

The Sumter Banner.

DEVOTED TO SOUTHERN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, NEWS, LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, SCIENCE AND THE ARTS.

W. J. FRANCIS, PROPRIETOR.

"God—and our Native Land."

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Major E. F. Perry's Criticism
UPON
Mr. Taber's Address

It is with extreme reluctance that we again recur to this duty. Nothing but a deep sense of duty to ourselves could induce us to do so.

The attempt has been made, in various sections of the State, to produce the impression that we falsely reported the purport and substance of Mr. Taber's speech, and, moreover, that we did so maliciously, and for political purposes! It is to meet and expose these calumnious charges that we now address the public.

So far from having any malice against Mr. Taber, we did entertain the kindest feelings for him, and respected and admired him as a young gentleman of talents and promise. All our intercourse had been respectful and civil. We can say it was, on our part, kind and cordial. Mr. Taber did us the honor to consult us as to the propriety of his delivering his Address at the College Commencement. We suggested to him what appeared to us the proper course for him to pursue. He thanked us for our suggestions, and, we believe, adopted them. The next day he advised with us again, on the same subject.

We went to hear him, not to censure him, but to praise him. His graduating speech had filled our mind with delight, and we had spoken of it in terms of unequalled admiration. But we cannot express the astonishment and mortification which we felt at the conclusion of Mr. Taber's recent Address. We were shocked to hear such sentiments as the following (which are extracted from his acknowledged, printed Address) uttered by a highly gifted young man, whose talents and gentlemanly bearing we had praised and admired: "But this reading and writing system is not only not productive of public virtue, but tends directly to a mental demoralization, no less fatal to republicanism, than licentiousness and vice!"

"We need not enter into an elaborate argument to show that the bare knowledge of reading and writing constitute, in no true sense, an education." "In New England, where we are told this system has been eminently successful—where reading and writing are taught to all—crime, vice, and infidelity are progressing in a fearful ratio!" "While the South reviled, because she hesitates to adopt and establish this meagre, insufficient and unsatisfactory system of public education, enjoys comparative and unexampled immunity from all!" "By far the larger portion of those who attend the Common School, come from the lap of poverty and toil!" "The tastes, the occupations—the opportunities—of these, cannot be intellectual. With the first light of morning they go forth to their honest labor, and at early eve sink exhausted to their couches! What time is spared them for books?" "By the operation of immutable laws, which neither the efforts of reform can effect, society everywhere is split into the extreme divisions of wealth and leisure, poverty and dependence."

"The life of this latter is of necessity mental, and in communities where they do not fall under a superior race, they constitute that turbulent, corrupt pauper host which looms in such fearful darkness over European society." "Is such a class fit for self-government?" "When she (the State) does educate, let her educate scientifically," &c. &c.

We were mortified to hear such sentiments and teachings pronounced in the very temple of learning itself—in the presence of the learned Faculty of a State College, the Trustees of that institution, before the Senators and Representatives of a democratic and republican people, and in the hearing of an assembled multitude of that people themselves! This, all this, too, as Dr. Lieber says, "in the middle of the nineteenth century!" We thought then, and we still think, that such sentiments, uttered at such a time, in such a place, before such an audience merited the rebuke of a free and independent press. But instead of obtaining

such rebuke, the speech itself was lauded and complimented by the press of the State. It is true, in some instances, there was an intimation that the views expressed by the orator, on the subject of popular education, were not in accordance with the notions of the editor on that subject!

We knew full well that, by the criticism which we made of Mr. Taber's Address in the *Southern Patriot*, we should incur his displeasure, and the displeasure of his friends, and bring down upon our head the penalty of indignant vengeance. But such considerations have never yet caused us to swerve from the line of duty, however much we may regret their consequences. We believed, too, at the time we penned that criticism, that there were many in South Carolina who secretly entertained the same views with Mr. Taber in regard to the utility of Common Schools, the impracticability of the States educating the masses of the people, and the high necessity of her educating a class thoroughly, on whom the others are to be dependent for instruction and teachings in politics, religion and morals, as was the case in the Athenian aristocratic oligarchy. These gentlemen believe, too, that "a pure democracy is the worst form of tyranny."

As to the truthfulness of our version of Mr. Taber's Address, we have the testimony of Judge O'Neill and Dr. Lieber. Professor Reynolds and Dr. Thornwell assign good reasons for their not being so pointed and clear. These four gentlemen only, were written to by us before the publication of Mr. Taber's Address, and for the purpose of having their remembrance of it. Each one of them shall speak for himself.

It will be remembered that Mr. Taber, in resenting our remarks on his Address, made no issue with us in regard to their truth. He published our correspondence with the offensive criticism, but said nothing as to the correctness or incorrectness of the criticism. We do not recognize the published Address, in all respects, as the speech we heard in the College Chapel. Some expressions are added, in explanation, as Mr. Taber states in his card. Some are left out which we remember, and others are modified and softened in their language. For instance, in the Address as spoken, the orator stated, in allusion to the ingratitude of ancient republics, that the State of South Carolina had covered herself in black disgrace or ingratitude, but that he would not say what it was! We find no such expression or allusion in the published Address.

Knowing that Mr. Taber had had five years to prepare his Address, and seeing a huge manuscript before him, the pages of which he turned over as he spoke, we took it for granted that every word uttered was written down. There was something, too, in the manner of delivery, which induced us to suppose the Address was memorized. But Mr. Taber says, in one of his cards, he would not bring into question the truth or justice of our criticism. Upon such an issue we might have demanded the publication of his Address precisely as it was delivered, a requisition which he could not comply with for the reason stated in his card of the 19th ult., that it was hastily prepared in the midst of numerous pressing engagements—that a crude manuscript was his only guide on the occasion, and that in some parts he spoke entirely without notes!

But we now take the Address, as it been corrected and written out by Mr. Taber, as the basis of discussion, in the language of Dr. Lieber. We will see how far the correctness of our report of the address is sustained by its language as published in all the newspapers of the State. Our purpose is to analyze the speech and give extracts from it. We would gladly publish the whole, but it would take too much of our space, and has been already seen by almost every one. As we proceed we will analyze our own criticism, and apply it to the extracts we give from Mr. Taber's Address.

First in order, as we shall notice our charges, is the following, in reference to the Common Schools. We say: "He opposed the common school system, and denounced them as mischievous." Did Mr. Taber do this? We give the following extracts from his Address as published and revised by himself. It they do not sustain the truth of our assertion, we are incapable of understanding the English language:

"Assuming that a republic depends for permanency upon the morality of the people, and that intellectual cultivation is a means to that end, there has been established, in some of the States of this Union, what is termed a Common School system, the range of which is reading and writing, with a few rudiments."
"Now, the first and fundamental error in this system appears to be, in the implied assumption that reading

and writing either in themselves constitute an education, or that the majority of those thus taught avail themselves of it, as a starting point for future cultivation. I need not enter into an elaborate argument to show that the bare knowledge of reading and writing constitutes in no true sense an education. It certainly cannot of itself make a better man or a better citizen."

"But again, 'Does this system, well-nigh barren as it is of intellectual fruit, cherish morals and instill virtue? If it does not, the very objects for which it is instituted, the promotion of public virtue, as essential to republicanism, are defeated. There is the test, and the common school system must stand or fall by it."

"Now, let us admit, for the sake of argument, that this system does educate intellectually, it may well be doubted whether it even then promotes morals. Indeed, although at the first glance there would seem to be direct connection between intellectual enlightenment and virtue, that the light which kindles the mind should also penetrate the heart; yet history is full of examples of the highest illumination of the one, linked with the deepest depravity of the other."

"But what is the state of morals where this system prevails? In Prussia, whose boast is the enlightenment of her people, crime and vice are greatly on the increase. In France, where the Prussian system has been adopted they exhibit no diminution. In the United States there is still a sadder tale. In New England, where we are told this system has been eminently successful, where reading and writing are taught to all, crime, vice and infidelity are progressing in a fearful ratio. It is attempted to explain this by the influence of emigration. But the statistics show the increase to be independent of it. While the South reviled, because she hesitates to adopt and establish this meagre, insufficient and unsatisfactory system of public education, enjoys comparative and unexampled immunity from all."

"But this reading and writing system is not only not productive of public virtue, but tends directly to a mental demoralization, no less fatal to republicanism, than licentiousness and vice."
We stated, also, in the second place, as we have arranged our allegations, that "In order to show the mischievousness of education amongst the masses, he appealed to the Northern States." In reference to this matter, we give the following extracts, which fully justify the assertion that Mr. Taber regarded the education of reading and writing as mischievous, and that the effect of this education was fully developed in the Northern States:

"But this reading and writing system is not only not productive of public virtue, but tends directly to a mental demoralization, no less fatal to republicanism, than licentiousness and vice."
"Placing young mind under a tuition like this, where no fixed principles in morals or politics are taught, where knowledge is circumscribed within a few dogmas, and where even this narrow training ceases at the very moment when the mind is awake with inquiry and speculation—then turn it out to pasture in the 'unweeded garden,' which a licentious Press has planted, and what is the result? Can it surprise us that such a mind, vain because of its meagre learning, not yet subdued into that beautiful humility which, according to Bacon, true knowledge fosters, should at once launch into wild speculations? Need we wonder that the instrument thus entrusted to unskilful hands, should be used, not to prune, but to destroy? Or that a mind so prepared, should at once fall a victim to specious fallacies, and mad theories: that it should greedily absorb the light and seductive, and reject the thoughtful and sober? Here is one great clue to the radiance of that torrent of isms, which is swamping our literature, morals and politics, and has cast upon society again the buried veil of exploded falsehood." The youth who leaves the common school at the North feels the pains of authorship within him.—Originality is his sole thought, and the more extreme and radical is he, the stronger and better his claim. Eager publishers calculate the success of the new work, by its congeniality to popular ideas and passion; and forth it goes in blue and gilt to minds as anchorless and weak as his own. Enter the cities of the North, embark on her steamers, ride on her railroads, go into the country, and every where you will find the appetite of her so-called readers, public, dieted on literary garbage. Cheap infidelity, socialism and vice, are served up in every form to suit the palates of the million.

"If, then, this system fails to elevate the people intellectually—if it does not

diminish vice and crime, if aided by a licentious Press it fosters mental vanity, wild speculation, and immorality—if, in a word, it falls short of its object, the welfare of the republic, what is the system really conducive to that end?"

Thirdly, we stated that Mr. Taber took the ground boldly, "that the laboring classes had no right to be educated, and that the poor man had to work, and it was useless for him to learn to read and write, that a little education made the people vicious and idle." In reference to this allegation, we make the following extracts from Mr. Taber's published Address, which we think have not the same strength of expression, harshness and point that the original or spoken words had. At least they do not read so grating to our ears as they sounded when spoken. The idea is the same: That labor and education cannot go together, and hence the necessity of slavery in a Republic, to furnish the wealthy and leisure class to devote themselves to that thorough education and training which existed amongst the Athenians. We think labor and education, the reading of books and the acquisition of knowledge, not at all incompatible. Some of the greatest and most learned men have been most indefatigable and industrious laborers and mechanics.

"And as to the second, a word will suffice. By far the larger portion of those who attend the common school, come from the lap of poverty and toil. They belong to that class to be found in every condition of society, but especially in the more wealthy and civilized whose livelihood is scantily had by the hard and drudgery. From this scene they go to the common school, and after receiving the medium of knowledge there given, they return whence they came, to toil and struggle. The tastes, the occupation—the opportunities of these, cannot be intellectual. With the first light of morning they go forth to their honest labor, and at early eve sink exhausted to their couches. What time is spared to them for books?"

"I come now lastly to the consideration of Slavery, as essential to a republic. Mr. Calhoun in his sublime disquisition upon government, fully exposes that monstrous fallacy of modern times, that 'all people are equally entitled to liberty.' Akin to this is the error that republicanism, the most elaborate and difficult of all systems, is not only suited to all peoples, but that it can at once qualify ignorance and incompetence for the duties and responsibilities of self government. Moreover, that the republican idea requires that all should participate equally in political rights."

"To assert the contrary is to defy all the popular maxims on the subject. But if there is one fact emphatically illustrated, in the history of Republics, it is that they cannot prosper where political equality does exist, in short, where some such system as African slavery is unknown."

"By the operation of immutable laws, which neither the violence of revolution nor the efforts of reform can effect, society everywhere is split into the extreme divisions of wealth and leisure—poverty and dependence.—The progress of civilization does not obliterate these lines, but tends rather to intensify and perpetuate them.—The life of this latter is of necessity mental, and in communities where they do not fall under the care of a superior race, they constitute that turbulent, corrupt, pauper host which looms in such fearful darkness over European society. Is such a class fit for self-government? Can they exercise safely the rights, or fulfill the duties of a republic? Are they not then the ready tools of the anarchist and the demagogue? Yet it is this class which modern utopianism invests with full political rights. To debar them of the privileges of the citizen, is to array against society, a jealous and violent mass, and to admit them is to subject government to their radical and corrupt influence."

"The first object of public education should (and by public I mean State) be to inform the people of the nature of their government, the rights and duties of the citizen. Prof. Lieber, in his admirable essay upon Anglican and Gallican liberty, enumerates this among the duties of all free systems. We believe that, as regards the larger portion of the citizens, government will fail when it attempts more; and if of facts results noble and grand and beneficent indeed, when it does this much."

Fourthly and lastly, we assert that Mr. Taber "depreciated demagogism, and urged conservatism, whilst using the most clap-trap arguments in favor of the aristocratic few, who were to be educated, and who were to govern the rest of mankind in their ignorance and poverty." It is now admitted by Mr. Taber that he made the Athenian Republic his model, where, in his own

language, "Citizenship and all its cognate rights were enjoyed by a very small portion of the people." "The great mass always remained in exclusion, as much so as our slaves." In support of the above allegations, we make the following extracts from the Address, and leave to the candid reader to say whether they do not contain arguments in favor of the aristocratic few, the twenty thousand of their own race. It must be borne in mind, too, that only a very small portion of those twenty thousand were educated, and they, too, were under the control of the higher class, the educated few:

"The two greatest dangers which beset all human governments are the extremes of radicalism on the one hand, and stagnant inactivity on the other. Both are equally hostile to liberty and civilization, just as the unfettered violence of the madman, and the stupor of the opium-eater, alike cannot consist with individual well-being. The tendency to either varies greatly with the character of the people, and the political system under which they live. With absolute and despotic governments, the tendency is most intense to the latter; but with the free and liberal, the proclivity is equally strong towards the opposite extreme of radicalism. In this, as in all things else, the path of sound wisdom lies in the happy medium which we call conservatism."

"But in a Republic, conservatism is the safeguard of the people. They constitute the government, and they have nothing to fear from it, but what they should fear from themselves. Conservatism, therefore, protects them against themselves. It is a great public conscience, which rebukes the sacrilegious thought, and unweaves the reckless arm."

"In all is the lesson taught, that wherever the element of slavery does not exist, and it has been attempted to confer political equality upon all classes, we find a section of society, where history has placed them, in dangerous fellowship with the demagogue and usurper."

"Such is the position of the North consequent upon the condition into which the absence of an inferior race has brought them. The people corrupt the politicians, and are in turn corrupted by them, until society becomes radical, and government verges towards anarchy."

"Turn then to the South. So what a grand part her menial class performs in social and political development. True, their voices are not heard in drunken shouts in our public meetings and the galleries of our Legislature, cheering on the demagogue. They cannot exercise the so-called freeman's birthright, and vote down law, property and God, and vote up anarchy, robbery and the devil. They cannot read nor write, and thus become no voter, if no worse."

"The masses of the North have ignored history, and laughed to scorn the dread warnings it utters. No extravagance, however wild, doubts them, but right onward they dash, trampling under foot all that is venerable, and rioting in the strong drink of novelties and isms. Temperance reform, abolition, spirit rapping, commingled."

"For a charm of powerful trouble, Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble."
"See how their social-fabric sways and trembles, how religion is poisoned with enthusiasm and pantheism; how their political system totters on the brink of pure democracy—that worst form of tyranny; how woman, despising the holy offices of wife and mother, markets her modesty in public brawls, how legislation is reckless and corrupt, and its halls polluted with rowdiness almost Jacobin. In such a chaos that curse of demagogues, the demagogue is at home—his nature and ends unchanged. Professing to equalize, he levels downwards; to break old chains, he forges new ones; to promote harmony, he engenders discord; to advance, he retards; to love the people, he would dupe and use them.—The loud-mouthed advocate of liberty, he works zealously for anarchy; and when, at last, the people madly destroy their ancient landmarks, and confiding, yield to his guidance, he erects on the grave of their rights and peace, a bloody, a remorseless tyranny."

"But when State education goes further, when in keeping with the spirit of the age, it seeks a broader basis, let her rear institutions like this. Let her consecrate light upon the hill tops, whence its rays will pierce the dark valleys and illumine the path of the climber, rather than scatter feeble candles, whose uncertain light deoys the unwary into pits and quagmires. Let

the pupils of this and similar institutions step forth into life deeply imbued with the spirit of our institutions and worthy principles. Men whose presence and example shall radiate patriotism and honor, and who, in the doubt and fury of political crises, will command the gaze and guide the steps of the erring. When she does educate, let her educate efficiently. Let her build upon the basis of the home and the family, an intellectual superstructure, grand and comprehensive, blending individual excellence with the State, and the State a part of the man."

"If gentlemen, we appeal to history for the vindication of this theory, it will be found ample and universal.—The Greeks, as they are the models in literature and art, so in the philosophy of government they command the deepest study. And there is no feature of their policy more striking than its under consideration. Citizenship and its cognate rights were enjoyed by a very small portion of the people, as in this State it is enjoyed by less than one half its population. It was, among the Athenians; confined by the constitution of Solon to the four primitive Ionic tribes, and though subsequently enlarged by Cleisthenes and Pericles, so as to admit the whole body of native freemen, yet the great mass always remained in exclusion, as much so as our slaves. The equality of Greek liberty was the equality of her free citizens. As before stated, there were in Athens but 20,000 voting citizens, to 370,000 slaves. Yet with this startling disparity of physical force, there existed, to the end of the Republic, a harmony almost uninterupted. In peace, the slave was the contented husbandman and domestic, and in the storms of battle he shared the perils and fortunes of his master. The subsequent ruin which swept over her institutions, came from another source.—In the tumults and anarchy of an unrepresentative democracy, and beneath the bowels of iron-headed barbarians, the liberties and polity of Athens sunk to the grave."

"Slavery and the distinction which attached to citizenship, gave to the Greek mind leisure and taste for that public education which expanded into such grand outline and beauty. They invested his nature with that heroic spirit which defied and conquered the Persian host. They, in a word, contributed to make him that poetic and free souled thing which has won the love of aftertimes."

"When we come down to the Roman Republic, we again find slavery elevating the character of the citizen, and protecting government from the taint of Radicalism. So, too, in the Republics of modern Italy, a full participation in the rights of citizenship was denied to the menial class. But the relation of master and slave not being recognized, social order and liberty were overthrown by the antagonism of sections. The last effort for republican government in Germany was signalized by the abolition of feudal bondage, and it died in its very birth. But the most striking instance in modern times of the essentiality of slavery to republics, are France and the Northern States of this Union."

"Whether such sentiments as we have given in the extracts made from Mr. Taber's speech are insulting to public opinion, indicating a want of true knowledge on the subject of popular education, and leading to tyranny over the working classes—whether they are against human liberty, in opposition to republicanism, to civilization and the spirit of the age—we leave every man to determine for himself."

But Mr. TABER says he is in favor of popular education. What does he mean by popular education? Not that miserable system of reading and writing obtained at the Common Schools, and which has produced the rowdiness of the North? By no means. His notion of popular education is that of Athens, where the masses were instructed orally, as our Negroes are taught. He would have popular education to consist, in the language of President THORNTON, of "popular addresses, forcible arguments, public lectures, contact with able and gifted men, theatrical representations; paintings and monuments." All this may be very good, but it is certainly a great misnomer to call it popular education. There is now no popular education without reading and writing. The art of printing has entirely changed the whole theory of education, since the days of the Athenians. A man might go and hear Calhoun and McDuffie make speeches, to the entire neglect of his shops or his fields, and he would still be an uneducated man, if he could neither read nor write. This sort of education might make him the blind follower of Calhoun and McDuffie, as the Athenians were of their orators; but it would not make him a scholar or an independent thinker, as would be done by reading books. He would become as unfit for

an independent republican citizen, as the Roman Catholic, who is never permitted to read his Bible, or know any thing of the religion of Christ, except what he gets from his priest. We have as little confidence in political priests as we have in religious priests.—Every man should think for himself, in politics as well as in religion.—The same may be said of every science and every pursuit of knowledge in the whole world. Without a man's ability to read his newspapers and his Bible, he must be more or less a dependent on the wealthy and educated classes."

Mr. TABER contends that the working man has no time for books—that he goes out early in the morning to his labor, and returns at night, exhausted. What time would such a man have to hear speeches and lectures? But Mr. TABER says the laborer can have no taste for literature, and of course would have as little for public speeches. The wealthy and persons of leisure are those who are to be educated, and pursue literature. We deny that wealth and leisure give any taste for literature, or have ever furnished in the United States one-tenth part of her statesmen and scholars. On the contrary, the great men of America, the scholars of the United States, the learned of the Republic, were never nurtured in the lap of wealth and leisure. Such men have always been hard workers—laboring men—men who made their living by the sweat of their brow. No mechanic or field laborer works harder, every day of his life, or works longer, than the lawyer and physician in full practice. And what is there in issuing writs, or making pills, in counselling with clients, or visiting sick rooms, more congenial to a taste for literature, than ploughing the earth or building a house? If the lawyer and the doctor can find time to devote to books and literature, so may the mechanic and tradesman, and the farmer and day laborer. Learning has been, as Dr. Lieber says, "entirely changed by the art of printing and common schools, where reading and writing are taught to the poor 'ragged children' of the country." Long may it continue, should be the wish of every one.

There is an aristocratic feeling and pretension in South Carolina, and a contempt and distrust of the people, which exist in no other State of this Union! There is less of republicanism in our State Constitution and Government, and less confidence reposed in the people under them, than in any other State in the Republic! Nowhere else are the people denied their constitutional right of voting for Electors of President and Vice President. In no other State are they deprived of the right of voting for their Chief Magistrate! Nowhere else in this broad Republic is the citizen of a swamp entitled to one hundred and twenty times the influence of another who lives on the hills or mountains. Nowhere else but in South Carolina is property invested with an influence in one portion of the State which the same species of property has not, in a different section of the country! In no State but South Carolina are six hundred dollars appropriated to the education of sixteen poor scholars in a parish, and only the same amount appropriated to educate two or three hundred in some of the districts! In the Senate of this State a majority of the Senators are elected by a very small minority of the people of the State. As to any change or alteration of our Constitution, it is impossible, unless the Senators representing perhaps one-tenth of the people see proper to sanction it.

These are odious aristocratic features in our Government, which deserve to be broken down. They tend to encourage the belief that the people are not fit for self-government, and if they were not taught to read and write, they would not be very long.

We have been told that Mr. TABER's Address is not without advocates and apologists in Greenville, as well as other portions of the State. This does not surprise us at all, for we verily believe that if Mr. TABER had proposed, in his quinquennial Address, that all the free white laborers of the State, men, women and children, should be blacked and sold, and we had opposed it as being unwise, unjust and atrocious, there would have been found some, no doubt, in Greenville, as well as elsewhere in South Carolina, who could not have seen anything objectionable in the suggestion, and who would have denounced us for opposing it.

We give the public the following letters, which we have received on the subject of this controversy. It was our purpose to have written to many others, but the publication of Mr. TABER's Address cut short our correspondence. It touches for us sufficiently.

COLUMBIA, January 8, 1854.
Dear Sir: Your letter was rather long on the way, and since it was written (CONTINUED ON FOURTH PAGE.)