsistence; the Education of a savage therefore extends little farther, than to enable him to use, with dexterity, a bow and a tomahawk.

But in the progress of manners and of arts, war ceases to be the employment of whole nations; it becomes the business of a few, who are paid for defending their country. Artificial wants multiply the number of occupations; and these require a great diversity in the mode of Education. Every youth must be instructed in the business by which he is to procure subsistence. Even the civilities of behavior, in polished society, become a science; a bow and a curtsy are taught with as much care and precision, as the elements of Mathematics. Education proceeds therefore, by gradual advances, from simplicity to corruption. Its first object, among rude nations, is safety; its next, utility; it afterwards extends to convenience; and among the opulent part of civilized nations, it is directed principally to show and amusement.

In despotic states, Education, like religion, is made subservient to government. In some of the vast empires of Asia, children are always instructed in the occupation of their parents; thus the same arts are always continued in the same families. Such an institution cramps genius, and limits the progress of national improvement; at the same time it is an almost immoveable barrier against the introduction of vice, luxury, faction and changes in government. This is one of the principal causes, which have operated

in combining numerous millions of the human race under one form of government, and preserving national tranquility for incredible periods of time. The empire of China, whose government was founded on the patriarchal discipline, has not suffered a revolution in laws, manners or language, for many thousand years.

In the complicated systems of government which are established among the civilized nations of Europe, Education has less influence in forming a national character; but there is no state, in which it has not an inseparable connection with morals, and a consequential influence upon the peace and happiness of society.

Division of the Subject. Attention to the Dead Languages

EDUCATION is a subject which has been exhausted by the ablest writers, both among the ancients and moderns. I am not vain enough to suppose I can suggest any new ideas upon so trite a theme as Education in general; but perhaps the manner of conducting the youth in America may be capable of some improvement. Our constitutions of civil government are not yet firmly established; our national character is not yet formed; and it is an object of vast magnitude that systems of Education should be adopted and pursued, which may not only diffuse a knowledge of the sciences, but may implant, in the minds of the American youth, the principles of virtue and of liberty; and inspire them with just and liberal ideas of government, and with an inviolable attachment to their own country. It now becomes every American to examine the modes of Education in Europe, to see how far they are applicable in this country, and whether it is not possible to make some valuable alterations, adapted to our local and political circumstances. Let us examine the subject in two views. First, as it respects arts and sciences. Secondly, as it is connected with morals and government. In each of these articles, let us see what errors may be found, and what improvements suggested, in our present practice.

The first error that I would mention, is, a too general attention to the dead languages, with a neglect of our own.

This practice proceeds probably from the common use of the Greek and Roman tongues, before the English was brought to perfection. There was a long period of time, when these languages were almost the only repositories of science in Europe. Men, who had a taste for learning, were under a necessity of recurring to the sources, the Greek and Roman authors. These will ever be held in the highest estimation both for style and sentiment; but the most valuable of them have English translations, which, if they do not contain all the elegance, communicate all the ideas of the originals. The English language, perhaps, at this moment, is the repository of as much learning, as one half the languages of Europe. In copiousness it exceeds all modern tongues; and though inferior to the Greek and French in softness and harmony, yet it exceeds the French in variety; it almost equals the Greek and Roman in energy, and falls very little short of any language in the regularity of its construction.*

*This remark is confined solely to its construction; in point of orthography, our language is intolerably irregular.

In deliberating upon any plan of instruction, we should be attentive to its future influence and probable advantages. What advantage does a merchant, a mechanic, a farmer, derive from an acquaintance with the Greek and Roman tongues? It is true, the etymology of words cannot be well understood, without a knowledge of the original languages of which ours is composed. But a very accurate knowledge of the meaning of words and of the true construction of sentences, may be obtained by the help of Dictionaries and good English writers; and this is all that is necessary in the common occupations of life. But suppose there is some advantage to be derived from an acquaintance with the dead languages, will this compensate for the loss of five or perhaps seven years of valuable time? Life is short, and every hour should be employed to good purposes. If there are no studies of more consequence to boys, than those of Latin and

Greek, let these languages employ their time; for idleness is the bane of youth. But when we have an elegant and copious language of our own, with innumerable writers upon ethics, geography, history, commerce and government; subjects immediately interesting to every man; how can a parent be justified in keeping his son several years over rules of Syntax, which he forgets when he shuts his book; or which, if remembered, can be of little or no use in any branch of business? This absurdity is the subject of common complaint; men see and feel the impropriety of the usual practice; and yet no arguments that have hitherto been used, have been sufficient to change the system; or to place an English school on a footing with a Latin one, in point of reputation.

It is not my wish to discountenance totally the study of the dead languages. On the other hand I should urge a more close attention to them, among young men who are designed for the learned professions. The poets, the orators, the philosophers and the historians of Greece and Rome, furnish the most excellent models of Style, and the richest treasures of Science. The slight attention given to a few of these authors, in our usual course of Education, is rather calculated to make pedants than scholars; and the time employed in gaining superficial knowledge is really wasted.*

* In our colleges and universities, students read some of the ancient Poets and Orators; but the Historians, which are perhaps more valuable, are generally neglected. The student just begins to read Latin and Greek to advantage, then quits the study. Where is the seminary, in which the students read Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Dionysius Halicarnasseus, Livy, Velleius, Paterculus and Tacitus? How superficial must be that learning, which is acquired in four years! Severe experience has taught me the errors and defects of what is called a liberal education. I could not read the best Greek and Roman authors while in college, without neglecting the established classical studies; and after I left college, I found time only to dip into books, that every scholar should be master of; a circumstance that often fills me with the deepest regret. “*Quis enim ignorat et eloquentiam et cæteras artes descivisse ab ista vetere gloria, non inopia hominum, sed desidiajuventutis, et negligentia parentum, et inscientia præcipientium, et oblivione moris antiqui?—Nec in auctoribus cognoscendis, nec in evolvenda antiquitate, nec in notitia velrerum, vel hominum, vel temporum fati operæ infumitur.*”—Tacitus, de Or at. Dial, 28. 29.

“A little learning is a dangerous thing, “Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.”

But my meaning is, that the dead languages are not necessary for men of business, merchants, mechanics, planters, &c. nor of utility sufficient to indemnify them for the expense of time and money which is requisite to acquire a tolerable acquaintance with the Greek and Roman authors. Merchants often have occasion for a knowledge of some foreign living language, as, the French, the Italian, the Spanish, or the German; but men, whose business is wholly domestic, have little or no use for any language but their own; much less, for languages known only in books.

There is one very necessary use of the Latin language, which will always prevent it from falling into neglect; which is, that it serves as a common interpreter among the learned of all nations and ages. Epitaphs, inscriptions on monuments and medals, treaties, &c. designed for perpetuity, are written in Latin, which is everywhere understood by the learned, and being a dead language is liable to no change.

But the high estimation in which the learned languages have been held, has discouraged a due attention to our own. People find themselves able without much study to write and speak the English intelligibly, and thus have been led to think rules of no utility. This opinion has produced various and arbitrary practices, in the use of the language, even among men of the most information and accuracy; and this diversity has

produced another opinion, both false and injurious to the language, that there are no rules or principles on which the pronunciation and construction can be settled.

This neglect is so general, that there is scarcely an institution to be found in the country, where the English tongue is taught regularly, from its elements to its true and elegant construction, in prose and verse. Perhaps in most schools, boys are taught the definition of the parts of speech, and a few hard names which they do not understand, and which the teacher seldom attempts to explain; this is called learning grammar. This practice of learning questions and answers without acquiring any ideas, has given rise to a common remark, that grammar is a dry study; and so is every other study which is prosecuted without improving the head or the heart. The study of geography is equally dry, when the subject is not understood. But when grammar is taught by the help of visible objects; when children perceive that differences of words arise from, differences in things, which they may learn at a very early period of life, the study becomes entertaining, as well as improving. In general, when a study of any kind is tiresome to a person, it is a presumptive evidence that he does not make any proficiency in knowledge, and this is almost always the fault of the instructor

Study of the English Language, necessary

IN a few instances perhaps the study of English is thought an object of consequence; but here also there is a great error in the common practice; for the study of English is preceded by several years attention to Latin and Greek. Nay, there are men, who contend that the best way to become acquainted with English, is to learn Latin first. Common sense may justly smile at such an opinion; but experience proves it to be false.

If language is to be taught mechanically, or by rote, it is a matter of little consequence whether the rules are in English, Latin or Greek: But if children are to acquire ideas, it is certainly easier to obtain them in a language which they understand, than in a foreign tongue. The distinctions between the principal parts of speech are founded in nature, and are within the capacity of a school boy. These distinctions should be explained in English, and when well understood, will facilitate the acquisition of other languages. Without some preparation of this kind, boys will often find a foreign language extremely difficult, and sometimes be discouraged. We often see young persons of both sexes, puzzling their heads with French, when they can hardly write two sentences of good English. They plod on for some months with much fatigue, little improvement, and less pleasure, and then relinquish the attempt.

The principles of any science afford pleasure to the student who comprehends them. In order to render the study of language agreeable, the distinctions between words should be illustrated by the differences in visible objects. Examples should be presented to the senses, which are the inlets of all our knowledge. That nouns are the names of things, and that adjectives express their qualities, are abstract definitions, which a boy may repeat five years without comprehending the meaning. But that table is the name of an article, and hard or square is its property, is a distinction obvious to the senses, and consequently within a child's capacity.

Use of the Bible in Schools.

THERE is one general practice in schools, which I censure with diffidence; not because I doubt the propriety of the censure, but because it is opposed to deep rooted prejudices: This practice is the use of the Bible as a school book. There are two reasons why this practice has so generally prevailed: The first is, that families in the country are not generally supplied with any other book: The second, an opinion that the reading of the scriptures will impress, upon the minds of youth, the important truths of religion and morality. The first may be easily removed; and the purpose of the last is counteracted by the practice itself.

If people design the doctrines of the Bible as a system of religion, ought they to appropriate the book to purposes foreign to this design? Will not a familiarity, contracted by a careless disrespectful reading of the sacred volume, weaken the influence of its precepts upon the heart?

Let us attend to the effect of familiarity in other things.

The rigid Puritans, who first settled the New England States, often chose their burying ground in the center of their settlements. Convenience might have been a motive for the choice; but it is probable that a stronger reason was, the influence which they supposed the frequent burials and constant sight of the tombs would have upon the lives of men. The choice, however, for the latter purpose, was extremely injudicious; for it may be laid down as a general rule, that those who live in a constant view of death, will become hardened to its terrors.

No person has less sensibility than the Surgeon, who has been accustomed to the amputation of limbs. No person thinks less of death, than the Soldier, who has frequently walked over the carcasses of his slain comrades; or the Sexton, who lives among the tombs.

Objects that affect the mind strongly, whether the sensations they excite are painful or pleasurable, always lose their effect by a frequent repetition of their impressions.* Those parts of the scripture, therefore, which are calculated to strike terror to the mind, lose their influence by being too frequently brought into view. The same objection will not apply to the history and morality of the Bible; select passages of which may be read in schools to great advantage. In some countries, the common people are not permitted to read the Bible at all: In ours, it is as common as a newspaper, and in schools, is read with nearly the same degree of respect. Both these practices appear to be extremes. My wish is not to see the Bible excluded from schools, but to see it used as a system of religion and morality.

* The veneration we have for a great character, ceases with an intimate acquaintance with the man. The same principle is observable in the body. High seasoned food, without frequent intervals of abstinence, loses its relish. On the other hand, objects that make slight impressions at first, acquire strength by repetition. An elegant simplicity in a building may not affect the mind with great pleasure at first sight; but the pleasure will always increase with repeated examinations of the structure. Thus by habit, we become excessively fond of food which does not relish at first tasting; and strong attachments between the sexes often take place from indifference, and even from aversion.

The Study of Mathematics

THESE remarks suggest another error which is often committed in our inferior schools: I mean that of putting boys into difficult sciences, while they are too young to exercise their reason upon abstract subjects. For example; boys are often put to the study of mathematics, at the age of eight or ten years; and before they can either read or write. In order to show the impropriety of such a practice, it is necessary to repeat what was just now observed, that our senses are the avenues of knowledge. This fact proves that the most natural course of Education is that which employs, first the senses or powers of the body, or those faculties of the mind which first acquire strength; and then proceeds to those studies which depend on the power of comparing and combining ideas. The art of writing is mechanical and imitative; this may therefore employ boys, as soon as their fingers have strength sufficient to command a pen. A knowledge of letters requires the exercise of a mental power, memory; but this is coeval almost with the first operations of the human mind; and with respect to objects of sense, is almost perfect even in childhood. Children may therefore be taught reading, as soon as their organs of speech have acquired strength sufficient to articulate the sounds of words.*

* Great caution should be observed in teaching children to pronounce the letters of the alphabet. The labials are easily pronounced; thus the first words a child can speak are *papa* and *mama*. But there are some letters, particularly *l* and *r*, which are of difficult pronunciation, and children should not be pressed to speak words in which they occur. The difficulty may produce a habit of stammering.

But those sciences, a knowledge of which is acquired principally by the reasoning faculties, should be postponed to a more advanced period of life. In the course of an English Education, mathematics should be perhaps the last study of youth in schools. Years of valuable time are sometimes thrown away, in a fruitless application to sciences, the principles of which are above the comprehension of the students.

There is no particular age, at which every boy is qualified to enter upon mathematics to advantage. The proper time can be best determined by the instructors, who are acquainted with the different capacities of their pupils.

Diversity of Studies in the Same School

ANOTHER error, which is frequent in America, is that a master undertakes to teach many different branches in the same school. In new settlements, where people are poor, and live in scattered situations, the practice is often unavoidable: But in populous towns, it must be considered as a defective plan of Education. For suppose the teacher to be equally master of all the branches which he attempts to teach, which seldom happens, yet his attention must be distracted with a multiplicity of objects, and consequently painful to himself and not useful to the pupils. Add to this the continual interruptions which the students of one branch suffer from those of another, which must retard the progress of the whole school. It is a much more eligible plan to appropriate an apartment to each branch of Education, with a teacher who makes that branch his sole employment. The principal academies in Europe and America are on this plan, which both reason and experience prove to be the most useful.

Local Situation of Colleges and Academies.

WITH respect to literary institutions of the first rank, it appears to me that their local situations are an object of importance. It is a subject of controversy, whether a large city or a country village is the most eligible situation for a college or university. But the arguments in favor of the latter, appear to me decisive. Large cities are always scenes of dissipation and amusement, which have a tendency to corrupt the hearts of youth and divert their minds from their literary pursuits. Reason teaches this doctrine, and experience has uniformly confirmed the truth of it.

Strict discipline is essential to the prosperity of a public seminary of science; and this is established with more facility, and supported with more uniformity, in a small village, where there are no great objects of curiosity to interrupt the studies of youth or to call their attention from the orders of the society.

That the morals of young men, as well as their application to science, depend much on retirement, will be generally acknowledged; but it will be said also, that the company in large towns will improve their manners. The question then is, which shall be sacrificed; the advantage of an *uncorrupted heart* and an *improved head*; or of polished manners. But this question supposes that the virtues of the heart and the polish of the gentleman are incompatible with each other; which is by no means true. The gentleman and the scholar are often united in the same person. But both are not formed by the same means. The improvement of the head requires close application to books; the refinement of manners rather attends some degree of dissipation, or at least a relaxation of the mind. To preserve the purity of the heart, it is sometimes necessary, and always useful, to place a youth beyond the reach of bad examples; whereas a general knowledge of the world, of all kinds of company, is requisite to teach a universal propriety of behavior.

But youth is the time to form both the head and the heart. The understanding is indeed ever enlarging; but the seeds of knowledge should be planted in the mind, while it is young and susceptible; and if the mind is not kept untainted in *youth*, there is little probability that the moral character of the *man* will be unblemished. A genteel address, on the other hand, *may* be acquired at any time of life, and *must* be acquired, if ever, by mingling with good company. But were the cultivation of the understanding and of the heart, inconsistent with genteel manners, still no rational person could hesitate which to prefer. The goodness of a heart is of infinitely more consequence to society, than an elegance of manners; nor will any superficial accomplishments repair the want of principle in the mind. It is always better to be *vulgarly right*, than *politely wrong*.

But if the amusements, dissipation and vicious examples in populous cities render them improper places for feats of learning; the monkish mode of sequestering boys from other society, and confining them to the apartments of a college, appears to me another fault. The human mind is like a rich field, which, without constant care, will ever be covered with a luxuriant growth of weeds. It is extremely dangerous to suffer young men to pass the most critical period of life, when the passions are strong, the judgment weak, and the heart susceptible and unsuspecting, in

a situation where there is not the least restraint upon their inclinations. My own observations lead me to draw the veil of silence over the ill effects of this practice. But it is to be wished that youth might always be kept under the inspection of age and superior wisdom; that literary institutions might be so situated, that the students might live in decent families, be subject, in some measure, to their discipline, and ever under the control of those whom they respect.

On classing Students.

PERHAPS it may also be numbered among the errors in our systems of Education, that, in all our universities and colleges, the students are all restricted to the same course of study, and by being classed, limited to the same progress. Classing is necessary, but whether students should not be removable from the lower to the higher classes, as a reward for their superior industry and improvements, is submitted to those who know the effect of emulation upon the human mind.

But young gentlemen are not all designed for the same line of business, and why should they pursue the same studies? Why should a merchant trouble himself with the rules of Greek and Roman syntax, or a planter puzzle his head with conic sections? Life is too short to acquire, and the mind of man too feeble to contain, the whole circle of sciences. The greatest genius on earth, not even a Bacon, can be a perfect master of every branch; but any moderate genius may, by suitable application, be perfect in any one branch. By attempting therefore to teach young gentlemen everything, we make the most of them mere smatters in science. In order to qualify persons to figure in any profession, it is necessary that they should attend closely to those branches of learning which lead to it.

There are some arts and sciences which are necessary for every man. Every man should be able to speak and write his native tongue with correctness; and have some knowledge of mathematics. The rules of arithmetic are indispensably requisite. But besides the learning which is of common utility, lads should be directed to pursue those branches which are connected more immediately with the business for which they are destined.

It would be very useful for the farming part of the community, to furnish country schools with some easy system of practical husbandry. By repeatedly reading some book of this kind, the mind would be stored with ideas, which might not indeed be understood in youth, but which would be called into practice in some subsequent period of life. This would lead the mind to the subject of agriculture, and pave the way for improvements.

Young gentlemen, designed for the mercantile line, after having learned to write and speak English correctly, might attend to French, Italian, or such other living language, as they will probably want in the course of business. These languages should be learned early in youth, while the organs are yet pliable; otherwise the pronunciation will probably be imperfect. These studies might be succeeded by some attention to chronology, and a regular application to geography, mathematics, history, the general regulations of commercial nations, principles of advance in trade, of insurance, and to the general principles of government.

It appears to me that such a course of Education, which might be completed by the age of fifteen or sixteen, would have a tendency to make better merchants than the usual practice which confines boys to Lucian, Ovid and Tully, till they are fourteen, and then turns them into a store, without an idea of their business, or one article of Education necessary for them, except perhaps a knowledge of writing and figures.

Such a system of English Education is also much preferable to a university Education, even with the usual honors; for it might be finished so early as to leave young person's time to serve a regular apprenticeship, without which no person should enter upon business. But by the time a university Education is completed, young men commonly commence gentlemen; their age and their pride will not suffer them to go through the drudgery of a counting house, and they enter upon business without the requisite accomplishments. Indeed it appears to me that what is now called a liberal Education, disqualifies a man for business. Habits are formed in youth and by practice; and as business is, in some measure, mechanical, every person should be exercised in his employment, in an early period of life, that his habits may be formed by the time his apprenticeship expires. An Education in a university interferes with the forming of these habits; and perhaps forms opposite habits; the mind may contract a fondness for ease, for pleasure or for books, which no efforts can overcome. An academic Education, which should furnish the youth with some ideas of men and things, and leave time for an apprenticeship, before the age of twenty one years, would in my opinion, be the most eligible for young men who are designed for active employments.

The method pursued in our colleges is better calculated to fit youth for the learned professions than for business. But perhaps the period of study, required as the condition of receiving the usual degrees, is too short. Four years, with the most assiduous application, are a short time to furnish the mind with the necessary knowledge of the languages and of the several sciences. It might perhaps have been a period sufficiently long for an infant settlement, as America was, at the time when most of our colleges were founded. But as the country becomes populous, wealthy and respectable, it may be worthy of consideration, whether the period of academic life should not be extended to six or seven years.

Of good Instructors.

BUT the principal defect in our plan of Education in America, is, the want of good teachers in the academies and common schools. By good teachers I mean, men of unblemished reputation, and possessed of abilities, competent to their stations. That a man should be master of what he undertakes to teach, is a point that will not be disputed; and yet it is certain that abilities are often dispensed with, either through inattention or fear of expense.

To those who employ ignorant men to instruct their children, permit me to suggest one important idea: That it is better for youth to have no Education, than to have a bad one; for it is more difficult to eradicate habits, than to impress new ideas. The tender shrub is easily bent to any figure; but the tree, which has acquired its full growth, resists all impressions.

Yet abilities are not the sole requisites. The instructors of youth ought, of all men, to be the most prudent, accomplished, agreeable and respectable. What avail a man's parts, if, while he is the "wisest and brightest" he is the "meanest of mankind?" The pernicious effects of bad example on the *minds* of youth Will probably be acknowledged; but with a view to *improvement*, it is indispensably necessary that the teachers should possess good breeding and agreeable manners. In order to give full effect to instructions, it is requisite that they should proceed from a man who is loved and respected. But a low bred clown, or morose tyrant, can command neither love nor respect; and that pupil who has no motive for application to books, but the fear of a rod, will not make a scholar.

The rod is often necessary in school; especially after the children have been accustomed to disobedience and a licentious behavior at home. All government originates in families, and if neglected there, it will hardly exist in society; but the want of it must be supplied by the rod in school, the penal laws of the state, and the terrors of divine wrath from the pulpit. The government both of families and schools should be absolute. There should, in families, be no appeal from one parent to another, with the prospect of pardon for offences. The one should always vindicate, at least apparently, the conduct of the other. In schools the master should be absolute in command; for it is utterly impossible for any man to support order and discipline among children, who are indulged with an appeal to their parents. A proper subordination in families would generally supersede the necessity of severity in schools; and a strict discipline in both is the best foundation of good order in political society.

If parents should say, "we cannot give the instructors of our children unlimited authority over them, for it may be abused and our children injured;" I would answer, they must not place them under the direction of any man, in whose temper, judgment and abilities, they do not repose perfect confidence. The teacher should be, if such can be found, as judicious and reasonable a man as the parent.

There can be little improvement in schools, without strict subordination; there can be no subordination, without principles of esteem and respect in the pupils; and the pupils cannot

esteem and respect a man who is not in himself respectable, and who is not treated with respect by their parents. It may be laid down as an invariable maxim, that a person is not fit to superintend the Education of children, who has not the qualifications which will command the esteem and respect of his pupils. This maxim is founded on a truth which every person may have observed; that children always *love* an *amiable* man, and always *esteem* a *respectable* one. Men and women have their passions, which often rule their judgment and their conduct. They have their caprices, their interests and their prejudices, which at times incline them to treat the most meritorious characters with disrespect. But children, artless and unsuspecting, resign their hearts to any person whose manners are agreeable, and whose conduct is respectable. Whenever, therefore, pupils cease to respect their teacher, he should be instantly dismissed.

Respect for an instructor will often supply the place of a rod of correction. The pupil's attachment will lead him to close attention to his studies; he fears not the *rod* so much as the *displeasure* of his teacher; he waits for a smile, or dreads a frown; he receives his instructions and copies his manners. This generous principle, the fear of offending, will prompt youth to exertions; and instead of severity on the one hand, and of slavish fear, with reluctant obedience on the other, mutual esteem, respect and confidence strew flowers in the road to knowledge.

Fatal Effects of employing Men of low Characters in Schools.

WITH respect to morals and civil society, the other view in which I proposed to treat this subject, the effects of Education are so certain and extensive, that it behooves every parent and guardian to be particularly attentive to the characters of the men, whose province it is to form the minds of youth.

From a strange inversion of the order of nature, the cause of which it is not necessary to unfold, the most important business in civil society, is, in many parts of America, committed to the most worthless characters. The Education of youth, an employment of more consequence than making laws and preaching the gospel, because it lays the foundation on which both law and gospel rest for success; this Education is sunk to a level with the most menial services. In most instances we find the higher seminaries of learning entrusted to men of good characters, and possessed of the moral virtues and social affections. But many of our inferior schools, which, so far as the heart is concerned, are as important as colleges, are kept by men of no breeding, and many of them, by men infamous for the most detestable vices.* Will this be denied? Will it be denied, that before the war, it was a frequent practice for gentlemen to purchase convicts, who had been transported for their crimes, and employ them as private tutors in their families?

* How different this practice from the manner of educating youth in Rome, during the flourishing ages of the republic! There the attention to children commenced with their birth; an infant was not educated in the cottage of a hireling nurse, but in the very bosom of its mother, whose principal praise was, that she superintended her family. Parents were careful to choose some aged matron to take care of their children; to form their first habits of speaking and acting; to watch their growing passions, and direct them to their proper objects; to guard them from all immodest sports, preserve their minds innocent, and direct their attention to liberal pursuits.

“—Filius—non in cella emptæ nutricis fed gremio ac finu matris educabatur, cujus præcipua laus, tueri domum, et infervire liberis. Eligebatur autem aliqua major natu propinqua, cujus probatis spectatitque moribus, omnis cujuspiam familiæ soboles committeretur, coram qua neque dicere fas erat quod turpe dictu, neque facere quod inhonestum factu videretur. Ac non studia modo curasque, sed remissiones etiam lufus que puerorum, sanctitate quadam ac verecundia temperabat.” In this manner were educated the Gracchi, Cæsar, and other celebrated Romans. “Quæ disciplina ac severitas eo pertinebat, ut sincera et intergra et nullis pravitatibus detorta unius eujusque natura, toto statem pectore, arriperet artes honestas.”—*Tacitusdc Oral. Dial. 28.*

The historian then proceeds to mention the corruption of manners, and the vicious mode of Education, in the later ages of Rome. He says, children were committed to some maid, with the vilest slaves; with whom they were initiated in their low conversation and manners. “Horum fabulis et errpribui teneri statim et rudes animi imbuuntur; nee quis quam in toto domo pensi habet, quid coram infante domino suit dicat aut faciat.”—*Ibm. 23.*

Gracious Heavens! Must the wretches, who have forfeited their lives, and been pronounced unworthy to be inhabitants of a *foreign* country, be entrusted with the Education, the morals, the character of *American* youth?

Will it be denied that many of the instructors of youth, whose examples and precepts should form their minds for good men and useful citizens, are often found to sleep away, in school, the fumes of a debauch, and to stun the ears of their pupils with frequent blasphemy? It is idle to suppress such truths; nay more, it is wicked. The practice of employing low and vicious characters to direct the studies of youth, is, in a high degree, criminal; it is destructive of the order and peace of society; it is treason against morals, and of course, against government; it ought to be arraigned before the tribunal of reason, and condemned by all intelligent beings. The practice is so exceedingly absurd, that it is surprising it could ever have prevailed among rational people. Parents wish their children to be *well bred*, yet place them under the care of *clowns*. They wish to secure their hearts from *vicious principles* and *habits*, yet commit them to the care of men of the most *profligate* lives. They wish to have their children taught *obedience* and *respect* for superiors, yet give them a master that both parents and children *despise*. A practice so glaringly absurd and irrational has no name in any language! Parents themselves will not associate with the men, whose company they *oblige* their children to keep, even in that most important period, when habits are forming for life.*

* The practice of employing low characters in schools is not novel—Ascham, preceptor to Queen Elizabeth, gives us the following account of the practice in his time. “Pity it is that commonly more care is had; yea and that among very wise men, to find out rather a cunning man for their horse, than a canning man for their children. They say, nay, in word; but they do so, in deed. For to one they will give a stipend of two hundred crowns, and loth to offer the other two hundred Shillings. God, that sitteth in the Heaven, laugheth their choice to scorn and rewardeth their liberality as it should: for he suffereth them to have *tame* and *well ordered horses*; but *wild* and *unfortunate children*: and therefore in the end they find more pleasure in their horse, than comfort in their child.”

This is *old language*, but the facts stated are *modern truths*. The barbarous Gothic practice has survived all the attacks of common sense, and in many parts of America, a gentleman’s groom is on a level with his schoolmaster, in point of reputation. But hear another authority for the practice in England.

“As the case now stands, those of the first quality pay their *tutors* but little above half so much as they do their footmen.”—Guardian, No. 94.

“‘Tis monstrous indeed that men of the best estates and families are more felicitous about the tutelage of a favorite *dog* or *horse*, than of their *heirs male*.”—*Ibm*.

Are parents and guardians ignorant, that children always imitate those with whom they live or associate? That a boy, bred in the woods, will be a savage? That another, bred in the army, will have the manners of a soldier? That a third, bred in a kitchen, will speak the language, and possess the ideas, of servants? And that a fourth, bred in genteel company, will have the manners of a gentleman? We cannot believe that many people are ignorant of these truths. Their conduct therefore can be ascribed to nothing but inattention or fear of expense. It is perhaps literally true, that a wild life among savages is preferable to an Education in a kitchen, or under a drunken tutor; for savages would have the mind uncorrupted with the vices, which reign among slaves and the depraved part of civilized nations. It is therefore a point of infinite importance to society, that youth should not associate with persons whose manners they ought not to imitate; much less should they be doomed to pass the most susceptible period of life, with clowns, profligates and slaves.

There are people so ignorant of the constitution of our natures, as to declare, that young people should see vices and their consequences, that they may learn to detest and shun them. Such reasoning is like that of the novel writers, who attempt to defend their delineations of abandoned characters; and that of stage players, who would vindicate the obscene exhibitions of a theater; but the reasoning is totally false.* Vice always spreads by being published; young people are taught many vices by fiction, books or public exhibitions; vices, which they never would have known, had they never read such books or attended such public places. Crimes of all kinds, vices, judicial trials necessarily obscene, and infamous punishments, should, if possible, be concealed from the young. An examination in a court of justice may teach the tricks of a knave, the arts of a thief, and the evasions of hackneyed offenders, to a dozen young culprits, and even tempt those who have never committed a crime, to make a trial of their skill. A newspaper may spread crimes; by communicating to a nation the knowledge of an ingenious trick of villainy, which, had it been suppressed, might have died with its first inventor. It is not true that the effects of vice and crimes deter others from the practice; except when rarely seen. On the other hand, frequent exhibitions either cease to make any impressions on the minds of spectators, or else reconcile them to a course of life, which at first was disagreeable.

* The fact related by Justin, of an ancient people, will apply universally. "Tanto plus in illis proficit victiorum ignorantio, quam in his cognitio virtutis." An ignorance of vice has a better effect, than a knowledge of virtue.

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mein,
As to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

For these reasons, children should keep the best of company, that they might have before them the best manners, the best breeding, and the best conversation. Their minds should be kept untainted, till their reasoning faculties have acquired strength, and the good principles which may be planted in their minds, have taken deep root. They will then be able to make a firm and probably a successful resistance, against the attacks of secret corruption and brazen libertinism.

Our legislators frame laws for the suppression of vice and immorality; our divines thunder, from the pulpit, the terrors of infinite wrath, against the vices that stain the characters of men. And do laws and preaching effect a reformation of manners? Experience would not give a very favorable answer to this inquiry. The reason is obvious; the attempts are directed to the wrong objects. Laws can only check the public effects of vicious principles; but can never reach the principles themselves; and preaching is not very intelligible to people, till they arrive at an age when their principles are rooted, or their habits firmly established. An attempt to eradicate old habits, is as absurd, as to lop off the branches of a huge oak, in order to root it out of a rich soil. The most that such clipping will effect, is to prevent a further growth.

The only practicable method to reform mankind, is to begin with children; to banish, if possible, from their company, every low bred, drunken, immoral character. Virtue and vice will not grow together in a great degree, but they will grow where they are planted, and when one has taken

root, it is not easily supplanted by the other. The great art of correcting mankind therefore, consists in prepossessing the mind with good principles.

For this reason society requires that the Education of youth should be watched with the most scrupulous attention. Education, in a great measure, forms the moral characters of men, and morals are the basis of government.* Education should therefore be the first care of a Legislature; not merely the institution of schools, but the furnishing of them with the best men for teachers. A good system of Education should be the first article in the code of political regulations; for it is much easier to introduce and establish an effectual system for preserving morals, than to correct, by penal statutes, the ill effects of a bad system. I am so fully persuaded of this, that I shall almost adore that great man, who shall change our practice and opinions, and make it respectable for the first and best men to superintend the Education of youth.

* Plus ibi iconi mores valent, quam alibi bonæ leges.
Tac. de Mor. Germ. 19.

What Books should be read in Schools.

ANOTHER defect in our schools, which, since the revolution, is become inexcusable, is the want of proper books. The collections which are now used consist of essays that respect foreign and ancient nations. The minds of youth are perpetually led to the history of Greece and Rome or to Great Britain; boys are constantly repeating the declamations of Demosthenes and Cicero, or debates upon some political question in the British Parliament. These are excellent specimens of good sense, polished stile and perfect oratory; but they are not interesting to children. They cannot be very useful, except to young gentlemen who want them as models of reasoning and eloquence, in the pulpit or at the bar.

But every child in America should be acquainted with his own country. He could read books that furnish him with ideas that will be useful to him in life and practice. As soon as he opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country; he should lisp the praise of liberty, and of those illustrious heroes and statesmen, who have wrought a revolution in her favor.

A selection of essays, respecting the settlement and geography of America; the history of the late revolution and of the most remarkable characters and events that distinguished it, and a compendium of the principles of the federal and provincial governments, should be the principal school book in the United States. These are interesting objects to every man; they call home the minds of youth and fix them upon the interests of their own country, and they assist in forming attachments to it, as well as in enlarging the understanding.

“It is observed by the great Montesquieu, that the laws of education ought to be relative to the principles of the government.” *

* Spirit of Laws. Book 4.

On public Schools—their Importance in a free Government.

In despotic governments, the people should have little or no education, except what tends to inspire them with a servile fear. Information is fatal to despotism.

In monarchies, education could be partial, and adapted to the rank of each class of citizens. But “in a republican government,” says the same writer, “the whole power of education is required.” Here every class of people should *know* and *love* the laws. This knowledge should be diffused by means of schools and newspapers; and an attachment to the laws may be formed by early impressions upon the mind.

Two regulations are essential to the continuance of republican governments: 1. such a distribution of lands and such principles of descent and alienation, as shall give every citizen a power of acquiring what his industry merits.* 2. Such a system of education as gives every citizen an opportunity of acquiring knowledge and fitting himself for places of trust. These are fundamental articles; the *sine qua non* of the existence of the American republics.

* The power of entailing real estates is repugnant to the spirit of our American governments.

Hence the absurdity of our copying the manners and adopting the institutions of Monarchies.

In several States, we find laws passed, establishing provision for colleges and academies, where people of property may educate their sons; but no provision is made for instructing the poorer rank of people, even in reading and writing. Yet in these same States, every citizen who is worth a few shillings annually, is entitled to vote for legislators.* this appears to me a most glaring solecism in government. The constitutions are *republican*, and the laws of education are *monarchical*. The *former* extend civil rights to every honest industrious man; the *latter* deprive a large proportion of the citizens of a most valuable privilege.

* I have known instructions from the inhabitants of a country, two thirds of whom could not write their names. How competent must such men be to decide an important point in legislation!

In our American republics, where governments is in the hands of the people, knowledge should be universally diffused by means of public schools. Of such consequence is it to society, that the people who make laws, should be well informed, that I conceive no Legislature can be justified in neglecting proper establishments for this purpose.

When I speak of a diffusion of knowledge, I do not mean merely a knowledge of spelling books, and the New Testament. An acquaintance with ethics, and with the general principles of law, commerce, money and government, is necessary for the yeomanry of a republican state. This acquaintance they might obtain by means of books calculated for schools, and read by the children, during the winter months, and by the circulation of public papers.

“In Rome it was the common exercise of boys at school, to learn the laws of the twelve tables by heart, as they did their poets and classic authors.” * What an excellent practice this in a free government!

* Middleton’s life of Cicero, volume 1, page 14.

It is said, indeed by many, that our common people are already too well informed. Strange paradox! The truth is, they have too much knowledge and spirit to resign their share in government, and are not sufficiently informed to govern themselves in all cases of difficulty.

There are some acts of the American legislatures which astonish men of information; and blunders in legislation are frequently ascribed to bad intentions. But if we examine the men who compose these legislatures, we shall find that wrong measures generally proceed from ignorance either in the men themselves, or in their constituents. They often mistake their own interest, because they do not foresee the remote consequences of a measure.

It may be true that all men cannot be legislators; but the more generally knowledge is diffused among the substantial yeomanry, the more perfect will be the laws of a republican state.

Every small district: should be furnished with a school, at least four months in a year; when boys are not otherwise employed. This school should be kept by the most reputable and well informed man in the district. Here children should be taught the usual branches of learning: submission to superiors and to laws; the moral or social duties; the history and transactions of their own country; the principles of liberty and government. Here the rough manners of the wilderness should be softened, and the principles of virtue and good behavior inculcated. The *virtues* of men are of more consequence to society than their *abilities*; and for this reason, the *heart* should be cultivated with more assiduity than the *head*.

Such a general system of education is neither impracticable nor difficult; and excepting the formation of a federal government that shall be efficient and permanent, it demands the first attention of American patriots. Until such a system shall be adopted and pursued; until the Statesman and Divine shall unite their efforts in *forming* the human mind, rather than in lopping its excrescences, after it has been neglected; until Legislators discover that the only way to make good citizens and subjects, is to nourish them from infancy; and until parents shall be convinced that the *worst* of men are not the proper teachers to make the *best*; mankind cannot know to what a degree of perfection society and government may be carried. America affords the fairest opportunities for making the experiment, and opens the most encouraging prospect of success.*

* It is worthy of remark, that in proportion as laws are favorable to the equal rights of men, the number of crimes in a state is diminished; except where the human mind is debased by extreme servitude, or by superstition. In France, there are but few crimes; religion and the rigor of a military force prevent them; perhaps also, ignorance in the peasantry may be assigned as another reason. But in England and Ireland the human mind is not so depressed, yet the distribution of property and honors is not equal; the lower classes of people, bold and independent, as well as poor, feel the injuries which flow from the feudal system, even in its relaxed state; they become desperate, and turn highwaymen. Hence those kingdoms produce more culprits than half Europe besides.

The character of the Jews, as sharpers, is derived from the cruel and villanous proscriptions, which they have suffered from the bigotry of Christians in every part of Europe.

Most of the criminals condemned in America are foreigners. The execution of a native, before the revolution, was a novelty. The distribution of property in America and the principles of government favor the rights of men; and but few men will commence

enemies to society and government, if they can receive the benefits of them: Unjust governments and tyrannical distinctions have made most of the villains that ever existed.

On the Education of Females.

In a system of education, that should embrace every part of the community, the female sex claim no inconsiderable share of our attention.

The women in America (to their honor it is mentioned) are not generally above the care of educating their own children. Their own education should therefore enable them to implant in the tender mind, such sentiments of virtue, propriety and dignity, as are suited to the freedom of our governments. Children should be treated as children, but as children that are, in a future time, to be men and women. By treating them as if they were always to remain children, we very often see their childishness adhere to them, even in middle life. The silly language called *baby talk*, in which most persons are initiated in infancy, often breaks out in discourse, at the age of forty, and makes a man appear very ridiculous.* In the same manner, vulgar, obscene and illiberal ideas, imbibed in a nursery or a kitchen, often give a tincture to the conduct through life. In order to prevent every evil bias, the ladies, whose province it is to direct the inclinations of children on their first appearance, and to choose their nurses, should be possessed, not only of amiable manners, but of just sentiments and enlarged understandings.

But the influence of women in forming the dispositions of youth, is not the sole reason why their education should be particularly guarded; their influence in controlling the manners of a nation, is another powerful reason. Women, once abandoned, may be instrumental in corrupting society; but such is the delicacy of the sex, and such the restraints which custom imposes upon them, that they are generally the last to be corrupted. There are innumerable instances of men, who have been restrained from a vicious life, and even of very abandoned men, who have been reclaimed, by their attachment to ladies of virtue. A fondness for the company and conversation of ladies of character, may be considered as a young man's best security against the attractives of a dissipated life. A man who is attached to *good* company, seldom frequents that which is *bad*. For this reason, society requires that females should be well educated, and extend their influence as far as possible over the other sex.

* It has been already observed that a child always imitated what he sees and hears: For this reason, he should hear no language which is not correct and decent. Every word spoken to a child, should be pronounced with clearness and propriety. Banish from children all diminutive words, all whining and all bad grammar. A boy of six years old may be taught to speak as correctly, as Cicero did before the Roman Senate.

But a distinction is to be made between a *good* education, and a *showy* one; for an education, merely superficial, is a proof of corruption of taste, and has a mischievous influence on manners. The education of females, like that of males, should be adapted to the principles of the government, and correspond with the stage of society. Education in Paris differs from that in Petersburg, and the education of females in London or Paris should not be a model for the Americans to Copy.

In all nations a *good* education, is that which renders the ladies correct in their manners, respectable in their families, and agreeable in society. That education is always *wrong*, which raises a woman above the duties of her station.

In America, female education should have for its object what is *useful*. Young ladies should be taught to speak and write their own language with purity and elegance; an article in which they are often deficient. The French language is not necessary for ladies. In some cases it is convenient, but, in general, it may be considered as an article of luxury. As an accomplishment, it may be studied by those whose attention is not employed about more important concerns.

Some knowledge of arithmetic is necessary for every lady. Geography should never be neglected. Belles Letters learning seems to correspond with the dispositions of most females. A taste for Poetry and fine writing should be cultivated; for we expect the most delicate sentiments from the pens of that sex which is possessed of the finest feelings.

A course of reading can hardly be prescribed for all ladies. But it should be remarked, that this sex cannot be too well acquainted with the writers upon human life and manners. The Spectator should fill the first place in every lady's library. Other volumes of periodical papers, though inferior to the Spectator, should be read; and some of the best histories.

With respect to novels, so much admired by the young, and so generally condemned by the old, what shall I say? Perhaps it may be said with truth, that some of them are useful, many of them pernicious, and most of them trifling. A hundred volumes of modern novels may be read, without acquiring a new idea. Some of them contain entertaining stories, and where the descriptions are drawn from nature, and from characters and events in themselves innocent, the perusal of them may be harmless.

Were novels written with a view to exhibit only one side of human nature, to paint the social virtues, the world would condemn them as defective: But I should think them more perfect. Young people, especially females, could not see the vicious part of mankind. At best novels may be considered as the toys of youth; the rattle boxes of sixteen. The mechanic gets his pence for his toys, and the novel writer, for his books; and it would be happy for society, if the latter were in all cases as innocent play things as the former.

In the large towns in America, music, drawing and dancing, constitute, a part of female education. They, however, hold a subordinate rank; for my fair friends will pardon me, when I declare, that no man ever marries a woman for her performance on a harpsichord, or her figure in a minuet. However ambitious a woman may be to command admiration abroad, her real merit is known only at *home*. Admiration is useless, when it is not supported by domestic worth. But real honor and permanent esteem, are always secured by those who preside over their own families with dignity.*

* Nothing can be more fatal to domestic happiness in America, than a taste for copying the luxurious manners and amusements of England and France. Dancing, drawing and music, are principal articles of education in those kingdoms; therefore every girl in

On the Education of Youth in America by Noah Webster

America must pass two or three years at a boarding school, tho her father cannot give her a farthing when she marries. This ambition to educate females above their fortunes pervades every part of America. Hence; the disproportion between the well bred females and the males in our large towns. A mechanic or shopkeeper in town, or a farmer in the country, whose sons get their living by their father's employments, will send their daughters to a boarding school, where their ideas are elevated, and their views carried above a connexion with men in those occupations. Such an education, without fortune or beauty, may possibly please a girl of fifteen, but must prove her greatest misfortune. This fatal mistake is illustrated in every large town in America. In the country, the number of males and females, is nearly equal; but in towns, the number of genteelly bred women is greater than of men; and in some towns, the proportion is, as three to one.

The heads of young people of both sexes are often turned by reading descriptions of splendid living, of coaches, of plays, and other amusements. Such descriptions excite a desire to enjoy the same pleasures. A fortune becomes the principal object of pursuit; fortunes are scarce in America, and not easily acquired; disappointment succeeds, and the youth who begins life with expecting to enjoy a coach, closes the prospect with a small living, procured by labor and economy.

Thus a wrong education, and a taste for pleasures which our fortune will not enable us to enjoy, often plunge the Americans into distress, or at least prevent early marriages. Too fond of show, of dress and expense, the sexes wish to please each other; they mistake the means, and both are disappointed.

On a Foreign Education.

BEFORE I quit this subject, I beg leave to make some remarks on a practice which appears to be attended with important consequences; I mean that of sending boys to Europe for an education, or sending to Europe for teachers This was right before the revolution; at least To far as national attachments where concerned; but the propriety of it ceased with our political relation to Great Britain.

In the first place, our honor as an independent nation is concerned in the establishment of literary institutions, adequate to all our own purposes; without sending our youth abroad, or depending on other nations for books and instructors. It is very little to the reputation of America to have it said abroad, that after the heroic achievements of the late war, these independent people are obliged to send to Europe for men and books to teach their children A B C.

But in another point of view, a foreign education is directly opposite to our political interests, and ought to be discountenanced, if not prohibited.

Every person of common observation will grant, that most men prefer the manners and the government of that country where they are educated. Let ten American youths be sent, each to a different European kingdom, and live there from the age of twelve to twenty, and each will give the preference to the country where he has resided.

The period from twelve to twenty is the most important in life. The impressions made before that period; are commonly effaced; those that are made during that period *always* remain for many years, and *generally* through life.

Ninety nine persons of a hundred who pass that period in England or France, will prefer the people, their manners, their laws, and their government, to those of their native country. Such attachments are injurious, both, to the happiness of the men, and to the political interests of their own country. As to private happiness, it is universally known how much pain a man suffers by a change of habits in living. The customs of Europe are and ought to be different from ours; but when a man has been bred in one country, his attachments to its manners make them, in a great measure, necessary to his happiness. On changing his residence, he must therefore break his former habits, which is always a painful sacrifice; or the discordance between the manners of his own country, and his habits, must give him incessant uneasiness; or he must introduce, into a circle of his friends, the manners in which he was educated. These consequences may follow, and the last, which is inevitable, is a public injury. The refinement of manners in every country should keep pace exactly with the increase of its wealth; and perhaps the greatest evil America now feels is, an improvement of taste and manners which its wealth cannot support.

A foreign education is the very source of this evil; it gives young gentlemen of fortune a relish for manners and amusements which are not suited to this country; which however, when introduced by this class of people, will always become fashionable.

But a corruption of manners is not the sole objection to a foreign education: An attachment to a foreign *government*, or rather a want of attachment to our *own*, is the natural effect of a residence abroad, during the period of youth. It is recorded of one of the Greek cities, that in a treaty with their conquerors, it was required that they should give a certain number of *male children* as hostages for the fulfilment of their engagements. The Greeks absolutely refused, on the principle that these children would imbibe the ideas and embrace the manners of foreigners, or lose their love for their own country: But they offered the same number of *old men* without hesitation. This anecdote is full of good sense. A man should always form his habits and attachments in the country where he is to reside for life. When these habits are formed, young men may travel without danger of losing their patriotism. A boy who lives in England from twelve to twenty, will be an *Englishman* in his manners and his feelings; but let him remain at home till he is twenty, and form his attachments, he may then be several years abroad, and still be an American.* There may be exceptions to this observation; but living examples may be mentioned to prove the truth of the general principle here advanced, respecting the influence of habit.

* Cicero was twenty eight years old when he left Italy to travel into Greece and Asia. "He did not stir abroad," says Dr. Middleton; "till he had completed his education at home; for nothing can be more pernicious to a nation, than the necessity of a foreign one."—*Life of Cicero*, vol. I. p. 48.

Dr. Moore makes a remark precisely in point. Speaking of a foreign education, proposed by a certain Lord, who objected to the public schools in England, he says, "I have attended to his Lordship's objections, and after due consideration, and weighing every circumstance, I remain of opinion, that no country but Great Britain is proper for the education of a British subject, who proposes to pass his life in his own country. The most important point, in my mind, to be secured in the education of a young man of rank of our country, is to make him an Englishman; and this can be done nowhere so effectually as in England." See his *View of Society and Manners*, &c. vol. i, page 197, where the reader will find many judicious remarks upon this subject. The following are too pertinent to be omitted.—"It is thought, that by an early foreign education, all ridiculous English prejudices, will be avoided. This may be true; but other prejudices, perhaps as ridiculous, and much more detrimental, will be formed. The first cannot be attended with many inconveniencies; the second may render the young people unhappy in their own country when they return, and disagreeable to their countrymen all the rest of their lives." These remarks, by a change of names are applicable to America.

It may be said that foreign universities furnish much better opportunities of improvement in the sciences than the American. This may be true, and yet will not justify the practice of sending young lads from their own country. There are some branches of science which may be studied too much greater advantage in Europe than in America, particularly chemistry. When these are to be acquired, young gentlemen ought to spare no pains to attend the best professors. It may, therefore; be useful, in some cases, for students to cross the Atlantic to complete a course of studies; but it is not necessary for them to go early in life, nor to continue a long time. Such instances need not be frequent even now; and the necessity for them will diminish in proportion to the future advancement of literature in America.

It is, however, much questioned, whether, in the ordinary course of study, a young man can enjoy greater advantages in Europe than in America. Experience inclines me to raise a doubt, whether the danger to which a youth must be exposed among the sons of dissipation abroad, will not turn the scale in favor of our American colleges. Certain it is, that four fifths of the great literary characters in America never crossed the Atlantic.

But if our universities and schools are not so good as the English or Scotch, it is the business of our rulers to improve them, not to endow them merely; for endowments alone will never make a flourishing seminary; but to furnish them with professors of the first abilities and most assiduous application, and with a complete apparatus for establishing theories by experiments. Nature has been profuse to the Americans, in genius, and in the advantages of climate and soil. If this country, therefore, should long be indebted to Europe for opportunities of acquiring any branch of science in perfection, it must be by means of a criminal neglect of its inhabitants.

The difference in the nature of the American and European governments, is another objection to a foreign education. Men form modes of reasoning, or habits of thinking on political subjects, in the country where they are bred; these modes of reasoning may be founded on fact in all countries; but the same principles will not apply in all governments, because of the infinite variety of national opinions and habits. Before a man can be a good Legislator, he must be intimately acquainted with the temper of the people to be governed. No man can be thus acquainted with a people, without residing amongst them and mingling with all companies. For want of this acquaintance, a Turgot and a Price may reason most absurdly upon the Constitutions of the American states; and when any person has been long accustomed to believe in the propriety or impropriety of certain maxims or regulations of government, it is very difficult to change his opinions, or to persuade him to adapt his reasoning to new and different circumstances.

One half the European Protestants will now contend that the Roman Catholic religion is subversive of civil government. Tradition, books, education, have concurred to fix this belief in their minds; and they will not resign their opinions, even in America, where some of the highest civil offices are in the hands of Roman Catholics.

It is therefore of infinite importance that those who direct the councils of a nation, should be educated in that nation. Not that they should restrict their personal acquaintance to their own country, but their first ideas, attachments and habits should be acquired in the country which they are to govern and defend. When a knowledge of their own country is obtained, and an attachment to its laws and interests deeply fixed in their hearts, then young gentlemen may travel with infinite advantage and perfect safety. I wish not therefore to discourage travelling, but, if possible, to render it more useful to individuals and to the community. My meaning is, that *men* should travel, and not *boys*.

The Tour of America, a necessary Part of a liberal Education

It is time for the Americans to change their usual route, and travel through a country which they never think of, or think beneath their notice: I mean the United States.

While these States were a part of the British Empire, our interest, our feelings, were those of Englishmen ; our dependence led us to respect and imitate their manners, and to look up to them for our opinions. We little thought of any national interest in America; and while our commerce and governments were in the hands of our parent country, and we had no common interest, we little thought of improving our acquaintance with each other, or of removing prejudices, and reconciling the discordant feelings of the inhabitants of different Provinces. But independence and union render it necessary that the citizens of different States should know each other's characters and circumstances; that all jealousies should be removed ; that mutual respect and confidence should succeed, and a harmony of views and interests be cultivated by a friendly intercourse.

A tour through the United States ought now to be considered as a necessary part of a liberal education. Instead of sending young gentlemen to Europe to view curiosities and learn vices and follies, let them spend twelve or eighteen months in examining the local situation of the different States; the rivers, the soil, the population, the improvements and commercial advantages of the whole; with an attention to the spirit and manners of the inhabitants, their laws, local customs and institutions. Such a tour should at least precede a tour to Europe; for nothing can be more ridiculous than a man travelling in a foreign country for information, when he can give no account of his own. When, therefore, young gentlemen have finished an academic education, let them travel through America, and afterwards to Europe, if their time and fortunes will permit. But if they cannot make a tour through both, that in America is certainly to be preferred ; for the people of America, with all their information, are yet extremely ignorant of the geography, policy and manners of their neighboring States. Except a few gentlemen whose public employments in the army and in Congress, have extended their knowledge of America, the people in this country, even of the higher classes, have not so correct information respecting the United States, as they have respecting England or France. Such ignorance is not only disgraceful, but is materially prejudicial to our political friendship and federal operations.

Americans, unshackle your minds, and act like independent beings. You have been children long enough, subject to the control, and subservient to the interest of a haughty parent. You have now an interest of your own to augment and defend: You have an empire to raise and support by your exertions, and a national character to establish and extend by your wisdom and virtues. To effect these great objects, it is necessary to frame a liberal plan of policy, and build it on a broad system of education. Before this system can be formed and embraced, the Americans must *believe*, and *act* from the belief, that it is dishonorable to waste life in mimicking the follies of other nations and basking in the sunshine of foreign glory.

NOTES

The History Public Schools Don't Teach

James Madison wrote that “a people who mean to be their own governors must be armed with the power that knowledge gives”.

In “Democracy in America” Alexis de Tocqueville noted that Americans of his day were far more knowledgeable about government and the issues of the day than their counterparts in Europe.

Tocqueville wrote “every citizen receives the elementary notions of human knowledge; he is taught, moreover, the doctrines and the evidences of his religion, the history of his country, and the leading features of its Constitution”.



The founders knew that only an educated populace, jealous of their rights, would be strong enough to resist the usurpation of their liberties by government. Today many people know nothing of our true history, or the source of our rights.

The mission of The Federalist Project is to get people the history public schools don't teach to motivate them to push back at the erosion of our liberties and restore constitutionally limited small government.

What we do:

Use social media to better educate Americans on:

- Our true American History, and what the public schools left out.
- What History tells us about current events.
- The Constitution, and why our form of government is the best ever developed.

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