

escaped entirely the casualties of that conflict. We have so far been seldom able to pause in the fearful struggle engaging our attention to pay the proper funeral honors to those who have fallen therein. They still, in most cases, occupy the shallow graves which were all that the exigencies of the battle would allow, or—a sight more melancholy still—the victims of disease and wounds repose side by side around all our Hospital sites, where the rough stake and mouldering turf denote their last resting place; but however they may have fallen or wherever they may rest, you, I know, will not fail to appreciate such sacrifices, or to embrace every occasion to honor the memory of the men who thus perishing to preserve their country, have earned a place in its history beside those who, in our Revolutionary era, died to create it.

PUBLIC EDUCATION.

I trust that during your present session, time enough may be spared from your other duties, to ensure the proper consideration of one that yields to none in the importance of the interests it involves. The subject of some uniform and efficient State system of public education has, on various occasions, I believe, been brought to the notice of former Legislatures, but probably because such systems are comparatively slow in their operations, and the benefits resulting from them not immediately palpable, but requiring time for their full development, their consideration has not heretofore commanded that prompt attention which their intrinsic importance deserves. No enterprise, however, in which a State can engage, is so certain of profitable and permanent results as well directed efforts in such a cause. The want of some such proper system in the southern portion of our country has, in my opinion, in a great measure led to the calamities it is now enduring; for however we may speculate as to the pretended or actual cause of the Rebellion, the influence of unscrupulous leaders over the masses of the people was the immediate cause of its successful outbreak.

The uneducated, and in many instances the grossly ignorant condition of a large portion of these masses gave to that influence a power it could never otherwise have acquired, and the penalty of the neglect which tolerated that condition is now being fearfully paid. A reference to the last census returns in that section of the country discloses the startling fact that on an average about nineteen per centum, or nearly one-fifth of the whole white adult population of the States that embarked in this rebellion, could not read or write. Although our own proportion of such a class is not above half of this, it is still far greater than it should be, and compares unfav-