

THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

"I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man."—Thomas Jefferson.

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TERMS:

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MISCELLANEOUS.

A LOOKING-GLASS FOR FARMERS.

To J. BUEL, Esq. editor of 'The Cultivator.'

Dear Sir:—When I was a boy, I can well remember how I used to be induced to wash my smutty face, by having a looking glass held before my eyes. For the same purpose, I have extracted the following picture of "a farmer," from the writings of that most eccentric and excellent writer "Samuel Slick," in the hopes that if any of your readers should happen to see any part of himself therein, that he will improve by the view. Here it is.

" * * * That critter, when he built that wreck of a house they call 'em a half house here, intended to add as much more to it some of these days and accordingly put his chimney outside, to serve the new part as well as the old. He has been too 'busy' ever since, you see to remove the banking put there the first fall, to keep the frost out of the cellar, and consequently it has rotted the sills off, and the house has fell away from the chimney, and he has had to prop it up with great sticks of timber, to keep it from coming down on his knees altogether. All the windows are boarded up but one, and that might as well be, for little light can penetrate them ole hats and red flannel petticoats. Look at the barn; its broken back roof has let the garble cends fall in, where they stand staring at each other, as if they would come close together and no doubt they soon will, to consult what is best to be done to gain their standing in the world.—Now look at the stock, there's your improved short horns. Them dirty looking, half-starved geese, and them draggle-tailed fowls that are so poor the foxes would be ashamed to steal them—that little lantern'd jawed, ragged, rabbit eared runt of a pig, poor sneak it cant curl its tail up—that old cow fraim standing there with its eyes shut, and looking for all the world as though she's contemplating her latter end, and with good reason too, and that other redish-yellow, long-wooled varmint, with his hocks higher than his belly, that looks as if he had come to her funeral, and which by way of distinction, his owner calls a horse, is all the stock, I guess, this farmer supports upon a hundred acres of good natural soil as ever laid out door. Now there's a specimen of Native Stock. I reckon he'll imigrate to a warmer climate soon, for you see the hen's roosting on, that he calls a shed, he's had to burn all the fence round the house, but there's no danger of cattle breaking into his field, and his old muley has learnt how to sneak around among the neighbors' fields, at nights, looking for an open gate or bars, to take a mouthful now and then. For if you were to mow the meadow with a razor and rake it with fine tooth comb you couldn't get enough to winter a grasshopper.

Spouse we drive up to the door and have a word to chat with Nick Bradshaw, and see if he is as promising as out appearances indicate.

Observing us from the only light of glass remaining in the window. Nick lifted the door and laying it aside, emerged from the kitchen parlor and smoke house to

reconnoitre. He was a tall, well-built athletic man of great personal strength, and surprising activity, who looked like a careless, good-natured fellow, fond of talking, and from the appearance of the little black pipe which stuck in one corner of his mouth, equally so of smoking; and as he appeared to fancy us to be candidates, no doubt he was already enjoying in prospective the neighboring tap-room. Just look at em.—Happy critter—his hat crown has lost the top out, and the rim hangs like the bail of a bucket. His trowsers and jacket show clearly that he has had clothes of other colors in other days. The untan'd moccason an one foot, which contrasts with the old shoe on the other, shows him a friend to domestic manufactures; and his beard is no bad mach for the woolly horse yonder. See the waggish independent sort of a look the critter has, with his hat or one side, and hands in his breeches pockets, contemplating the beauties of his farm.

"You may talk about patience and fortitude, philosophy and christian resignation, and all that sort of thing till you get tired, but—ah, here he comes, 'Morning Mr. Bradshaw—how's all home to day?' 'Right comfortable,'—hear that, comfort in such a place—'I give thanks—come, light and come in. I'm sorry can't feed your hoss, but the fact is, 'tan't bin no use to try to raise no crops late years, for body don't git half paid for their labor, these hard times—I raised a nice bunch of potatoes last year, and as I couldn't get nothing worth while for 'em in the fall, I tho't I'd keep 'em till spring. But as frost set in while I was down town 'lection time, the boys didn't fix up the old cellar door, and this infernal cold winter froze 'em all. It's them what you smell now, and I've just been telling the old woman that we must turn too and carry them out of the cellar 'fore long, they'll make us sick like enough, for these's no telling what may happen to a body late years. And if the next legislator do something for us, the Lord knows but the whole country will starve, for it seems as tho' the land now days won't raise nothing. It's actually run out.'

"Why, I should think by the look of things around your neighbor Horton's that his land produced pretty well." "Why, yes, and it's a miracle too, how he gets it—for everybody round here said, when he took up that track, it was the poorest in the town. There are some folks that think he has dealings with the black art, for't does seem as tho' the more he worked his land the better it got."

Now here was a mystery; but an easy explanation of Mr. Slick soon solved the matter, at least to my mind. "The fact is," says Mr. Slick, "a great deal of this country is run out, and if it warn't for lime, marsh-mud, sea-weed, salt sand, and why not, they've got here in such quantities, and a few Horton's to apply it, the whole country would run out, and dwindle away to just sick great good natural good-for nothing do-nothing fellows as this Nick Bradshaw, and his woolly horse, and woolless sheep, and cropless farm, and comfortless house, if indeed such a great wind rack of loose lumber is worthy the name of a house."

"Now by way of contrast to all this, do you see that neat little cottage looking house on yonder hammock, away to the right there, where you see those beautiful shade trees. The house is small, but it is a whole house. That's what I call about right; flanked on both sides by an orchard of best graft fruit; a tidy flower in front that the girls see to, and a most grand sarce garden just over there, where it takes the wash of the buildings, nicely sheltered by that bunch of shubbery."

"Then see them everlasting big barns, and, by gosh, there goes fourteen dairy cows, as slick as moles. Them flowers, honeysuckles and rose bushes, shows what sort of a family lives there just as plain as straws shows which way the wind blows."

"Them galls an't tually racing round to quilting and husking frolics, their feet exposed in thin slips to the mud, and their

honor to a thinner protection. No, no, take my word for't when you see gals busy about such things to home, they are what our old minister used to call 'right minded.'—Such things keep them busy, and when folks are busy about their own business, they've no time to get into mischief. It keeps them healthy, too, and as cheerful as larks, I've a mind w'll 'light here and view this citizens improvements, and we shall be welcomed to a neat substantial breakfast, that would be worthy to be taken as a pattern by the farmer's wife in America."

We were met at the door by Mr. Horton, who greeted my friend Slick with the warm Salutation of an old acquaintance, and expressed the satisfaction natural to one habitually hospitable, for the honor of my visit. He was a plain, healthy, intelligent looking man about fifty, dressed as a farmer should be, with the stamp of 'HOMESPUN,' legible upon every garment, 'not forgetting a very handsome silk handkerchief, the work throughout of his oldest daughter.

The room into which we were ushered, bore the same stamp of neatness and comfort that the outside appearance indicated.—A substantial home-made carpet covered the floor, and a well filled book case and writing-desk, were in the right place, among the contents of which, I observed several agricultural periodicals. I was particularly struck with the scrupulously neat and appropriate attire of the wife and two intelligent interesting daughters that were busily engaged in the morning operations of the dairy.

After partaking of an excellent breakfast, Mr. Horton invited us to walk over his farm, which tho' small, was every part in such a fine state of cultivation, that he did not even express a fear of starving unless the legislature did something to keep the land from running out.

We bade adieu to this happy family, and proceeded on our journey fully impressed with the contrast between a good and bad farmer, and for my own part, perfectly satisfied with the manner that Mr. Slick had taken to impress it indelibly upon my own mind.

Mr. Slick seemed wrapped in contemplation of the scenes of the morning for a long time. At length he broke forth in one of his happy strains. "The bane of this country, Squire, and indeed of all America, is having too much land—they run over more ground then they can cultivate, and crop the land year after year, without manure, till it's no wonder that it runs out. A very large portion of land in America has been run out by repeated grain crops, and bad husbandry, until a great portion of this country is in a fair way to be ruined. The two Carolinas and Virginia are covered with places that are run out and are given up as ruined, and they are a plaguey site too many such places all over New England and a great many other States. We have not the surplus of wheat that we used to have in the United States, and it'll never be so plenty while they are so many Nick Bradshaw's in the country."

"The fact is this, Squire, education is deucedly neglected. True we have a sight of schools and colleges, but they ain't the right kind. The same Nick Bradshaw has been clean through one on'em, and was there that he learnt that infernal lazy habit of drinking and smoking, that has been the ruin of him ever since. I would'n't give an old fashioned swing-tail clock, to have my son go to college where he could'n't work enough to earn his own living and learn how to work it right tu."

"It actually frightens me when I think how the land is worked and skinned till they take the gizzard out on't when it might be growing better every day.—Thousands of acres every year are turned into barrens while an everlasting stream of our folks are streaking it off to the new country where about half on'em after wading about among the tadpoles to catch cat-fish enough to live on a year or two, actilly shake themselves to death with that everlasting cuss of all new countries, the fever and agur. It's a melancholy fact, Squire, though

our people don't seem to be sensible of it and you nor I may not live to see, but if this awful robbin' of posterity goes on for another hundred years, as it has for the last, among the farmers, we'll be a nation of paupers. Talk about the legislature doing something, I'll tell you what I'd have them do. Paint a great parcel of guide boards, and nail 'em up over every legislature, church, and school-house door in America, with these words on'em in great letters, 'THE BEST LAND IN AMERICA, BY CONSTANT CROPPING, WITHOUT MANURE WILL RUN OUT.' And I'd have 'em also, provide means to learn every child how to read it, no use to try to learn the old ones, they're so set in their ways. They are on the constant stretch with the land they have, and all the time trying to git more, without improving any on't. Yes, yes, yes, too much land is the ruin of us all.

Although you will find a thousand more good things among the writings of "The Clockmaker," I hope you will not look for a literal copy of the foregoing. And if ever this meets the eye of the writer of the "Sayings and doings of Samuel Slick," I beg him to excuse me for the liberty I have taken with his own language. I remain your agricultural friend. SOLON ROBINSON. Lake C. H. Va. Oct. 12, 1839.

The capital article which follows, is from the "Old Dominion," an ably conducted paper, printed at Portsmouth, Virginia. It contains much good sense and sound argument, and it is well worthy the time its perusal will occupy.

KNOWLEDGE AND VIRTUE.

If there is any one subject in which we feel a deeper interest than any other, and perhaps we might say all others, it is that of Education. It is an object of paramount consequence with us; it is interwoven with fibre of the heart, and blended with every principal of the mind. If there is a consummation more ardently desired than any other, it is that we may see every poor man's child, ay, every child in the land, furnished with the means of acquiring knowledge at a common school. It has been matter of grief and wonder, to witness so great a degree of apathy and inattention, upon a question of such stupendous importance to the American people, we know not how to account for it—how philanthropists, patriots, christians, can justify their criminal negligence on this subject, we must leave to their consciences to determine. For our own part, from this time henceforward, we are determined to bend our energies upon this point. It shall not be our fault that thousands of the rising generation are allowed to grow up in ignorance, indolence and vice.

Not only have the American people been wickedly remiss upon the subject of providing more general means for the diffusion of knowledge, but even those they have provided have been outrageously abused. They have been expended in educating American youth to become—what? Not republicans—not lovers of equal rights—of democracy; not to become ardent advocates of the largest liberty, and to consult the greatest happiness of the greatest number. No! The tendency of the system of education pursued at nearly all our colleges and other seminaries of learning, is to make aristocrats; to lead the pupil to prefer the splendid governments of Europe, to the republican simplicity of our own institutions. Many to their praise be it spoken, break through these trammels, overcome these pernicious influences and become ardent and true friends of the people; of this we have honorable instances; our only regrets that they are few, compared with the whole number of graduates. One great reason why so many lawyers, clergymen, and others of the learned professions, are so inimical to the genuine principles of American liberty, is the pernicious influence of our present system of education at colleges, which is so well calculated to make anti-republicans.

In an excellent article in the Westminster Review attributed to the pen of Lord

Brougham, we find some useful hints. The writer says—We invent and improve machinery of every description, but the machine of mind—the worn out machinery of our ancestors—the fundamental engine, that machine of all mechanics—the education of man—is not a jot improved since the days of King Alfred. Education at the present day, if not absolutely pernicious and useless is, to a great degree purposeless—it has the mischievous result of occupying valuable means to no end. And if it does all this, says the Reviewer, to no useful end, it is injurious, inasmuch as it impedes the application of what would be useful. Life and money, labor and industry, are expended in what is unproductive—they might be expended in productive acquisition. The machinery of education is antiquated and bad and its product is nothing or worse than nothing. We should laugh at the man who should till his farm as farms were tilled before the Norman conquest; yet we maintain both by example and precept, the system which cultivates man's mind as it was done when man was a tyrant and slave—ignorant debased. We seen to imagine that the whole of all that is valuable in education consists in endeavoring to acquire a knowledge of two dead languages Latin and Greek; or rather as we should say, in endeavoring to avoid acquiring them, or in forgetting and renouncing them after they are acquired.

If education means anything, (we quote again from the Westminster Review,) it is the process by which the mind of man, possessed with powers, but unfurnished with ideas, is stored with knowledge, and is enabled to apply this to the business of human life. The business of life is, however, no longer what it was in the days of Alfred; but the education is the same. If, without education—if, in spite of a vicious or an useless system, we have attained that which we do possess, it is not too much to hope, that under a system of which the means are calculated for the ends, we are yet immeasurably behind the point which we shall, at some future day reach.

We have no fear in asserting that the most enlightened people will always maintain superiority over those who are less informed—that they will excel them, not only in invention, but in industry; that they will resist or conquer them in arms; that they will exceed them in moral order, and, what is not less important, will form, or reform, a political state better administered and therefore more free from abuses, and more conducive to the wealth and happiness of the total community. It is *were every man understands his own duties*, that he understands the duties of others and those duties are his rights.

At this day every one knows that if he would hope to succeed, he must commence his education when he is thought to have quitted it. He must educate himself; and thus doing, he condemns, by his practice, the college system, in which he has been brought up, though he is rarely honest enough to confess his own folly, or that of his parents and ancestors, in maintaining an almost useless system.

The education of those who are really educated, is their own work, not only are all the previous time and money lost, but that period of life which ought to have been occupied in acquisition has passed, never to return, never to be compensated by after industry. The college monopoly has cheated them with the semblance of teaching, it has taught them what they have not learned or if they have learned, it has taught, they have found, too late, that it is useless, and must be forgotten. It has cheated them of their wealth and their time; it has cheated as far as it could, the state which depends on their acquisitions; it is not an Alma Mater, but a Harry and a Robber. Twenty times a century the world wonders at a self-taught Ferguson, Rittenhouse, Franklin, Watt, and Burns, or a Chantry. It forgets that all which are taught, are equally self-taught; but the colleges receive the praise and the individual alone, who knows