

any wise, could come upon the counties, under the act of public instruction.

A great error seems to exist with respect to the design and character of this law. It is not to extend a system of common charity, or eleemosynary institutions, but, in truth, a school for all, to call forth the latent wealth the great mass of unimproved intellect, in every grade and denomination, wherein consists the actual power, and real riches of the State.

The answer of the late illustrious Jefferson to an invitation from the Mayor of Washington to attend the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the declaration of our independence, contains the following affirmation—“The general spread of the lights of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favoured few booted and spurred, ready to ride over them, legitimately, by the Grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others.” And these were among the parting words of the Philosopher of Monticello of that sage who was summoned up to realms of bliss on the very day which consummated the jubilee of the declaration of our liberty and independence, which emanated from his mind, and was the effusion of his pen—Is there not something peculiar and impressive in this coincidence? And, although the language of that statesman was applied to our institutions, generally, do they not bear with immense force upon the theme of education? Do they not imply, in terms intelligible to common sense, that a *partial* ‘spread’ of the ‘lights’ of learning does not comport with the common right of all the people—That a ‘favoured few’ should monopolize the power of knowledge and hold the reins to ‘ride over them?’ Or rather, do they not, by irresistible implication, command the rich and wise the ‘favoured few,’ to lend their aid to shed abroad the general ‘spread’—that its Promethean rays may penetrate the poorest dwelling and impart its genial fire to every latent spark of genius—which otherwise, might be as clay—inert and lifeless, wanting the touch of the heavenly flame?

“The best service that can be rendered to a country, next to giving it liberty, is in diffusing the mental improvement, equally essential to the preservation and enjoyment of the blessing.”

Such are the words of an eminent jurist and a pure patriot; and no freeman, who is qualified to preserve and en-