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THE EPIDEMIC YELLOW FEVERS OF NATCHEZ.

"IN MEDIO VERITAS."

Essay read before the Jefferson College and Washington Lyceum, Dec. 2, 1837, by J. W. MONETTE, M. D.

CONTINUED.

I. THE MIASM OF YELLOW FEVER.—This we consider as a subtle, gaseous, invisible, and inodorous matter, generated by the action of the sun, or by solar heat, upon the atmosphere, independently of any effluvia or sœtor from the decomposition of animal matters, and independently of any exhalations from marshes, dry earth, or vegeto-animal compounds, or any thing of those kinds. We believe it to be the result of some unknown combination of the solar rays, with the atmosphere, which takes place at all times and in all places, while the temperature in the shade is steadily between 88° and 98° of Fahrenheit, or between 110° and 130° in the open sun: that its specific gravity is much greater than that of common air, and that it possesses the common properties of aerial fluids. We think it probable, that, in its simple state of miasm, it is innocuous; but becomes morbid by combination with impure air; that commonly it becomes separated from pure air, and settles near the ground; that it is partially neutralized by a temperature of 55° or 60°; and is entirely destroyed by a temperature of 50° or 45° at the lowest. The degree of its morbid qualities depends upon the nature and degree of combination. Hence, in our opinion, it can accumulate in dangerous quantities only when the weather is steadily between 88° and 89° during the day, and above 60° or 70° at night, and during a period when there is but little wind to disperse it, or only sufficient to waft it gently in the air, and cause it to settle in low confined places, in a manner similar to the collections of carbonic acid gas. We think, unless the weather is unusually calm and sultry, or remarkably warm, to cause its rapid formation, that it requires from ten to fifteen days for it to accumulate sufficiently to be in any wise prejudicial; that strong winds sweep it away, or diffuse it in the general air; and heavy rains wash it partly off, or cause it to settle in low, damp places, and deep bayoux; where, in a long succeeding calm, hot period of weather, it will accumulate until they overflow, and spread it over the surrounding grounds near their margins: that it assumes a level surface, like water, and hence is deeper in some points than at others, in proportion to their relative elevation: that it cannot accumulate on steep declivities without a barrier below, when it rises only to the level of the barrier. On perfectly level surfaces, it seldom raises its surface more than three or four feet above the ground, and most commonly not more than two or three feet. A cold night, with a temperature below 50°, would destroy all that had previously generated; a strong wind or tornado would sweep it out from bayoux, ravines, or low confined places. Hot weather favors its formation; calm weather favors its accumulation, as well as the contamination of the air requisite to form a morbid union with the miasm.

We believe it requires for its formation an extreme temperature above 88°, because unless the temperature has been up to that point during the hottest period of the day, for many days, no yellow fever has occurred; whereas, although the temperature of the nights may have been up to 80° or above, so that the mean temperature is 80° or 82°, yet if the greatest heat of the day has not been up to 88° at least, there is no yellow fever. Again, a few days may give an extreme temperature of 90° or 95°; yet if one or two cool nights, at a temperature of 50° or 55° succeed, there will be no yellow fever for ten days subsequently at least. Again, there might be thirty days in succession, with an extreme temperature as high as 93° or 95°, and yet two cold nights, ten or fifteen days apart, would neutralize all the miasm previously formed; and although the mean heat, for a month or longer, might average more than 80°, there would be no yellow fever. Hence the mean heat should not be taken into our estimates; but the actual temperature by day and by night. The winds may be fresh from the south, so as not to reduce the temperature below 90° by day, and yet they may carry off all the miasm, or all the contaminated air: or a calm, hot day, may be succeeded by a gale at night, which will carry off the miasm. This miasm is not injured or neutralized by damp air: on the contrary if calm, damp, foggy, cloudy, or misty weather, succeed many days of intensely hot and sultry weather, the miasm previously formed, remains, if it does not accumulate; damp, moist air is congenial to it, and seems to attract it: or it settles over low, damp places, in preference to dry ones of the same elevation. Hence it accumulates in deep ravines or bayoux. Upon these principles, we perceive why yellow fever is most prevalent in low, damp sections of cities, near the wharves and about the shipping. These places attract and retain the miasm already formed: as well as favor its generation and preservation. The temperature about such places, from their exposed situation, is often at least two or three degrees higher than in other parts of the city. The reflection from the water adds to this effect by day, and moderates the cold by night. The temperature of the country air is generally at least two or three degrees less than it is in any closely built parts of cities, not only during the day, but at night; country air is necessarily much cooler, because there is not such an accumulation of heat in radiating bodies.

Although it requires a temperature above 88° to generate miasm, we find that it requires a reduction of nearly one-half to neutralize or destroy it. Hence yellow fever is often endemic all the year in the West Indies; for there the temperature of the air is seldom below 55° of Fahrenheit, and where infection exists, even that temperature will not destroy it. These facts may be illustrated by similar ones in relation to another fluid. Thus water, for example, under the common atmospheric pressure, will not boil at 200° or 205° Fahrenheit, but it will boil at 212°. At the latter temperature it

infected that of "several young men from the city, who went on board, all took the disease, and soon after died." Immediately after these cases the disease manifested itself in various parts of the city.

The yellow fever prevailed severely in New Orleans, in 1817, for several weeks previous to its appearance in Natchez.

II. THE EPIDEMIC OF 1819. The first alarm of yellow fever was given on the 4th of September, at which time several cases had occurred, and a portion of the citizens immediately fled to the country. Cases became more frequent, and more malignant in their type until the 14th of September, when it was considered epidemic. It continued to prevail with great mortality until the first of December. At this time about 200 persons of all kinds had fallen victims to its ravages, and the total number of cases was over 400. Some, as in 1817, died after they had fled to the country; and others after they had returned to their homes, and imprudently slept in their houses and beds before they were perfectly disinfecting by cold weather. The total deaths as given in the Sexton's reports, during the epidemic, in the city, were about one hundred and eighty. On the 3d of October, when only about seventy-eight deaths had taken place, a census taken showed the entire population, including blacks in both the upper and lower parts of the city, to be only five hundred and sixty-eight souls. Subsequently about one hundred of this number died; of whom about fifty died in the month of November. Several cases and deaths by yellow fever were reported as late as the 3d, 4th and 5th of December.

A report made by the board of health during the epidemic states, that the inhabitants of the country, and in the immediate vicinity of the city, were as healthy as usual at that season.

The meteorological table given by Dr. Perlee shows that July and August were very wet, and September very dry. The rain-gauge gave in July 12.27 inches; in August 8.05 inches; and in September 0.95 inches. The mean heat of July was 79°, of August 79°, and of September 75°. Thus July and August exhibited a lower mean temperature, by 3° than the same months in 1818, which was a healthy year. The mean heat of September, 1819, was the same nearly as in 1818. Hence we see that the yellow fever in 1819 prevailed under the same temperature, or less, and with more than double the quantity of rain which preceded the epidemic of 1817.—The month of November, in 1819, exhibited a higher mean temperature than the same time in the preceding years; being 65° Fahrenheit, or three-fourths of a degree higher than the mean temperature of November, 1837.

Dr Perlee ascribes this epidemic to the same general causes which, in his opinion, produced that of 1817. He supposes the excessive rains in July and August caused a stronger "predisposition," as during the healthy summer of 1818 it was comparatively dry and healthy.* As to the particular portion of the city in which it prevailed in 1817 and 1819, we are not informed; but doubtless it occupied that part of the city in which it has prevailed in each subsequent epidemic.

* In 1818, the rain of July, August and September, together, being only 10.30 inches, or less than that of July, 1819.

The yellow fever had prevailed to a most alarming extent in New Orleans, for about two weeks before it appeared in Natchez. There had been scattering cases about the shipping, boats and wharves, as early as June; but it did not become epidemic until about the middle of August. It raged severely among the shipping, and spread to the adjacent streets, as also among the boats which had descended the river. Not a ship escaped one or more deaths, and some lost their whole crews; many steamers became infected, and lost many of their passengers and hands. It did not entirely cease there until near the last of January, 1820.†

During the years 1820, 1821, and 1822, yellow fever as an epidemic, was unknown in Natchez. Yet, in each of these years, especially in 1822, there were several sporadic cases, and some whose infection was derived from New Orleans, by handling, opening, or sleeping on blankets, &c., from the infected district of that city. The state of the weather during these summers I have not been able to ascertain.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NATCHEZ, 9th March, 1838.

REV. S. G. WINCHESTER,

Dear Sir,—We believe we fully represent the wishes of all who heard your admirable Lecture, delivered before the Institute and Lyceum to-day, on the "Importance of Female Education," when we respectfully solicit a copy for publication in the South-Western Journal.

With sentiments of high respect and esteem,

Your obedient servants,

G. V. H. FORBES,

Ed. South-Western Journal.

S. A. HODGMAN,

Principal of Ladies' Institute and Lyceum.

MESSRS. G. V. H. FORBES AND S. A. HODGMAN,

Gentlemen,—If you think that the publication of my Lecture on the Importance of Female Education, will, in any degree, promote the cause which it advocates, you are at liberty to lay it before the readers of the South-Western Journal.

With sentiments of great regard,

I am your obedient servant,

S. G. WINCHESTER.

NATCHEZ, March 9th, 1838.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE EDUCATION.

Having been invited by the Principal of this Institution, to deliver the first lecture in the course which he has proposed, I have selected, as my subject, the Importance of Female Education, which may be regarded as an appropriate introduction to the lectures which are to follow.

The term EDUCATION, in its common acceptation, is far too limited in its meaning. It is commonly used to express the acquisition of the rudiments of learning, and as applying to the intellectual faculties only. The etymology of the word, however, justifies us in extending its application to all the faculties, moral, intellectual and physical. It signifies to draw out (*e duco*) these faculties into vigorous and useful exercise, and expresses that systematic training to which they are subjected. The restricted application of the term divorces from it, its most important meaning, namely, a moral training, which includes religious instruction and discipline. We call this the most important part, because without it, the

cultivation of the intellect and the acquisition of learning, may, and sometimes do, become the means of injury to the individuals themselves, and to the community generally, and do not necessarily lead to the study or practice of morality: whereas a correct moral training fits the subjects of it to become useful members of society, and its natural tendency is to dispose them to improve their minds. And above all, such a training renders their eternal salvation more probable, as it is the instrumentality which God ordinarily employs in the conversion of the heart.

But the standard of literary acquirements among females is far too low. This is owing chiefly to the influence of a prevalent sentiment among the other sex; viz. that it is both unnecessary and inexpedient to elevate this standard above the ordinary calls of that sphere in which they are destined to move. This unworthy prejudice has manifested itself in the bestowment of opprobrious epithets upon such as have dared to venture on the forbidden ground of a more exalted and enlarged literature. The phrase "blue-stocking," as applied to learned females, arose from a very contracted and partial estimate of the female mind, and of its legitimate vocation, if not from vanity and jealousy.

But we trust that this sentiment is passing away with the ages in which it originated, and with the barbarous heathenism of which it is a remnant. Heathenism gave birth to, and nurtured that strong public sentiment which, where it prevails, decrees the milder sex to ignorance and servitude. The light and influence of the gospel, wherever it has spread, have struck off their fetters, and redeemed them from the bondage in which they were held. The Christian religion elevates woman to her proper rank, and restores to her the rights and privileges with which she was endowed by her Creator. As woman, therefore, should be the last to repudiate or neglect the religion to which she is so much indebted, so she should be among the first to cherish and cultivate literature, the handmaid and ally of Christianity. As the one has restored her to liberty and rank, so the other, by its light and power, enables her to maintain them against future aggressions.

For what is civilization, but the result of education, in the expanded sense of that term? A correct mental and moral training brings about that state of society, in which the rights and immunities of women are acknowledged and respected. We need not travel to other countries, or look back to other ages, for an exemplification of this truth. Turn your eyes upon the aborigines of our own land, and mark the condition of the present generation. Behold the servitude and degradation of the female sex, among the tribes that roam through our forests, and then learn to estimate your indebtedness to religion and literature. How beautiful and appropriate is the brief but comprehensive eulogy which another has pronounced upon the sex: "latest at the cross, and earliest at the sepulchre."

That females are not deficient in point of intellect is abundantly evident from the works of those who have, from time to time, appeared before the public, in the character of authors. Nor are their works confined to the lighter branches of literature, but some, and not a few, considering

the limited number of well educated females, have handled with skill and profound research, the more severe and abstruse points of mental and moral, as well as natural science.

The term education is also too limited in its meaning, if it regard merely the acquisition of ideas. The mental training which it properly includes, is far more important for all practical purposes, than the knowledge to be derived from books merely. For example, let a female peruse carefully and attentively, a work of close, analogical or analytical reasoning, such as Butler's Analogy, Edwards on the Will, Euclid's Elements, or Fearn's Essay on Contingent Remainders, and Executory Devises, (provided she were familiar with legal technicalities,) and we venture to affirm that the training and discipline which her mind would derive from such a study, would be of far more avail to her, than all the ideas she would acquire from the books themselves. When the mind is thus subjected to a severe discipline, it is expanded and strengthened; the life, the vigor, the freshness, with which it operates in the conception, arrangement, and elucidation of thought, are vastly more to be desired than that dependent and torpid reliance upon the thoughts of other men, which a mere book reader betrays, however great may be the rude and undigested mass of borrowed ideas which he may thus have obtained. It is one thing to read, and it is quite another thing to study. We should mingle our own thoughts, as we proceed in a work, with those of the writer. We should close the book, even in the middle of a sentence, and follow out, by meditation or writing, the train of thought which a word, or phrase, or sentiment of the writer, may have suggested to our own mind. The mind should be thus habituated to independent and original thinking, and be taught to move onward in its own strength. A child must be taught to walk by an occasional reliance upon its own ability, so the mind must frequently be thrown upon its own resources, and be left without the extraneous aids and props on which it would otherwise rely, and become enervate and subservient.

Females commonly discover great timidity in committing their thoughts to paper, but perhaps they could not accustom themselves to a more profitable exercise. This will court thought, and lead to method and perspicuity. A correct style, a readiness and felicity of expression are the results of careful practice; and when chastened with that peculiar delicacy with which the female mind tempers its own conceptions, they become doubly attractive and impressive.

Such we apprehend to be the legitimate meaning of the term education, when applied to the intellectual faculties; for the acquisition and multiplication of ideas by no means exhaust its signification.

To what extent the education of females must necessarily be carried, in order to answer the ends for which it is bestowed, I do not venture to determine. Their situation and calling in life, being so different from those of the other sex, must have due weight in deciding this question. It is, on this account, unfair to settle this question by the rules which apply to the other sex, and equally so, to estimate their talents and acquirements by a comparison with those of the opposite sex: for the latter commonly receive their education with the view to some particular vocation, which determines the char-

ter and extent of their studies. Hence, those men who have distinguished themselves in the literary world, were either trained up to one of the learned professions, or enjoyed literary ease and leisure. We speak now of a general rule; there have been, we know, some exceptions. Those belonging to the learned professions, have distinguished themselves in the line of their profession, by bending all the powers of their minds; and causing all their studies and researches to point to a specific branch of literature, to the comparative neglect of all the others. The same remark, as far as it is applicable, is true of those distinguished literary men, who were attached to no particular profession. Their talents and requirements commonly shine in connexion with one only of the many departments of learning, to the comparative neglect of the others. Now it is not proposed that females should prosecute the learned professions, or enjoy literary leisure, to the neglect of their household duties. There are numerous and weighty domestic duties, which devolve wholly upon them, and which they must discharge in a suitable manner. And it would be as unfair to determine the duties of the one sex by those of the other, as to argue from the literary excellencies of the one, the deficiencies of the other. For, besides the field of literature, which is common to both, females are required to cultivate a branch of knowledge peculiar to their sex, and which relates to their domestic duties. Now if we establish a rule of comparison, which will operate to their disparagement, let that rule work both ways, and by it, infer from their superior knowledge of household affairs, the intellectual and literary inferiority of the other sex. We shall then be convinced of the injustice and absurdity of the rule itself.

It has been made a question whether or not females should study the dead languages. But why not? Their exclusion from the practice of the learned professions, is surely no valid reason, else it would apply with equal force to literary men out of those professions. If the meaning of the term education be such as we have defined it, and if the cultivation of the mind be an essential part of education, then a knowledge of the dead languages is not the *end*, but only the *means* of education. And if the end be lawful and proper, how do the necessary means become less so? We fear there is a disposition to regard the education of females, in the same light as that of youth intended for a mechanical trade: and to argue that the knowledge of the dead languages is no more necessary to a female in the discharge of her household duties, than it is to mechanics in the performance of their no less important functions. If, indeed, a female is to be regarded in no other light than as a house-keeper or a seamstress, the argument may have some force: but are they not to be the companions and counsellors of the other sex? Are they not to adorn and improve the society of which they are members, and to give life, and form, and polish to the circle in which they move? We might, indeed, turn the argument against those who use it, and ask, will a knowledge of music, drawing, dancing, &c., increase her ability to regulate her domestic affairs with skill and economy? You reply no; but music is delightful to the ear, and painting charms the eye,

as well as a creditable accomplishment. We reply this is all selfishness. You would educate a female only so far as was necessary to enable her to serve and amuse you. Your own convenience and gratification constitute the end and object of her education. This is only polishing and jeweling the chains, by which you bind her to the task of serving and pleasing you. Besides, even if you make the convenience and pleasure of the other sex, the standard of female education, it ought to be remembered that the taste and disposition of men vary materially; and that what conduces to the pleasure of one, may be insipid, if not disgusting to another. Therefore, unless those who have no relish for the refinements of literature are disposed to exclude those who have, from all participation in the pleasures and profits of female society, they should unite with us in endeavoring to elevate the standard of female education; which, if it were accomplished, would greatly enhance the pleasure of female society to well educated and literary men, while, at the same time, it would detract nothing from the profitableness of such society to those of humbler pretensions to learning and intellectual cultivation.

But we advocate the importance of female education, not with the view to the convenience and selfish gratification of our own sex, but on the more exalted ground of their own inherent rights and privileges. We are at no more liberty to shackle their minds, than to fetter their bodies. If their education is to be limited in any case, let it be done by providential circumstances, as it is with the opposite sex: and not by a ruthless proscription, not by an ancient and long cherished prejudice, not by the force of a blind public sentiment. These are the chains by which they have been too long held in cruel subjection, and the age in which we live, the nation where we dwell, the advancing state of society, and our allegiance to the principles of liberty and free enquiry, all demand, with a loud voice, that they should be delivered from their bondage, and fully enjoy the gifts of providence, and the privileges of their being, as moral, rational, and accountable creatures.

We say, then, let the study of the dead languages, and of every other branch of literature, be regarded as a lawful constituent of female education—let them especially study the Latin language, even if it be merely to perfect a knowledge of their own.

The want of a proper and adequate education among females, often exposes them to contempt, and repels from their society, men of learning and science. It is related of Cassori's wife, that she destroyed his whole herbarium, by scraping off his dried specimens, for the sake of the paper. It is also related of Peiresc's niece, that she used the epistles of his learned correspondents, in lighting candles.

A female, who, though ignorant, was anxious to be considered intelligent and literary, once asked of a gentleman, who well understood her character, the loan of the History of England. He complied with her request, and sent her also Walker's Dictionary, supposing that she would need the one in order to understand the other. She, however, read them *both through*; and returned them with her thanks, and a declaration of the pleasure she derived from the perusal of

them; adding, that the only fault she could find with the dictionary was, that as soon as she became interested in one subject, it went to another! Of two sisters in high life, whose father had recently gone to Europe, it is related, that on being asked to what part of Europe their father had gone, one replied, to France; the other immediately corrected her, by saying, that he had gone to Paris, and not to France. Many instances of a similar kind might be stated, showing the mortifying effects of a defective female education. What cheek does not mantle with shame at the bare recital of such humiliating exposures of female ignorance! What parent, of delicate sensibilities, would not be overwhelmed with confusion, if a daughter should so dishonor her sex! What brother, of proper feelings, could endure the mortification, if a sister should so offend the ears of a refined and intelligent company? The experience of such mortification would probably be so potent an argument, as to dispel from the mind of him who suffered it, the last, lingering doubt, as to the importance of female education; and would secure us an effectual ally in the cause we advocate.

The cultivation of the female mind, greatly increases the influence of the female character in society. To this influence we owe all the delicate refinements, and chastened sympathies, of social life. Whenever the female sex is degraded, and their influence destroyed, the male sex becomes so in a corresponding proportion. Cast your eye over the various communities, and nations of the earth, for a confirmation of this statement. What is the state of society where to be a woman, is to be a slave, bound to the ignoble task of ministering to the gratification of proud, domineering man? Such is the nature of the social system, that where it is legitimately acted out, the gentle and imperceptible influence of the one sex, is found to soften down the asperities, and rectify the natural uncouthness of the other. Her smile relaxes his rigid countenance, and expands his knitted brows. The music of her voice subdues his vociferous tones. And the mildness of her demeanor, tames the wild restlessness of his nature. Such is the legitimate influence of the female character in society. And in order to sustain this influence, and make it effectual, it must be guided and controlled by a cultivated intellect. Knowledge is power; and although it is true, that woman really governs, while she seems to obey, yet her authority is in proportion to her intelligence and refinement.

The influence of female education is felt in elevating the standard of mental cultivation in the opposite sex. It appears effectually to the pride of men, even when it fails to awaken a more commendable motive. If they would appear to advantage, in the society of intelligent and well educated ladies, they feel that they must increase their own knowledge, and cultivate their own minds. Vanity is a powerful stimulant in any cause. And the one sex are perhaps not more free from its influence than the other, although it may operate in a different manner upon each.

Such an education as we are contending for, would afford to females abundant employment and amusement for all their leisure hours. They would have access to sources of pleasure from which others are debarred. And these resources

being within themselves, they would no longer be dependent for enjoyment upon persons or circumstances. Unless surrounded by external sources of pleasure, uneducated females are apt to experience great uneasiness and misery. They are sensible of a vacancy which they cannot fill up, except with sighs and fruitless complaints. For there are times, to such when even novels satiate and cloy the appetite, and when music has lost its charms. Indeed, even gaiety and fashion themselves, will at times lose their power to captivate and please. An "empty void," called the *ennui*, is experienced, and the sufferer can find no adequate relief, not even in the sympathies of kindred spirits.

Even the external sources of enjoyment on which uneducated females are so dependent, are not always adequate to the gratification of their desires, neither are they of such character as to improve the mind or mend the heart. The scandal of the female sex has been the theme of dramatists and poets, held up to ridicule by the satirist, and severely reprovved by the moralist. But who are they that, for the most part, are given to this vice? Are they not those whose mental cultivation is inadequate to a higher and more commendable grade of conversation? Elevate the standard of female education; kindle within their bosoms a zeal for knowledge and literary pursuits, let them taste the cup of intellectual enjoyment, and you do more to reform the crying vices of the sex, than all the lessons of the moralist, or the censures of the satirist, have hitherto effected.

Old age, the haggard ghost that haunts the gay, the vain, the giddy girl of uncultivated intellect, is honored, admired and revered, when adorned with knowledge and education. Old age, the dread of youthful vanity and ignorance, the bane of pleasures that live upon flattery and beauty; old age, when able to instruct with wisdom, has thrown around it, a charm and an attraction which more than compensate for the loss of youth and beauty. For what is beauty? It is a fading flower that blooms upon the cheek of youth. It is a fruitless blossom, that withers at the touch of time, and often instills poison in the bosom which it decks. What are the pleasures of beauty? They are the fragrance of the flower, which it sends forth only while it lives. But what is a good education? It is a fountain of pleasure, sending forth its perennial streams to irrigate and beautify society. It is a jewel which is polished, not obscured, by the hand of time. Youth must grow old, beauty will fade, flattery will cease, or become insipid, even riches may take to themselves wings and fly away, but a good education remains, and improves by that which destroys more ephemeral attractions.

In this connection it may be observed, that education may be called upon, in the providence of God, to subserve a more important and substantial purpose, than mere gratification or pleasure. We have just said that riches may take to themselves wings and disappear. This reverse is often realized. Those who, in the midst of affluence, have studied accomplishments, merely with the view of becoming more attractive, and of ministering pleasure to the circle in which they moved, have, in the reverses of fortune, been compelled to resort to those accomplishments for the means of subsistence. If accomplishments may be thus relied on, how much more

confidently may you trust to a solid education for support in such an emergency? Let no female suppose herself exempt from the smiles or frowns of providence. God's ways are often inscrutable and past finding out; and as it is the part of wisdom to prepare for events that may befall us, and that have befallen others. Let this consideration have its due weight in estimating the importance of female education.

In its bearing upon the future maternal character of the present and coming generations of the sex, our subject assumes an importance beyond all that individual gratification or advantage can bestow upon it. Who are to instil the earliest principles into those minds that are hereafter to provide over the destiny of human society? To whose moulding hand will be committed the character of the next and succeeding generations? To the sex, whose cause we advocate to-day. And if such be their task, what should be their qualifications? What an amount of mental and moral training is necessary to prepare them for the duties that devolve upon them! If unable to instruct their offspring, if unable properly to cultivate and cherish the buddings of the infant mind, if unable to guide its enquiries and rectify its mistakes, we need not the gift of prophecy to predict the future character and destiny of those who are thus committed to blind guides and incompetent instructors.

The duties which mothers owe to their children, cannot, during their earliest infancy, be transferred to other hands. The attempt would be frustrated by the very texture of the social system. These duties are inherent in the connexion itself, and can not be separated from it. Hence, impressions will be made by the mother, upon the mind of her infant; she will give a direction and cast to its future character. She cannot avoid it, if she would. And she should remember that her responsibility is in proportion to her influence. It is a question of vast importance to the community and to the nation of which those children are to constitute a part, whether these impressions are to be salutary or baneful. If, then, you desire to become the benefactors of your race, and that your influence and exertions, should outlive the period of your allotted time on earth, and tell, with happy effect, upon the character of generations yet unborn, use that influence, and put forth those exertions, in elevating the standard of female education.

The character and genius of our civil institutions imparts to this subject additional importance.

The mothers of our future law-givers and rulers, will lay the foundation of that character which will belong to them. The infant statesmen of coming years, will imbibe their most enduring principles from the lips of those who shall give them birth. Let it not be supposed that we unduly estimate the maternal influence. Some of the greatest and best men that have ever lived, have acknowledged their indebtedness to this influence, for all that distinguished them in life, and made them the ornaments of the age and nation in which they lived. Viewed in this light our subject becomes fraught with the destiny of this great Republic. It is the highest praise that can be bestowed upon our form of government, that it cannot flourish, nor be successfully administered, where

the mass of the people are vicious, ignorant and debased. Nor is the amount of virtue and knowledge which it requires of imperfect and sinful beings, so great as to render it impracticable or utopian. It steers a safe and happy medium between Sylla and Charybdis. Its tendency is to elevate the standard of good morals and intelligence, by opening the door of promotion and distinction to all, and making the hope of success an incentive to the cultivation and practice of virtue. Such being the distinctive features of our civil policy, the importance of female education rises in magnitude, as we contemplate its bearing upon the safety and prosperity of the nation.

The general diffusion of religious knowledge through the medium of Sunday-schools and bible classes, affords an additional argument in support of our main proposition. Using the term education in its extended and legitimate sense, we contend that its standard among females should be elevated, if they would keep pace with the religious intelligence of those who are favored with Sabbath school instruction, and whose parents do not regard such an institution as beneath their notice and patronage.

The mothers and elder sisters of the present day are not unfrequently put to shame, by the superior knowledge of religious matters, which the younger branches of the family have acquired in these nurseries of piety and usefulness. The system of bible-class instruction, also, gives to those who avail themselves of it, so decided an advantage in conversation or writing, that it cannot escape the notice even of a superficial observer. These facilities to youth have compelled others to study and read the bible, and the history of the times and nations of which it treats, in order to maintain a respectable appearance of intelligence, and to avoid a mortifying exposure of their ignorance by little children. And if females would insure respect, and maintain their proper influence in society, they must bestow upon this branch of education, a much larger share of attention than is common among certain classes. Literature has ever been the handmaid and companion of religion. And the literature of religion is becoming better understood, and more generally studied, than perhaps at any former period. Our colleges, being for the most part, under the direction and influence of religious teachers, will continue to impart more or less of this species of literature to the minds of the rising generation, and thus, by its influence on the social system, compel the female sex to give it more attention, else their ignorance and deficiency will be glaringly exposed, by the light which is reflected by the other sex.

In conclusion, permit me to call your attention to two evils in regard to female education, which are said to be prevalent in this district of country. The first relates to the practice of passing by the schools and seminaries at home, and sending your daughters to those at a distance. Without saying any thing derogatory to the character and standing of the female schools at the north and east, I may be permitted to remark, that distance often throws around objects, unreal charms, and therefore becomes a deceptive medium through which to view the qualities either of persons or things. The halo of excellence by which they seem to be encircled, exists only in the medium through which they are viewed. Near-

ness and familiarity would soon dissipate their apparent attractions, and would doubtless lead us to appreciate more highly the real advantages which they possess.

The declaration of our Lord and Saviour, that a prophet hath honor save in his own country, embodies a principle as applicable to the subject before us as to any other. The practice of which we speak, makes this state tributary in literature to the north. It is an acknowledgment of our inferiority in the facilities of education, which is doubtless true; but it need not be true. This practice helps to make it true. It enervates the sinews of literary enterprise at home. It undervalues our actual resources, and discourages all effort to develop them. There is no good reason why this state and this city should not possess adequate facilities for education in all its branches. The wealth, intelligence, refinement and enterprise of this community, seem to demand that the effort should be made, and seem to promise that the effort shall be successful. Let the State of Mississippi consult her true interest and honor, and she will no longer make it necessary to bow down and do homage to the superior facilities of other states. Her patriotism, her enterprise, and her political influence command the respect of other sections of the country, and shall her literature, the bulwark of our political strength and respectability, be suffered to languish or pine away in insignificance? On the contrary, let the standard of education be lifted high. Let her resources be made available, and let her facilities be multiplied, till she shall attract to her own bosom the youth of other states, that she may train them up for usefulness, and send them back as blessings to the society from which they came.

The remaining evil to which I will allude, relates to the practice of frequently changing the teachers of your children. If the claims of every new establishment should induce parents to make this change, it will operate most unfavorably upon the progress of the pupils. When a teacher becomes acquainted with the mental habits and abilities of his pupil, and when the pupil becomes familiar with the teacher's mode of instruction, the principal difficulties in the way of success are removed, and the progress of the pupil is increased in a very perceptible ratio. Besides, these frequent changes operate to the discouragement of those teachers from whom the pupils are taken, and tends ultimately to break up the institution. Permanency in a seminary of learning, is an invaluable characteristic. It strengthens confidence, increases zeal, and affords an opportunity of completing what has been commenced. But this practice, of which we speak, must always give to our institutions an ephemeral character, and render abortive what might otherwise be successful.

It is to be hoped that the day is not far distant, when this city shall be as famed for its facilities in the education of females, as it is for its refinement and hospitality; and when we shall no longer send our daughters to other states, as witnesses and messengers, to publish our destitution and barrenness. Let the commendable pride of Mississippi be touched, let her honor be appealed to, and her gallantry will be as distinguished for educating the fair sex, as it now is for honoring and admiring them.

SOUTH-WESTERN JOURNAL.

NATCHEZ, MARCH 15, 1838.

AGENTS WANTED.

One or two gentlemen of responsible character and pleasing address, are wanted as agents, to obtain subscribers and collect subscriptions for the South-Western Journal. Any young gentleman, who can satisfy the Executive Committee of his qualifications and integrity, shall receive letters of introduction to gentlemen in various parts of the State, whose influence will be exerted to favor and facilitate his views.

Application may be made at the office of the South-Western Journal, corner of Main and Canal Streets, Natchez.

THE SOUTH-WESTERN JOURNAL.

It is the intention of the Executive Committee of the South-Western Journal, to give rather more variety to the succeeding numbers, by devoting nearly one-half the space to shorter editorial and selected articles. The design is not to give a lighter character to the publication, but a more practical and varied one. The limits of the Journal will not permit essays of great length, or those continued through successive numbers, without the danger of substituting a monotonous sameness for the lively and pleasing variety, which the public taste justly requires in the periodical literature of our country. The same care will be taken in the preparation of the shorter articles as in the longer. A few brief papers will be presented on rural economy, embracing the best modes of cultivating ornamental shade trees and shrubbery.

We have a gentle hint for our poetic correspondents— which, (as mediocrity in poetry is abhorrent both to the gods and to men,) we venture to press at this time. More credit would accrue to most writers of poetry for periodicals, if they would select every tenth line they write for publication (a premium tithe) and burn the remainder: that is to say, the subtraction of nine parts from ten makes the tenth ten times as valuable as the whole would have been: thus $10 - 9 = 10 \times 10 = \text{good poetry!}$

THE TEACHERS' CONVENTION.

A county convention of Teachers and friends of Education was organized in this city, on Saturday, the 17th instant, as will be seen by the official report, published in the present number of the Journal. Fifteen members signed the constitution, and paid their initiation fee. This, we believe, will be a working society. There seemed to be a strong disposition evinced by some of the members to institute a censorship of the character and qualifications of teachers, through which they must successfully pass, before they could be admitted to the confidence of the public. Some such measure as this will more properly come under the action of the State Convention at Jackson.

COMPLIMENTARY.—As extremes often approach each other, we have real pleasure in recording of the New Orleans Picayune, that it is as much distinguished for its life, piquancy, and entertainment, as (according to its statement) the South-Western Journal is for its devotion "to the deeper and more abiding interests of the useful sciences, and of the cause of education in all its grades."