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THE SCHOOL JOURNAL.

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THO. H. BURROWES, Editor.

OUR HUNDRED FRIENDS.

In response to the offer of Mr. J. C. Thom, of Indiana co., that he would procure ten subscribers to the 3d volume of the Penna. School Journal, commencing July, 1854, and send on the money before that time, if 99 other teachers and friends in the State should agree each to do the same, we have received a number of names. We shall now commence publishing the list, and hereafter shall add the names of such as choose to join.

1. J. C. Thom, Clarksburg, Indiana co.
2. Leonard Alleman, Green Caste, Franklin co.
3. J. M. Barnett, Allegheny City.
4. W. F. Wyers, West Chester, Chester co.
5. Amos Row, Lancaster, Lancaster co.
6. J. D. Wingate, Bellefonte, Centre co.
7. J. G. Bliss, Beaver, Beaver co.
8. J. R. Sypher, Hinkletown, Lancaster co.
9. T. F. Thickstun, Meadville, Crawford co.
10. Jos. R. McQuaid, West Newton, Westmoreland co.

DEFERRED ARTICLES: The press of other matter excludes several communications and some editorial articles designed for this No. The former shall appear next month; the latter will always give place to the favors of correspondents.

NOTICES OF EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS: Several calls for the meetings of educational societies were received for insertion in the April No. of the Journal. They came too late and could not be inserted; and, as the meetings to which they related took place in April, of course they are not now published. Hereafter, calls of this kind, which will be cheerfully inserted, should be forwarded on or before the 25th of the month previous to that of the No. in which they are to appear.

JUVENILE PUBLICATIONS: Several communications on this topic are among the contents of this No.—We make no further remark now, than to suggest the propriety of “sticking to the text.” We never heard any one question the propriety or utility of juvenile *compositions*. On the contrary, we believe that, as soon as a child can string words together in writing, he should be encouraged and made to write down his own thoughts, daily, as a regular part of his school work. This, however, is different from *publishing* those efforts to the world, after correction by the teacher. The question of the propriety of *publication* is the only one we desired to raise.

THE NEW SCHOOL LAW.

We had hoped to be able to publish the whole of the new school law in this number of the Journal, and even delayed its publication one week for that purpose; but now (May 5th) we have only just received it in an authentic shape. It shall, however, be inserted next month.

On a cursory examination we find much to approve and to fill the heart with hope of better times. Among those promising features are, the creation of the office of *County Superintendent*; the exclusion of all teachers who shall not pass a *satisfactory examination* and obtain the Superintendent's certificate; and the specification of the *branches of study* which must be embraced in the Common School course. On the other hand, we miss several desirable provisions which were in the bill as first prepared by the State Superintendent and reported by the Senate Committee. Among these, the one that we most regret is that which provided for the *annual meeting* of the Teachers and Directors of each county, at the call and under the presidency of the County Superintendent, for mutual improvement and discussion.

It would have been no detracton from their dignity, and greatly for the good of the schools, if the majority in the Legislature had reposed more confidence in the experienced recommendations of th

There, when the anthems of praise arise from the full-voiced choir the poet's devotional words roll tremblingly, on sweet music's strains, up to the vaulted roof; and the whole congregation, with fervor join in chorus, to adore the Great I Am, prompted by the language, the meaning numbers of the Sacred Bard. How suggestive to the reflective mind, of those anthems that shall unceasingly roll through Heaven's high sounding arches throughout Eternity, from the redeemed and sanctified throng around the great, white throne! of the alleluias of praise that shall forever echo there, attuned by myriads of angel-voices!

Oh! go where you will; do what you will; in all this motley world, you still will everywhere observe the great, the hallowed influence of the Poet's art; its suggestive and expressive power. To music's sweetest, most enrapturing strains, it gives a lively thought, a meaning, a force, an expression; in description, it gives a vivid, real, present picture; in idea, it treats of matter, of essence, or of spirit, with equal skill; and its better influences will ever lead "from nature up to nature's God." To the scenes, the vicissitudes, the duties, and all the affairs of earth, and earthly life, it imparts an interest, a nobility, a romance; to the spirit of devotion, the worship of God's people, the exercises of the sanctuary, it contributes a fervor, a sincerity, an elevation of thought, a delightful zest.

If such is its nobility; if such are its influences and tendencies in the slightest degree; is not the cultivation of the talent, or at least the taste, for this most noble of the arts, worthy of consideration in the course of that education which shall go to make the youth of to-day, the man or woman of taste, refinement, and influence, in after years.

We have now completed the task, we proposed at the outset. We have considered, and attempted to illustrate the nobility, the influence, and tendency of the most commonly accepted of the fine arts.—The utility and worth of gardening and architecture are so self-evident; and these arts are so generally appreciated and attended to by all, that we have not felt called upon to give them a more than passing mention. It was a wise saying of Goethe, that great master in German literature, that "we should do our utmost to encourage the beautiful, for the useful encourages itself." Around our homes, and in the streets of the wide city, we may cultivate our tastes; indulge in the pleasures and learn the utility of Horticulture and Architecture. But, for Music, Painting, Sculpturing, and Poetry, we have here claimed as wide and fair a field of influence and usefulness. Of these, music and painting, drawing; and, perhaps, sculpturing, in the formation of prints and flowers; are the most available in our schools. Yet a taste for Poetry;—a just appreciation of its beauties and sublimity, the order and rules of harmonious versification; might be inculcated with profit and pleasure. With such influences, such tendencies, they are surely all well worthy some degree of attention and care. Perchance in the mind of some thoughtless boy, there might lie a latent spark that needs but such care, encouragement and direction to make it blaze out in genius like that which dipped a Raphael's pencil, or attuned a Beethoven's deaf ear, to make it glow into a fire like that which lit a Milton's song.

AN ADDRESS

Delivered before the Ereunetcon and Mathetcon Literary Societies of the Elders' Ridge Presbyterian Academy, Pa., September 29th, 1853.

BY COORLANDT VAN RENSBELAER, D. D.

Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Education.

Young Gentlemen of the Literary Societies of the Elders' Ridge Presbyterian Academy:

It is a privilege to stand upon one of God's country ridges, away from the streets of city life, surrounded by a beautiful Pennsylvania landscape.—The soul of man is made to sympathize with nature. His eye loves the blue of the heavens, the green of fields and trees, the slope of the mountain, the winding of water-brook and river. His ear loves the pure-voiced wind. There is an inspiration in the healthy air. Oh, how good it is to be country-born and country-bred; and walking upon some acres of well-tilled soil, to know that these are *father's* and that yonder is the homestead where mother dwells with a happy family. It is pleasant, indeed to look upon the country. But even amidst the rural enchantments of nature, it is a far finer sight to look at this academy that stands upon the ridge. *Elders' Ridge*—well named and associated with the good, old stock of Zion—is now doubly honored as the location of an institution of the Church. The institution is established upon the eminence of divine truth; it is endowed with the wealth of great moral purposes; and its glory consists in the mental and moral development of young men, born to a high destiny of privilege and duty.

Before proceeding to my more immediate subject, I wish to say a few words in regard to the value of Literary Societies in an institution like this. Their value consists principally in four things. *First*, They cultivate the power of extemporaneous speaking, the art of elocution—one of the most useful departments of human acquisition. *Secondly*, They tend to preserve the harmonies of education; they work in admirably with the attainments of scholarship, reducing knowledge, as it were, to practice and even stimulating its pursuit. *Thirdly*, They cherish a proper sense of self-reliance, and counteract the timidity and excessive modesty of many a youthful student. A youth who has learned how to speak out his thoughts, in the glow of competition with other minds has begun to act the part of a man, and to put away childish things. And *Fourthly*, these Societies exert excellent social influences, and strengthen the bonds of friendship. Be assured, gentlemen of the Ereunetcon and Mathetcon Literary Societies, that the weekly exercises within your Halls teach important branches of learning, and that the Societies are really Assistants in the Board of Instruction of the Academy.

But this is not my subject. A person, called to address you, has the common-law right of literature to talk about anything he pleases, always however, in conformity with the proprieties of the occasion.—As my aim is to be useful in this brief interval of Christian interview, I have taken for my subject a paragraph of the annual circular of the Elder's Ridge Presbyterian Academy, viz: the institution "aims to accomplish a two-fold object: 1st. To elevate the standard of general education by providing properly qualified teachers for common schools, 2d. To prepare young men to enter an advanced class in colleges." My subject is, therefore, a double one, tied

together by the academic bond; first, the common school as a field of labor; and second, the college as a place of youthful desire.

I. My remarks will be principally on **THE COMMON SCHOOL AS A FIELD OF LABOR**. And where is there richer mould than in this field, on either side of the mountains? Where can the implements of industry turn up soil more promising to the eye of sight and of faith, and the cultivator enjoy the rewards of a better harvest? The common school is one of the powers of the land. Every school-house is a ridge, helping to water and fertilize the surrounding country, and by the variety and elevation of position, adding a blessing to the general landscape. The importance of common schools may be briefly *alluded to* in several points of view; for a brief allusion is all that our mutual contract of speaking and hearing, will justify.

1. Look at the common school, then, in its relation to *agriculture* and you will find that you are doing no inferior work in becoming a teacher. Agriculture, both as a science and an art, requires at least an ordinary degree of knowledge in carrying forward its operations. Would the valleys and hill-slopes of western Pennsylvania have ever presented the appearance of cultivation which now robes them with beauty and verdure, if the farmers had been an ignorant and shiftless population? Knowledge is power, even at the handle of the plough, or in the grasp of the scythe, or at the top of a wagon-load of hay.—Every thing worth doing at all, is worth doing well, and can be better done by being done with knowledge or common sense. There are some men, who, although they have never learned to read or write, yet show much shrewdness in agriculture; but there can be no doubt that if such had attended more to their minds, they would have been better fitted to look after their farms. Agricultural people ought to value the common school for the general purposes of everyday life, just as they do the grind-stone for the axe in the time of wood-cutting. These little boys in the school-houses are soon to be the sturdy farmers of Indiana county, and they need all the knowledge they can get, to know the best way to manage their affairs. You want no fools in the field of agriculture; nor, on the other hand, are classical scholars of much use among cattle, and haystacks, and threshing floors; but common sense is much needed every where, and common sense is the chief end of a common school. The common school teacher, therefore is a sort of head-manager on all farms of a school district. He helps train the boys to become respectable farmers, and the girls to become thrifty housewives; and both to be fitted for each other when the "good time comes." The population of a country is greatly formed for the occupations of agricultural life through reading, writing, arithmetic, and the general items of learning put together in the common schools.—The New Englanders, who are so shrewd and thrifty would never have known how to do so much of everything, if the little country school houses had not disciplined them with book and birch, and so made them ready for the world. Depend upon it, young gentlemen, there is a close relation between common-schoolism and agriculture, just as there is between corn sown and corn grown, between means and end, between cultivation and harvest.

2. Our common schools have also a good deal to do with *politics and free government*. Many a man goes to Harrisburg who acquires all his learning in

the township school-house; and many more, who began to get it there, have gone on to attain to more, and to qualify themselves for influence in higher stations. Our governors and statesmen and judges were once little boys, sitting down on hard unbacked benches, with bare feet on a rude floor, and with unwashed hands turning over the spelling-book, or holding a pen at an acutely wrong angle in trying to create letters. Many a beginning of humility has ended in a career of honorable success. As a boy in the academy sometimes goes up from the bottom to the top of a class, so many a man has gone up from a low position in life to the head of his profession.

But, leaving public officers out of view, how important are common schools in teaching the masses to read, and thus to act in the great affairs of life!—The people can never manage wisely the affairs of government, if left to grope along in ignorance and mental degradation. It is one of the axioms of a republican government that the people must be intelligent. Mere intelligence is not, of itself, sufficient; but, even with virtue and religion—which are better things—*this* cannot be dispensed with. Ignorance is the ambush of demagoguism, whilst the school-house is the stockade fort, from whence to fire upon the subtle foe. Never since the days when the Indians defeated Braddock at the pass of the Monongahela, has a more savage enemy than demagoguism arrayed itself against American liberty. We must conquer it, by taking our position from the school-house and in the line of general education. Every boy, taught to read, stands so much better chance to become a wiser voter and a more intelligent citizen. A person, in passing through a park, saw nailed to one of the trees—"All dogs found in this park will be shot." Whereupon a friend who was with him said, "Unless dogs can read, they are pretty badly off here."—But an American voter, who has had no common school education, is worse off than the dog in the park. Although he may have political masters to read for him, he is liable to be shot down at any time, and by none sooner than by those who lead him into the "park" on election days. The voting masses must be educated masses. We must gather into the school-houses all the children we can, and pour into their minds the light of primers, of arithmetics, of grammars, and of history; knowing that every new ray of knowledge dispels so much darkness, under whose cover corruption does its wily work. The school teacher is an important character in the political world; for he assists in training the people to the intelligent exercise of their political rights, as well as to discharge the higher functions of political station.

3. The common school in its *relation to education* has motives to stimulate young men to become teachers. The importance of the general education of the people can scarcely be over-estimated. Dr. Johnson, upon being once asked, "Who was the most miserable man," replied, "The man who cannot read on a rainy day." Every one ought to have mental resources and the means of acquiring knowledge from books. My design is to notice the common school as affording opportunity of beginning education *early*, and of *stimulating its progress*. The early education of children is to be sought as the best basis of general education. The intellect of the young should be unfolded at the period which God has given for the work. A late beginning leaves its mark of disadvantage, which no future diligence can eradicate.

The common school, planted in the midst of a neighborhood, affords opportunities of comparatively easy access, even to young children, and summons them all to enter upon their studies without delay. It is eminently conciliatory, accommodating and practical; and aims not at carrying on instruction from some given point of a higher course, but at commencing with the elements of language, so as to cultivate the minds of children from an early age.

The education of children, thus early begun, becomes the means of progress. The boy first sent to school merely to learn the rudiments of knowledge and thence to be brought home again to labor, often acquires a love of books which leads him to be a learner all his life. Although he may never be advanced to an academy, or college, he yet has been nurtured into the pursuit of a thing, which he will always continue in a measure to seek. His education goes on, making perchance slow progress, but still adding to its value year after year, until the principal invested in the stock of common school learning becomes far more productive than his original mental means gave any promise of.

The common school, not unfrequently, is the feeder of the academy, as the academy is of the college; and in this view of the case, the relation of the common school to education becomes very important.—If Daniel Webster had never gone into the district school, taught by Thomas Chase, there is little likelihood that that glorious black-eyed boy would ever have gone to Exeter Academy, and then to Dartmouth College. Webster's experience is that of a multitude of others in the land. In riding along with a stage-driver on the National Road last week, he informed me that he was born in the same village, on the same night with a distinguished member of Congress, (whom he named) and that they were companions in early life at the same public school. Whilst one never rose higher than to drive horses, the other went to an academy and college, became an educated man, and thus eventually a great public character. In proportion as common schools are improved in general condition—and there is a constant tendency now towards improvement—they will contribute more and more to advance academical and collegiate education. So that a faithful teacher has a wide field of usefulness before him, and may well be stimulated to lay out his strength on his scholars, not knowing how far he may promote, through the influences of his school, the general cause of education in its more humble as well as its higher branches.

4. One more consideration to stimulate the teacher, is the *relation of common schools to religion*.—Great imperfection in the matter of religious instruction has undoubtedly existed, of late years, in the administration of the system. Some of the schools have, perhaps, had an injurious effect upon the cause of Christ, positively and negatively. The withdrawal of religion from education is wrong in principle and in policy; and the community must suffer in the providence of God for inflicting this dishonor upon divine truth. The question in many places is now very much reduced to this: "Shall the public school system be sustained in spite of its indifference to religion?" Our answer is, "Yes." Between the two evils we may choose the least. Education without religion is probably, on the whole, better than no education at all. At least, it is so in this country, where the children commonly have other opportunities of receiving evangelical instruction in Sabbath Schools,

or by pastoral care, or in families. The existence of these opportunities outside of the schools is no *argument* for keeping religion outside of the schools, and can be no palliation of the sin in the sight of God; and yet as a plea of justification in still adhering to the system, it may be admitted as valid.

But there is a way of exerting a direct influence in favor of religion, even though the Bible itself be excluded, and that is by the fidelity of pious teachers. The graces of Christianity will shine through dungeon bars. Law cannot confine them out of sight. Christianity has rights of her own. Public opinion, however arbitrary or infidel, cannot make a teacher throw off his religion as a garment, and hide it under school-benches. No! Religion is seen in the countenance; it beams in the eyes, and makes itself known in the voice; its spirit is that of good will and charity; and its discipline derives sanction from the eternal world. The teacher may make appropriate allusions to the Creator of men, and to the plan of salvation through the Redeemer. A general enforcement of the claims of the Gospel, it is his privilege to insist upon as an individual believer. Public sentiment will in most places allow general and appropriate suggestions relating to religion, and in various places will still tolerate the Bible and other more formal means of inculcating divine truth.

It is believed, therefore, that the public schools, at least for the present, sustain a relation of good to the cause of religion; first, because knowledge is generally better than ignorance; secondly, because outside evangelical influences can contribute something to make up the defalcation in the school room; and thirdly, because pious teachers can both indirectly and directly inculcate some portion of divine truth upon the minds and consciences of the scholars. If the time should ever come when religious teachers shall be rejected from the public schools, then the last bond between public education and the church will be broken, and the state must abide the consequences of its infatuated and wicked policy.

Young gentleman, it is an important thing to engage in carrying out one of the objects of the Elders' Ridge Presbyterian Academy, viz: the promotion of the cause of common schools, particularly in view of their relation to agriculture, politics, education, and religion. Permit me, before passing to the second topic, to say a few words to commend the profession of teacher on account of the advantages which accrue personally to the individual.

One of these advantages is the teacher's own *mental improvement*. The best way to impress knowledge upon one's own mind is to endeavor to communicate it to others. The schoolroom has a constant tendency to sharpen one's faculties, and to promote, even amidst much vexation, intellectual benefit.

A *knowledge of human nature* is certainly acquired among boys and girls. A school is a wonderful place in which to learn the true characteristics of mankind. It presents every variety of character, all kinds of perverseness, trickery, good nature, falsehood, self-vindication, fun, idleness, diligence, mischief, and ingenuity. Hence a teacher is commonly one of the knowing ones of the earth.

It results from this that a good measure of *self-acquaintance* is usually acquired in this profession. Oh, the trials of a teacher's mind and heart and conscience! How he is taxed by the little publicans, sitting at the receipt of knowledge! How many hard lessons about patience and self-restraint are put into

him by boys and girls with natural tact of instruction! A teacher must be dull, indeed, not to have a deep acquaintance with poor human self. After all, self-knowledge is wealth.

A teacher also obtains wealth in another form.—The *substantial returns* of his profession are quite considerable. The first money which many an enterprising young man makes, is in teaching the children of the yeomanry of the land. As the California gold comes sometimes from breaking the hard quartz, and sometimes from the washing of the sand—so the professional coffer is filled both by hammering on hard intellects, and by the easy gatherings of the more exposed treasure. A teacher is thus enabled to support himself respectably; and afterwards to go to the college or the seminary, or to continue his profession, according to circumstances.

And this leads to my last remark on this point, which is, that the common school often *guides the teacher himself to a higher and more influential position*. God's ways are not as our ways. A comparatively humble place in early life has been the means, in Providence, of promoting the future advantage of both teacher and scholar. Many a principal of an academy, or professor in a college has passed on to his elevation by beginning his ascent from the steps of a district school-house. The best pilots on the magnificent steamers of the west are commonly those who began navigation in a flat boat, and then became second pilots on stern-wheel steamers, and finally trod the deck of the "Crystal Palace," or the last "Ben Franklin." The most thorough and accomplished teacher, other things being equal, is the man who first sounded the depths and shoals of knowledge in a subordinate capacity, and thus became gradually acquainted with the whole channel of the mighty and majestic stream. A teacher often makes his first instructions serve as the basis of entrance into some other profession or pursuit. In any aspect of the case, the common school serves as the medium of future advancement.

I will here make a single remark to those of you, young gentlemen, who expect to be teachers in the common schools; and that is, *Keep the smart scholars up to their work*. Do not expect too much from the dull ones; but whilst all are taught to do their duty, take special care that the bright ones come up to the mark. The celebrated Dr. Parr made it a rule seldom to punish lads of stunted capacity, and never to extort from mediocrity of mind gifts which nature had not been prodigal enough to bestow. But the really talented he resolutely attacked, and insisted upon it that those whom nature had favored should cultivate her gifts. This was good advice. Look after the smart boys and girls, and make them do their work well.

Having considered the common school as a good field of labor, mentioned some advantages to the teacher personally, and added a single rule of administration, it is time now to refer to the second object of the Elders' Ridge Presbyterial Academy, which is to prepare young men to enter advanced classes in college.

II. THE COLLEGE COURSE, AS AN OBJECT OF YOUTHFUL DESIRE, is the topic to be considered. I have two remarks to make upon it.

1. The college course is designed to *produce a higher order of men*. Education has a natural tendency to elevate its subject. Place a collegian

and a common-school boy side by side, and other things being equal, you will see what a difference their training has made. It is with the mind as it is with the soil; cultivation shows its advantages.—An acre of boys, or an acre of earth, will be improved according to the labor and skill put forth. You often hear a farmer boast, "A few years ago that field yielded poorly; but since I manured it, and tilled it aright, it has done wonderfully well; far better than my neighbor's of equal quality." Just so, the President of a college can point to many a graduate and say, "See that young man. When he first came to college, he was rude enough, and had been long left uncultivated; but we put him in the plough of diligence, fertilized his mind with rich motives and sowed the seeds of learning, and now how superior is he to the young man who sat by his side at the common school and who never carried his education further!" People may have as many prejudices against colleges as they please; but it will ever be true that colleges raise up the mind, and secure a higher order of men. Why do farmers send their boys to the common school? Because the knowledge and discipline there acquired place the boys in a higher grade than if they had never learned to read and write. The same principle carried out elevates the student of the academy above the common school boy, and the collegian above the student of the academy. It is necessarily so, because the higher the course the more severe are the studies; and the mind receives sterner discipline, and expands more and more, according as it is operated upon by education.

The college is a place of privilege and of honor.—It raises up the children of men to a more advanced degree of intellectual and moral cultivation. In our colleges, as well as in our academies, however it may be in our schools, religion goes hand in hand with learning. Our young men, in going through the upper courses of training, feel the blessed power of religious influences moulding their minds and hearts. Sometimes, indeed, a young man fails in getting much good at a college and, as the saying is, he turns out badly. But the failure is, probably, more owing to defective training at home than to the hazards of college life, great though these may be. And besides, do not common-school boys fail, too, sometimes, in getting much good from their limited course?—Do they not often grow up the worse for having learnt to swear and curse and lie and steal from their wicked companions in the district school-house.—There are failures everywhere, among all classes of men and all kinds of educated men.

The college is a great place to test and to improve character. It brings out its true sons, as silver and gold are tried. With all the imperfection of these institutions, they generally improve the mind and heart, and send forth into the community a higher order of men.

2. The other remark I have to suggest about the college, as a place of youthful aim, is that it trains men for a *higher order of usefulness*. Mind was not given to subserve the private purposes of the individual, and merely to rejoice over its own conscious elevation and dignity. Its capacity, enlarged by cultivation, must pour forth its resources for the public good. We are all bound by the appointments of Providence to do what we can to promote the best interests of society. Now it is clear that our influence depends materially on our intellectual and moral elevation. Ignorance can never claim an equality

with knowledge, in ability to serve the world. In fact, all the pursuits of life derive immense advantages from learning. Not only does the church rely upon education to qualify her ministers for more extensive usefulness, but agriculture, the mechanical arts, manufactures, commerce, the learned professions, literature and general philanthropy, all give honor to intellect, as debtors to its moving power. Educated men assist in the formation of public opinion, in devising plans of general improvement, in directing the education of the people, in giving an impulse to works of benevolence, and in short have an influential agency in promoting the social, physical, political and religious interests of the world. Colleges, therefore, are great blessings to mankind. By raising up a high order of men, they qualify them to enter upon high spheres of usefulness. For these two reasons, colleges may well excite in ingenious, enterprising, conscientious young men, a disposition to enjoy the advantages afforded by their halls of literature.

The double object of the Elders' Ridge Presbyterial Academy is commanding and noble. The academy, from its elevated ridge, looks down with interest upon the common school on one side and upon the college on the other. Placed in the middle between the two, it sends strength into both. It gives teachers to the schools, and students to the colleges.—With such a spirit to bless all around it, it will itself be blessed by the laws of Providence, which take care of great enterprises. The school, the academy and the college are immense public benefits. Like the rivulet, the creek and the river, they form the great educational system, which waters the world with streams of joy.

I congratulate you, young gentlemen, that you enjoy the advantages, literary, social and religious, afforded by the Elders' Ridge Academy. You will never sit under the instructions of teachers, more sincerely desirous of advancing you in intellectual knowledge, or more solicitous for the things of your everlasting peace. May their instructions and their prayers be answered in the lives of usefulness and piety you shall lead! Aim at being useful, highly useful; useful among men through the grace and strength which come only from God. You see an exemplification of Christian enterprise in the establishment of this institution. Behold what faith and love and perseverance can accomplish with the divine blessing. In the same spirit, go ye forth to do good things and great things for the country, mingling modesty with enterprise and giving to God the glory of your success. Attend always to the interests of education; and if you cannot find an Elders' Ridge on which to erect an academy, like that which crowns yonder eminence—which, without impropriety may well be called *Donaldson's summit*—nevertheless aim at doing what you can to advance education every where, and among all classes in society.

I close this address, young gentlemen, by setting before you the example of a native-born son of western Pennsylvania, who fulfilled in his own person the two aims of your academy, by being a school teacher and a graduate; and who afterwards rose to be president of a college.* He was born west of

the mountains just before the revolutionary war, of poor but respectable parents; and in the midst of the war was left an helpless orphan at the age of nine years. A friend of his father, who kept a tavern and a small grocery store, took him into his employment, and gave him instruction in writing and arithmetic. He soon became very fond of reading; and as there happened to be in the house a copy of the *Spectator* the young boy's eye was attracted to the Latin sentences, prefixed to the chapters. With a determination and perseverance which God gave to his youthful heart, he began to study Latin, all by himself, by means of a *Horace* and a half-torn Latin Dictionary which he found in the neighborhood. He obtained considerable insight into the strange language by these strange means, often sitting up at his studies till a late hour. One night, Judge Addison—who lodged at the same hotel—upon returning to his lodgings after the family had retired, found the boy, now about twelve years of age, diligently engaged with his *Horace* and Dictionary by the light of the fire.—After a little conversation, the Judge became deeply interested in the youth, and promised to give him a grammar and other books, better suited to unfold the language. The promise was not forgotten; and the little boy, still behind the counter and in the bar room, gradually mastered the Latin and the Greek, and in a few years became a fine classical scholar.—Dr. McMillan soon found him out, and secured him as a teacher in the Canonsburg Academy, before the college was established. After a while, he was sent to Princeton College by means of assistance supplied in part by Dr. McMillan, and he was graduated in 1797, at the age of twenty-five. After studying theology with Dr. McMillan, he was licensed by the Ohio Presbytery in 1798 and ordained a minister of the gospel in 1800. In 1802, when Jefferson College was chartered, the first President was the Rev. JOHN WATSON, the little orphan boy, who commenced the Latin in the chimney corner, with no teacher but his own divinely aroused energies and with no opportunities but the most forbidding and unpromising. Standing on the last Sabbath at the grave of Watson, in the old Chartiers grave yard, I rejoiced that resurrection glory awaited the tabernacle in which such a spirit had dwelt.

Young gentlemen, be ye like-minded; quit you like men! God has given you minds and precious opportunities! Your country and your church call for your services, at a most eventful age of the world. Let this academy witness in you faithful sons. And whilst pursuing your various studies and whilst engaged in the exercises of your literary societies, forget not that religion is the chief study and the best exercise for the faculties of immortal beings. Among all the advantages of this institution, its religious spirit gives it its highest glory, for it tends to prepare you all for Heaven.

Oh Thou, whose providence is over all the earth, and who "waterest the ridges thereof abundantly," pour out thy Spirit here! Bless the Elders' Ridge Presbyterial Academy, its honored Principal, its teachers, its students, their parents, the community, the Presbytery, and the Church, throughout their generations! Supply teachers for our common schools, and send forth students into our colleges, to the praise of Thy great name!

*For the incidents which follow, I am indebted to Dr. Elliot's *Life of Macurdy*, a work full of interesting information about the early ministers and churches of western Pennsylvania. It stands side by side with Dr. Miller's *Life of John Rodgers*; both being superior specimens of Christian Biography.