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An Address Delivered Before the Penobscot Association of Teachers and Friends of Popular Education

Joseph C. Lovejoy

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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ADDRESS

PENOBSCOT ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS,

AND

FRIENDS OF POPULAR EDUCATION,

AT BANGOR, DEC. 26, 1838.

BY REV. J. C. LOVEJOY.

BANGOR :

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SAMUEL S. SMITH, PRINTER.

1839.

ADDRESS.

THE object for which we meet to-day is one of silent, yet permanent good. It has not those outward attractions, which gather the unthinking and the selfish. These are moved by sudden impulses, and often forsake the cause they have espoused, when most it needs their aid. We have come to enquire what may be done, and what we can do, to diffuse more widely and in deeper channels, the streams of knowledge. Those who have preceded me on the anniversaries of this association, have pointed out the defects in our present system of common schools, and have suggested the appropriate remedies. I need not repeat what they have said, nor traverse again the field of their careful observation. The subject opens before us *mind*, in all its original states, and in its various progressions. For the purpose of my present lecture, I define Education thus—*the science of rearing men, fitted to be useful members of society on earth, and for everlasting felicity in heaven.*

There are several favorable circumstances which must concur, in order to produce such men. My object is to show what these circumstances are, and how far they are found in our own State.

In the first place, in order to produce such men, *the climate must be favorable.*

Not all parts of the earth are adapted to the culture of every production. Some portions yield the best specimens of the vegetable, other some of the animal world. Man is by no means an exception to this law. Not every latitude will yield first rate men. Within the tropics, and within the arctic circles, are such extremes of heat and cold, that men are found of dwarfish bodies, or of obtuse and inactive minds. As you approximate these circles, the strength of body, or of mind, or both, becomes less. Strike a circle

six degrees north of the northern tropic, and another six within the arctic line, and you have comprised the gold and silver of the human race—you have left little but brass and dross. This would include the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Phoenicians, Egyptians and Romans among the ancients; and the modern nations in the first ranks of knowledge and civilization. On this zone of the earth, languages, laws, religion, arts, science and invention have received their greatest perfection. All other sections of the globe have little which can profitably compare with the monuments of mind, which crown the belt which I have described.

Happily, we find ourselves planted in a climate adapted to the highest state of man. The soil is sufficiently productive to afford the amplest sustenance; and it only yields its harvest into the hardy hand of industry. Constant demands are made upon the contrivance and labor of the mass of our population. Had we a more fertile soil, we might indeed command more leisure; but facts show, that leisure possessed without previous toil, is wasted in idleness or profligacy.

The most extensive acquisitions in knowledge have been made by men of large business, and those of constant professional employment. Our long and cold winters, forbidding the pleasures of the field and the grove, furnish the best season for the cultivation of mind. We should, therefore, by no means repine that our heritage is among the bleak winds, and on the comparatively sterile soil of New-England.

A second requisite for producing first rate men, is a *good parentage*. There must be good blood, or else there is a deficiency which cannot be supplied. I fully believe that all the nations of the earth, were made of one blood; but I also know that this blood has been greatly corrupted. Whole races have degenerated, through many succeeding generations. They transmit this accumulation of debasement to posterity. That accurate and wide observer of mankind, Dr. Good, remarks; “the variable talents of the mind are as propagable as the various features of the body—how or by what means we know not—but the fact is incontrovertible. Wit and dulness, genius and idiotism, run in direct streams from generation to generation. And hence the moral character of families, of tribes, and of whole nations. The understanding, it is admitted, is in many tribes habitually obtuse. It has thus indeed

been propagated for a long succession of ages ; and till the mind receives a new turn, till it becomes cultivated and called into action by some benevolent stimulus, the same obtuseness must necessarily continue, and by a prolongation of the habit, may perhaps even increase."

It would be utterly impossible to produce a nation of first rate men from any of these degenerate stocks. Surround them by whatever influences conduce most to excite and elevate, and the improvement will be very slow and gradual. That narrow ridge of mountains, lying between the Caspian and the Black Seas, has sent out its line of noble descent into all the world. Wherever the sons of these mountains pitch their tent and build their habitations, "the wilderness and the solitary place are made glad for them." Every where, they are the patrons of enterprize and knowledge, themselves the brightest patterns. The genius of that honored spot may stand upon her own proud eminence, and look abroad upon the colonies which she has sent forth, and challenge comparison with all the rest of the race. Out of the loins of these Circassians came our ancestors. The men who settled N. England were more than ordinary samples of this illustrious family. The trees that remain in the forest over which the tempest in its fury has swept, show that their trunks are oak, and that they have struck their roots deep into an iron soil. The men who came first to New-England had been tried in the flames of a heated and protracted persecution. Trials, dangers, death could not destroy the firm purposes of their souls. They did not faint in the day of adversity. It was early determined, among those who led in the enterprise of settling this part of the new world, that they would colonize none but "the best." Like the army of Gideon, the emigrants were repeatedly sifted. Whoever was of a faint heart remained at home ; and those of weak constitutions and feeble limbs early perished through hardships and exposure. The land was indeed planted with "a noble vine, wholly of the right seed."

If we succeed not here, in perpetuating a nation of hardy, vigorous, intelligent men, the failure can never be charged to those who felled the trees, and planted the vineyard. The history of the Pilgrims cannot be too often repeated. They were not desperate adventurers, making a last effort to save themselves from infamy or oblivion. "Their's was not the flight of guilt, but of

virtue. It was a humble and peaceful religion, flying from causeless oppression. It was conscience, attempting to escape from the arbitrary rule of the Stuarts." Never were colonies settled under circumstances more favorable to posterity. The Pilgrims, their associates and successors, were called to sow the seed of a vast empire; we reap the harvest of blessing from furrows turned by their hands, and moistened with drops from their brows. They were men of athletic bodies, compelled from their first landing to inure themselves to severe toil. They were men of very respectable literary attainments, and of the firmest moral character.

How favorably in this respect does our situation contrast with that of what are called "our sister republics" in South America. They have been attempting to imitate our example in the establishment of free institutions. But the descendants of the pirates who plundered Mexico, and wet the mines of Peru with innocent blood, cannot enjoy freedom. An iron despotism alone can keep them in subjection. Texas may have her mimic revolutions—her Congress of duelists, assassins, swindlers and vagabonds; but liberty, peace and order will not dwell among them. If ever you see there a nation of virtuous men, some angel will breathe into the air, and trouble the fountains, so that they will wash turpitude into purity, and bleach consciences black as sackcloth into the whiteness of snow.

Other circumstances to be estimated, in the production of worthy men, are the laws, religion, and modes of education.

While laws are an index of the intelligence, morals, and enterprise of a people, they exert a powerful and direct influence upon them all. Some of the richest soil on earth, the best coasts washed by any waves, lie within the dominions of the proud Monarch of Turkey. But so arbitrary and selfish is his policy, that his subjects are discouraged from all enterprise, and find but poor encouragement even to their virtue or knowledge.

For seven hundred years, the wisdom of Lycurgus was seen at Sparta. By his severe and rigid laws he impressed, through all this period, fortitude and magnanimity upon the character of the Lacedemonians. While his laws remained, they were a barrier to luxury and idleness. They were repealed; and the wave that destroys all nations swept over the city and the monuments of Lycurgus. The first marked period of improvement in civilization,

in the history of England, was after the laws of Alfred. This King of worthy memory has impressed his image upon the whole Anglo-Saxon race, not more by the patronage and example given to learning, than by the many wise and beneficial laws that were enacted during his reign. While he launched the first fleet, and laid the foundation for all the future power and glory of that "proud Isle," as mistress of the seas, he also carefully guarded the interests of his subjects, yielding them a trial by jury, and teaching them, in all his statutes, that they had individual interests in the government.

From the earliest written compact, made on board the *Mayflower*, and under which the Pilgrims lived and flourished, down to the establishment of our latest constitution, our laws have been framed by the combined wisdom of experience and earnest zeal for the best good of the community. The principles asserted are such, that the most rigid scrutiny cannot prove them false, and such as have a most beneficial practical bearing upon the community. It has taken ages to evolve a few simple principles in the constitution of this State. Not till very recently, could any such sentences as these have been found in the constitutions or laws of any people. "No one shall be hurt, molested or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshiping God in the manner and season most agreeable to his conscience." "Every citizen may freely speak, write and publish his sentiments on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of this liberty." The power of the people, in adding from time to time to their laws or of altering those already enacted, tends powerfully to awaken and stimulate mind. The fact, that each individual's vote is of equal value in the ballot box leads all to a higher estimate of themselves, and encourages that *disposition*, implanted in all men, to be and to do something worthy of their race, which otherwise might languish and die for want of support.

So far as religion has influence upon the public mind and the formation of character, it is proper here to notice it. The history of the world shows that this is one of the controlling elements that gives direction to national character. The splendid system of Grecian mythology, invented by the earlier poets and diffused by their writings, had an obvious and paramount influence in giving direction to that nation; which to the present day has had no

superior in the arts, no equal in the accuracy and refinement of their language, and whose courage and contempt of death are written highest upon the monuments of fame. Religion was inwrought through the whole mind of the nation. The blood of their sacrifices consecrated every important enterprise.

By representing the grove, the field and the city as filled with guardian spirits, they had much nearer the conception of an ever present deity, than any other of the ancient heathen nations. The degrading influence of a low and vicious idolatry is manifest among modern heathen nations. The revelation of the true God, now in our hands, at once attesting its truth and its superiority to all other systems of religion, in its contests and its triumphs, has also a far more beneficial influence in the formation of national character. None can deny the purity of its precepts, nor contemplate without admiration the grandeur of its themes, nor question the importance of its discoveries. Man is here placed in a new and higher position than any occupied by the sages, whose sole guide was their own reflection and experience. His immortality is here proved, and the path by which he may make it glorious and happy, is made luminous from the very source of light itself. He is here taught that he is the child of God, stamped with his image, under his laws, and amenable to his tribunal. What can stimulate a human being in the race of a high and virtuous life, if the fact that God and angels are the spectators, and heaven the prize, will not? The form too in which christianity presents itself to the mind in this country, is at once calculated to draw forth the best affections of the heart, and the highest efforts of the mind. The fundamental principle of protestant christianity is, the Bible is the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice; and that each mind is to interpret this book for himself, accountable to none but God for his opinions. This strikes off at once those fetters of the soul, thrown around it, by popes, cardinals, counsels and general conventions.

Allow this principle free and unrestrained scope, and it will do much to produce a nation of reflecting and intelligent men. That the religious world has been slow in coming to this result, is no more the fault of religion, than it is the crime of astronomy, that no eye sooner than Newton's saw the simplicity of her laws, and the harmony and grandeur of her revolutions. The order of the heavenly world was just as perfect, when the unaided eye of the

Persian Astrologer gazed upon it, as when surveyed by the telescope of a Herschel.

We may now rejoice that every man may follow the dictates of his own mind, without fear of the scourge, the scaffold or the stake. No careful observer can mistake the impulse given to an individual of the humblest capacity by a deep and practical interest in the subject of religion. His whole soul seems attracted by a new and higher impulse, so that in a period of ten years his profiting in knowledge will be manifest to all.

New-England is more indebted for her present elevation, to the religious sentiments of our forefathers, than to every thing else. Religion made them what they were. Religion furnished the motives which led them forth from their kindred, and the land of their homes, to plant a nation in the wilderness. Religion sustained them in all their sufferings and severe trials. This was their cloud by day and their pillar of fire by night. They were singularly fortunate, too, in bringing with them such numbers of learned, pious and devoted ministers of religion. Men superior to them have seldom, since the days of the Apostles, stood before a congregation, or lifted a voice in the pulpit. Of one of them, the venerable Hooker of Hartford, the colonists said, "Europe has more than repaid America in this one pearl, for all the treasures taken from her coast." Character is no where better formed than under the purifying influences of the sanctuary. Let a family desert the house of God, and in twenty years, that family will rank with the ignorant and vicious portion of the community. It must therefore be regarded as a circumstance highly favorable to the production of worthy men, that every where in New-England, the spire of the sanctuary is seen, side by side with the school room, the one inviting the young to seek for wisdom and knowledge, the other proclaiming that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

The last point to which I direct your attention is, *the modes of Education*. The question is now settled, by the united voice of the present and the past, that what we call learning is better acquired in public schools and seminaries, than under private tutors. So far at least as the great mass of the community are concerned, necessity gives but one side of this question. The children of a large majority of the community *must* be educated in public schools.

Nor need they regret this. What necessity has laid upon *them*, is adopted by the few as a matter of choice. It is well, then, to look at the influence of public schools upon the mind of a community.

The systems of education prevalent among the ancient Persians and Greeks were eminently calculated to produce such men as those nations delighted to honor. A few of the first years, say six or seven, were wholly devoted to the exercise and growth of the muscular powers. And I very seriously question whether these years could be better employed. Children ought not, at this season, to be pent up, either in the parlour or the school room. Without following Miss Martineau in all her devotion to '*spontaneousness*,' I think a *decent* respect should be shown to it. The practice of our ancestors was as nearly right as any system ever devised by man. About one half of the year was by them assigned to the original and only divine employment, tilling the ground; and the other half to study. They laid, in every neighborhood, the foundation of the little school room; and as the population thickened around it, they established the more advanced Grammar school; and then with a noble generosity,—the "depth of their poverty abounding to the riches of their liberality"—and with a far-seeing wisdom, they endowed, with the corn their own hands had taken from the field, the University of Knowledge. An example like this, the world has never known. Go search the records of the past; find all the names of the patrons of Education. You will see an Alexander lending his purse to the historian—and a Ptolemy and a James making princely provision for the translation of the Bible; but where else do you find a hardy peasantry, bringing in the sheaf of wheat, and laying it down in the treasury of the university.

A sentiment has to some extent prevailed in this State, as injurious to common schools, as it is adverse to all the higher interests of knowledge. Many have thought that, while they ought to patronize the common schools by legislative aid, nothing need be done for the academy, and especially for the college. As though the streams could flow, when the fountain itself is dry. As though a tree could have branches, and leaves, and fruit, without a trunk. Suffer the academies to decay, and the colleges to rot down, and in one generation the Goths and Vandals of our own soil, would tread every school house in the dust. Who are the most efficient and constant

friends of the common schools? Are they the *educated*, or the *ignorant*? I never knew a well educated man that was not the friend and promoter of the universal diffusion of knowledge. The objection has been, that endowments to colleges benefitted the rich exclusively. The reverse of this is much nearer the truth. The rich man could *buy* an education for his sons at almost any price. The great mass of parents must obtain it for theirs at a moderate sum, or it is forever beyond their hopes or their power. The endowments, therefore, granted to academies and colleges, are the high way cast up for all to walk upon; and without which, those in moderate circumstances could never enter the arena, and contend for the highest prizes of the university. With the way open, young men from this condition are the most numerous victors in the race.

If the great body of people understand their true interests, they will indeed demand and keep in vigorous operation an efficient system of common schools; but they will also open the doors of the higher seminary to every son of the republic. There should forever be, in all the offices and in all the professions of the country, men from every condition and employment in society. Then the feelings of all will be appreciated and their opinions represented. But they cannot do honor to their respective stations, nor acquire a due proportion of influence, without the most ample mental resources. To prepare such men, the academy and college, no less than the primary schools, must receive the fostering care of the State. And here is open before the legislator of the present day a field, where he may erect monuments more glorious and more enduring than the pyramids. It is now a time of profound and almost universal peace. The resources of the country are ample. This *method* of *internal* improvement is neither partial nor unconstitutional. It is made (by the constitution of this State) the *duty* of the legislature 'to encourage and suitably to endow, from time to time, all academies, colleges and seminaries of learning within the State.' And I cannot see why it is not now the duty and the privilege of this State, immediately to endow one or two academies in each county. We have some fifty of these institutions, scarcely one of which is suitably endowed. There are not five in the State, where a father can place his son, and feel confident that he will become master of the subjects he may study. Two or three *permanent* teachers, responsible for the progress of their pupils and for the

character of the school, should be placed at the head of one academy, at least, in every county in the State. No course of legislation would so soon enrich the instruction of the common schools.

More might, and ought to be, done for the common schools, than ever yet has been. Yet I have often been pained, to hear our common schools, as they are, disparaged. It has often been said 'that they are worse than none'; 'the money is all thrown away.' Such expressions are by no means true. To see the value of our present schools, you have only to compare a section of country where there are none, with any portion of New-England. I could wish, indeed, that instructors were in many instances better qualified; that parents would be more scrupulous in sending their children; and that the circle of studies were somewhat enlarged; but with all their defects, I love and value the common schools. They have excited and given impulse to thousands of minds, which had else been unknown among their generation and to posterity. A great many persons, by drinking at these little rills, have acquired a taste for the deeper and wider streams of knowledge. Many who honor these schools as the nurse of their childhood, are doing valiant battle in the first rank of those who seek the honor and the salvation of their country.

On the whole, the instructors of our common schools, and the friends of education, have much reason to thank God and take courage. There is much in our present condition to assure us that our labor will not be without reward. We may rear within this State as noble and worthy generations of men, as the world has ever seen. The climate is well adapted to such a purpose. The wild and broken landscape, here the little hill, and there the mountain; on one side the deep ravine, and on the other the broad valley; here the pure rill, and there the swelling river; the wild winds of winter, the swift approach of spring, and the rapid growth of summer, all unite to *awaken* mind and excite it to vigorous action. The noble, honored sires, whose praises are in all the world, their shining virtues, written upon every page of our history, like the statues of Miltiades, will not suffer us to slumber. Their love of knowledge, of true liberty, of strict morals, must awaken posterity to emulate their virtues.

In this subject we find both our encouragement and responsibil-

ity in the work of education. Had we a less propitious climate, or other insurmountable obstacles, we might sit down in hopeless indifference. Had our ancestors enstamped upon their posterity images of weakness and crime, we might never expect to wipe away the disgrace, or purify the poisoned blood flowing down from their veins. Rome was settled by robbers; and the nation was a robber of cities and the plunderer of nations; war was their element and their strength; repose was weakness and anarchy. As the shrewd and patriotic Caledonian said of them, "they make a solitude, and then call it peace."

The character of New-England can never cease to feel the influence of the Puritans. Already has this section of country attained an honorable distinction among the families of the republic, and of the earth. She has men whose names have been heard by the remotest of civilized nations. Her sons of the present and of the past are honorably enrolled among the greatest and best of the divines, the jurists, and the statesmen of the world. If she is true to herself, a still wider renown awaits her. We are called to labor upon no doubtful experiment. Other hands have laid deep and strong the foundations of her monuments. A patient and persevering application of the principles, in morals, education and religion, which have made her population what they are, will raise them to a superiority to themselves.

A single mind should not be suffered to slumber in darkness and ignorance. To perfect the system of moral, religious and intellectual training for the young, so piously commenced by our fathers, should be the highest ambition of the present day. The age is indeed distinguished by its *startling*, sometimes *astounding* novelties; for the rapidity of its changes, and the noise of its self-applause; but the divinity of mind, and the heart of purest benevolence, work not their best achievements in any of these. He who labors to perfect character (at present though it be but a single specimen of the divine workmanship,) in some good degree complete in all its parts, has performed a labor which will last longer, and reflect more honor, than the chiseled heroes of Phidias or Lysippus. If he who plants a tree is a benefactor to mankind, how much more is he who brings to perfection an immortal soul! Who could desire a more honorable position than that of Socrates in the market at Athens; Plato walking in the groves; or our

own half century teacher Abbot,—all possessing the full confidence and entire control of their pupils. Theirs, and such as theirs, is the place where wisdom dwells. In such sober methods she hews out her pillars, and prepares the materials for her house. Who does not wish to polish a stone, or assist in rearing the walls of this edifice? He that will labor here long and faithfully, shall have not a noisy and transient, but a sure and permanent reward. He shall see the fruit that will remain. He plants trees whose leaves are ever green, and like those in the Paradise above, they bear fruit every month. No man in the community does a more permanent good to society than the ever faithful and skilful teacher.

Let not, therefore, the teacher, who goes into the most obscure corner of the State, and occupies a room over which the native forest still hangs, think that his labor is in vain. He is there opening the embracements of immortal minds; and he may be training the spirit of a Cato, a Pericles, or a Franklin. He may be unloosing the tongue of a Fenelon, a Henry, or a Summerfield. He labors not alone. A thousand genial influences are cooperating with him. No matter how rough the quarry in which you find the gems of mind. Disengaged and polished, they are often diamonds of the first water. The country expects at your hands, men qualified to guide her councils, shine in the professions, be her support in adversity—her ornament in prosperity. Much of the character of the future age depends upon the instructors of the young. You cannot, therefore, feel too deeply the responsibilities which rest upon you. Notwithstanding much has been said of improving the rooms, the books, the modes of instruction, yet the best of all improvements, is a revised and improved edition of teachers. Almost every thing depends upon the living instructor. A good teacher cannot, indeed, supply the deficient faculties of a stupid pet, for not teaching whom all the mysteries of science he is often censured by blind parents; but he can and will call out and exercise faculties, where they are found. Wherever the efficient and faithful teacher goes, he will leave his impress upon his pupils. If *he* has been superficial in his acquisitions, they will become so. If he penetrate to the dividing asunder of the elements of knowledge, they will learn never to pass an intricate sum, nor to accuse the book of error upon every other page.

Especially let me request you not to be carried away by that

modern and foolish doctrine, that *moral suasion* is the only motive to study and obedience. Of all the theories of the inventive century in which we live, this most directly contradicts experience, common sense, and the Bible. Quintilian was right when he said, "Give me the boy whom praise excites, and who keenly feels reproach." The Bible is right when it says, "Spare the rod, and spoil the child." You might as well expect to go out into the Pacific Ocean, and lead home a whale around Cape Horn, by moral suasion, or *persuade* a lion to hold still, while some unfeeling son of Aesculapius wrenched every tooth from his head, as to *attempt to govern men, or children, wholly by moral suasion*. First of all, teach your pupils what *law is*, and then if they disobey, give them practical illustration of what *penalty is*.

Much of the riot and insubordination abroad in the land had their origin in the family and the school room. I recommend—no needless severity, but a manly, firm and strict adherence to order and government. You will be greatly assisted in exciting this respect for law in the minds of your pupils, by that degree of religious sentiment which it is your duty to inculcate. The laws of the State are imperative, that you should impress 'piety and morality,' upon your pupils. This therefore, is no more your moral than your legal duty. I do not mean, that the teacher of the public school, should avail himself of his position to make converts to any sect. Divided as the community is, this cannot be desired or expected. But this much in regard to christianity ought every where, and in every case to be insisted on; that the teacher himself show and require, respect for the sabbath, reverence for the Bible, and regular attendance upon the public worship of God. Any teacher that comes short of this is as unfit to instruct the young, as though he had been guilty of treason against the State. I speak of religion only in its bearing upon the citizen. I speak of it only as Washington and the elders, who lived in the days of our Joshua, spake and thought of it. *Ponder* the words of that sage. "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness,—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician equally with the pious man ought to respect and

cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be obtained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of a peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that *national morality* can prevail, in exclusion of religious principle."

The same sentiment is contained in an address from the pen of Josiah Quincy, President of Harvard College: "The great comprehensive truths, written in letters of living light upon every page of our history,—the language addressed by every past age of New-England to all future ages, is this;—Human happiness has no perfect security but freedom—freedom none but virtue—virtue none but knowledge;—*and neither freedom, nor virtue, nor knowledge has any vigor, or immortal hope, except in the principles of the christian faith, and in the sanctions of the christian religion.*"

Let these sentiments be the guide of parents and teachers, and "your sons shall grow up as plants around your table, and your daughters shall be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."