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Beginnings of Public Education
in North Carolina

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY
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BY
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9. CALDWELL LETTERS ON POPULAR EDUCATION.

LETTERS
ON
POPULAR EDUCATION,
ADDRESSED
TO THE PEOPLE
OF
NORTH CAROLINA.

Title page of the
collected letters as
published.

How can he rule well in a commonwealth
Who knoweth not himself in rule to frame?
How should he rule himself in mental health
Who never learned one lesson for the same?
If such catch harm, their parents are to blame:
For needs must they be blind, and blindly led,
Where no good lesson can be taught or read.
Cav. in Mir. for Mag.

HILLSBOROUGH:
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1832.

PREFACE.

Report of 1825 committee work of the chairman.

A few years ago the attention of our Legislature was directed upon the subject of general education. They closed their proceedings upon it at that time by appointing a standing committee of four persons from the community at large, to whom it was prescribed to consider the subject of popular education through the ensuing year, and report to the Assembly at its next Session. That committee never met and no opportunity was afforded of comparing the sentiments of its members in personal conference. Towards the close of the year a paper drawn up by the chairman was sent to the other members for perusal, that if no other should have been prepared, and they should express their assent to such a measure, it might pass as a report to the Legislature. It detailed a plan conformable with the practice of some other states in the east and north, with provisions adapting it to our own circumstances. Objections were not raised to the measure, and it was presented as a report. As a basis it called for the creation of funds so vast as to preclude all hopes that it would be deemed practicable, and the anticipated issue was verified, that the ways and means necessary to its accomplishment, were of themselves an insuperable objection.

Plan called for too vast expenditures.

Caldwell's plan of public education embodied in these letters.

The writer of these letters, it may be recollected, was honored with an appointment on that committee, and it will not be strange that himself or any other person on whom the eye of the Legislature had been thus particularly turned, should feel some sense of obligation to reflect more fully on the subject, and engage in further researches as longer time and larger opportunity might put them within his power. He feels himself to be standing on ground somewhat different from that which he would have continued to occupy, had the appointment never occurred.

From the circumstances, as they have been explained, it might be concluded, that all he has to think or say on the

subject of popular education is already before the public, which now at least, and for three years past would not do justice to his opinions and views. Had the writer been called upon at any time within this compass, to explain such a scheme of elementary education as would be preferable to all others, especially in our circumstances, and which instead of being impracticable can with the utmost facility be commenced and carried forward into execution without delay, the system he would have proposed is fully exhibited in these letters. They have occupied no small portion of his inquiries on a subject which involves the very highest interest of the State. He has now discharged what, with such views as he had, he could not but consider as a duty, and to his fellow citizens, he cheerfully leaves the consideration and disposal of it.

In these letters remarks have been made freely upon the past and present method of schools in our own state. It may appear that injustice is done to many respectable and useful men, acting in the occupation of schoolmasters. It is hoped that these strictures will not be understood as pointed upon individuals, or upon the profession. It is to this class of society that the writer himself belongs. Is it not natural that he should be jealous for its honor? He is fully aware of the proper distinction between the truly respectable and worthy, and others who are wholly unmeet for the trust, in principles, character and qualifications. If a proper system of education were established, these would no longer appear as blots upon the profession. Instead of securing its high and important purposes to the community, they have exerted an influence baneful to an extent which none can tell, and have been most accountable for the reproach in which all education is now held by multitudes throughout the state.

No intended reflection on real teachers.

Chapel Hill, Oct. 17, 1832.

LETTERS ON EDUCATION.

LETTER I.

Fellow Citizens,

Letters originally
appeared in the
Raleigh Register.

The substance of these letters was commenced in publication more than two years ago, in a different form, with the signature of Cleveland, in the Raleigh Register. It soon appeared that, from failure of health and inevitable avocations, my purpose could not then be prosecuted. From the postponement, greater opportunity has been given of revolving the subject, and maturing the plan it was then intended to suggest, of popular education. I believe, however, that nothing material has since occurred to change the views then contemplated, and they are now presented in the form of letters, instead of numbers with the chosen signature.

Any plan of educa-
tion must consider
the conditions
peculiar to North
Carolina.

I have no need to inform you that my life has been much, may I not say exclusively conversant with the subject of education. It has been passed too, among your selves, in habitual familiarities with the necessities of the state, its difficulties, the habits of the people, your peculiar sentiments on the subjects of legislation, and on the nature and extent of the means at once in unison with your inclinations and commensurate with your resources. The necessity of such information for the construction of plans to advance the interests and meliorate the condition of the people is indisputable. The writer of these letters is fully sensible of the deficiency of any pretensions he can properly make to a competent share of this species of qualification, compared with what might be rationally expected from the circumstances in which he has been acting for more than five and thirty years, and in comparison too with many others of his fellow citizens, who have enjoyed far less opportunities in reference to this particular subject. It has been his object however, to discipline his views

to the particular circumstances of his countrymen whose welfare he would consult, and to exclude everything which would be impracticable or hopeless for want of concurrence with their established modes of motives and action, while he should forever repudiate the thought of urging one consideration, or recommending one step, perceived to be variant from integrity, and in the practical adoption of which he is not prepared to make common cause with his countrymen to its utmost issue.

When a people have continued long in one course of legislation, when they have frequently and habitually resisted essays made to diversify or enlarge it, any measure which looks beyond the limits of their ordinary action, must conspicuously embody advantages great and numerous and unquestionable, if it would hope for complacent consideration, much more for final acceptance. Should an innovation in any instance gain their assent, and through malformation or mismanagement unhappily fail to secure its object, the event will be pregnant with disappointment to all future efforts at improvement. If on the contrary it should prove successful, even inveterate prejudice may be weakened and dissolved and many things become easy which before were impossible.

An innovation in North Carolina legislation must embody great advantages to gain consideration.

There is perhaps no art or science in which greater improvement has been made than in that of education in primary schools. It has assumed a character wholly different from that of former times, and from that in which it still appears among ourselves. The mode of communicating instruction, the variety of which it consists, the interest ever kept alive in the bosom of the pupil, the exclusion of corporal punishment with which it is most successfully conducted, the activity and versatility to which it trains the intellectual faculties, the life and force which it imparts to the human affections, and the wide range of thought and knowledge which it opens before the reason and curiosity of the pupil, transcend the anticipated pictures even of an indulged imagination. Could we witness

Recent progress in primary education.

it in its processes and effects, its superior excellence would assuredly occur to us with a conviction as complete, as every one now feels in favor of the gin in preference to the fingers in the process of now cleaning cotton, of the steamboat compared with sails or oars, or of a locomotive engine carrying its numerous tons at twelve miles an hour, contrasted with the labor and plodding movement of wagons and horses, of which unhappily to our incalculable loss we are still fain to avail ourselves, over the sharp pinches, the floundering water pits and jolting obstacles of highways on which the hand of improvement has never operated. Nothing certainly is wanted but this ocular demonstration, to the resolute and instant adoption of all these astonishing and inestimable improvements which distinguish the generation of men and the age to which we belong, above the bygone ages and generations of the world. But to witness the present perfection of the school master's art is not our privilege, for its examples are too remote. And this presents an obstacle to any system of elementary schools we can recommend for the children of our state.

Examples of the perfection of the schoolmaster's art too remote.

Our aversion to taxation for support of schools.

Another obstruction meets us in our aversion to taxation beyond the bare necessities of government and the public tranquility. Any scheme of popular education must be capable of deriving existence originally, and of maintaining it perpetually, without taxing us for the purpose, or we are well aware that we shall not as a people consent to its establishment.

Indifference of many to the advantages of education.

A still further difficulty is felt in the indifference unhappily prevalent in many of our people on the subject of education. Vast numbers have grown up into life, have passed into its later years and raised families without it: and probably there are multitudes of whose fore-fathers this is no less to be said. Human nature is ever apt to contract prejudices against that which has never entered into its customs. Especially is this likely to be the case if there have been large numbers who were subject in com-

mon to our same defects and privations. They sustain themselves by joint interest and feelings against the disparagements and disadvantages of their condition. It becomes even an object to believe that the want of education is of little consequence; and as they have made their way through the world without it, better than some who have enjoyed its privileges, they learn to regard it with slight if not with opposition, especially when called to any effort or contribution of funds for securing its advantages to the children. Such are the woful consequences to any people who, in the formation of new settlements, have not carried along with them the establishment of schools for the education of their families. So strangely may the truth be inverted in the minds of men in such circumstances, that they become avowed partizans of mental darkness against light, and are sometimes seen glorying in ignorance as their privilege and boast. When a people lapse into this state, and there is reason to fear that multitudes are to be found among us of this description, it must be no small difficulty to neutralize their antipathy against education, and enlist them in support of any system for extending it to every family in the state.

Picture of the results of lack of education on the thinking of the masses.

I might mention further, as one of the greatest obstructions, the scattered condition of our population, over a vast extent of territory, making it difficult to embody numbers within such a compass as will make it convenient or practicable for children to attend upon instruction.

Sparse population.

A most serious impediment is felt in our want of commercial opportunities, by which, though we may possess ample means of subsistence to our families, money is difficult of attainment to build school houses and support teachers. Could the avenues of trade be opened to this agricultural people, funds would flow in from abroad, and resources would be created at home, which would make the support of schools and many other expenses to be felt as of no consequence. Excluded as we now are from the market of

Lack of commercial opportunities a great difficulty in the way of the support of schools.

the world, the necessity of rigid economy is urged against every expenditure however small, and the first plea which meets us, when the education of children is impressed upon parents is their inability to bear the expense. This is one principle reason why it has been thought that among all the improvements upon which we are called to engage for the benefit of the state, commercial opportunity shall be the first. With the enlargement of funds, every difficulty would vanish in the way to such improvements as are rapidly elevating other states to distinction and opulence.

Summary of difficulties in the way of supporting schools.

It appears then how numerous are the discouragements we have to encounter in framing any plan for popular education. Our habits of legislation have been long established, and their uniformity has in few instances been broken, from our first existence as a state. To provide for the education of the people, has unhappily never entered as a constituent part of these habits. We are wholly unaware of the immense improvements, which would render captivating to us if we could but witness them, the methods of instruction in elementary schools, now practiced in other parts of the world. Our aversion to taxation, even to provide for the education of poor children, is invincible, and extinguishes at once the hopes of any plan to the execution of which such means are necessary. The same fate awaits every scheme of education, which looks for success to the borrowing of funds. Through the influence of inveterate habit, large portions of our population have learned to look with indifference on education. But to what an appalling magnitude does this difficulty grow, when among many, a spirit of hostility is even boasted in behalf of ignorance against knowledge! We want resources too, and must for ever want them, not only for educating our children, but for every other improvement, so long as we are without commercial intercourse with the world.

I have already mentioned seven distinct causes of em-

barrassment in the organization of any plan for popular education. It were easy to extend the enumeration, but these will suffice to show the serious obstacles that meet us in the formation of a system of primary schools, to stagger our hopes of its acceptance with the people. An eighth, however, I must not omit, on account of its very great influence. It is seen in the aversion with which we recoil from laws that exercise constraint upon our actions. We are a people whose habits and wishes revolt at everything that infringes upon an entire freedom of choice upon almost every subject. It would be easy to elucidate how this has come to be a trait so deeply marked in our character, but its reality is unquestionable. Provision for general instruction can scarcely be effected, without some compulsory measures regulating the actions of individuals into particular channels directed upon the object. Every such measure is felt to be an entrenchment upon the indefinite discretion to which we tenaciously adhere, when a relinquishment of it is not absolutely indispensable.

Aversion to surrendering any personal liberty another difficulty in the way of public education

I am, fellow citizens, yours,

With the highest respect,

and best wishes for your welfare,

J. CALDWELL.

LETTER II.

Fellow Citizens,

Such difficulties as have been enumerated must be either avoided or overcome in any scheme which we would propose as practicable for popular education. And what is our object in the specification? Is it to discourage or induce the conclusion that the object is unattainable? Certainly not. If impediments must be encountered on our way to a distant spot to which we would travel, of these we ought to be well informed, lest we waste time or effort in arriving at it, or be wholly repulsed in the attempt. The obstacles appear numerous, and some are invincible, but let

Our duty to find a way around the difficulties.

us endeavor to select a course that will either shun or surmount them. As a total relinquishment, can we be reconciled to acquiesce in it, till every trial shall have been made, which may issue more happily.

We have not been in the habit of taxing ourselves for education.

We have been in certain habits of legislation, until they have become fixed upon us, and any deviation from these seems to be almost instinctively regarded with aversion. Among the objects for which we have, through our whole history been accustomed to provide, education is not one. But the reason why we have never acted upon the subject is confessedly, not because it has not been deemed desirable, but that the methods proposed for effecting it have depended upon taxation. Is there no course then to be taken, to which funds thus raised are unnecessary? If one may be found, the plea of mere habit is probably displaced with the cause to which our habit, on this point at least, owes its inveteracy.

All would favor public schools if they could see what was being done in other States.

If our indifference and inactivity in regard to popular education be in any degree due to the wretchedly imperfect methods of instruction in our primary schools; if a knowledge of the admirable height of improvement which they have reached in other states, and other parts of the world, would kindle an enthusiasm for the acquisition of their privileges, which would no longer brook delay, let us hope that this want of information and light is not so essential to the subject, as to be an insuperable impediment. In truth, I have no hesitation in averring that it does constitute a difficulty equal if not superior to any other with which we have to contend. We may venture to predict, that could every parent in North Carolina be present for a few hours only to witness the process of elementary schools as they are now conducted in New York, and Connecticut, and Massachusetts, the impressions they would produce could never be effaced, nor the impulse excited in his bosom repressed. Could the conviction attending such a scene be common to every head of the family in our state,

how soon would all hearts and all hands be united in some effort, which by the union would be irresistible.

With respect to the difficulty arising from our aversion to taxation, I am ready to admit, nay conclusively to affirm that it must and will be fatal to every scheme of popular education to which it is made necessary.

Taxation will be fatal to any plan.

As to a spirit of hostility against knowledge, and a determination upon principle to sustain the cause of ignorance and to exclude all education as a foe to human happiness, and to true republicanism, the portion of our people who hold such opinions, is too small to contend with the great body of our citizens, who for the honour of our state, it is verily believed, are of entirely different sentiments. If no system of primary instruction has been established among us by legislative action, it is not that N. Carolina is at enmity with the subject itself, but because her means have been thought inadequate to its accomplishment.

People can not be said to favor ignorance.

Our resources doubtless fail, for want of commercial privileges. But this obstacle, too, ceases, if some plan for the diffusion of education can be effected by means already at our command.

Other difficulties may be surmounted.

Lastly, it is true, we are a people, whose feelings may be said to be sensitive to the irksomeness of constraint. Let us then consult this feeling with all the delicacy in our power. Let us, if possible, contrive the structure of our schools so as not to depend upon compulsion but upon inducement. Let it lie principally upon the attractions of its charms. Let it avoid giving offence by the imposing sternness of its features.

It is not then to dishearten, that I have spoken in detail of such difficulties as meet us, in digesting a plan of popular education. The survey is attended with no dispiriting effect, if we can only keep clear of one or two principal obstructions, to which the rest owe their chief if not all their influence.

It will be forever vain to meditate plans of legislative action, if we persist in looking to means, which the people

Schemes of education by taxation only perpetuate party spirit and will ever fail.

have given prescriptive evidence that they will never adopt. Why continue to press schemes from year to year, involving the necessity of taxation? such projects may serve to amuse, to distract, to weaken. Party spirit, which is the bane of all wise and sound policy, is perpetuated from year to year, assumes a standing character, and is propagated among the people, poisoning the fountains of legislation. The halls of the Assembly become an arena to fight over again the same battles, in which it often happens that the best interests of the country are connected with the degradation of defeat. Success is made the test of merit. The strength of a cause is estimated not from the benefits with which it is pregnant to the state, but by the comparative numbers enlisted in its support or subversion, by adherence to a party, the agitations of hope and fear, and the delusions of artificial excitement. The triumphs of victorious opposition, even to an object so sacred and all important as the education of the people, are capable of covering the object itself with ignominy, through an indiscreet and persevering connection of it with loans and taxes to which our established feelings are in revolting and irreconcilable aversion.

The fate of former schemes of taxation for education should give us pause.

The laws and measures which have been urged upon us by the most unquestionable patriotism, and by minds of every rank in ability, and which have owed their prostration to the taxes proposed for their execution, who could attempt to enumerate? They lie entombed in the mouldering records of our legislative assemblies. Were each to occupy the space of earth usually allotted to a fellow mortal, no repository of the dead in the wide range of our state would be ample enough for their receptions. Let us take warning from their fate, and look to other means.

The people will accept an inexpensive voluntary plan of education.

Thousands of parents are ready to second any practicable system by which education may be accessible to their children. Let it be offered to their voluntary acceptance by the best methods of instruction, and at the least ex-

pense, and they will grasp with eagerness the proffered privilege. How can we imagine that a people like ourselves, living in an age of knowledge every where distributed through a thousand channels, can continue indifferent to its opportunities. There is not a wind of heaven, come from what quarter it may, which wafts not to our ears, improvements and discoveries that fill the world with activity and interest.

Can we sit contented to hear of them only in confused sounds, unable to examine for ourselves? Shall the eyes of a people so numerous, and prepared for the full exercise of every knowledge of personal and public freedom, continue wrapt in clouds and darkness? And shall not our imaginations, too, be set at liberty to delight themselves in the rich luxuriancy of their proper enjoyments, which the journals of travelers, the productions of genius, and publications of every discription, are daily offering to our contemplation? It is our boast that we live in an age fruitful in wonders both in art and knowledge. How deplorable is the condition of that man who is debarred all access to them by the use of books. To him who can read, the press is a watch-tower from whose summit he can extend his view over the whole earth, stretching into boundless prospects of harvests, and fruits and flowers, under a culture unexampled in the past ages of the world. To what but the press does the present generation owe its superior light? It is the vehicle by which we travel over every region of the globe, surveying its continents, islands, oceans, with their productions in endless diversity. The animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, the manners and customs of its tribes and nations, their governments, the causes of their happiness and their miseries, their institutions and inventions, superstitions and prejudices, their depravity and cruelty, their struggles for liberty, their forfeiture of its blessings by dissention, ambition, and by yielding themselves a prey to despotic power, are all made

Deplorable condition of the man who can not read.

to pass in review by the mysterious revelations of the press before the optics of the mind. Who that enjoys its opportunities can frame adequate conceptions of the dark prison of his thoughts who cannot read, and the contracted limits of his intellect? To him the lament of the poet is applicable, whom blindness by disease had shut up from the light of day.

“This to me returns not,
 But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
 Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
 Presented with a universal blank
 Of the world’s works, to me expunged and rased,
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.”

He lives indeed in the most enlightened period of the world, and the sun of knowledge is blazing in splendor around him, but he is enclosed in walls impenetrable to its beams, and he is sunk in the obscurity of a distant age.

Do we reflect, fellow citizens, on the multitudes who are in this dark and cheerless condition, constituting no small portion of our population? How many more of our generations must still grow up, to pass through life, surrounded with the gloom of three hundred years ago? Shall we not say with united voice, this evil is too grievous, too inglorious, and in its effects too mischievous to be borne? It must have a remedy and it must have it soon. Let us bring all the resources of our minds to bear anew upon the subject, and use the best means in our power to disseminate education through every county of the state, and among every portion of the people.

I am, fellow citizens,

Yours, with the highest respect.

J. CALDWELL.

LETTER III.

Fellow Citizens,

Two methods of providing for popular education occur in ordinary practice. One is voluntary, leaving it wholly to the discretion of the people themselves, without aid by the state; the other is by the intervention of the legislature. A third will appear in a combination of both. On the two former some explanation, as brief as I can make it, will help us to arrive at intelligent and satisfactory conclusions. This will be given in the present letter.

Three methods of popular education.

The first method is the one which we now practice. It consists in the origination and maintenance of a school in any neighborhood, by a voluntary combination among as many of the inhabitants as will agree. Its insufficiency is proved by all our past and present experience. A school house is to be erected at the common expense; a site for it is to be chosen with the consent of all; a master is to be found; a selection and approbation if there be more than one, is to be discussed and settled; his compensation and support must be fixed to the general satisfaction, and the time of continuance must be stipulated.

The voluntary plan we now follow; its evils.

Here are six principal points on every one of which dissemination of opinions, feelings and interests may spring up, to produce weakness or defeat. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the perplexities that meet us at every step, and the discouragement of failures and disappointments, until at last in a vast number of instances, the object is relinquished in despair.

The evil which is the greatest of all, is the want of qualified masters. It may be difficult to obtain a teacher at all, but it is pretty certain in the present state of the country, not one is perfectly fitted for the occupation. Do we think that of all the professions in the world, that of a school-master requires the least preparatory formation? If we do, there cannot be a more egregious mistake. For if any man arrived at years of maturity, who can read, write and

Lack of proper teachers the greatest evil; condition of the primary schools.

cypher, were taken up to be trained to the true methods of instructing and managing an elementary school, by a master teacher who understands them well, he could scarcely comprehend them and establish them in his habits in less than two years. This is not to speak with looseness and extravagance on the subject; and we need only to examine with opportunity of information, to be convinced of it as a practical truth. Yet in our present mode of popular education, we act upon the principle that school-keeping is a business to which scarcely any one but an idiot is incompetent, if he only knows reading, writing and arithmetic. If in almost every vicinage there happens to be one or a few who have more correct opinions, the numbers who think otherwise carry it over their heads, and our primary schools are kept sunk down to the lowest point of degradation, and education is disgraced by our own misconceptions and mismanagements.

Teaching regarded
with contempt.

In the present condition of society and of public opinion, the occupation of a school master in comparison with others, is regarded with contempt. It would be wonderful were it otherwise, when we look at the manner in which it is very often, if not most usually filled. Is a man constitutionally and habitually indolent, a burden upon all from whom he can extract a support? Then there is one way of shaking him off, let us make him a school master. To teach a school is, in the opinion of many, little else than sitting still and doing nothing. Has any man wasted all his property, or ended in debt by indiscretion and misconduct? The business of school-keeping stands wide open for his reception, and here he sinks to the bottom, for want of capacity to support himself. Has any one ruined himself, and done all he could to corrupt others, by dissipation, drinking, seduction, and a course of irregularities? Nay, has he returned from a prison after an ignominious atonement for some violation of the laws? He is destitute of character and cannot be trusted, but presently he opens

a school and the children are seen flocking into it, for if he is willing to act in that capacity, we shall all admit that as he can read and write, and cypher to the square root, he will make an excellent school master. In short, it is no matter what the man is, or what his manners or principles, if he has escaped with life from the penal code, we have the satisfaction to think that he can still have credit as a school-master.

Is it possible, fellow citizens, that in such a state of things as this, education can be in high estimation among us? Is it strange that in the eye of thousands, when education is spoken of, you can read a most distinct expression that it is a poor and valueless thing? Can we rationally hope that so long as a method of popular education as this shall be all to which we look, the great body of the people will become enlightened and intelligent? Will they be qualified to act in all the various relations of parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and servants, neighbors, members of the community, citizens of the state, subjects of providence and heirs of immortality? In all these capacities every child that grows up into life must necessarily act, and the teacher whose habits, views and dispositions do not qualify, and whose conscience does not urge him to instill into his pupils the principles, excite the emotions, and select the books best fitted to them all, is totally defective in the business of a school master, and has need to learn the first elements of his art. If any difficulty occurs as to the largeness of the qualifications of a common teacher, which seem here to be required in excess, it is a subject on which I propose to explain more fully afterwards, and will hope for a reference at present to the further remarks to be made upon it.

People's estimate of education degraded by the poor teaching done in the primary schools.

Every species of business may be executed with various degrees of ability, and men may differ in their opinions of such as possess skill of a higher order in their professions. But respecting such as possess no talent, no qualifi-

education, none can mistake. All must feel one common overpowering conviction that their pretensions are despicable. Let any profession be wholly consigned to occupants so wretchedly destitute of every qualification in skill or principle, let it be known to the people only in such defective and degrading forms, and how can it be otherwise than contemptible, and all that is connected with it of little or no worth?

The people must be given better teachers in order to change present conditions.

It is apparent then that popular education cannot be efficient, when left to the insignificance into which it sinks, with no other security for its prosecution than the accidental and voluntary action to which it is now left. So unvarying and universal has been this method of educating children among us, that to speak of schools and school masters modelled upon other plans, as they are understood and maintained in other parts of the world, would probably expose a man to the charge of romancing, or at least as recommending something to us wholly unattainable, and fitted only to men of different attributes and capabilities from our selves. This plan of popular schools, hitherto, the only one we know, is so meagre and deformed in its features, and rickety in its constitution, that its repulsiveness prevents many from the use of it, who have not a doubt that education is of the utmost importance to the young, to families and to the population of a free state. The mind is a proper subject of cultivation, as much at least as the soil which we subdue and mellow for a harvest. Its powers must be developed, and its affections moulded by an informing and plastic hand. It should have the knowledge of letters, and the easy use of them, both in reading and with the pen. These are the portals which should be thrown open to all, that they may have free access to the information of the age. These are essential; but to know how to read and write are but a part of the great objects of early education.

Good and evil dispositions must be distinguished, and

habits established of feeling and thinking and acting. Reading and writing are but instruments for forming the mind. All this would be admitted, nay strenuously asserted by many, if not by every individual. But when the concession is made, when the conviction is complete, and we turn to the means of securing these advantages for children, how are all our ardors suddenly arrested and congealed, as soon as we turn to the only means for forming their principles and dispositions. The school house too often presents itself to the eye as a region infested with mists and noxious reptiles, and poisonous plants, and among these the dearest objects of our affections must be placed, that they may have access by reading and writing to the springs of knowledge and intellectual life.

That education in our primary schools should be held in low estimation, is but a natural consequence of the circumstances in which it is acquired. It never can be valued so long as they continue. The resources to which we have been left through our whole progress as a people, being of this character, the consequence is well known that thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, are left to grow up unable to read at all. Experience has made it undisputable that the plan which we have practiced, if plan it can be called, is a total failure so far as North Carolina is concerned. Can evidence be wanting of its deplorable consequences, when it is by no means rare to hear men directing upon education a derision which would imply that they can deem it a glory and a privilege to be without it? I have been placed in circumstances, and there are few I fear who have not been similarly situated, where it would be dangerous to the election of a candidate to have it thought that he had any pretensions to information or culture, at least beyond a bare capacity to read. And some miserable being, to secure the great object of his ambition, has frontlessly presented it as a sure and glorious passport to success over the head of a rival, who was so unfortu-

nate as to have had some education, that he belonged to the class of the ignorant, with whom the greater part considered it their glory to be ranked.

We see, then, the consequences of educating children by such wretched methods as we commonly practice. Thus it will always continue to be, so long as these methods are retained. We dress up the occupation of a school master in rags. It appears in hideous deformity by our own arrangement. It is no wonder if that which we intended for the figure of a man, cannot be thought of otherwise than as a laughing stock a by word, or a scarecrow, and then education is put down as a questionable subject. Nay, it becomes a thing of scorn and reproach. The repulsive and disgraceful forms in which it appears, have been given to it by ourselves, in the crudity of our own misconceptions. Where is the subject or the personage that may not be exposed to derision and rejection by a similar process?

And how shall the confidence and the affections of the people be regained? It is by stripping off the offensive and contemptible disguise, and presenting education in all the beauty and excellence of her proper character. No sooner shall this be done, than all will fall in love with her. Her presence will be courted as the privilege and ornament of every vicinage, and under her patronage the clouds and mists that lower upon us will be dissipated.

With the highest respect,

I am your obedient servant,

J. CALDWELL.

Fellow Citizens,

My last letter was occupied in showing that inefficiency of the mode of popular education, which has been our sole dependence in North-Carolina, and the pernicious effects it produces in harassing those who look to it, in disappointing their wishes, and in planting and in propagating prejudices upon the whole subject of knowledge and education.

We saw that from disagreements among neighbors when schools are to be instituted, from the incompetency of teachers, their total ignorance of their profession, the profligacy, idle habits and degeneracy by which many of them are characterized, such a method of elementary instruction has left us overwhelmed in thick darkness amidst a firmament gleaming with the brightness of the most enlightened age. It is in a persevering adhesion to this system, if system it can be called, that it has become fashionable with many to deery education as a thing of no value, and as qualifying men, not for distinguished usefulness and integrity, but for dexterity in the arts of cunning and selfishness. So long as we continue these methods of educating children, it threatens an envelopement in denser clouds of obscurity and prejudice. It surely behooves us to make good our escape from it without delay, from the baleful effects it has already produced, and which it will surely multiply upon us, if it cannot be replaced by something better.

Another system which in our circumstances however is beyond our reach, it is my purpose now to explain, for the single reason that it comes upon us with reiteration from year to year, with no other consequence than to occupy our time, to distract the public mind, and to dishearten us with efforts terminating in abortion. It is the method practiced in some of our sister states, especially in Connecticut, New York and others. In these states, through time, and by such resources as they could command, a vast school fund has been treasured up, to such an amount as a million and a half of dollars. By the annual interest of these funds, schools are supported for educating every child in the country. The state is divided into districts of convenient size, a school house is erected in each, and teachers are either partially or entirely maintained by appropriations from the proceeds of the school fund. In New York a district is not entitled to aid until it can report authenti-

The Connecticut plan of education will not be adopted here.

cally that it has already provided a school-house, and is prepared to pay a certain sum towards the support of a teacher.

Calculation to show that the plans of other States can not be carried out here.

Let us now enter into some computation, to see whether such a plan is within our power. If it be not, it is useless to think of it. It is worse than useless, it is time misspent on projects which must end in baffling disappointment. To make the subject plain, let us begin with the supposition of a single school in each county of North Carolina, and that fifty dollars, only, are annually allowed from a school-fund for its support. This supposition is put not with the idea that one school is enough for a county, or fifty dollars for its maintenance, but for further calculations.

The state containing sixty-four counties, an allowance of fifty dollars to each, calls for an annual expenditure of three thousand two hundred dollars. The capital necessary to yield this interest at six per cent. is 53,333 dollars. Hence the following table is easily framed, showing the capital which must be accumulated for the maintenance of schools, from one to sixteen in each county, at fifty dollars each. Fractions are omitted, except in gaining other numbers from the preceding.

TABLE I.

For 1 school to a county, at \$50 per annum a capital must be created and kept at interest of.	\$53.333
For 2 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	\$106.666
3 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	160.000
4 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	213.333
5 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	266.666
6 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	320.000
7 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	373.333
8 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	426.666
9 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	480.000
10 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	533.333
11 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	586.666
12 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	640.000

13 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	693.333
14 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	746.666
15 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	800.000
16 schools to a county, at \$50 each.....	853.333

The counties are very different in size; and the schools assigned must vary in number, according to the circumstances. Taking thirty-two miles square for the extent of the counties one with another, and allotting a school to a space eight miles square, each county would have sixteen schools. In this case the distance which some children must go to a school is at least four miles, but they would be those only who lived at the limits of the square. For sixteen schools to a county, a fund of eight hundred and fifty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-three dollars must be vested at interest, to pay fifty dollars a year to every school. The table shows us by inspection the fund required for any less number of schools.

But it will hardly be thought that fifty dollars a year will be sufficient for the maintenance of a school. A hundred would probably be too little, but let us take that sum for exemplification. The following table is furnished upon the same basis, and we have only to double the former numbers:

TABLE II.

For 1 school to a county, at \$100 per ann....	\$106.666	
2 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	213.333	Further calculations.
3 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	320.000	
4 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	426.666	
5 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	533.333	
6 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	640.000	
7 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	746.666	
8 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	853.333	
9 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	960.000	
10 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	1,066.666	
11 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann....	1,173.333	
12 schools per annum, at \$100 per ann....	1,280.000	

13 schools per annum, at \$100 per ann. . . .	1,356.666
14 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann. . . .	1,493.333
15 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann. . . .	1,600.000
16 schools to a county, at \$100 per ann. . . .	1,706.666

It is probably unnecessary to explain the use of this tabular statement. It is obvious that the fund necessary for the annual disbursement requisite for sixteen schools to a county at \$100 each is one million seven hundred and six thousand six hundred and sixty-six dollars.

We can now see the extent of our enterprise, if we undertake to provide for popular education upon the plans of New York, Connecticut and some other states. If 150 dollars be allowed to each school instead of 100, the numbers of both tables must be united to exhibit the requisite funds.

No hope to raise such a large sum.

But the essential question occurs, How shall the funds be created which the tables show for executing such a system? That it will be done by taxation, there is no prospect. To raise a fund of a million and a half dollars, we must be taxed to the amount of a hundred thousand dollars annually for fifteen years. Is this within the limits of probability? It is presumed that no one will announce that it is. Were we taxed at the rate of fifty thousand dollars a year, thirty years must pass away before the fund would be completed. Both the amount of the tax, and the postponement of the time, are enough singly to preclude all thought of such a measure.

Present taxation of 75 cents on each poll regarded as oppressive.

Our habits are at variance with taxation for any purpose, beyond the bare necessities of governmental subsistence. Even this levy it is our anxious and ever exerted effort to reduce to the very lowest point by every device of legislation. The tax now paid by the people for the support of our state government is twenty-five thousand dollars a year. Have we any doubt whether the sum is so small as this? The Bank stock owned by the state, I am informed, amounts to seven hundred and fifty thousand

dollars. The annual revenue derived from it into the treasury, at six percent is forty-five thousand dollars. If the expenses of our state government be seventy thousand, no more than twenty-five thousand are necessary beyond the interest of the stock to make up the sum, and this is not twenty cents to the poll. It is evident that I speak of bank stock in its ordinarily productive state.

Of county taxation we cannot speak with precision. In no two counties is it probably the same, and it fluctuates in each county from year to year, with the emergencies with which it is to provide. It is for those who are better informed than I am, to say whether it is likely to be more than such a sum as fifty cents to the taxable poll, upon an average through the state. Admitting this, our annual taxation in North Carolina, is at the rate of seventy-five cents to every taxable poll. If there be any mistake in these statements it is easily corrected, but it is presumed the result will not differ much from the truth. Such taxation as this, we should think, must be too small to excite discontent. But who does not know that it is habitually urged as subject of complaint, if not as oppressive. Now if while it is so inconsiderable, we have our eye ever solicitously directed upon its diminution, how shall we expect that any plan of popular education shall be accepted and carried into execution, to which additional taxation to the extent of a hundred thousand dollars a year, or fifty thousand dollars a year, or even a much smaller sum, becomes necessary for fifteen or thirty years to come?

It is now submitted to the dispassionate consideration of those who look to New York, or Connecticut, for plans of popular education, whether the proposal and discussion of them is likely to be attended with any other consequences than apprehension in the general mind that the whole subject of education is hopeless. Is it not better to drop them, and turn our eye to a different direction? There may possibly be other methods of accomplishing the object.

Better to drop the
idea of schools by
taxation.

Let us not despair that one may be devised susceptible of execution by means within our power. In one assurance at least we may rest with satisfaction, that if our time may be lost in adopting this course, in cleaving to the other it certainly will.

No hope that bonds will be issued.

Nor can we look with better hopes to the consent of the state to borrow the necessary funds. To loans as well as taxes for all purposes such as these, we have ever shown an invincible dislike. It is in vain to urge the authority and the example of other states. We may lament over the losses both of moral and pecuniary wealth to an incalculable amount perpetuated through every year of our existence, by what we may call our unhappy prejudices against a taxation which we should not feel, and against raising funds by loan to be attended with immense profits to the state; but to what end shall we repine, and vent our regrets in the most flowing and eloquent strains? We wish to provide a system of elementary schools. If we would busy ourselves with the least prospect of success, let us avoid placing it upon the issue of loans and taxes. While the spirit now ascendant shall continue to reign in our political atmosphere, the vessel which shall have the hardihood to venture freighted with these, may for a while buffet the surge. Her friends may with momentary exultation exclaim,

Her path is o'er the mountain wave;
but soon it shall be as a doom pronounced upon her,

Her home is in the deep.

I am yours, with the highest respect,

J. CALDWELL.

LETTER IV.

Fellow Citizens,

Qualified teachers necessary whatever plan of education is adopted.

I have mentioned some difficulties in the way of making provision for general education, most of which it is probably in our power to supersede. But one there is, of which

in our present situation, that is not to be said, and until it is removed it would prove alike fatal to all that could be proposed. It is the want of teachers qualified for the business of instruction, whatever be the mode of instituting and maintaining schools. To no purpose should we create a capital of a million and a half or two millions of dollars, if school masters could not be called into action competent to their office. This is a truth as vital as it is unquestionable. Teachers are necessary instruments to every system of popular education, and here, as in everything else, without the means, the end cannot be accomplished. It is a part of the subject, on which if it be not understood, it is most difficult to give the necessary explanation. Doubtless there are many, to whom a want of instruction would appear least likely to produce any embarrassment. For who is there able to read, write and cipher, who cannot teach a school? If there be any who have such opinions as these, an error more essential cannot be held upon any subject. That I may not appear to be speaking things extravagant and without authority, permit me to quote the opinions and declarations of others.

It will be seen in the course of these letters, that an institution for preparing school masters for their profession is regarded as necessary, and in the first instant at least as a competent provision in our own state, for general education. To this thought as an original conception by me I make no pretensions. It has been often urged and sometimes adopted in practice in other parts of the world. In the year 1826, Gov. Lincoln addressed the legislature of Massachusetts upon the subject in these terms: "The qualifications of instructors deserve much more of care and attention. To the great honor and happiness of the commonwealth, this employment has become an extensively desirable and lucrative occupation. It may be safely computed that the number of male teachers, engaged by the

School for training teachers.

towns annually, for the whole or parts of the year, does not fall short of twenty-five hundred different individuals, to which, if the number of female instructors, and those employed in private schools be added, the aggregate would amount to many thousands. Knowledge in the art of governing, and a facility in communicating instruction, are attainments in the teacher of indispensable importance to proficiency by the pupil. These talents are as much to be acquired by education, as are the sciences themselves. It will merit the consideration of the legislature, whether the provision for the preparation of a class of men to become the instructors of youth in the public schools, is not among the highest inducements to the measure, and should be an object of primary and definite arrangement."

"Nothing surely," says the *Journal of Education*, "can be more beneficial to the interests of our state, than the establishment of a seminary, which may furnish a constant supply of well educated teachers, prepared to enter on their office with accomplished minds, and enlightened views of the whole subject of education, as well as the best practical qualifications for instruction. Such a seminary cannot fail soon to become so popular as to support itself. But all its actual success must depend on the liberality with which it must be enabled to commence its operations; for a poor and imperfect institution, instead of promoting the object desired, would unavoidably fix and entail a low standard of qualifications on the part of instructors, and consequently a low state of public education."

Public education has never been neglected in Massachusetts. The first settlement of the state commenced with provisions for popular schools, that not a child should grow up in the new republic uneducated. It was felt to be a first principle, that in a free and popular state every member of it ought to be enlightened. These were men as strictly tenacious of original and inherent rights as any whose names are recorded upon the page of history. Are they to be considered as committing a breach upon these

Even Massachusetts has found such a school necessary.

rights, when they established laws for educating the children of the state? Such laws have ever been maintained through their whole progress to the present hour. We should suppose that among such a people, an ample supply of men could always be found well qualified to act as school masters. Yet we have seen what were the sentiments of one of their governors upon the subject and his recommendation to the legislature, that a seminary should be forthwith instituted for training teachers to the business of their vocation. In North Carolina no provision has ever been made for the maintenance of schools. Our population have spread themselves over the soil to the utmost limits of a large state, and the education of families has been wholly excluded from our policy. Is it likely, then, were we to adopt any plan of popular education at present, it could be carried into effect, without such an institution for preparing instructors, as is deemed necessary even in Massachusetts.

It is well known to have been an object for many years past in British India, to discover and put in practice the most effectual methods of diffusing christian civilization among the population of that country. It was in the prosecution of this object that Bell instituted his system of mutual instruction. It was soon considered as the most successful plan of instruction in elementary schools. Its peculiarities were so various, and so much depended upon familiar acquaintance in the teacher with these peculiarities, that few could adopt them from description, and none could fully understand and apply them in practice without witnessing the processes through which the pupils were passed in the whole course of their education. It was on this account deemed expedient to establish institutions called "Central Schools," whose purpose was to train up teachers qualified to take charge of schools as they might be formed in every place, and conduct them with the necessary skill. The reason why they were denominated

Bell's plan of central teachers' schools in India.

Central Schools, obviously occurs. They were points of eminence, fountains of light, from which knowledge was to be propagated in every direction, till it should reach the extremities of the empire. From the "*Christian Observer*," a publication second to none of the present age in talent and benevolent spirit I extract a brief notice, touching upon the subject of Central Schools, shortly after their commencement in 1820.

"The president and the members of the Bombay School Committee, after having provided for the education of European and Christian children of both sexes, have at length turned their serious consideration to the means best calculated for extending the blessings of intellectual cultivation to the native children of India.

"The result of this consideration has been the proposal of a plan, so palpably beneficial that it has already met with the complete approbation of the assemblies of two classes of the native inhabitants.

"A Mohammedan youth, the son of a Sepoy in the office of the chief secretary to government, who has received instruction for about a year at the Central School in the town of Bombay, gave, in the course of a rigid examination, such proofs of his capacity to convey to his countrymen the rudiments of tuition in English, on the plan of Dr. Bell, that the first class of upwards of twenty Parsee children was to be placed under his care. A prospectus of the proposed plan is now printing for the purpose of distribution, in order to diffuse among the native inhabitants a more general knowledge of the means about to be offered them, of educating their children more extensively, economically, and effectually, than has hitherto been in their power. A teacher of the Guzerattee has declared himself ready to attend the Central School, in order to prepare himself for instruction on Bell's Plan*."

* See *Christian Observer* for year 1820, p. 528.

Seminaries then for training teachers to act with ability in their profession, were established and proved of the highest benefit as early as 1820. It has been customary for such as wish to improve the art of education, and learn its best methods, to visit personally the institutions which have been thought to exhibit the best models. Scarcely a traveller passes through Switzerland, who does not make it a special object to visit Fellenburg's seminary at Hoffwyl, and formerly it was no less customary to look with inquiry into that of Pestalozzi at Yverdun. Lancaster's system was similar to Dr. Bell's, and who knows not the curiosity which has prompted numbers to witness the regulations of his schools where they have been ably conducted? The modes of business may be viewed for an hour or two with gratification, and we may become enlightened and convinced in regard to the best methods of instruction. But the art of teaching by these and other methods as they have advanced to perfection through many years past, is not to be acquired and appropriated in a moment. The knowledge of them is to be gained by minute study, the habits of its application in practice are to be established, the principles upon which the teacher is to live, and feel and act in his profession, must be planted and grow into strength, that he may intelligently and conscientiously adhere to them and take delight in them, and his dispositions and affections must be formed to the proper charities of his office. Do we think that all this can be comprehended, and assumed and confirmed in any individual in a moment, and that all we have to do is to pronounce that he shall be a school master, to convert him into a fit character to our hands? Such was not the opinion of Gov. Clinton on the subject.

"In the first place," said he in 1827, "there is no provision for the education of competent teachers. Of the eight thousand now employed in the state of New York, too many are destitute of the requisite qualifications. Per-

Fellenburg's school in Switzerland, and others, examples.

Gov. Clinton on the education of teachers.

haps one-fourth of our population is annually instructed in our common schools, and ought the minds and morals of the rising generations to be entrusted to the guardianship of incompetence? The scale of instruction must be elevated; the standard of education ought to be raised, and a central school on the monitorial plan ought to be established in each county, for the education of teachers, and as examples for other momentous purposes, connected with the improvement of the human mind.”*

What 200 trained teachers could do in this State.

It is no new undigested, or untried project, then, which is recommended to your adoption. If at this moment two hundred teachers could be produced from among us in the different counties of the state, all well accomplished for the direction of primary schools and universally known to have been formed and disciplined under a head master eminently skilled and of established reputation in the monitorial methods of instruction, we may assert with confidence that not a month would pass away, before they would be called into action. Nor would there be danger that we would be overstocked. The new methods of government, the unexampled alacrity of the pupils, the rapidity of their advancement, the evident influence upon their principles and habits, the total elevation of mind and heart under such tuition, would present the advantages of education they would impart with irresistible conviction. At the end of a single year it is not to be doubted that requisition would be importunately urged for a far more numerous body of the same description.

We could use the interest of the Literary Fund to establish a teachers' school.

It is in our power without delay to commence an efficient plan of popular education, by providing such a corps of instructors and offering them to the people upon terms to which few or none could think beyond their ability. We have a literary fund to the amount of eighty or a hundred thousand dollars. Let it forthwith be profitably invested. Let its annual interest be applied for the erection of a central school, that is, an institution for prepar-

*Journal of Education, Vol. II, p. 118.

ing school masters upon the most improved methods of instruction. Let a head teacher be selected with time and opportunity for inquiry, from the whole field of the United States, and a salary be allowed him, to take charge of the institution, and in the central school let him train men sent to it from all the counties of the state, or at least from such as shall think proper to avail themselves of the opportunity. A single year need not pass, after teachers thus formed should have commenced their operations, till a demand for them would be heard, clamorous for more than could be supplied. Give us such teachers as those, would be the cry, and we too will have a school for our children. I am, fellow citizens,

Yours, most respectfully,

J. CALDWELL.

LETTER VI.

Fellow Citizens,

My object in the preceding letters has been to explain the reasons for circumscribing and concentrating our views upon a plan for effecting popular education, which is now to be detailed. We have looked at the obstacles which usually meet us upon this subject, to which is to be ascribed an abortion of such laws as are commonly proposed for its accomplishment.

Purpose of former letters.

Let a central school be instituted by the legislature, for the purpose of educating and preparing instructors of elementary schools for their profession. It is denominated a central school not because its situation is necessarily to be in or near the center of the state, but because wherever it is it will be a point or focus from which education is to emanate with diffusion to every part of the country. The provision of it evidently implies that the business of an instructor in popular schools, is itself an art not to be comprehended, and established in the habits of an individual, without much time, education and discipline for its forma-

Central school for preparation of teachers; necessity for it.

tion to it. It implies too, that the methods and results of education in these primary schools have become vastly, nay totally different, in their present advanced stage of improvement, from school keeping as it is for the most part still practiced among us. For the reality of this it is not asked of any who have not had opportunity of information, that they take it for granted from the declaration of the individual. Numbers among ourselves can attest it to a greater or less extent by their knowledge, and the world abounds with publications to illustrate and confirm it. Some examples of this evidence have been selected, and are presented in an appendix to these letters. Let even these few be carefully perused, and it will begin to appear that so various and comprehensive are the objects of well trained and qualified teachers at present in their profession, that a man can scarcely be supposed to become intelligent, prompt and skillful, in less than eighteen months or two years, with diligent and well guided application through the whole time. In its merits and the importance of its effects, it claims the first attention of a people. It befits the dignity of the wisest and most enlightened legislature, and is worthy to be sustained by the zeal and energies of the state.

Central school to have two years' course of study.

Cost of education to the people would not be increased.

Nor is it to be supposed that the education we recommend is too extensive or costly. The expense of such schools as we propose will probably be the same as it is in the present common schools of the country, or but little different. The time allowed to it by the parent will be discretionary with himself, while the whole manner and value of the instruction will be incomparably superior. With unhesitating confidence we may affirm that it would redeem the cause of education from the deplorable degradation to which it is sunk, and the public mind, by the convictions it would produce, would undergo a total regeneration in its sentiments upon the subject.

A board of education being appointed by the legislature,

consisting of men wisely and dispassionately selected, their first business would be to determine the site of the institution. The choice would properly be governed by the circumstances of health, cheapness of living, vicinage, facilities proffered, peculiar adaptation of service to the objects in view, the easy constitution and maintenance of a primary school for exemplification, accommodation to the whole state, and possibly proximity to the seat of the legislature.

Central school board; observation school.

A head master or principal teacher must be sought out and appointed to take charge of the institution. As the success and efficacy of every plan of public education must chiefly depend upon its execution, nothing will be of greater import than a happy choice of the master who is to manage the details of the institution, and stand as a pilot at the helm. He should be one uniting much experience, sound discretion, a vigorous and well regulated mind, correct principles, regular habits of life, and a heart ardent with the benevolence of training up the rising generation to usefulness, the social virtues, to all the "charities of father, son and brother," and to the best prospects of a happy immortality. By past fidelity and success he should have already given proof of a mind fertile in resources, adapting itself to occurrences, and replenished with expedients practically ascertained in the most distinguished institutions during many years past, while the arts of education have been rapidly advancing to their present perfection.

Teachers for the central school; importance of a trained principal.

I might enlarge much on the selection of the principal; but though numbers may be found who combine all these qualifications eminently, and at least sufficiently, for it is honorable to our age that it is singularly productive of characters thus accomplished, many might distrust the possibility. They might apprehend that if our success is to depend on the discovery and employment of such a teacher, our hopes are scarcely to be admitted as feasible.

It is true that if we must find him among ourselves, our efforts might end in disappointment. Nor let it be imagined that this is said from an opinion that our own population does not furnish as large a proportion of mind as any other upon earth, susceptible of every capacity and accomplishment we could desire. But we will know that the methods of primary education have been but little cultivated among us, and it is a necessary consequence that they must be less understood here, than in parts of the world where they have been assiduously studied, and reduced to practice with the best opportunities.

The school interior.

The principal should be a member of the board of education, and it would be of consequence, could the appointment be previously made, that he should be liberally consulted respecting the form, the size, the extent of school rooms, and on their furniture and its disposition, that the various purposes of a whole system may be best consulted, every movement performed with order and facility, and the whole management be conducted with interest to the scholar, and a distinct understanding between himself and the teacher. Schoolrooms thus constructed become patterns, no less than the modes of instruction, to the teachers reared in the central school, to the best proficiency in their vocation.

Duties of the
Principal.

Lectures are there to be given by the principal, on the different methods of instruction, the ends to be kept in view, and the true means of success in their attainment. The manner of addressing the minds of the children, and of influencing their affections would be explained. The benevolent, elevated, and pure principles which properly characterise the profession of a teacher, would be set before the candidate for the office, until they should be admired, imbibed and become habitual to his bosom, and flow forth in his actions and intercourse. The consequence must be that he would be captivated with their harmonies, their moral beauties and their effects. He would carry them

out into the practice of his occupation. He would prefer and enjoy them for their excellence, improve upon them with intelligence and a virtuous emulation, and persevering in them from choice, would elevate the standard of knowledge and morals in the community which had chosen and patronized him for these generous and important purposes.

The literary fund of North Carolina, if I mistake not, amounts to a hundred thousand dollars. This is amply sufficient for the creation and support of the institution of which we speak. Let the money, bank stock, and other property of which it consists, be examined and the means devised of converting the whole, or as much of it as possible, into active and productive stock at the rate of six per cent. The annual revenue from it would be six thousand dollars. The buildings should be of the plainest sort. Nothing supernumerary beyond necessity and a plain accommodation, should be permitted to enter into their composition. Their use is for men with whom utility is to be the object of supreme value, and who should be enured to pursue this with an inflexible purpose, putting down everything that is enjoyment or convenience only and yet not indispensable, under their feet, as of minor consideration. Such views should be sedulously interspersed and incorporated into the whole texture of their education, by the master who disciplines them, and by the government which calls them into action. Health and the propagation of knowledge in the elementary education of the state, should be the great objects kept steadily in view, and no considerations of bare indulgence or ease should be permitted to interfere. The man whether young or of middle age, who will not adopt these principles, and be faithful to them in practice, through his whole course in the central school, giving assurance that he is not to relinquish them in future life, it were better at once to set aside, as one that has put his hand to the plough and is looking back. Let us admit no weak fears that men enough cannot be found in every

The present Literary Fund of \$100,000 will support the schools; guiding principles.

county in the state to accept the conditions and abide by them. Perseverance for a time, with rigorous adherence to this system, will clear away all obstructions, and give the education of our school masters a true and constant direction. Upon this species of discipline in the institution, the eye of the principal of the board of education, and of the legislature should be specifically and vigilantly directed every day and month and year of its history.

The buildings constructed with simplicity and the utmost plainness, need not cost much. But let them not be abridged of ought that is really necessary to the efficacy of business.

Introduction of manual labor to be considered.

Whether grounds should be annexed for manual labor, and to aid in the subsistence of the candidates, is an inquiry worthy of consideration. Beside hardy exercise united with usefulness, it would tend to rescue bodily toil from the degradation which is connected with it, by a cause of unhappy operation among ourselves. Such employment would act powerfully in preventing the candidate from being corrupted by impressions that he is to be regarded as one entitled to privileges and exemptions. He is to be a man that knows no vain distinctions between himself and the humblest citizen of the state. On this subject it is of the utmost importance that his views and feelings be steadily conformable with the true and correct standard of usefulness and virtue. His proper maxim is: He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

\$6,000 sufficient for buildings to begin with.

The sum of six thousand dollars is competent to the preparation of the buildings, and to place the principal upon a salary from the beginning. Parts may afterwards be added, as necessity may require. Observation, experience, larger information, may doubtless suggest improvements, which it will be easy to supply.

Summary of the foregoing letter; an appeal.

The literary fund now lies dormant and unproductive. The education of the people sustains an ever during cry in

our ears, with an importunity that is heard in every household, in our streets and highways, our fields and workshops, our schools and churches, our courts of justice and our halls of legislation. Shall we delay a moment to listen to the summons, when it is in our power to act? Should it be thought expedient to continue the enlargement of the literary fund in accordance with views originally meditated by the legislature, the instant application of that which has already been created, cannot interfere with such a purpose. No scheme of public education can ever be carried into effect without an abundant supply of teachers well qualified for its execution. We can commence the preparation of these without a moment's postponement. Who knows but that such a provision of school masters as it is in our power to make, to answer the calls which will be everywhere heard for their services, as soon as their merits shall be known, may prove all that the legislature may find necessary for giving existence to the very best of schools, by spontaneous action through all the counties and vicinities of the state. Should this be the issue, then all that mighty accumulation of capital, to the amount of a million and a half or two million of dollars, may be dispensed with as an unnecessary cause of delay, an unwieldy apparatus, a useless burden upon the people. A strong probability, if not a satisfactory certainty of this, will further appear by expositions yet to be developed.

I am, fellow citizens,

Your very obedient servant,

J. CALDWELL.

LETTER VII.

Fellow Citizens,

How, it will be asked, is the school proposed to be filled with candidates for the profession of teachers? In every county which shall choose to avail itself of the privileges of the institution, let school commissioners be chosen by

How pupils will be supplied for the school; commissioners in each county to select pupils; county to pay \$100 a year expense for each; every pupil supported bound to teach.

the people themselves for as long a time as shall be thought proper. The number should be as small as will ensure intelligence and fidelity. Five or seven would probably be better than a larger number. We may propose to increase wisdom by enlarging the body, but let us remember that responsibility is weakened, and efficacy lost.

The school commissioners being appointed, they are to govern themselves by the rules prescribed by the legislature. For a limited time previously published, they will receive the names of such applicants for education to the profession of teachers as shall choose to offer. From these they will select as many as the county will consent to support at the central school at a hundred dollars each per year, through the time required for completing an education. If more than a hundred dollars be necessary, let it be added by themselves or their friends.

The candidates before admission may be required to enter into bond with competent security to the county commissioners, that should they afterwards desert the profession for which they were educated at the public expense, they shall replace the sum expended by the county upon their education. They may however be released at any time from this obligation by the school commissioners, should these think proper to remit it. Let it be understood also, that the first three months after the entrance of a candidate into the central school, shall be a period of probation. At any time during this period or at the expiration of it, he may be discharged from the school by the board of education, or a majority of them, with or without reasons rendered for such dismissal, as they shall think proper. He may be dismissed also, at any time afterwards for misconduct, by the same authority.

Every candidate taught at the central school, when his education shall have been completed, shall receive a certificate to that effect from the board of education, signed by the principal of the school and by the other members or by

a majority of the board. And every such qualified instructor shall be bound to teach in the county which has educated him, subject to the direction of its school commissioners, upon such general conditions and regulations as the legislature shall ordain.

Public examinations should be statedly held, of the candidates in the central school, at times and places appointed by the legislature, exhibiting the state of the institution, its progress, and its prospects. They may suggest any improvements indicated by experience to be expedient or desirable.

Examinations, observation school, where graduates will teach.

A library should be provided for the central school, and the books purchased for it determined by the board of education.

The central school should always have one or more primary schools of children and young persons connected with it, for exemplification to the candidates of the instruction in such schools. These being conducted under the direction of the principal who receives a salary, should afford tuition gratuitously to the pupils.

It is evident that when the masters educated in the central school should return to their counties, their services are supposed to be for the benefit of such neighborhoods as will erect schoolhouses, and proffer the sum requisite by law for the tuition of their children. The expense is incurred voluntarily, and not by compulsion; yet the excellence of these schools, the advantages they confer, the moral influence they produce, the interest they excite in the pupil, the beautiful and impressive order of all their processes, the variety and copiousness of their instruction, the kind and benevolent sentiments they diffuse through all hearts, the sense of rapid progress and valuable attainment pervading the mind in the performance of their different offices, the neat and regular order of their movements, the quick succession of their numerous exercises developed at the word of command, and preventing weariness by fre-

What will be effected by the trained teachers.

quent and reasonable changes in employment; in short the delights of reason excited by novelty, of imagination by appropriate narrative, and of complacent feeling flowing from the bosom of the teacher as a living spring, all combine to produce an irresistible conviction that the privileges of such instruction are inestimable, and that a failure to improve them when offered to our families is an irreparable loss. I repeat, if these descriptions of the present improved modes of instruction in primary schools appear extravagances, it is because we are forbidden to look upon them by their inaccessible distance from us in other states and other countries. It is in our power, by the action of our legislature, and by a fund now in our hands to transfer them with all their blessings and benefits to ourselves. Shall we hesitate for a moment upon a question of so much importance to our own happiness, the happiness of our children, and the welfare of the republic? Do we still hesitate respecting the reality of these representations? The whole amphitheatre of christendom is full of their proofs, and can it be that they have never penetrated to us by the rays which the press is dispensing around us. The present is a period of improvement, and it has elevated the methods of education in correspondence with the perfection of other arts. Let us all look into this matter for ourselves, for it is a subject which most deeply concerns us. I would not be an egotist, but if I have ever spoken or acted in any thing involving our interests as a people, I would hope that it might all be found to have been in truth and verity, in nothing at variance with experimental certainty. How is it a privilege for us to live in the most enlightened age, if its wisdom be unstudied, its advantages unsought, and some of its effects of the very first importance be rejected from our credence, because we have never brought them within the scope of our inquiry.

Let us be willing then to admit that when such teachers as those of whom we speak, are represented to our people,

the demand for their services will especially at first, be greater than the supply. Were there two of this description in every county, two vicinities at least within its compass should speed to their employment. When the experiment shall thus be exhibited in the presence of parents and their friends, we need not fear the result. The struggle would soon be between those who already possessed them, to retain them still, and others who would not relinquish their rightful claim to an equal share in the advantages of their instruction. Should this be the case, their labors would be distributed among different schools for such terms as three, four or any other number of months, under the direction of the school commissioners of the county.

Were we to suppose a candidate to be sent to the teachers' seminary by a county every year, and the time necessary for completing his course of preparation for the instructor's office to be two years, the county would have two candidates constantly upon the list of the school after the first year, at the cost of one hundred dollars each to be defrayed by its people, and every year one would be added to the number of its teachers. The demand for these masters would probably be least pressing at first, but it would likewise increase as the people should become familiar with the merits of their instruction, and be able to report themselves to the school commissioners prepared with a school-house and compensation for their employment. The augmentation of their numbers, and the call for their services, would, from the circumstances be likely to keep pace with one another. In counties which might be indifferent to the subject, and such possibly, nay probably there would be, the provisions of the law would imply no necessity of engaging in the practice of the system. From such counties no candidates would be sent, and in them, as is reasonable, no advantages of elementary education would be enjoyed. But it is highly probable, if not morally certain, that this could not long continue. Even if the people of

If any county fails to send pupils, then individuals in the county should have that privilege.

a single vicinage should at any time resolve, by common consent to send a candidate to the central school, at their own expense and for their own behoof, they should not only be at liberty but encouraged by public sentiment to act a part so creditable and meritorious. This in many instances would in all probability be done, especially when the county engaged not in the plan, or when the teachers being yet few, their services in one neighborhood must be curtailed to a brief space of time at a single place. Efforts of this kind, while they would make wiser men independent of opposition from the reluctant population around them, would break down resistance, and dissolve prejudices, in portions of the country where they unhappily existed, until all at length should voluntarily concur in conceding and estimating the advantages of education.

Other States might
desire to send
pupils.

Should North Carolina resolve to establish a central school of the nature here described, it is not improbable that its privileges might be admired and craved by some at least from sister states around us. Should this prove to be the case, we should doubtless open the doors of her institution for their reception, which accords with a spirit of liberal accommodation worthy of the cause in which we should be engaged. How far the institution might receive aid from the funds thus created certainly cannot be foreseen, nor is it of much consequence to consider.

I have thus sketched with as much brevity as I could for a distinct intelligence to the subject, the plan which it is the principle object of these letters to suggest, for commencing, at least, the prosecution of popular education. It will appear that it involves no taxation by the legislature, since the necessary ways and means are actually at our disposal. It wholly waves the creation of all that vast capital, which from the example of other states, has been thought indispensable before we could begin to move. In all its provisions and details it imposes no compulsion, should there be any counties of the state who might choose

to decline its offers. It proposes to influence only by conviction of its benefits, and the value of its advantages, relying on the attractions with which, when fully developed, it will win all to the knowledge of its excellence, and the adoption of it in practice.

That it is high time for us, for the whole people of North Carolina, to look with more intentness than ever upon the subject of popular education, and to devise the means of it, is a sentiment in which surely most of us if not all will cordially concur. It claims from every man, especially from every head of a family, faithful and dispassionate consideration. How can it be otherwise than that a deep impression must be felt in the mind of every considerate man, of its indispensable necessity to a people who have remained to this late period destitute of its privileges. Our country presents to ourselves and to the world the spectacle of a strange abstraction from light and knowledge, impenetrable to their beams, while they are falling upon her externally with the meridian splendor of science, religion and the arts. Can anyone who feels toward her any affectionate desire, who wishes for her respectability, who would see her raised out of intellectual darkness and desolation that hovers over her and settles with pervasion through the minds of her offspring, fail to be impressed with a conviction that we can no longer postpone the day of action upon the subject?

Shall we still plead that our physical ability is inadequate; that we possess not the means? To what distant period then are we to look, in what more auspicious condition must we be placed, to be conscious of strength enough to set forth in the attempt? What future prosperity of growth is in our prospect, which shall take from us all excuse of delay, and dispossess the spirit of supineness that reigns in our bosoms, of the sceptre which by its torporific touch benumbs all our faculties? We are a nation in all the vigor of early manhood. If the sound of war ever reaches our ears, it is not to afflict or even to threaten

High time to devise some means of popular education.

No time in the future likely to be better to begin this work.

us with its ravages, but only to remind us that through forty seven years of peace out of the last fifty of our existence, we have continued under the fostering care and protecting shield of a kind Providence, in the full opportunity of growing prosperity in our worldly condition. No taxation has weighed heavily upon us. We glory in the energies infused in the heart, the muscles, and the sinews of our popular system, by the plastic force of civil liberty. A comparison with others in power and privileges would flush our cheek with disdain and indignation. We have a country inferior to none of the original states in soil; in climate it is far superior to most, in the mildness of its winters, in the diversity of its productions, and in the renovation of its crops. In the midst of these sources of wealth and opportunity, our children are left to grow up unpruned and uncultivated as the forest of the brake which the hand of our industry has never touched. This continues to the present hour, while it implies an almost total exclusion of knowledge, like the opacity of incarcerating walls, in the last and most enlightened age of the world.

Before closing this letter, I shall present a practical statement which cannot but make a deep impression of the importance of popular education, and of providing for the diffusion of it without loss of time. It is extracted from a report of the managers of the school society in the City of New York.

Wealth is found in proportion to education.

“National wealth proceeds chiefly from activity of mind, and must therefore be proportioned to the extent and universality of its development. It appears by the statement of Baron Dupin that in some parts of France, those who are educated are one-tenth in others one twentieth, in others only one two hundred and thirty ninth of the whole population, and that the national revenue from these districts is nearly in corresponding ratios.”

Other advantages besides increased wealth.

But it is not in material productions or pecuniary wealth only that education displays its most estimable effects in the employments of the understanding, in the virtues of

the heart, in the effects of these upon the energies and resources of the state in elevating, purifying, and enriching the enjoyments of life, and in training it by an enlightened piety for heaven, are to be seen in its most signal and sublime influences.

Culture's hand

Has scattered verdure o'er the land;
 And smiles and fragrance rule serene,
 Where barren wilds usurped the scene.
 And such is man—a soil which breeds
 Or sweetest flowers, or vilest weeds;
 Flowers lovely as the morning light,
 Weeds deadly as the aeonite;
 Just as his heart is trained to bear
 The poisonous weed, or floweret fair."

I am, fellow citizens,
 Your obedient servant,

J. CALDWELL.

LETTER VIII.

Fellow citizens,

It is no new or singular opinion of mine, as I have already shown that education is necessary to prepare men for the school master's profession, as the lawyer, the physician, the mariner, the cabinet maker, and men of other professions are trained with much application to their several employments. Of this we should all certainly be convinced, could we become minutely acquainted with the methods of instruction, in their present state of improvement, and in the perfection they have attained. If knowledge of these has not yet reached us, it is with difficulty that we shall realize their extent, or estimate their merits. They are to be seen in the various objects upon which the labors of the teacher are directed, the means proved by past experience to combine the greatest efficacy, and the

Education necessary to prepare any one to teach.

feelings, dispositions, and principles to be sustained in himself, and established in the bosoms and habits of his pupils.

Were all these actually exhibited in the order and time requisite for their practice, they would afford an explanation more lucid, and impress us with proof more conclusive, than all that could be said upon the subject, though we should listen with unflinching patience to the most luminous details. Such exhibitions are unbaptly inaccessible to most, if not all of us. No interests that concern us as individuals, and in our national character we may confidently affirm, are in importance compared with this.

That the education of the young consists in learning to write, read, and cypher, and in these only is a common and pernicious error. Were this opinion correct, no institution would be necessary to qualify men for the business of instruction. It would be to swell the machinery beyond all proportion to the little purposes to be affected.

If we look no further than these it is an admitted impossibility to show valid reasons for the necessity of the apparatus which men of the first authority have pronounced indispensable to elementary education. To govern and maintain order in such schools is an additional talent, but though this were included, we would still fall immensely short of the ends affected by the present modes of instruction. They conspicuously relate to the elicitation of thought and the enlargement of the faculties with aptness and variety; to the discipline of the affections, to the principles and habits of action, to the knowledge to be selected and repositied in the minds of the young. Hundreds are able to read a book, to perform the mechanical operation of writing even handsomely, and to solve all the questions of arithmetic, but not one in a hundred is qualified to act upon the hearts and minds of the children, and mould them in the true principles of personal virtue and social intercourse. The man who has not learned to unite

The true aim of teaching.

both the mechanical and the moral, in the whole selection, order, and spirit of a system as comprehensive as it can be made, not by suggestion of his own mind only, but by the ingenuity, experience, and wisdom of others, is deficient in the talents which every master ought to possess, and which by the opportunities of a well constituted central school it is easy to furnish.

Reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and geography, constitute the basis of modern education in primary schools. The system is now left in this unhappy and unquestionable figure of a mere skeleton. Nor is it left to cover itself with flesh and features as accident shall direct, according to the fatal influences of companionship, or the crude notions of one who has dropped into the profession of an instructor, cut of the accidents of life, perhaps out of it vices, weaknesses and follies and irregularities. Fullness and proportion have been given to the system. In the maturity of its growth it is presented to us with graceful outlines, the interesting expression of benevolence and good sense, healthful complexion and compactness of constitution. to fix at once our confidence and admiration. The essential subjects of art and intelligence in the education of a child are incorporated and intermingled throughout, with the best moral influence that should reign in the heart, illuminate the features and give its own proofs of inward reality by the outward action.

By the later improvements, celebrity is gained in the acquirement of the physical part of education. Variety and extent of information are increased. Promptness, force, and aptness of skill in the use of the faculties are acquired. Interest and pleasure and not necessity, are made the inspiring and animating motives. These we shall admit are high recommendations. But to these are superadded others of most eminent value, without which too many proofs exist that education is a "curse instead of a blessing." It is the watchful and incessant study of

an instructor to reform the affections and mould them to their true standard. The government of the passions becomes habitual in the converse of the school. It is made as distinctly an object to repress selfishness, impatience and insolence, as it is to communicate the knowledge of the rule of three or practice in arithmetic. The virtues are kept steadily in view in all that is said or done. They are held up prominently to the eye of the pupil by examples and in impressive and brief narratives, in small books admirably composed and compiled for the purpose. Faults and vices of mind and conduct are set forth conspicuously, as they occur in the subjects taught, or in the feelings and actions of the child, in a manner to convince him that it is not to wound and mortify, and to indulge in a spirit of crimination or irritability, but to show him his errors, their unhappy effects upon his habits and his happiness, to infuse into his bosom the feelings of equity and complacency, to captivate him with the virtues for their excellence, and for the richness of their fruits, inspire detestation of vice for its hideousness, and its odious effects upon himself as well as others.

The course of study
broader than
formerly.

In the education of popular schools matured and perfected as it now is, are combined the acquisition of art and knowledge, the formation of moral character, and the invigoration of the faculties. The progress of the scholar in one of these branches only, the arts of reading, penmanship and numbers is pushed to far greater extent in the same compass of time than under the old system. But both the others are simultaneous accompaniments that elevate the character and enhance the value of education, investing it with an aspect and excellence of a far superior order. Even the amusements of children are included among the objects of the teacher. While he studies to make them interesting, they are directed to the innocent and humane feeling, the exclusion of vicious and impure motives, and to the most salutary exercises of the limbs and muscles. Modes of influence and control in the whole conduct of

business have especially been consulted, which render severity of punishment unnecessary, secure diligence by the delights of variety, by seasonable changes in the subjects, by exemplifications for illustrating them, by emulation without envy, by curiosity, by reason, by dexterity, by accuracy in order and movement at the word of command. The child thus taught takes pleasure in the school, is unwilling to stay away, becomes intent upon its occupations and the interests they excite. All this is associated with the best dispositions, the preference of the virtues, a rejection of bad principles and hateful feelings, the love of the master, kindness, deference, and obedience to parents, and good will in intercourse with all. Here is no gloom settled upon the mind and clouding the brow from apprehension of stern vigour, or impending punishment, no oppressive weariness from unchanged posture for many hours, and unvaried subject of study for successive days. In schools such as those of which I speak, it must follow that more of everything will be required. The heart of the pupil will be imbued with virtuous principles and amiable qualities. He will be prepared for action in all the relations of life and in social intercourse in love of industry, cheerfulness of disposition, order of business, quickness of thought, alacrity in action, and fertility of resources.

Some will probably doubt of the reality of such improvements, and whether all these splendid results in primary schools are attainable. In this incredulity most men would have concurred, even at the close of the last century. But since that period scarcely any art has advanced with more rapid march to eminence than elementary education. The present age is replete with proof that is not safe to imagine or to pronounce what is possible in improvements in any department of knowledge or practice. Had we been told at a period not far remote, that it was practicable to travel fifty miles an hour on land; that a single

Many ignorant of
the recent progress
in education.

horse could carry from ten to fifty tons on level ground; that the time would come when men could mount into the region of the clouds, and descend into neighboring countries; that methods might be contrived for diving to the bottom of the sea, and for carrying on submarine labors and discoveries, what would have appeared more incredible, and yet we well know that all these are practicable realities.

Some may question the possibility of determining the distance and size of the sun, moon, and planets, their motions and exact places during the whole long tract of time assigned for their existence; yet to the mind most tenacious of doubt on the perfection to which science has attained on these subjects, the prediction of eclipses and of the reappearance of some comets must enforce an admissibility scarcely to be questioned.

And why should we be sceptical respecting the improvement in the methods of education more than in those for effecting other purposes? Fixing our eye distinctly upon each of these, may not a faithful and practiced ingenuity invent and arrange means peculiarly and powerfully fitted to accomplish them all?

It can not surely be that teaching alone has not lately made improvement.

That an end more important than the best education of the young, cannot be placed before the human mind, the very attempt to prove to any man would be an impeachment of his understanding and his heart. Let us be assured that the profession of a teacher has not, among all the arts and professions of civilized society, remained without improvements so various and so apt in their connection and agency, as to be complicated and powerful in the production of their effects. We may now avail ourselves of the very circumstance of this elevated advancement in the system, in its operative powers, and in the quality of its fruits to excite an interest and an avidity in every bosom which will ensure a diffusion of it through the country, by the facilities which it is in the power of the

Legislature to afford for its dissemination among the people.

These ends will be accomplished by a central school under the tuition of a man fitted by his dispositions, his virtues, his knowledge of the most approved methods of primary education, and his address acquired in their practical application. A body of counsellors in a board of education appointed by the Legislature will at once sustain him in the functions of his office, and act as the medium of communication with that body, and the link binding him by the necessary responsibility. This institution will furnish an educational corps, augmenting from year to year, to be called into action as fast as their numbers can be increased. An analogy may be perhaps seen in the corps of civil engineers educated in the military academy at West Point, the members of which are incessantly called into active employment on plans of internal improvement through the different States of the union. The education of schoolmasters can never terminate ineffectually. Whenever we shall adopt any scheme of popular education, let it be what it may, it can never be carried into successful operation, without the supply of professional men properly trained to their vocation.

What the central school will do.

I am, fellow citizens,

Your obedient servant,

J. CALDWELL.

LETTER IX.

Fellow Citizens,

To the man who enjoys the privileges of education, and is humanized by its influence, no prospect can be more painful than that of a people destitute of its opportunities. It has ever been the object of tyrants to keep their subjects in ignorance and blind them with superstition. A man may desire the same thing from other motives which the tyrant desires for security to his power. "He may wish

Humanity pained to behold ignorance.

all mankind to remain in ignorance of important truths, when the most important truths that could be revealed to them, were to be the discovery of any other genius than his own. When a statue had been erected by his fellow citizens of Thasos to Theagenes, a celebrated victor in the public games of Greece, we are told that it excited so strongly the envious hatred of one of his rivals, that he went to it every night, and endeavoured to throw it down by repeated blows, till at last unfortunately successful, he was able to move it from its pedestal and was crushed to death beneath it on its fall. This, if we consider the self-consuming misery of envy, is truly what happens to every envious man. He may perhaps throw down his rival's glory; but he is crushed in his whole soul, beneath the glory which he overturns.

Tyrants dread
popular education.

“The monarch may dread popular education, on account of the light which it sheds into the national mind respecting the great objects of civil government, and the abuses of power. The republican too, may regard with malignant eye the diffusion of knowledge among the people, if he apprehends that it will impair his own influence, or threaten his comparative estimation in the community. To the sincere and enlightened patriot, it is of no consequence whether the equal rights of his fellow citizens are secured and her popular institutions promoted in connection with his own personal aggrandizement, or by the knowledge and the abilities of others around him. Let the ambitious citizen, who resists the diffusion of education and mental culture, or fails to propagate them throughout the whole population of the State till they reach the utmost extremities, beware lest he be found chargeable with promoting the same cause among the people, as is dearest to the heart of the despot, who sees in their illumination the overthrow of his selfish and capricious sway.

“A government like ours, which guarantees equal representation and taxation, trial by jury, the freedom of

speech, and of the press, of religious opinion and profession, not only depends for its energy and action but for its very existence upon the will of the people. And are the rights of mankind and the obligations of civil society, generally, understood or respected by the ignorant? Has property, or reputation, or life, when left to depend upon the wisdom of ignorance or the forbearance of passion, ever been accounted safe? And where is human character usually found the most degraded and debased? Is it where schools and the means of education abound, and where the light of knowledge never illumined the human intellect? If then, the habits, notions and actions of men, which naturally result from the ignorance of letters, from the force of superstition, and the blind impulses of passion, are utterly incompatible with a rational liberty, and every way hostile to the political institutions of freedom, how high and imperious is the duty upon us, living under a government of the freest of the free, a government whose action and being depend upon the popular will, to seek every constitutional means to enlighten, and chasten, and purify that will? How shall we justify it to ourselves and to the world, if we do not employ the means in our power in order to free it from the severe bondage of ignorance and passion, and place it under the mild control of wisdom and reason?"

The education of the people necessary to preserve our social institutions.

These are the sentiments of a committee of congress in their report on popular education in the year eighteen hundred and twenty-six. They are cardinal truths upon which the security and success of every free government must forever rest. The education of which we speak is not that of academies and colleges. The numbers trained in these institutions must be comparatively small. They are absolutely indispensable to fill up certain departments of service for the complete organization of a State. As well might we think to leave out some of the wheels of a clock, as to omit them from the constitution of society.

As few, however, are required in comparison with the whole population, to fulfill the purposes to which they must necessarily be provided, so it is but few who are in circumstances to bear the expenses of education so extensive. The wisdom of Providence is exhibited, in making the supply coextensive with the demand. The man who thinks they are unnecessary has need to learn yet the first rudiments of civil society.

Can only address the educated.

But the education which is exclusively the subject of these letters, is derived from primary schools, such as have already been described in the best perfection they can attain, both moral and physical. All that I have said or can say is to the educated only, since access to one who knows not letters is closed against this, as well as all else that issues from the press. He may indeed "hear of it by the hearing of the ear," but it will be to him as a distant and confused sound, the import of which he can little estimate.

The helplessness of ignorance.

Let us place up to the eye for our consideration the thousands, may I not say the hundred thousands of people, old and young, that cannot read. With this prospect under our view a little time only, could we convey in competent expressions the reflections which it would excite in our bosoms? A wilderness of minds springing into life, and advancing through its tract of years, untaught, untutored, groping their way in darkness, except where a few rays break in upon them from the floating information of the time.

Social conditions which ignorance brings about.

Let us look into the dwelling of many a family, into which a book has never entered. A throng of children is presently before us. They are growing up in all the wilderness of nature. Their expression is marked with no traits of gentleness or the mild affections to engage the eye; no lineaments denoting intelligence made interesting with variety of thought. An inquisitive and wondering gaze indicates that the emotions and ideas excited in them are

vague and indefinable. The indurated muscles and sharpened features, manifest the want of a humanizing influence within. The veins swell not with a free and expanding flow, illumined and sweetened by the genial and diversified actions of the heart. How shall it be otherwise, since no culture of the mind, or the affections has ever softened the original asperity of nature, and the countenance is the index of the few accidental thoughts and unmitigated dispositions that reign within? No system appears in the household of a mother, who in like manner was cast upon existence without a moulding or directing hand. She too was left to take the path which might offer to an eye untaught to discriminate, and to pursue it whithersoever its random course might lead. To her offspring she has imparted life. Her instincts have impelled to her to appease the cravings of their appetite, and to guard them from instant danger. The father has never been qualified to teach his children, or train them to a system of principles and conduct. He too was destitute of the knowledge requisite for their instruction, himself having never learned. In the rising race no respect for parents appears: no affectionate regard for their warning voice. No control of the passions is discoverable in words or actions, no self-denial, no quick compliance with the directions of a mother, nor of a father, unless from apprehended wrath which may burst into an incalculable storm. Who of us has not observed in the children of such circumstances, a ferocity and uncertainty at which the spectator recoils with indefinable apprehension for the consequences. Their motives to action are the feelings of the moment. These succeed each other with caprice unchastened by a wisdom which knows their native and growing violence. Their menacing impulses strike the ear from any chord in all the wide diapason of the passions. Even in their sports a jarring and discordant harshness is felt with sensations at once painful and portentous. Their resentments give

evidence of revenge conceived, repressed perhaps by the fear of a power to revenge with superior force. In grief or joy, extremes still predominate, marked with sullen depression or violent transport. In intercourse they are gregarious rather than social. To strangers they look with suspicion; perhaps they fly with panic, suggesting anew whether Hobbes may not have been right in his inhuman doctrine, that "a state of nature is a state of war." To infant minds placed in the moral desert, no God occurs as the creator of the world, the disposer of events, an object of reverence, gratitude, love, obedience, or fear. Dismal superstitions crowd their thoughts of an invisible world. Witchcraft and wandering ghosts often fill their conversations with horror and their bosoms with dismay. Conscience knows not its proper office, and becomes hardened in insensibility, after being long ridiculed for its superstitious fears. The true God is scarcely known to them as their heavenly Father, whose presence may encourage them in goodness, deter them from evil, and console them in distress. No Saviour is understood in his proper character, radiant with the beams of mercy. No gospel of peace can find access into the bosom of one who cannot read its messages of grace, and who is surrounded by others equally excluded from them. No Spirit is known as a monitor of good, to soften the flinty heart, to dissolve it in the penitence of guilt, to enamour it with the beauties and glories of the divine nature, and assimilate it to the pure and blissful atmosphere of the skies. To one thus destitute of opportunity and education, heaven is out of sight, and hell but a note in language, to which his voice and his ear have been turned to give force to folly, or to vent the violence of the passions.

To some this may appear an overwrought picture of the consequences resulting from the want of education. These, however, are its proper fruits, and will be found exhibited in fact in portions of the country, where most of the popu-

lation have long been destitute of knowledge with its enlightening and meliorating influences. To such issues human nature tends when wholly left to itself. Doubtless numbers exist, who, ignorant of letters, with minds never opened by information and moral improvements, are amiable in intercourse, and of high worth as members of society. From the influence of vicinage, and a peculiar action of circumstances, they have retained much perhaps of the primitive stock from which they have descended, or by the attractions of surrounding excellence, they have framed themselves to its habits by the example of a well instructed and virtuous community. It is happy for them, that though without knowledge themselves, they enjoy many of its blessings, intermingled as they are with others who diffuse around them its genial and elevating force.

It has long been ascertained, that from the uneducated part of a people offenders of the darkest hue come forth to fix the eye of society upon their deep depravity, and the enormity of their crimes. This has been confirmed by the concurring observation of judges and barristers, who have been attentive to the subject, both in Europe and America. Exceptions will certainly occur, and especially in communities where education has consisted merely in the mechanical processes of learning to read and write and cypher, with no moral influence upon the heart, but such as perverts and hardens it. This but illustrates and evinces the importance of reforming education itself, lest it prove a culture productive of briars and thorns, instead of fruits and harvests.

The darkest crimes
spring from igno-
rance.

Yours most respectfully,

J. CALDWELL.

LETTER X.

Fellow Citizens,

The picture of families placed either by circumstances or choice beyond the reach of education, cannot but be

Value of even a
little education.

painful to every humane and considerate bosom. It seemed necessary to dwell upon it, that the importance of the subject may be adequately felt.

Among such as have enjoyed the privileges of a very limited education only, what multitudes of minds have risen up by the energies of native genius, broken away from the shackles of narrow circumstances, placed their names high on the rolls of eminence, blessed their country with the fruits of their enterprise and even enriched the world with their productions. Among the children of our own State, hundreds if not thousands may exist, in whose bosoms God has implanted susceptibilities of distinguished virtue, and high capacities of usefulness.

The marble buried in its native mines,
 Conceals the beauty of its clouds and lines;
 The sculptor's polish can each feature give,
 And even make the rugged marble live.
 Thus genius in the night of darkness born,
 May wind unnoticed her resounding horn.
 Like the stout traveller straying from his course,
 She errs the more from her exhaustless force.
 Young Edwin wandered in his native dell,
 And woke the music of his simple shell.
 With morning dawn he left his lowly shed,
 And led in wonder, sought the mountain head,
 His thoughtful mind unlettered would explore,
 And muse in sadness that he knew no more.
 At length a stranger to his longing eyes,
 Bade the bright visions of the world arise;
 To his attention all his lore expressed,
 And roused the genius kindled in his breast.

Talents hidden
 away from lack of
 opportunity.

Who can tell the talent that lies buried in all that multitude of minds, which for want of education must sink back into existence, unproductive and unknown? Who can conjecture how much there may be of glowing ardor which, promoted into action, might soar to loftiest flights,

or penetrate with keenest scrutiny into the secrets of nature; would decorate life with fairest ornaments, or save our country in the critical hour; might diffuse happiness through society by deeds of benevolence, unite their fellow men in its enterprise, or propagate truth and virtue around them like the waves that enlarge their circles on the lake? How many are there who may be formed with qualities to shine with the most beautiful tints, and the brightest lustre. How many, who with powers elicited, might adorn their country with fabrics of beauty, of comfort, of taste and health, and high enjoyment? Who of us can tell but that in the bosom of some obscure little cottager there lives a spark which once kindled into a flame, might enlighten and warm the universe? Of such as these generations have already existed upon our soil, and disappeared beneath its surface as though they had never been. They were presented to us by Providence with a munificent hand.

“But knowledge to their eyes, her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Quotes Gray's
Elegy.

“Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

“The applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes.”

The literary production of other States, the inventions and enterprises of their people, show how large a proportion of genius is educed out of obscurity and inaction, and made efficacious, where the stimulating and expanding

Condition of other
countries.

influences of education are universally felt. Just as large a proportion would become conspicuous here, could each rising generation enjoy the same privileges.

We provide for the animal part of children; not the spiritual.

We occupy a soil ample in extent. Our toils are perpetuated to render it productive. Our families are spreading themselves more extensive over the surface. With strenuous effort and incessant cares we make provisions for their animal subsistence, but their minds are left to starve and dwindle. Their intellect languishes, and the value of their being is principally known through the appetites and passions. And is it possible for any man to believe that our happiness and the greatest excellence of our nature properly consist in mere animal pleasures? Are these the proper objects of creatures made superior to the brutes, and endowed with powers of indefinite improvement? Even a single individual left to himself naturally grows in thoughts and resources. By communication with a few his knowledge becomes increased. But how contracted must be that man's information, who has been limited to the suggestions of his own mind, whose range of view has been circumscribed to a few miles around a single spot, and whose intercourse with his fellow men has been but little more extensive.

This must be for the most part the condition of such as have never learned to read. It is when the thoughts, the discoveries, the resources, the different circumstances of men over the face of the earth, and their inventions in the arts, are treasured up in the most valuable publications, and their virtues and vices, their original disadvantages, and their methods of conquering difficulties, of extracting good out of evil, of converting the unformed and irregular materials of nature into powerful means of utility, wealth and enjoyment, that any single mind can know the little it can effect by its own individual powers, compared with the vastness of what it is to accomplish by the combined ingenuity and activity of our race through different na-

tions and successive periods of time. The information we gain by the ear and the eye only, is limited to what we think as individuals, and the few with whom we converse. The knowledge we acquire by the press is commensurate with the world.

Shall it not be our first and glorious purpose, upon which all our powers moral and physical, shall be directed to break down the walls that shut in our people from the light of day? Can a greater work be achieved than to disperse the darkness through which the hundred thousand infant minds in our State are groping their way into existence, and which without our steadfast resolve and united action, must continue to enshroud them through the whole of life? To their offspring too, without an effort, it must descend with the inheritance of their estates through succeeding generations. It is for you, in whom are the springs of power, to connect with your own names the merit and the lustre of this achievement. Time will soon snatch from you the opportunity of appropriating it to yourselves. Commence the work and a new era is marked in the history of our State and in the career of its prosperity and character through future time. In providing for the education of the people by some plan within our power with wisdom and perseverance, nothing can be questionable. The subject speaks for itself. To neglect it, especially at the present day, and in the present condition of our country, can scarcely fail to carry an emotion of revolt if not painful reprehension into the secret bosom of every considerate man. Let us advance to the subject with confidence that some plan is within our power, to which no longer time is necessary than for digesting its operations and arranging its order. Placing our eye upon the purpose, and believing that what has been done by so many others may be done by us, we shall discover the means we can enlist for its accomplishment. Men know not their own powers and energies till they put them forth

Let us use all moral and physical power to bring light to the people.

into action. Parental affection, benevolence, patriotism, the interest of every individual, viewed with a reflective eye, all unite in urging upon us the imperious call which sounds in our ears from every hamlet, town, neighborhood, family, and from the remotest recesses of the State. Interwoven with the obligation to protect life, liberty, and property, is the right of successive generations to the instruction and discipline essential to their perpetuity and substantial enjoyment.

“This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
 This universal plan in vain addressed,
 To eyes and ears of parents, who themselves
 Did in the time of their necessity
 Urge it in vain; and therefore like a prayer
 That from the humblest roof ascends to heaven,
 It mounts to reach the State’s parental ear;
 Who, if indeed she own a mother’s heart,
 And be not most unfeelingly devoid,
 Of gratitude to Providence, will grant
 The unquestionable boon.

“So shall licentiousness and black resolve
 Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take
 Their place and genuine piety descend,
 Like an inheritance from age to age.”

I am, fellow citizens,
 Your very obedient servant,

J. CALDWELL.

LETTER XI.

Fellow Citizens,

In two or three well written pieces published some time since in one of the weekly prints, after proposing a law for borrowing funds necessary for the provision of schools for the State, the writer recommended to prepare teachers for such schools, by availing ourselves of our university,

The University
 could not take the
 place of a central
 school for teachers.

for their education. It is possible that some may be of the opinion that by these means the establishment of a central school and the expense of its maintenance may be superseded.

Before closing these letters I would crave your indulgence while a few considerations are presented to evince the inexpediency of this mode of institution.

The system of education in colleges is modelled for forming their members to the liberal professions, or to literary or scientific occupations upon the largest scale. The education of grammar schools is framed with reference to these special ulterior attainments. To prepare and qualify a man for the arts and methods of primary schools is so entirely different in its nature, that no course of studies and employments can be fitted for both. This is so eminently true, especially in our own present state of society, that to educate a young man in a college, is to disqualify him almost with certainty for the permanent business of an elementary schoolmaster. The liberal professions, and the tuition of grammar schools, are open to all who have collegiate education, and talent largely cultivated is ever in demand, incessantly growing with the growth of our population. Society is made up of all professions, that by combination every individual may be readily supplied at will with all that is desirable for his convenience or his necessities, in the greatest perfection and upon the best terms. Hence the division of labor among carpenters, smiths, merchants, farmers, masons, lawyers, literati, miners, cabinet makers, ministers of the gospel, physicians and others. It is a received principle in common life, that the education of a youth for some of these professions, would not qualify but unfit him for others. If a youth be destined to the business of a shoemaker, it would be absurd to teach him the art of making wagon wheels. Nay even if we would have him to be a

carpenter, we should not place him as an apprentice to one who makes sideboards and bureaus. If he is to be a millwright we do not teach him to make watches. To educate a youth in a college is to spoil him for the occupation of a primary schoolmaster. After having prepared him in this manner, a far greater difficulty still remains, and it is of our own creation. It consists in restricting him for the business for which he is intended. He will soon be tired of being an abecedarian, if he can teach Virgil and Homer, or hope for distinction in one of the liberal professions. His tastes, his desires, his habits, the scope of his mind, his expense and modes of living, have been formed entirely at a variance with the ends proposed.

To be eminently successful in his business, he must be happy in it, and this is impossible if appetites and enjoyments be established in him, which circumstances different from those of his occupation, alone can gratify. No man is most efficient in that which he is able to do, whose secret bosom is discontented with his condition, hankering for what he deems the privileges of another for which he is no less qualified.

It enters as an essential part into the system here proposed, that the men who are taught in the central school shall be professionally schoolmasters for life. If we educate them in academies and colleges, no restrictive obligations could permanently hold them to this vocation, except such of their number as were of the lowest rank in ability. We should put them into the college, candidates for the profession of schoolmasters, and through the influence of association, and doubtless of persuasion, if they really possessed the capacities for which they had been selected out of the community from which they came they would come out with their eye directed upon what a new taste would teach them to estimate as higher prospects. The views and habits of such men as we wish, should be of substantial utility and worth, and entirely fit them for their

College education spoils a youth for primary teaching.

The plan of the central school tries to provide schoolmasters for life; this could not be done in another school.

proper business in its peculiar forms, and principles, and ends. In colleges, much if not a greater part is taught, which is wholly aside from these, incurring the consequence of much time lost, and expenditure of funds upon misdirected discipline, which to them and to us are of principal value. If to these considerations, enough surely to determine us upon this point, we add another which is inevitable, that the expenses of collegiate education must be far greater than in a central school, a resort to such a mode of preparing teachers for primary schools, cannot but appear ineligible, and wholly to be discarded.

To some of us it may still appear strange that a supply of schoolmasters in the numbers and with the discipline here implied, should be thought so necessary as to call for popular and legislative action. Let us reflect then that man is a being susceptible of a variety of character, which to us is infinite, nor is it possible to estimate the force of education in moulding him to these diversities. The nations of the earth are distinguished from one another by characteristics no less striking than the contrasts and singularities of individuals most dissimilar. Their disparities are seen in manners, customs, institutions, religion, government, laws, and modes of life and intercourse. For these differences they are indebted to the circumstances in which they originally commenced their history, and to the events and complicated influences, moral and physical, which have modified their career. These have constituted the basis of education to the individuals who compose them, and when their several characters have become established, it is by education that it is perpetuated or changed. By this every rising generation embibes the sentiments, imitates the habits, and transmits the distinctions derived from its predecessors. Would you alter the character of a whole people? It cannot be done but by educating their springing progeny to the system you would prefer. Would you make them unchangeable?

The influence of education on society.

They must be trained from infancy to the opinions and habits of their forefathers with the overflowing current of time. Would you prepare a people never accustomed to popular government, for living under a republican constitution? Reconcile them to place their children universally under the tuition of freemen who, in the office of school masters, will wisely and faithfully conduct their education to such an issue, and if there be any method of accomplishing your wishes it is this. Do any of us admire, as we will regret, that the southern republics of our own continent cannot advance, with constancy, and prosperity, in the same career of rational liberty as ourselves? The solution is seen in the education which forms their children and youth not to the customs and opinions of civil freedom in the exercise of the elective franchise, but to such as are incompatible with it. The invincible laws of nature are now instructing them in the arts of freedom. If they listen not to her precepts, and submit not to her discipline, these laws know no change, and success is hopeless. How would you insure their speediest attainment of the inestimable boon? The scheme is visionary, but the end would be effected, could you furnish and secure a reception among them of a competent body of well qualified and faithful school masters, into whose hands the whole education of their children should be spontaneously and unreservedly committed.

Were it an object to bring European nations to live in tranquility under civil constitutions like our own, the same process, were it practicable, would assure the same result. Manners are formed, and predilections most steadfastly fixed, while the young are growing from infancy to manhood. The triteness of a proverb is its commendation, and it is one which has been universally sanctioned since its first happy expression by the poet:

“’Tis education forms the common mind,
Just as the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined.”

What means have the missionaries of the cross found most effectual, after all the trials which these devoted men have made for evangelizing heathen nations, and for the abolition of idolatry with its inveterate corruptions and cruelties? All other methods they have learned to relinquish in despair, and to depend exclusively on the agency of the schoolmaster to extirpate the bitter roots of paganism, and sow the seeds of christian civilization.

Missionaries depend on the work of the schoolmaster.

To this human nature is known to yield, though entrenched in prejudices once deemed invincible, and girded with prescription as with armour of proof. This has proved a line of length and power to reach even the Hotentot, and the New Zealander, in the dark caverns of their brutality, and restore them to the primitive distinctions and glories of humanity, from which they seemed to have once sunk to an irrevocable depth. Would we then secure the best enjoyment, and most assured permanency to our free institutions, and to the people in their richest fruits, it must be effected by the power of education in the hands of those who themselves have well learned, and will faithfully administer it, upon its proper principles.

I am, fellow citizens,

Your very obedient servant,

J. CALDWELL.