

THE GLEANER:

AND NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

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Nec araneorum sane texus, ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.

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THE GLEANER.

INFLUENCE OF THE PRESS

The following admirable remarks on the power, and moral and political effects of the Press, were delivered by Ely Moore, Esq. at the anniversary celebration of the "New York Typographical Association."

"Before I sit down, gentlemen, permit me to offer a few remarks relative to the influence, power, and importance of the press—the lever which is at this moment moving the world—that glorious luminary which is dispelling the clouds of moral darkness, and warping into life and action the intellectual energies of millions—whose benign and cheering rays are penetrating the very confines of civilization, and redeeming man from slavery, ignorance, and degradation. Would you, gentlemen, regard with deeper interest the importance of your art, or prize more highly the character of your avocation, then contemplate, for a moment, the condition of those tribes, or fraternities of men, who have never experienced the benefits and advantages of the Press, and contrast their situation with those who are privileged to move within the sphere of its blessed influence. Nay, compare, if you will, the condition of those nations where the Press has diffused its light and dispensed its intellectual treasures, with that of the most refined and enlightened nations, in the most auspicious and polished eras of antiquity, and mark the difference that characterises their political, intellectual, and moral destinies. True, the celestial signs, and astronomical figures, with other relics that have come down to us, inspire us with admiration, and beget in us exalted conceptions of the wisdom and glory of ancient Egypt, and irresistibly lead us to regard the land of the Pyramids, the land of Osires and of Hermes, of Sesostris, and the Ptolemies, as the birth place of the arts and sciences; whilst her hieroglyphics, her golden zodiac, and countless symbols, may be regarded as the first books by which mankind were instructed.

Ancient Greece and Rome too, might assert their claims to wisdom, virtue and philosophy. The former with pride and exultation might refer to the names of Phidias and Praxiteles, as masters in sculpture; to Apelles and Timanthes in painting; to Demosthenes as the first of orators; to Solon and Lycurgus as wise legislators, and to Socrates and Plato, as unrivalled moralists and philosophers; whilst the latter with equal pride, might point to "names that know not death," to Brutus and Cicero, Aurelius and Cato, as models in wisdom, virtue and heroism. We grant, most readily grant, that each had their wise, great, and good men. But, alas! they were "few and far between." Like the pillars of Hercules, they towered in severe and solitary grandeur amidst a barren waste; while all around was a mental wilderness. Knowledge was confined to the academic groves, where none save the favored few were allowed to enter; whilst the multitude were mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water"—were ignorant, and therefore, vicious and degraded; but where the Press exerts its influence, all classes of society are comparatively enlightened—are capable of estimating their natural, political, and religious rights; and knowledge, morality, and happiness, flow through all the ramifications of society. If mankind, then, held in reverence the name of Cadmus, for introducing the alphabet—of Danaus or giving the model of the ship—of Xenaoras, who first constructed it—of Chiron, who invented the sphere to navigate it—of Leonarda Da Vinci, the inventor of clock navigation, and of our immortal countryman,ulton, for the application of Steam—I say, how pre-eminently then do the claims of Faust, the inventor of our art, entitle him to the appellation of benefactor; or that the art of printing has contributed more essentially towards the instruction of mankind than all the arts besides, is a truth notorious and incontrovertible—hence it is, that the Press is the

pride and safeguard of free governments—but the terror and destined destroyer of all despotic. To the tyrants of the earth it brings despair; they dread its power—would fain stifle its influence—they tremble, and shudder as they name it; and the acknowledgment of their fears stands recorded in their edicts and lists of proscriptions.

It has been well said, that "the Press is intimately connected with human happiness." All the means combined and employed in promoting the amelioration of mankind are not so powerful and so efficacious as the periodical press alone. Its influence is felt and acknowledged in every part of our wide and extended country. It enters every domicile, from the marble mansion upon the Atlantic to the rude cabin upon the banks of the Oregon, and cheers and chastens, refines and instructs, whithersoever it reaches.

If the periodical press (to use the language of one of our greatest men) with its rich treasures of science and intelligence, were struck from existence, we should then know how much we had possessed by feeling how much we had lost. * * * Had this great source of instruction and intelligence (continues the same writer) been possessed by the old world, how differently might have been its destiny, and how rich the lessons of experience transmitted to us. How precious would be a newspaper, printed at the epoch of some of those memorable events, that have come down to us in 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' A Gazette of Sparta, or of Athens, when Xerxes was upon the Hellespont, or Leonidas at Thermopylae, would be a treasure far beyond the marble monuments which yet look out upon the ruins around them. The hopes, the fears, the efforts, the sacrifices of Greece, would be before us, not in the impassioned strains of her poets, nor in the eloquent but partial narratives of her historians, but as they marked the approaching danger, and the alterations in popular feeling. And with equal interest should we gaze upon a similar monument of the literature and fortunes of Rome, when civil discord, or foreign armies shook her power, but not her resolution: when her citizens retreated to the sacred mount, when the great Carthaginian army swept her eagles from the field of Canae. All that is wanting, (he concludes) to complete our knowledge of antiquity, these publications would have furnished.

In a government like ours, gentlemen, where the public voice is omnipotent—where the whole superstructure of our institutions rests upon public opinion—how important it is that the public mind should be well informed; that it should be properly instructed not only in morals and the arts, but in the science of government, that the people may at all times be capable of judging of 'men and measures' accurately; inasmuch as upon the intelligence, virtue, and discretion of the people depends the stability of our institutions, and the consequent happiness of millions; and for the diffusion as well as for the preservation, of this intelligence and virtue, we are chiefly dependent upon the press * * *

Do I hazard too much, gentlemen, when I say that our liberties were not only achieved, but have in a great measure, been preserved by the Press. Through what other medium could the story of our wrongs have been communicated, so as to have produced a simultaneous feeling throughout all the colonies? by what means could the principles and deliberations of the fathers of the Republic have been diffused, so as to have caused a uniform and simultaneous movement throughout the land? Through the press, the people were not only made acquainted with the measure of their wrongs but were inspired with a spirit to redress them. The obnoxious acts of Parliament [says the Abbe Reynal] were circulated throughout the continent upon paper edged with black, emblematical of mourning for liberty departed." Writings fraught with vigor and eloquence were delivered in all directions from the press,

and wherever a pamphlet or newspaper circulated the people were made acquainted with the merits of the controversy—were inspired with enthusiasm, and girded for the conflict.

I have said that liberties, so far, have been preserved by the press, and the declaration needs no confirmation when addressed to an assembly so intimately acquainted with the history of the Republic as "The Typographical Association of New York." And, gentlemen, you will permit me to predict that if the American Republic shall be so fortunate as to shun the fate of those Republics that have existed in by-gone days, its preservation will be ascribed to the press alone * * * Observation has taught us that the press is all-powerful in correcting public abuses—in exposing and punishing political heresy, and in restraining and chastising unlawful ambition. Shall we be told then, that the press may become corrupt and licentious, and instead of guarding, as a faithful sentinel, the citadel of our liberties, may be converted by a band of political desperadoes into an engine, that will not only rock its battlements, but rive its foundation? If we take the past as a criterion by which to judge, we shall arrive at a very different conclusion. Wherever the press is free the people are enlightened—and where the people are enlightened, no danger need be apprehended, but that they will act in reference to the welfare of the Republic—knowing as they will, knowing as they do, that the individual interest of each is necessarily identified therewith.'

FROM THE ACADIAN RECORDER.

THE PULPIT AND THE PRESS.—'The Schoolmaster' has three principal modes of influencing the public mind. One is, by attending to the rising generation in the School Room; another by ascending the Pulpit and delivering oracles from that commanding and most effective position; and another, by distributing facts, and comments on them, as materials for judicious thought, through the agency of the Press. Perhaps it would be well, if each of those powers knew their own province and preserved it, and that one should not interfere except in a very general manner with the other. The Pulpit might single out particular persons and presses for condemnation, and the Press might dreadfully annoy by marking naked spots for analysis and animadversion; the schoolmaster might disseminate prejudice, and might in turn have the economy of his establishment unpleasantly handled; but in the end very general evil and injury would be the result. We are led to those thoughts by a collision which has taken place in the sister Province. The St John Colonist some weeks since published an extract from the 'Reformers Catechism,' which, well as we can recollect, was a parody on some part of the Book of Common Prayer, and similar to many such witticisms which have appeared in the old country. The point of such things consists, in applying well known words to new thoughts, engaging the mind and the ear by continued contrast and unexpected variation; the evil lies, to the judgment of most persons, in a profane handling of sacred matters, which tend to lessen their solemnity and importance. This latter effect—which has been disputed—is undoubtedly far from being a light offence; but as such parodies have been occasionally produced by every party and all kinds of men at home, a Provincial Editor might copy one of them, without intending to do evil, or being aware of the different lights in which such an article might be viewed. By a Communication in a subsequent 'Observer,' we find, that the Rector of St John, in a sermon delivered on Nov. 18, alluded in very warm and pointed terms to the occurrence; and not content with endeavouring to convince the offender, or to put his hearers on their guard against the supposed effect of such productions, he repeatedly and bitterly aimed at the livelihood of the man, by prostituting the most sacred allusion to affect a decrease of his subscription.