

Trap or Freedom; which was read, and, on motion, ORDERED, That the said petition be committed to Mr. Grahame and Mr. Dorsey to consider and report thereon.

Mr. Dorsey has leave of absence till Monday next.

Mr. Hammond, from the committee to whom the bill, entitled, An act to discontinue the donation to Washington college, was referred, delivers to the president the following report:

THE committee to whom was referred the bill for discontinuing the donation to Washington college, beg leave to report, that they have carefully inquired into the progressive state of the college from its original institution to the present time, that they might be enabled to ascertain the propriety, policy and utility, of passing or rejecting the bill in question. The result of this inquiry has authorised them to inform the senate, that at the period when the college was projected, a useful freeschool was established at Chester-town, under the management of seven visitors; and that, according to the representations formerly made to the legislature, about one hundred and forty scholars and students usually attended the school, and received instruction in various branches of literature from a number of able and approved teachers. From an institution, thus thriving under a very limited patronage, it was sanguinely expected by its supporters and friends, that a seminary of learning, founded upon a broader scale, and established by the sanction and assistance of the legislature, would be productive of great and extensive advantages to the youths of the eastern shore particularly, and generally to those of the peninsula between the two bays. Under this expectation, and for reasons specified at large in the memorial of the said visitors, the general assembly of Maryland granted an act of incorporation at November session, seventeen hundred and eighty-two, and thereby founded and established Washington college, agreeably to the terms and privileges contained in their charter; to which the committee beg leave to refer the senate. In consequence of the encouragement thus given by law, the said visitors proceeded to obtain subscriptions, and to erect the college at Chester-town; and finally, to open the same for the purposes of education, under the management and care of its governors and professors, in the manner frequently communicated to the legislature. Soon after the establishment of this seminary, a college on the western shore was contemplated, and this scheme was also effected; and the two colleges were incorporated, by the name and style of The University of Maryland. Not long after this great measure, to which the legislature were induced to accede by the liberal minds of its members, and by a prevailing disposition in their constituents to advance the important interests of education, it became questioned, whether the wealth and population of Maryland, and the state of its society, were yet sufficiently promoted to give employment to two colleges; and whether the establishment of seminaries, upon a smaller scale, and situated in different and convenient places, and capable of furnishing those branches of learning which would previously prepare the students for a collegiate education, would not be more useful and necessary? These questions, frequently discussed in social conversations, and often agitated upon public occasions, have settled in opinions, which appear very prevalent, that for the reasons before suggested, one of the colleges is at present unnecessary; and that institutions of learning, more generally diffused, would better answer the purposes of education. Whether these opinions be correct, may in some degree be ascertained by facts, which it has been thought proper to present to the consideration of the senate. At November session, seventeen hundred and ninety-four, when a committee of this house required information upon the subject of Washington college, they received a letter from the president of the board, enclosing a series of answers to their questions; from which it is obvious, that after the establishment of this seminary for several years, and notwithstanding the liberal patronage, and the annual donation of the legislature, a much smaller number of students and scholars were instructed than attended the freeschool of Kent county, under the management of its visitors, before the foundation of the college: To the report of that committee, which is entered at large upon your journals, together with the letter and statement of the president, we refer the senate; and from the information we have lately received upon the same subject, we are authorised to state, that there is at this time no material difference in favour of the college; and that in every year the much greater number of the students and scholars have been inhabitants of the county in which the seminary is seated. Your committee are also credibly informed, that several grammar schools are erected in different parts of the state, having no assistance but private contributions, and the perquisites of tuition, in which the scholars are as numerous as those who are taught in the grammar school attached to the college, and in some instances the number is greater. It has been said, and it is believed that the assertion is true, that the progress and improvement of this institution have been retarded by the opinions which have been entertained, or disseminated, against its utility; and that while these opinions prevail, and attempts are repeatedly made to withdraw the donation which has been granted in its favour, it cannot be expected that the college should improve. But the committee are apprehensive that these opinions are daily becoming more and more deep rooted, and that therefore these wished for improvements will continue to be retarded; and under such circumstances, the college must be long embarrassed before it can answer or accomplish the true ends of its institution.

Upon the whole, the committee are persuaded that one college, well regulated and liberally endowed, is entirely sufficient to satisfy all the purposes of this kind which the present condition of Maryland can require; and that if the donation in question were divided among three or more seminaries of learning upon the eastern shore, the benefits of education, which were evidently designed, would be considerably extended; and the encouragement given by such a distribution of the money would advance the instruction of scholars at useful grammar schools in the increased proportion of four for one. The committee being of this opinion, beg leave to submit the following propositions to the consideration of the senate.

That the payment of the annual sum of £.750, being part of the donation granted to Washington college, be discontinued.

That the sum of £.375, part of the said donation, be granted to Washington academy, in Somerset county, and paid annually to the trustees of that institution, to be applied by them to the purposes of education in such manner as they shall think expedient.