Miss Ma M. Somerville
From the Author

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION FOR AFRICANS.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Board of Trustees:

Your generous action — endorsed by the equally generous action of the Trustees of Donations in Boston — in electing me to the Presidency of Liberia College, gives me the opportunity of appearing before you and this large and respected audience, on this important occasion, to discuss what I conceive to be the work which lies before this institution, and to indicate the manner in which it shall be my endeavor to discharge the responsible duties which the situation imposes.

A college in West Africa, for the education of African youth by African instructors, under a Christian government conducted by Negroes, is something so unique in the history of Christian civilization, that wherever, in the civilized world, the intelligence of the existence of such an institution is carried, there will be curiosity if not anxiety as to its character, its work, and its prospects. A college suited in all respects to the exigencies of this nation and to the needs of the race cannot come into existence all at once. It must be the result of years of experience, of trial, of experiment.

Every thinking man will allow that all we have been doing in this country so far, whether in church, in state, or in school, (our forms of religion, our politics, our literature — such as it is) is only temporary and transitional. When we advance into Africa truly, and become one with the great tribes on the continent, these things will take the form which the genius of the race shall prescribe.

The civilization of that vast population, untouched by foreign influence, not yet affected by European habits, is not to be organized according to foreign patterns, but will organize itself according to the nature of the people and the country. Nothing that we are doing now can be absolute or permanent, because nothing is normal or regular. Everything is provisional or tentative.

The College is only a machine, an instrument to assist in carrying forward our regular work, — devised not only for intellectual ends but for social purposes, for religious duty, for patriotic aims, for racial development; and when as an instrument, as a means, it fails, for any reason whatever, to fulfil its legitimate functions, it is the duty of the country, as well as the interest of the country, to see that it is stimulated into healthful activity, or, if this is impossible, to see that it is set aside as a pernicious obstruction. We cannot afford to waste time in dealing with insoluble problems under impossible conditions. When the College was first founded, according to the generous conception of our friends abroad, they probably supposed that they were founding an institution to be at once complete in its appointments, and to go on working regularly and effectively as colleges in countries where people have come to understand, from years of experience and trial, their intellectual, social, and political needs, and the methods for supplying those needs; and in their efforts to assist us to become sharers in the advantages of their civilization, they have aimed to establish institutions *a priori* for our development. That is, they have, by a course of reasoning natural to them, concluded that certain methods and agencies which have been successful among themselves must be successful among Africans. They have on general considerations come to certain conclusions as to what ought to apply to us. They have not, perhaps, sufficiently borne in mind that a college in a new country and among an inexperienced people must be, at least in the earlier periods of its existence, different from a college in an old country and among a people who understand themselves and their work; but, from the little experience we have had on this side of the

water, we have learned enough to know that no *a priori* arrangements can be successfully employed in the promotion of our progress. We are arriving at the principles necessary for our guidance, through experience, through difficulties, through failures. The process is slow and sometimes discouraging, but after a while we shall reach the true methods of growth for us. The work of a college like ours, and among a people like our people, must be at first *generative*. It must create a sentiment favorable to its existence. It must generate the intellectual and moral state in the community which will give it not only a congenial atmosphere in which to thrive, but food and nutriment for its enlargement and growth; and out of this will naturally come the material conditions of its success.

Liberia College has gone through one stage of experience. We are to-day at the threshold of another. It has, to a great extent, created a public sentiment in its favor; but it has not yet done its generative work. It is now proposed to take a new departure and, by a system of instruction more suited to the necessities of the country and the race, — that is to say, more suited to the development of the individuality and manhood of the African, — to bring the institution more within the scope of the co-operation and enthusiasm of the people. It is proposed also, as soon as we can command the necessary means, to remove the College operations to an interior site, where health of body, the indispensable condition of health of mind, can be secured; where the students may devote a portion of their time to manual labor in the cultivation of the fertile lands which will be accessible, and thus assist in procuring the means from the soil for meeting a large part of the necessary expenses; and where access to the institution will be convenient to the aborigines. The work immediately before us, then, is one of reconstruction, and the usual difficulties that attend reconstruction of any sort beset our first step. The people generally are not yet prepared to understand their own interest in the great work to be done for themselves and their children, and the part they should take in it; and we shall be obliged to work for some time to come, not only without the popular sympathy we ought to have, but with utterly inadequate resources.

This is inevitable in the present condition of our progress. All we can hope is that the work will go on, hampered though it may be, until, in spite of misappreciation and disparagement, there can be raised up a class of minds who will give a healthy tone to society, and exert an influence widespread enough to bring to the institution that indigenous sympathy and support without which it cannot thrive. It is our hope and expectation that there will rise up men, aided by instruction and culture in this College, imbued with public spirit, who will know how to live and work and prosper in this country, how to use all favoring outward conditions, how to triumph by intelligence, by tact, by industry, by perseverance, over the indifference of their own people, and how to overcome the scorn and opposition of the enemies of the race, — men who will be determined to make this nation honorable among the nations of the earth.

We have in our curriculum, adopted some years ago, a course of study corresponding to some extent to that pursued in European and American colleges. To this we shall adhere as nearly as possible ; but experience has already suggested, and will no doubt from time to time suggest, such modifications as are required by our peculiar circumstances.

The object of all education is to secure growth and efficiency, to make a man all that his natural gifts will allow him to become ; to produce self-respect, a proper appreciation of our own powers and of the powers of other people ; to beget a fitness for one's sphere of life and action, and an ability to discharge the duties it imposes. Now if we take these qualities as the true outcome of a correct education, then every one who is acquainted with the facts must admit that as a rule, in the entire civilized world, the Negro, notwithstanding his two hundred years' residence with Christian and civilized races, has nowhere received anything like a correct education. We find him everywhere — in the United States, in the West Indies, in South America — largely unable to cope with the responsibilities which devolve upon him. Not only is he not sought after for any position of influence in the political operations of

those countries, but he is even denied admission to ecclesiastical appointments of any importance.

The Rev. Henry Venn, late Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, writing in 1867 to the Bishop of Kingston, Jamaica, of the Negro of that island, says: —

"There can be no doubt in the minds of those who have watched the progress of modern missions that a chief cause of the failure of the Jamaica Mission has been the *deficiency of Negro teachers for the Negro race.*" [1]

With regard to the same island Bishop Courtenay, in an address before the American Episcopal Convention in 1874, said: —

"We have not as yet in Jamaica one priest of purely African race. At the present moment no Negro in holy orders could command that respect in Jamaica which a white man could command." [2]

Bishop Mitchinson, of Barbadoes, at the Pan Anglican Council in London, in 1878, said with regard to his diocese: —

"Experience in my diocese has taught me to be mistrustful of intellectual gifts in the colored race, for they do not seem generally to connote sterling work and fitness for the Christian ministry. . . I do not think the time has come, or is even near, when the ranks of the clergy will be largely recruited in the West Indies by the Negro race." [3]

But this testimony is borne not only by white people, who might be supposed to be influenced by prejudice; it is the experience also of all thinking Negroes who set themselves earnestly to consider the work and disqualifications of the Negro in civilized lands. All along this coast, in the civilized settlements, there is a dissatisfaction with the results so far of the training of native Africans in Europe and America, and even with their training on the coast under European teachers.

The *West African Reporter*, of Sierra Leone, complains as follows: —

[1] Memoirs of Rev. Henry Venn, B. D., p. 215.
[2] The Church Journal, New York, October 29, 1874.
[3] The Guardian, July 3, 1878.

"We find our children, as a result of their foreign culture (we do not say *in spite* of their foreign culture, but as a *result* of their foreign culture), aimless and purposeless for the race, — crammed with European formulas of thought and expression so as to astonish their bewildered relatives. Their friends wonder at the words of their mouth; but they wonder at other things besides their words. They are the Polyphemus of civilization, huge, but sightless, — *cui lumen ademptum*."

This paragraph has been quoted in several American periodicals. The *American Missionary*, the organ of the American Missionary Association, in commenting, adds: "To some extent the same holds true of Negroes from the South, educated in the North for work in their old homes." The *Foreign Missionary*, organ of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, referring to the same paragraph, says: —

"We would further add that Negroes educated anywhere out of Africa labor under certain disadvantages in becoming missionaries to the heathen of their own race. As *foreigners*, with foreign habits, they fail to exert the influence wielded by Anglo-Saxons. We cannot hand over the evangelization of Africa to the colored race, except so fast and so far as they can be trained, like Bishop Crowther's men, on the soil."

To a certain extent, perhaps to a very important extent, Negroes trained on the soil of Africa have the advantage of those trained in foreign countries; but in all, as a rule, the intellectual and moral results thus far have been far from satisfactory. There are many men of book-learning, but few, very few, of any *capability*, — even few who have that amount or that sort of culture which produces self-respect, confidence in one's self, and efficiency in work. Now why is this? The evil, it is considered, lies in the system and method of European training, to which Negroes are everywhere in Christian lands subjected, and which everywhere affects them unfavorably. Of a different race, different susceptibility, different bent of character from that of the European, they have been trained under influences in many respects adapted only to the Caucasian race. Nearly all the books they read, the very instruments of their

culture, have been such as to force them from the groove which is natural to them, where they would be strong and effective, without furnishing them with any avenue through which they may move naturally and free from obstruction. Christian and so-called civilized Negroes live for the most part in foreign countries, where they are only passive spectators of the deeds of a foreign race; and where, with other impressions which they receive from without, an element of doubt as to their own capacity and their own destiny is fastened upon them and inheres in their intellectual and social constitution. They deprecate their own individuality, and would escape from it if they could. And in countries like this, where they are free from the hampering surroundings of an alien race, they still read and study the books of foreigners, and form their idea of everything that man may do, or ought to do, according to the standard held up in those teachings. Hence without the physical or mental aptitude for the enterprises which they are taught to admire and revere, they attempt to copy and imitate them, and share the fate of all copyists and imitators. Bound to move on a lower level, they acquire and retain a practical inferiority, transcribing very often the faults rather than the virtues of their models.

Besides this result of involuntary impressions, they often receive direct teachings which are not only incompatible with but destructive of their self-respect.

In all English-speaking countries the mind of the intelligent Negro child revolts against the descriptions given in elementary books — geographies, travels, histories — of the Negro; but, though he experiences an instinctive revulsion from these caricatures and misrepresentations, he is obliged to continue, as he grows in years, to study such pernicious teachings. After leaving school he finds the same things in newspapers, in reviews, in novels, in *quasi* scientific works; and after a while — *sæpe cadendo* — they begin to seem to him the proper things to say and to feel about his race, and he accepts what at first his fresh and unbiassed feelings naturally and indignantly repelled. Such is the effect of repetition.

Having embraced or at least assented to these errors and falsehoods about himself, he concludes that his only hope of rising in the scale of respectable manhood is to strive after whatever is most unlike himself and most alien to his peculiar tastes. And whatever his literary attainments or acquired ability, he fancies that he must grind at the mill which is provided for him, putting in the material furnished to his hands, bringing no contribution from his own field; and of course nothing comes out but what is put in. Thus he can never bring any real assistance to the European. He can never attain to that essence of progress which Mr. Herbert Spencer describes as *difference:* and therefore, he never acquires the self-respect or self-reliance of an independent contributor. He is not an independent help, only a subject help; so that the European feels that he owes him no debt, and moves on in contemptuous indifference of the Negro, teaching him to contemn himself.

Those who have lived in civilized communities, where there are different races, know the disparaging views which are entertained of the blacks by their neighbors (and often, alas!) by themselves. The standard of all physical and intellectual excellencies in the present civilization being the white complexion, whatever deviates from that favored color is proportionally depreciated, until the black, which is the opposite, becomes not only the most unpopular but the most unprofitable color. Black men, and especially black women, in such communities experience the greatest imaginable inconvenience. They never feel at home. In the depth of their being they always feel themselves strangers in the land of their exile, and the only escape from this feeling is to escape from themselves. And this feeling of self-depreciation is not diminished, as I have intimated above, by the books they read. Women, especially, are fond of reading novels and light literature; and it is in these writings that flippant and eulogistic reference is constantly made to the superior physical and mental characteristics of the Caucasian race, which by contrast suggests the inferiority of other races, — especially of that race which is furthest removed from it in appearance.

It is painful in America to see the efforts which are made by Negroes to secure outward conformity to the appearance of the dominant race.

This is by no means surprising; but what is surprising is that, under the circumstances, any Negro has retained a particle of self-respect. Now in Africa, where the color of the majority is black, the fashion in personal matters is naturally suggested by the personal characteristics of the race, and we are free from the necessity of submitting to the use of "incongruous feathers awkwardly stuck on." Still, we are held in bondage by our indiscriminate and injudicious use of a foreign literature; and we strive to advance by the methods of a foreign race. In this effort we struggle with the odds against us. We fight at the disadvantage which David would have experienced in Saul's armor. The African must advance by methods of his own. He must possess a power distinct from that of the European. It has been proven that he knows how to take advantage of European culture, and that he can be benefited by it. This proof was perhaps necessary, but it is not sufficient. We must show that we are able to go alone, to carve out our own way. We must not be satisfied that in this nation European influence shapes our polity, makes our laws, rules in our tribunals, and impregnates our social atmosphere. We must not suppose that the Anglo-Saxon methods are final, that there is nothing for us to find out for our own guidance, and that we have nothing to teach the world. There is inspiration for us also. We must study our brethren in the interior, who know better than we do the laws of growth for the race. We see among them the rudiments of that which, with fair play and opportunity, will develop into important and effective agencies for our work. We look too much to foreigners, and are dazzled almost to blindness by their exploits, — so as to fancy that they have exhausted the possibilities of humanity. In our estimation they, like Longfellow's Iagoo, have done and can do everything better than anybody else: —

> "Never heard he an adventure
> But himself had made a greater;

Never any deed of daring,
But himself had done a bolder;
Never any marvellous story
But himself could tell a stranger.
No one ever shot an arrow
Half so far and high as he had,
Ever caught so many fishes,
Ever killed so many reindeer,
Ever trapped so many beaver.
None could run so fast as he could;
None could dive so deep as he could;
None could swim so far as he could;
None had made so many journeys;
None had seen so many wonders,
As this wonderful Iagoo."

But there are possibilities before us not yet dreamed of by the Iagoos of civilization. Dr. Alexander Winchell, professor in one of the American universities, — who has lately written a book, in the name of science, in which he reproduces all the old slanders against the Negro, and writes of the African at home as if Livingstone, Barth, Stanley, and Cameron had never written, — mentions it, as one of the evidences of Negro inferiority, that "in Liberia he is indifferent to the benefits of civilization."[1] I stand here to-day to justify and commend the Negro of Liberia — and of everywhere else in Africa — for rejecting with scorn, "always and every time," the "benefits" of a civilization whose theories are to degrade him in the scale of humanity, and of which such sciolists as Dr. Winchell are the exponents and representative elements. We recommend all Africans to treat such "benefits" with even more decided "indifference" than that with which the guide in Dante treated the despicable herd, —

"Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda, e passa."

Those of us who have travelled in foreign countries, and who witness the general results of European influence along this coast, have many reasons for misgivings and reserves and anxieties about European civilization for this country. Things

[1] Pre-Adamite Man, p. 265.

which have been of great advantage to Europe may work ruin to us; and there is often such a striking resemblance, or such a close connection between the noxious and the beneficial, that we are not always able to discriminate. I have heard of a native in one of the settlements on the coast who, having grown up in the use of the simple but efficient remedies of the country doctors, and having prospered in business, conceived the idea that he must avail himself of the medicines he saw used by the European traders. Suffering from sleeplessness he was advised to take Dover's powders, but in his inexperience took instead an overdose of morphine, and next morning he was a corpse. So we have reason to apprehend that in our indiscriminate appropriations of European agencies or methods in our political, educational, and social life, we are often imbibing overdoses of morphine when we fancy we are only taking Dover's powders.

And it is for this reason, while we are anxious for immigration from America and desirous that the immigrants shall push as fast as possible into the interior, that we look with anxiety and concern at the difficulties and troubles which must arise from their misconception of the work to be done in this country. I apprehend that in their progress interiorwards there will be friction, irritations, and conflicts; and our brethren in certain portions of the United States are at this moment witnessing a state of things among their superiors which they will naturally want to reproduce in this country, and which, if reproduced here, will utterly extinguish the flickering light of the Lone Star, and close forever this open door of Christian civilization into Africa.

Mr. Matthew Arnold reminds us[1] that when some one talked to Themistocles of an art of memory he answered, "Teach me rather to forget." The full meaning of this aspiration must be realized in the life of the Christian Negro before he can become a full man, or a successful worker in his fatherland.

In the prosecution of the work of a college in America for the education of Negro youth, it seems to me, therefore, that

[1] Preface to Johnson's Lives of the Poets.

the aim should be, to a great extent, to assist their power of forgetfulness, — an achievement of extreme difficulty, I imagine, in that country where, from the very action of the surrounding atmosphere, "the interstices with which Nature has provided the human memory, through which many things once known pass into oblivion, are kept constantly closed."

In the prosecution of the work of a college for the training of youth in *this* country, the aim, it occurs to me, should be to study the causes of Negro inefficiency in civilized lands; and, so far as it has resulted from the training they have received, to endeavor to avoid what we conceive to be the sinister elements in that training.

In the curriculum of Liberia College, therefore, it shall be our aim to increase the amount of purely disciplinary agencies, and to reduce to its minimum the amount of those distracting influences to which I have referred as hindering the proper growth of the race.

The true principle of mental culture is perhaps this: to preserve an accurate balance between the studies which carry the mind out of itself, and those which recall it home again. When we receive impressions from without we must bring from our own consciousness the idea that gives them shape; we must mould them by our own individuality. Now in looking over the whole civilized world I see no place where this sort of culture for the Negro can be better secured than in Liberia, — where he may, with less interruption from surrounding influences, find out his place and his work, develop his peculiar gifts and powers; and for the training of Negro youth upon the basis of their own idiosyncracy, with a sense of race, individuality, self-respect, and liberty, there is no institution so well adapted as Liberia College with its Negro faculty and Negro students.

We are often told of the advantages which students of the African race are enjoying in the institutions established for their training in America; but listen to the testimony of Dr. Winchell with regard to the position of the students in one of the best of them, namely, Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn. He says: —

"I have sometimes, when visiting Fisk University at Nashville, looked with admiration at some magnificently formed heads which are there working, under all the discouragements of social repression, for knowledge, culture, and high respectability. My sympathies have been deeply moved at the evidences of their earnestness and conscious strength, coupled with a keen and crushing perception of the weight of the social ban which their race brings upon them. I will not refrain from expressing here the hope that such cases may receive every encouragement and mark of appreciation."[1]

This testimony, coming from one who is ostentatiously anti-Negro, is peculiarly striking; but one is amused at the *naïveté* exhibited in the expression of the "hope" recorded in the last sentence by a man who has assailed the Negro with every weapon of antipathy which could be drawn from his imagination, and is doing all in his power to swell the Negrophobic literature and to intensify a public sentiment sufficiently hostile to that class of people.

It has always been to me, let me say in passing, a matter of surprise that there should be found white men who — in spite of this anti-Negro literature, with the Notts and Gliddons and Winchells and Bakers to instruct them, with the prophets of ill on every hand — are still willing and ready to give their means and their time and their labor for the promotion of the intellectual training of such a race. It is astonishing, not that so little money is spent on African education, but that any at all is spent by men who from their childhood have been imbibing from the books they read, and from their surroundings, sentiments of disparagement and distrust of the possibilities of the African race.

We may conclude, then, that there is no field so well adapted for the work of Negro training as Liberia; and it must be our aim to bring Liberia College up to the work to be done in this peculiar and interesting field. Now what is the course to be adopted in the education of youth in this College?

I have endeavored to give careful consideration to this im-

[1] Pre-Adamite Man, p. 182, note.

portant subject; and I propose now to sketch the outlines of a programme for the education of the students in Liberia College, and, I may venture to add, of Negro youth everywhere in Africa who are to take a leading part in the work of the race and of the country. I will premise that generally in the teaching of our youth far more is made of the importance of imparting information than of training the mind. Their minds are too much taken possession of by mere information drawn from European sources.

Lord Bacon says that "reading makes a full man;" but the indiscriminate reading by the Negro of European literature has made him, in many instances, too full, or has rather destroyed his balance. "The value of a cargo," says Huxley, "does not compensate for a ship being out of trim;" and the amount of knowledge that a man has does not secure his usefulness if he has so taken it in that he is lop-sided.

We shall devote attention principally, both for mental discipline and information, to the earlier epochs of the world's history. It is decided that there are five or six leading epochs in the history of civilization. I am following Mr. Frederic Harrison's classification. First, there was the great permanent, stationary system of human society, held together by a religious belief, or by social custom growing out of that belief. This has been called the theocratic state of society. The type of that phase of civilization was the old Eastern empires. The second great type was the Greek age of intellectual activity and civic freedom. Next came the Roman type of civilization, and age of empire, of conquest, of consolidation of nations, of law and government. The fourth great system was the phase of civilization which prevailed from the fall of the Roman Empire until comparatively modern times, and was called the Mediæval Age, when the Church and feudalism existed side by side. The fifth phase of history was that which began with the breaking up of the power of the Church on the one side, and of feudalism on the other, — the foundation of modern history or the modern age. That system has continued down to the present; but if subdivided, it would form the sixth type, which

is the age since the French Revolution, — the age of social and popular development, modern science and industry.

We shall permit in our curriculum the unrestricted study of the first four epochs, but especially the second, third, and fourth, from which the present civilization of Western Europe is mainly derived. There has been no period of history more full of suggestive energy, both physical and intellectual, than those epochs. Modern Europe boasts of its period of intellectual activity, but none can equal, for life and freshness, the Greek and Roman prime. No modern writers will ever influence the destiny of the race to the same extent that the Greeks and Romans have done.

We can afford to exclude then as subjects of study, at least in the earlier college years, the events of the fifth and sixth epochs, and the works which in large numbers have been written during those epochs. I know that during these periods some of the greatest works of human genius have been composed. I know that Shakespeare and Milton, Gibbon and Macaulay, Hallam and Lecky, Froude, Stubbs and Green, belong to these periods. It is not in my power, even if I had the will, to disparage the works of these masters; but what I wish to say is that these are not the works on which the mind of the youthful African should be trained. It was during the sixth period that the transatlantic slave trade arose, and those theories — theological, social, and political — were invented for the degradation and proscription of the Negro. This epoch continues to this day, and has an abundant literature and a prolific authorship. It has produced that whole tribe of declamatory Negrophobists, whose views, in spite of their emptiness and impertinence, are having their effect upon the ephemeral literature of the day, — a literature which is shaping the life of the Negro in Christian lands. His whole theory of life, quite contrary to what his nature intends, is being influenced, consciously and unconsciously, by the general conceptions of his race entertained by the manufacturers of this literature, — a great portion of which, made for to-day, will not survive the next generation.

I admit that in this period there have been able defences of the race written, but they have all been in the patronizing or apologetic tone, — in the spirit of that good natured man who assured the world that —

> "Fleecy locks and dark complexion
> Cannot forfeit nature's claim."

Poor Phillis Wheatly, a native African educated in America, in her attempts at poetry is made to say, in what her biographer calls "spirited lines," —

"Remember, Christian, Negroes, black as Cain, May be refined, and join the angelic train."

The arguments of Wilberforce, the eloquence of Wendell Phillips, the pathos of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, are all in the same strain, — that Negroes have souls to save just as white men have, and that the strength of nature's claim is not impaired by their complexion and hair. We surely cannot indulge, with the same feelings of exultation that the Englishman or American experiences, in the proud boast that —

> "We speak the language Shakespeare spoke,
> The faith and morals hold which Milton held;"

for that "language," in some of its finest utterances, patronizes and apologizes for us, and that "faith" has been hitherto powerless to save us from proscription and insult.

It is true that culture is one, and the general effects of true culture are the same; but the native capacities of mankind differ, and their work and destiny differ, so that the road by which one man may attain to the highest efficiency, is not that which would conduce to the success of another. The special road which has led to the success and elevation of the Anglo-Saxon is not that which would lead to the success and elevation of the Negro, though we shall resort to the same means of general culture which has enabled the Anglo-Saxon to find out for himself the way in which he ought to go.

The instruments of culture which we shall employ in the College will be chiefly the Classics and Mathematics. By

Classics I mean the Greek and Latin languages and their literature. In those languages there is not, as far as I know, a sentence, a word, or a syllable disparaging to the Negro. He may get nourishment from them without taking in any race poison. They will perform no sinister work upon his consciousness, and give no unholy bias to his inclinations.[1]

The present civilization of Europe is greatly indebted to the influence of the rich inheritance left by the civilizations of Greece and Rome. It is impossible to imagine what would be the condition of Europe but for the influence of the so-called dead languages and the treasures they contain.

"Had the Western World been left to itself in Chinese isolation," says Professor Huxley, "there is no saying how long that state of things might have endured; but happily it was not left to itself. Even earlier than the 13th century the development of Moorish civilization in Spain, and the movement of the crusades, had introduced the leaven which from that day to this has never ceased to work. At first through the intermediation of Arabic translations, afterwards by the study of

[1] I have noticed a few lines from Virgil, describing a Negress of the lower class, which are made to do duty on all occasions when the modern traducers of the Negro would draw countenance for their theories from the classical writers; but similar descriptions of the lower European races abound in their own literature. The lines are the following, used by Nott and Gliddon, and recently quoted by Dr. Winchell: —

"Interdum clamat Cybalen; erat unica custos;
Afra genus, tota patriam testante figura;
Torta comam, labroque tumens, et fusca colorem,
Pectore lata, jacens mammis, compressior alvo,
Cruribus exilis, spatiosa prodiga planta;
Continuis rimis calcanea scissa rigebant."

[Meanwhile he calls Cybale. She was his only (house) keeper. African by race, her whole figure attesting her fatherland; with crisped hair, swelling lip, and dark complexion; broad in chest, with pendant dugs and very contracted abdomen; with spindle shanks and broad enormous feet; her lacerated heels were rigid with continuous cracks.]

But hear how Homer, Virgil's superior and model, sings the praises of the Negro Euryabates, who signalized himself at the siege of Troy: —

"A reverend herald in his train I knew,
Of visage solemn, sad, but *sable* hue.
Short *woolly curls* o'er-fleeced his bending head,
O'er which a promontory shoulder spread.
Euryabates, in whose large soul alone,
Ulysses viewed an image of his own."

the originals, the western nations of Europe became acquainted with the writings of the ancient philosophers and poets, and in time with the whole of the vast literature of antiquity. Whatever there was of high intellectual aspiration or dominant capacity, in Italy, France, Germany, and England, spent itself for centuries in taking possession of the rich inheritance left by the dead civilizations of Greece and Rome. Marvellously aided by the invention of printing, classical learning spread and flourished. Those who possessed it prided themselves on having attained the highest culture then within the reach of mankind." [1]

Passing over then, for a certain time, the current literature of Western Europe, which is, after all, derived and secondary, we will resort to the fountain head; and in the study of the great masters, in the languages in which they wrote, we shall get the required mental discipline without unfavorably affecting our sense of race individuality or our own self-respect. There is nothing that we need to know for the work of building up this country, in its moral, political and religious character, which we may not learn from the ancients. There is nothing in the domain of literature, philosophy, or religion for which we need be dependent upon the moderns. Law and philosophy we may get from the Romans and the Greeks, religion from the Hebrews.

Even Europeans, advanced as they are, are every day devoting more and more attention to the Classics. Says a very recent writer: —

"We have not done with the Hellenes yet, in spite of all the labor spent and all the books written on them and their literature bequeathed to us. It has indeed been said that we know nearly as much about the Greeks and Romans as we shall ever know; but this can only be true of the mass of facts, to which, without some new discoveries, we are not likely to add greatly. It is not in the least true in regard to the significance of Hellenic history and literature. Beyond and above the various interpretations placed by different ages upon the great writers of Greece, lies the meaning which longer experience and more improved methods of criticism, and the test of time declare, to be the

[1] Inaugural Address at the opening of Mason Science College, Birmingham, September, 1880.

true one. From this point of view much remains and will long remain to be done, whether we look to the work of the scholar or to the influence of Hellenic thought on civilization. We have not yet found all the scattered limbs of Truth ; it may be that we are only commencing the search. . . . The *Gorgias* of Plato and the *Ethics* of Aristotle are more valuable than modern books on the same subjects, for the simple reason that they are nearer the beginning. They have a greater freshness, and appeal more directly to the growing mind." [1]

If we turn to Rome we find equal instruction in all the elements of a correct and prosperous nationality. "The education of the world in the principles of a sound jurisprudence," says Dean Merivale, "was the most wonderful work of the Roman conquerors. It was complete, it was universal ; and in permanence it has far outlasted — at least in its distinct results — the duration of the empire itself."

"As supernatural wisdom came from God through the mouths of the prophets," said St. Augustine, "so also natural wisdom, social justice, came from the same God through the mouth of the Roman legislators." [*Leges Romanorum divinitus per ora principum emanarunt.*] [2]

"Roman civilization produced not only *great* men but *good* men, of high views of human life and human responsibility, with a high standard of what men ought to aim at, with a high belief of what they ought to do. And it not only produced individuals, it produced a strong and permanent force of sentiment ; it produced a character shared very unequally among the people, but powerful enough to determine the course of history. . . . Certainly, in no people which the world has ever seen has the sense of public duty been keener or stronger than in Rome, or has lived on with unimpaired vitality through great changes for a longer time. . . . Its early legends dwelt upon the strange and terrible sacrifices which supreme loyalty to the commonwealth had exacted and obtained without a murmur from her sons. They told of a founder of Roman freedom dooming his two young sons to the axe for having tampered with a conspiracy against the state ; of great men resigning office because they bore a dangerous name, or pulling down their own houses because too great for private

[1] Hellenica. Edited by Evelyn Abbott, M. A., LL.D. London, 1880.

[2] Quoted by Père Hyacinthe in the Nineteenth Century, February, 1880.

citizens; of soldiers, to whose death fate had bound victory, solemnly devoting themselves to die, or leaping into the gulf which would only close on a living victim; of a great family purchasing peace in civil troubles by leaving the city and turning their energy into a foreign war in which they perished; of the captive general who advised his countrymen to send him back to certain torture and death, rather than grant the terms he was commissioned to propose as the price of his release. Whatever we may think of these stories, they show what was in the mind of those who told and repeated them; and they continued to be the accredited types and models of Roman conduct throughout Roman history." [1]

It is our purpose to cultivate the study of the languages of the two great peoples to whom I have referred as among the most effective instruments of intellectual discipline.

A great deal of misapprehension prevails in the popular mind as to the utility in a liberal education of the so-called dead languages, and many fancy that the time devoted to their study is time lost; but let it be understood that their study is not pursued merely for the information they impart. If information were all, it would be far more useful to learn the French and German, or any other of the modern languages, during the time devoted to Greek and Latin; but what *is* gained by the study of the ancient languages is that strengthening and disciplining of the mind which enables the student in after life to lay hold of and with comparatively little difficulty to master any business to which he may turn his attention. A recent scholarly and experienced writer says on this subject: —

"Even if it were conceivable that a youth should entirely forget all the facts, pictures, and ideas he had learned from the Classics, together with all the rules of the Greek and Latin grammar, his mind would still, as an instrument, be superior to that of every one who has not passed through the same training. Nay, even the youth who was always last in his class, and who dozed out his nine years on the benches of a classical school, only half attentive to his teacher and not doing half his tasks, — even he will surpass, in mental mobility, the most diligent scholar who has been taught only the modern languages and a

[1] The Gifts of Civilization. By Dean Church. New edition. London, 1880.

quantity of special and disconnected knowledge. One of the first bankers in a foreign capital lately told me that in the course of a year he had given some thirty clerks, who had been educated expressly for commerce in commercial schools, a trial in his offices, and was not able to make use of a single one of them; while those who came from the German schools (and had studied the classics), although they knew nothing whatever of business matters to begin with, soon made themselves perfect masters of them." [1]

The study of the Classics also lays the foundation for the successful pursuit of scientific knowledge. It so stimulates the mind that it arouses the student's interest in all problems of science. It is a matter of history that the scientific study of nature followed immediately after the revival of classical learning.

But we shall also study Mathematics. These as instruments of culture are everywhere applicable. A course of algebra, geometry, and higher mathematics must accompany step by step classical studies. Neither of these means of discipline can be omitted without loss. The qualities which make a man succeed in mastering the Classics and Mathematics are also those which qualify him for the practical work of life. Care, industry, judgment, tact, are the elements of success anywhere and everywhere. The training and discipline, the patience and endurance, to which *each* man must submit in order to success; the resolution which relaxes no effort, but fights the hardest when difficulties are to be surmounted, — these are qualities which boys go to school to cultivate, and these they acquire in a greater or less degree by a successful study of Classics and Mathematics. The boy who shirks these studies, or retires from his class because he is unwilling to contend with the difficulties they involve, lacks those qualities which make a successful and influential character.

It will be our aim to introduce into our curriculum also the Arabic, and some of the principal native languages, — by means of which we may have intelligent intercourse with the millions accessible to us in the interior, and learn more of our own country. We have young men who are experts in the geo-

[1] Karl Hiltebrand in Contemporary Review, August, 1880.

graphy and customs of foreign countries; who can tell all about the proceedings of foreign statesmen in countries thousands of miles away; can talk glibly of London, Berlin, Paris, and Washington; know all about Gladstone, Bismarck, Gambetta, and Hayes; but who knows anything about Musahdu, Medina, Kankan, or Sego — only a few hundred miles from us? Who can tell anything of the policy or doings of Fanfi-doreh, Ibrahima Sissi, or Fahqueh-queh, or Simoro of Boporu — only a few steps from us? These are hardly known. Now as Negroes, allied in blood and race to these people, this is *disgraceful;* and as a nation, if we intend to grow and prosper in this country, it is *impolitic*, it is *short-sighted*, it is *unpatriotic;* but it has required time for us to grow up to these ideas, to understand our position in this country. In order to accelerate our future progress, and to give to the advance we make the element of permanence, it will be our aim in the College to produce men of ability. Ability or capability is the power to use with effect the instruments in our hands. The bad workman complains of his tools; but even when he is satisfied with the excellence of his tools, he cannot produce the results which an able workman will produce even with indifferent tools.

If a man has the learning of Solomon, but for some reason, either in himself or his surroundings, cannot bring his learning into useful application, that man is lacking in ability. Now what we desire to do is to produce ability in our youth; and whenever we find a youth, however brilliant in his powers of acquisition, who lacks common sense, and who, in other respects, gives evidence of the absence of those qualities which enable a man to use his knowledge for the benefit of his country and his fellow-man, we shall advise him to give up books and betake himself to other walks of life. A man without common sense, without tact, as a mechanic or agriculturist or trader, can do far less harm to the public than the man without common sense who has had the opportunity of becoming and has the reputation of being a scholar.

I trust that arrangements will be made by which the girls of our country may be admitted to share in the advantages of this

College. I cannot see why our sisters should not receive exactly the same general culture as we do. I think that the progress of the country will be more rapid and permanent when the girls receive the same general training as the boys; and our women, besides being able to appreciate the intellectual labors of their husbands and brothers, will be able also to share in the pleasures of intellectual pursuits. We need not fear that they will be less graceful, less natural, or less womanly; but we may be sure that they will make wiser mothers, more appreciative wives, and more affectionate sisters. And here it affords me pleasure to extend, on behalf of the few educators in Liberia, and of the public generally, a hearty welcome to a lady just from America, the daughter of a distinguished leader of the race, who has come to assist in the great work of female education, and who honors us with her presence on this occasion.[1]

In the religious work of the College the Bible will be our text-book, the Bible without note or comment, — especially as we propose to study the original language in which the New Testament was written; and we may find opportunity, in connection with the Arabic, to study the Old Testament. The teachings of Christianity are of universal application. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid." The great truths of the Sermon on the Mount are as universally accepted as Euclid's axioms. The meaning of the Good Samaritan is as certain as that of the forty-seventh proposition, and a great deal plainer.

Christianity is not only not a local religion, but it has adapted itself to the people wherever it has gone. No language or social existence has been any barrier to it; and I have often thought that in this country it will acquire wider power, deeper influence, and become instinct with a higher vitality than anywhere else. When we look at the treatment which our own race and other so-called inferior races have received from Christian nations, we cannot but be struck with the amazing dissimilitude and disproportion between the

[1] Mrs. Mary Garnet Barboza.

original idea of Christianity, as expressed by Christ, and the practice of it by his professed followers.

The sword of the conqueror and the cries of the conquered have attended or preceded the introduction of this faith wherever carried by Europeans, and some of the most enlightened minds have sanctioned the subjugation of weaker races — the triumph of Might over Right — that the empire of civilization might be extended; but these facts do not affect the essential principles of the religion. We must gather its doctrines not from the examples of some of its adherents but from the sacred records.

But even as exemplified in human action, notwithstanding the drawbacks to which I have referred, "it has so manifested its superiority," says Dr. Peabody, "in beneficent action, to all the other working forces of the world combined, that the experimental evidence for it under this head is oppressive and unmanageable from its multiplicity and fulness. . . . It is in the exclusively Christian elements that the great workers of the last eighteen centuries have been of one mind and heart. No matter what their sphere of labor, wherever we see pre-eminent ability and success in a life-work worth performing, we find but the reproduction of the specifically Christian elements of St. Paul's energy, — a spirit profoundly moved in grateful sympathy with a loving suffering Redeemer, a strong emotional recognition of human brotherhood, and a merging of self in the sense of a mission and a charge from God. . . . If you were to take away Christian work and workers from the world, and destroy the vestiges of what has been wrought in Christ's name, I doubt whether those who now reject or despise the Gospel would think the world any longer worth living in." [1]

Now this is the influence which is to work the great reformation in this land for which we hope. This is the influence which is to leaven this whole country and to become the principle of the new civilization which we believe is to be developed on this continent. It has already produced important changes notwithstanding its slow and irregular growth, notwithstand-

[1] Christianity and Science, by Andrew P. Peabody, D. D., LL.D. New York, 1875.

ing the apparent scantiness and meagreness of its visible fruits; and it shall be the aim of this College to work in the spirit of the great Master who was manifested as an example of self-sacrifice to the highest truth and the highest good, — that spirit which excluded none from his converse, which kept company with publicans and sinners that he might benefit them, which went anywhere and everywhere to seek and to save that which is lost. We will study to cultivate whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report. If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, we will endeavor to think on these things.

Our fathers have borne testimony to the surrounding heathen of the value and superiority of Christianity. They endeavored to accomplish what they saw ought to be accomplished; and, according to the light within them, fought against wrong and asserted the right. Let us not dwell too much on the mistakes of the past. Let us be thankful for what of good has been done, and let us do better if we can. We, like our predecessors, are only frail and imperfect beings, feelers after truth. Others, let us hope, will come by and by and do better than we, — efface our errors and correct our mistakes, see truths clearly which we now see but dimly, and truths dimly which we do not see at all. The true ideal, the proper work of the race, will grow brighter and more distinct as we advance in culture.

Nor can we be assisted in our work by looking back and denouncing the deeds of the oppressors of our fathers, by perpetuating race antagonism. It is natural perhaps that we should feel at times indignation in view of past injustice, but continually dwelling upon it will not help us. It is neither edifying nor dignified to be forever declaiming about the wrongs of the race. Lord Beaconsfield once said in the House of Commons that Irish members were too much in the habit of clanking their chains on rising to speak. Such a habit, when it ceases to excite pity, begets contempt and ridicule. What we

need is wider and deeper culture, more intimate intercourse with our interior brethren, more energetic advance to the healthy regions.

As those who have suffered affliction in a foreign land, we have no antecedents from which to gather inspiration.

All our traditions and experiences are connected with a foreign race. We have no poetry or philosophy but that of our taskmasters. The songs that live in our ears and are often on our lips are the songs which we heard sung by those who shouted while we groaned and lamented. They sang of their history, which was the history of our degradation. They recited their triumphs, which contained the record of our humiliation. To our great misfortune we learned their prejudices and their passions, and thought we had their aspirations and their power. Now if we are to make an independent nation — a strong nation — we must listen to the songs of our unsophisticated brethren as they sing of their history, as they tell of their traditions, of the wonderful and mysterious events of their tribal or national life, of the achievements of what we call their superstitions; we must lend a ready ear to the ditties of the Kroomen who pull our boats, of the Pesseh and Golah men, who till our farms; we must read the compositions, rude as we may think them, of the Mandingoes and the Veys. We shall in this way get back the strength of the race, like the giant of the ancients who always gained strength, for the conflict with Hercules, whenever he touched his Mother Earth.

And this is why we want the College away from the seaboard — with its constant intercourse with foreign manners and low foreign ideas — that we may have free and uninterrupted intercourse with the intelligent among the tribes of the interior; that the students, even from the books to which they will be allowed access, may conveniently flee to the forests and fields of Manding and the Niger, and mingle with our brethren and gather fresh inspiration and fresh and living ideas.

It is the complaint of the intelligent Negro in America that the white people pay no attention to his suggestions or his

writings; but this is only because he has nothing new to say, — nothing that they have not said before him, and that they cannot say better than he can. Let us depend upon it that the emotions and thoughts which are natural to us command the curiosity and respect of others far more than the showy display of any mere acquisitions which we have derived from them, and which they know depend more upon our memory than upon any real capacity. What we must follow is all that concerns our individual growth. Let us do our own work and we shall be strong and respectable; try to do the work of others and we shall be weak and contemptible. There is magnetism in original action, in self-trust, which others cannot resist. I think we mistake the meaning of the lines of the poet which are so often quoted, —

> "Lives of great men all remind us
> We can make our lives sublime,
> And, departing, leave behind us
> Footprints on the sands of time."

How shall we make our "lives sublime"? Not by imitating others, but by doing well our own part as they did theirs. We are to study the "footprints" that when we are "forlorn" or have been "shipwrecked" we may "take heart again;" not to put our own feet in the impression previously made, for by so doing we should be compelled at times to lengthen and at times to shorten our pace, sometimes to make the strides of Hiawatha and sometimes to crawl, — and thus not only cut a most ungainly figure, but accomplish nothing either for ourselves or the world.

"Whilst I read the poets," says Emerson, "I think that nothing new can be said about morning and evening; but when I see the day break, I am not reminded of these Homeric or Shakespearian or Miltonic or Chaucerian pictures. No; but I am cheered by the moist, warm, glittering, budding, melodious hour, that takes down the narrow walls of my soul, and extends its life and pulsation to the very horizon. *That* is morning, — to cease for a bright hour to be a prisoner of the sickly body, and to become as large as nature."

We have a great work before us, a work unique in the history of the world, which others who appreciate its vastness and importance envy us the privilege of doing. The world is looking at this Republic to see whether "order and law, religion and morality, the rights of conscience, the rights of persons and the rights of property," may all be secured and preserved by a government administered entirely by Negroes.

Let us show ourselves equal to the task.

The time is past when we can be content with putting forth elaborate arguments to prove our equality with foreign races. Those who doubt our capacity are more likely to be convinced of their error by the exhibition, on our part, of those qualities of energy and enterprise which will enable us to occupy the extensive field before us for our own advantage and the advantage of humanity, — for the purposes of civilization, of science, of good government, and of progress generally, — than by any mere abstract argument about the equality of races.

The suspicions disparaging to us will be dissipated only by the exhibition of the indisputable realities of a lofty manhood as they may be illustrated in successful efforts to build up a nation, to wrest from nature her secrets, to lead the van of progress in this country, and to regenerate a continent.