

of the youths of the State, in many of whose uncultivated minds, may have slumbered the "rudiments of the statesman's skill and the patriot's fire" have attained to manhood, and other thousands are pressing on as wave follows wave, to the same goal, to take their stand upon the stage of citizenship, to whom poverty has denied the benefits of any degree of education. And yet, under our free republican institutions they are made in part, the depositaries of the supreme power of the commonwealth, they are in fact the rulers of the State, by whose suffrages, the fearful issues of peace and war, and the abstruse problems of political science and constitutional law are to be adjusted.

The intelligence of the people constitutes one of the main pillars of our fabric of Government, and upon an enlightened morality and public virtue, must rest the hope of the patriot for its safety and perpetuity. Education is the handmaid of religion, and it is the dictate of wisdom, that the public school, like the sanctuary of the living God, should be made accessible to the humblest and poorest in our midst, that thereby the seeds of knowledge and religion may be sown together, broadcast over the land, and their manifold increase "made to swell beyond calculation the harvest of future prosperity."

These propositions are so self-evident, that the naked assertion of them, challenges the approving judgment of every sound thinking man, and well wisher of our race. It cannot be necessary at this day in addressing the Legislature of a sovereign State, to enforce them with any great degree of elaboration.

It is a burning shame, that Maryland one of the first born of the revolution, in that great sisterhood of States, whose empire reaches from ocean to ocean, should have done so little for the diffusion of knowledge among those within her limits, whom poverty may doom to perpetual ignorance. We are far, very far in the rear of some of the youngest States in the Union in this great work. We have placed at hazard millions of treasure in efforts to develop our physical resources; every muscle of the public arm has been stretched to its utmost tension to penetrate the bosom of the earth, and bring to light its hidden treasures. To increase our commerce and augment our wealth, and to swell the means of administering to the comforts of the physical man, we have scaled the mountains and bridged their gorges, that we might attract to our own the riches and resources of other lands, and yet we have done comparative nothing by any public effort towards developing the capacities and treasures of the immortal mind in the field of action to which I have adverted.

Gentlemen, the time has come when the State should be aroused to vigorous and prompt action in reference to this great public necessity. Let then the initiatory steps be at once taken, to devise a liberal, efficient, uniform and practical system of com-