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## Verona, April 1, 1873

J. G. Deupree

Verona Standard

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VERONA, April 1, 1873.

[Special Cor. of Standard.]

LETTER FROM VERONA.

The Debating Club.—A Maiden Speech.—Nature Stronger than Education.

Editor of Standard:

Hans thanks all who have been kind enough to express an appreciation of his letters and to intimate a wish for his speedy recovery. By way of variety Hans gives a Maiden speech delivered before the Debating Club. The report of the speech is as accurate as stenography could produce it. For fear of wounding his modesty Hans with-holds the speaker's name. By the way the Verona Debating Club is quite an interesting feature of this lively village. Its meetings are held every Friday night at the Collegiate Institute, and are well attended. The proposition under discussion was, that education is a stronger element in the formation of mental character than constitution. After the champion for the affirmative had taken his seat, the timid, blushing champion of the negative arose, and in broken accents delivered the following grandiloquent:

SPEECH.

Mr. President;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Having listened attentively to the gentleman, and having followed him in his devious and tortuous voyage on a sea of speculation, I find myself in the gloom of doubt, in the mists of fogs of uncertainty, and overshadowed by the dark and portentous clouds of sophistry. My understanding is in imminent danger of shipwreck from the proximity of Sylla and Charibdis, that on either hand threaten our destruction. The beacon fire of the Gentleman, so far from guiding us in safety, serves only to intensify the darkness by its inspissated gaseous exhalations. To speak plainly, instead of elucidating the question, the gentleman has only succeeded in wrapping it in a veil of impenetrable obscurity. Let us take our reckoning and return whence the gentleman led us. Let us glance at the language of the question. Education is a term of broad significance and is understood by all to mean the cultivation of our powers, physical and mental. The gentleman had much to say of the importance of education, wishing to put me in a position of seaming opposition. But, I yield to no one

in the appreciation of the great necessity of a thorough and finished education. But we are not to discuss the importance of education, but are to compare it, as a formative element of mental character, with constitution, or the native endowments of man which he inherits from his progenitors or receives directly from the Omnipotent Creator.

The precious diamond that coruscates in the cornet of kings is nothing but carbon of pure charcoal in a crystalized form. Its brilliant scintillation are due to polish. Yet, imbedded in the ocean in obscurity its glittering splendor all unknown, its character as a diamond still exists. As native carbon is necessary to produce or to constitute the diamond and polish is but an incidental circumstance; so in the formation of mental character, constitution or native endowment is an essential prerequisite to all education. The most assiduous cultivation can no change the apple to an oak. Years of training can not convert a poodle, contemptible as he is, into the matchless Newfoundland. Though of the same species, human beings differ as much in their mental character, as animals of lower order. The African can never be developed into a Caucasian. The fool by nature can never, by human device, be made a man of wisdom. Human ingenuity may exhaust itself in seeking expedients and new methods of education, but it will never be able to convert a dolt into a man of talents. If intellectual faculties must exist prior to all education, education can not be a stronger element in the formation of mental character than constitution. The proposition is preposterous and absurd.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus ended the speech. Hans will not comment, but leave each reader to form his own conclusion. Other speakers followed on either side and the debate was interesting throughout. To fully appreciate a debate, go and hear it.

Yours &c.,

HANS.

VERONA, April 9, 1873.

[Special Cor. of Standard.]

LETTER FROM VERONA.

Memphis. Extract from the Appeal. Negro School.

Editor of Standard:

VERONA

like old Rome, sits enthroned upon seven hills. A male academy crowns one of the loftiest, and a female college another perhaps a mile distant. Every hill-top is surmounted by a white cottage, and everywhere there are neatly painted houses of unpretending plainness and simplicity, telling of a population careful of its gains yet wanting none of the substantial comforts of life. There are twelve merchants in the place, and not one is avoided by drummers that through villages along all southern railroad lines. Solvency, modest competency and good morals distinguish the population of the place, which surely boasts of at least "gentlemen" enough for some Shakespeare to imagine it the scene of another immortal story. A share of public spirit distinguishes the people of the village. It not only boasts of two excellent schools and of high hills and excellent water and confessed moral and physical healthfulness, but the schools are supplied with children from distant towns and villages. There is talk of a narrow-gauge railroad across the country to the coal fields and iron mines of Alabama that manufactories may be established and the village become a city.

The above is an extract from a letter by L. J. D. editor of the Appeal, written to his paper, while on a tour through Mississippi. He spent a day with his brother, Hans, and this part of his letter will interest our people, as it exhibits the impressions produced upon a stranger by a brief visit to Verona. The suggestion of a narrow-gauge railway to the coal fields of Alabama has awakened the interests of the Veronese. In course of time, the half-defined desire will ripen into a full determination; and another decade will see the vast mines of Alabama's coal and iron rendered accessible to us and to the whole State of Mississippi.

THE NEGRO SCHOOL,

though not mentioned by L. D., is one of the institutions Verona, under the judicious discipline and instruction of Prof. Penny, it seems to be accomplishing great good. Young Ethiops are taught spell and cipher with amazing rapidity. Prof. Penny, though of African extraction, is a Southern birth and deserves credit for his advance in knowledge as well as his exemplary deportment. He is no politician but seems desirous, ye and anxious to ameliorate the condition of his people by contributing all his time and energy to the education of the boys and girls. He is right. If they are to be citizens in the future they need all the wisdom that can be imparted in the school. Big-foot Bill was asked the other day, why he went to school