

propagated by a virtuous education of the rising generation."

What said the father of his country, (Washington,) in his Farewell Address. "We should promote as an object of primary importance, institutions for the diffusion of general knowledge." Listen to the language of John Adams. "The wisdom of the Legislature in making liberal appropriations for the benefit of public schools, is portentous of great and lasting good." What said Jefferson? "That education is mostly to be relied on for promoting the virtue, wisdom, and happiness of the people." Chief Justice Marshall said: "Intelligence is the basis of our independence."

If these positions be true, and who can doubt, is it not our imperative duty to carry out the suggestions, and provide in our organic law for the general culture of the mind? We feel the greatest necessity of a different system from the present in our country, and if the Convention and Legislature refuse to remedy the defect, and hope the people will take up the subject. We have some three or four thousand dollars distributed annually by our commissioners throughout our county for educational purposes, and I fear but little good results therefrom. Mr. President, upon the subsequent section of the bill, I will give my views more fully. I hope this section will pass without serious opposition.

Mr. Davis said:

That he would avail himself of the opportunity, to offer a few facts on this subject, in addition to what had been just said by his friend, (Mr. Smith,) from Allegany, for the serious consideration of this Convention. He desired, in the first place, to call the attention of the Convention to the fact, that they had now acknowledged, for the first time, that the people were sovereign, and by their action, had said, that they were better judges of the qualification for all civil officers of the State, than either the Governor or Legislature. It would appear by the last census, there were fifteen thousand person, above the age of twenty, who could neither read nor write. In addition to this, there were almost as large a number who could read, but could not write, and a very large number who could read and write but imperfectly. These were considerations he thought worthy of the attention of every gentleman who valued the stability of our political institutions. But there was still a higher consideration which should control our action. It was the duty of the Government to protect the children of the State from vice and immorality. Infanticide was punished with death, and yet they suffered what was almost equivalent, and in some instances worse than infanticide! They suffered children to grow up in ignorance, poverty and crime. The best and cheapest prevention for this state of things, as shown elsewhere, was general education diffused among the people. He referred to what Pennsylvania had done. She had provided in her Constitution that "it should be the duty of the Legislature to educate every poor child in the State gratuitously;" and he referred to this State; because she had been slow to adopt

a system of common school education. In 1835, when the system of the State of Pennsylvania first went into operation, there were in that State, but 808 both male and female common school teachers, and 32,544 children who attended them. It had been progressing year by year until 1847, a period of only twelve years, at which time the report he had terminated, when the number of teachers had increased to 8,674, and the total number of scholars male and female, was 331,967. The statistics of the city of Philadelphia, which was not included in the above, showed that since the adoption of this system, the proportion of persons who had passed through her common schools, and had never been inmates of either her jails, penitentiaries and almshouses were very small, less than ten per cent. He would not take up the time of the House in multiplying these statistics. These facts would be confirmed, had he time to refer to them from every other portion of the world, where a liberal system of education had been introduced.

One objection urged was the expense of the system. This is greatly magnified; but as the gentleman from Queen Anne's (Mr. Grason,) very properly stated, the other day, what good institutions could they have without expense; and is not the general education and improvement of the people worth some expense? The States north of us had instituted what they considered essential to their system, and which had proved a blessing rather than a burthen; namely, education—Normal schools—which is provided for in this bill, and which is to qualify persons in the State for the profession of teachers. They properly considered teaching as much a profession, and requiring as thorough a training and preparation as that of law or medicine, and thought it their duty to provide for it. In Massachusetts, three Normal schools cost the State but \$6500, but the State, or its citizens, were more than trebly reimbursed by the sale of school books alone, furnished by these teachers to the Southern States. New York and Connecticut also have each a Normal school, in growing and successful operation. France has seventy-three.

One proposition of the committee was to have a general superintendant of education. He considered this as the foundation of the system, and necessary to place it in general and successful operation. It had been said by some gentlemen, that they had a good system in their counties; other gentlemen had said that they had none, or worse than none at all. In his own county he knew it was a wretched system. Now, he desired a common head, a general superintendant, who would study the subject, and understand it, and who would visit every part of the State, and visit those counties which, as gentlemen had said, have a perfect system, and carry the information thus acquired into counties which had none, or worse than none. This officer would thus make up a general sentiment and feeling among the people on the subject—it would then cease to be looked upon as a burden. They had now no system of books, no system of discipline all was left to the whim and caprice of the schoolmaster