

ly can be afforded by a population whose ambition to attain higher walks of learning has been excited by an early conviction of the value of knowledge.' The results which were anticipated under the system of semi-public academies with State aid were not accomplished. As has been suggested by your President, the educational system began from the wrong end and was built from the roof instead of from the foundation. Under the re-organization of the school system, beginning with the State aid in 1834 and '36 there was provided a graded system of public education reaching from the primary up through the secondary, and the grammar to the high school, so that we then began to do what was intended should be done at the beginning—to give to the people a complete and well rounded system of education at the public expense. The result was that as early as 1836, after the organization of the primary and secondary departments, a high school was instituted in Philadelphia, with a full college course. It was known as the 'People's College.' This was followed in 1849 by a high school in Pittsburg, and in 1852 by one at Easton.

"Now, then, I have endeavored to show you, in as brief a manner as possible, the relations of the State to our system of education and also to prove that the relations were such as to give the greatest encouragement to a higher system of education. There is a tradition connected with the English navy which declares that in every piece of cordage there is a scarlet thread woven, and wherever the British seaman finds himself, whether in a strange port or upon some distant continent or island of the sea, the scarlet thread reveals to him the nationality of the ship. Written in our constitutions and the laws of the Commonwealth are the sentiments of the people regarding the public system of education, and the most indifferent cannot fail to discover the manifest purpose towards a higher system of education. This legislation was undoubtedly inspired by the benefits it would confer upon the people.

"I hold in my hand a paper published in Harrisburg, January 5th, 1811, known as *The Oracle of Dauphin*. It represents one of the conspicuous and prominent newspapers of the State of that day. It has printed upon its pages as broad and noble sentiments as ever were penned by man indicating that, while the fathers may not have been rich in possessions and could not boast of their magnificent newspapers, they possessed the highest sentiments and the noblest principles. Let me read to you an article from one of its columns. It is the report of the Committee on Education of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, and one of the most distinguished citizens of that day was its chairman. I refer to the Hon. Nicholas Biddle.

"The first object of the Commonwealth, is the happiness of the people; its highest security, their attachments; and that government is alike ignorant of its interests and false to its duty, unless it zealously strives to improve their condition. On ourselves this duty is enjoined by a consideration far more important than our own personal advantage when we observe the wonderful career which Providence has permitted to this nation, or how powerfully its fate must influence the future destinies of freedom. In the revolutions which are still shaking the earth to its centre, almost every government that once asserted the great cause of religious and political liberty, has been prostrated in succession, till there now remains but one Republic, the last hope of the civilized freedom—the only government that has dared to build its altars on universal toleration, or confided its laws to public virtue. It is for us then to vindicate the dignity of human nature and its capacity for freedom. Our own example must determine whether it be indeed true that men are unable to enjoy popular government, or whether after a few years of freedom, due, not to our government, but local causes, we are to close forever the melancholy list of nations who have vainly attempted to be free. In this situation we should anxiously surround our institutions with everything that